

First Chosen by the Dragon

8-10 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 9

Jan 20, 2026[Evelyn's POV]Days blur together in Draven's territory like rain on glass. My room is barely larger than a closet—stone walls, a thin mattress on a wooden frame, a single window too narrow to climb through. The servants' quarters press in from all sides, filled with strangers who want nothing to do with me. I learn quickly what's expected. Scrubbing floors until my knees ache. Hauling water from the well until my shoulders burn. Whatever menial task proves I'm willing to work without complaint. The egg stays hidden beneath loose floorboards near my bed. I discovered the gap my second night here, prying up boards until I found a hollow space just large enough to conceal my precious secret. Only at night do I dare retrieve it. When the compound falls silent and shadows swallow my tiny room, I pull the egg from its hiding place and cradle it against my chest. Its warmth pulses against my skin like a second heartbeat. "Soon," the dragon whispers through our bond. "Soon we'll be truly together, and nothing will separate us again." "I hope you're right," I breathe into the darkness. "I don't know how much longer I can keep hiding you." "Trust in what we share. They cannot take what they don't know exists." I take a deep breath, trying to steady myself. Then I realized something. "Hey. I never asked but... What's your name?" www.NovelWorm.com There's a brief pause, but when the dragon replies, I hear a smile in her voice. "Aspis. My name is Aspis." "Nice to meet you, Aspis." I smile back. We lapse into silence. The words and the presence comfort me, but fear never fully fades. If anyone discovers what I carry—if Draven learns I smuggled a dragon egg across his borders—death will come swiftly. I must survive long enough for the hatching. That's all that matters now. Each morning I emerge from my room and feel eyes following my every movement. Servants fall silent when I approach their conversations. Guards track my path through corridors with suspicious gazes. And Commander Sera appears everywhere I turn. The sharp-eyed woman watches from doorways, from shadows, from convenient corners. She never speaks to me directly, but I feel her attention like a blade pressed against my spine. She reports to Draven. I'm certain of it. I try to be friendly despite the coldness surrounding me. I offer help to other servants whenever possible. I smile at guards who pass. I make myself as invisible and useful as possible. None of it works. The other house members treat me with suspicion at best, open hostility at worst. I'm a houseless stranger who appeared from somewhere beyond their borders. A rogue with no family, no connections, no reason to trust. Why would anyone

welcome that? One afternoon, while carrying fresh linens through the main courtyard, I cross paths with trouble wearing a charming smile. He shares Draven's dark features—the strong jaw, the midnight hair, the sharp intelligence in his eyes. But where Draven moves like a predator stalking prey, this man carries himself with easier grace. Less wolf. More prowling cat. He stops directly in my path, forcing me to halt or collide with him. The linens nearly tumble from my arms as I stumble backward. *www.NoV@Iworm.Com* “So you're the rogue my brother dragged in from the cliffs.” His voice holds amusement rather than threat. “Evelyn, isn't it? The mysterious wanderer with nowhere else to go?” “That's right.” I adjust my grip on the linens carefully. “And you must be...” “Riven.” He begins circling me slowly, studying my face from different angles. “Draven's younger brother. The less intimidating one, if you believe the rumors.” “I haven't heard any rumors about you.” “Then you haven't been listening carefully enough.” He completes his circle and stops before me again. “You don't look like much, I'll admit. Thin. Tired. A bit ragged around the edges.” “Travel does that to a person.”

“So does running from something.” His eyes sharpen despite his casual tone. “But then, the dangerous ones rarely look dangerous. That's what makes them so effective.” My pulse quickens, but I keep my expression neutral. “I'm not dangerous. I'm just trying to survive, same as anyone.” “Everyone says that. Even the assassins. Even the spies.” He tilts his head. “Where exactly did you come from, little rogue? Before the cliffs, I mean. Before you stumbled so conveniently into our territory?” “A small settlement in the neutral lands. Nothing worth mentioning.” “Settlements have names.” “Mine didn't. It was barely a village—just a handful of families trying to scratch out a living.” The lie comes smoothly now, practiced through repetition. “Raiders destroyed it. I've been wandering ever since.” “How tragic.” His voice holds no sympathy. “And you were traveling alone? No companions? No friends who might vouch for your story?” “Friends are luxuries I can't afford.” “On that, we agree.” He steps closer, invading my space deliberately. “What are you running from, Evelyn? And don't insult me with another vague answer about raiders and destroyed villages.” “I'm running from people who wanted me dead.” Truth wrapped in deflection. “Isn't that reason enough to flee?” “It's reason enough to wonder who those people were. And whether they might follow you here.” “No one is following me. I made absolutely sure of that.” “Did you?” He studies my face like he's memorizing every single detail. “You seem very confident for someone who arrived so desperate.” “Confidence is all I have left.” Something flickers in his expression—respect, perhaps, or deeper suspicion. I can't tell which. “My brother may have let you stay,” Riven says finally, leaning close enough that I smell pine and leather. “But that doesn't mean you're welcome here. This isn't a sanctuary. It's a test.” “A test?” “To see what you really are. Draven collects information like other men collect weapons. Every word you speak, every move you make—it's all being recorded and analyzed, be sure of that.” “I know I'm being watched.” “Good. Then you won't be surprised when I tell you that I'll be watching too.” His

smile turns sharp. “One wrong step, little rogue. One whisper of deception. And I’ll be the first to know.” www.NoV@lwOrM.com He straightens and walks away without another word, leaving me standing in the courtyard with my heart pounding and my arms full of linens I’ve nearly crushed. The encounter rattles me more than I want to admit. That night, alone in my cramped room with the egg cradled against my chest, I stare at the ceiling and wonder if I’ve traded one prison for another. In Mintia, my family wanted me dead. Here, strangers watch my every breath and wait for me to prove I’m exactly as dangerous as they suspect. “You are not trapped,” Aspis whispers gently. “You are surviving. There is a difference.” “Is there? Because right now it feels exactly the same.” www.NoV@lwOrM.com “In Mintia, you had no hope. Here, you have me. You have our bond growing stronger each night. You have a future they cannot take from you.” I press my cheek against the warm shell and let Aspis’ presence wash over me.

Enemies surround me on all sides. Draven’s suspicion. Sera’s surveillance. Riven’s sharp questions. The hostile stares of everyone else in this place.

But Aspis is right about one thing. In Mintia, I had nothing to fight for. Here, I have everything—if I can just survive long enough to claim it. Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella’s storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

First Chosen by the Dragon

7-9 minutes

Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — 10

Jan 20, 2026 [Draven’s POV] Sera’s daily report arrives with my morning tea, as predictable as the tides. “The rogue continues to behave herself,” Sera begins, settling into the chair across from my desk. “Compliant. Hardworking. She hasn’t caused a single incident worth noting.” “How terribly disappointing.” I lean back, studying her weathered face. “I was hoping for at least one murder attempt by now.” “Your humor remains as dry as ever, my lord.” Sera’s lips twitch. “But there is something curious about her.” “Only one thing? She’s losing her mysterious appeal already.” “She moves wrong.” Sera folds her hands in her lap. “Or rather, she moves too right. Her spatial awareness rivals our trained scouts.” I set down my tea carefully. “Go on.” “Yesterday I observed her in the kitchens. A servant dropped a knife behind her. She didn’t flinch or startle. She simply stepped aside before it hit the ground, as if she

knew exactly where it would fall.”“Reflexes can be sharpened by hard living.”“These aren’t survival reflexes, my lord. These are trained responses. The kind we drill into our warriors for years.” Sera meets my eyes steadily. “Whatever she claims about being a simple rogue, her body tells a different story entirely.”“I told you,” Khaira rumbles through our bond. “She is not ordinary. My instincts about her remain unchanged.”I ignore my dragon’s commentary.“Continue surveillance. I want to know every detail of her movements.”“Of course, my lord. There’s one more thing.” Sera hesitates. “She’s been assigned to help with equipment in the training yard this afternoon.”“Closer to the weapons?” A smile tugs at my lips. “How wonderfully convenient.”The training yard buzzes with activity when I arrive. Young riders practice forms under Xavier’s watchful eye while servants scurry between equipment racks.I position myself in the shadows near the armory entrance.The perfect vantage point.Evelyn works near the weapon racks, organizing practice blades with careful efficiency. Even from this distance, I notice what Sera described. The economy of her movements. The way she tracks everyone in her peripheral vision.wwW.©veIwOrM.c(O)mShe’s cataloguing threats. Automatically. Unconsciously.“Watch,” Khaira urges. “She reveals herself in small moments.”A young rider jostles a rack while reaching for a training sword. The motion sends another blade sliding free, tumbling toward the ground, and Evelyn moves before I can even blink.Her hand shoots out, catching the blade mid-fall. Her grip settles perfectly on the hilt—fingers positioned exactly right, wrist angled for immediate defense or strike.For one heartbeat, she holds the weapon like she was born with steel in her hand. Then her expression flickers and she fumbles the blade deliberately, nearly dropping it again before placing it back on the rack with clumsy haste.“Did you see?” Khaira’s interest burns through our bond. “That was no accident. That was muscle memory.”“I saw.” My jaw tightens. “At least some minor Dragon’s House training. Maybe better.”The afternoon crawls past while I wait.Patience has never been my strongest virtue, but some prey requires careful stalking. When evening shadows stretch across the compound, I make my move and find her in a corridor near the servants’ quarters. Empty. Private.Perfect for the conversation we need to have.wwW.©veIwOrM.c(O)m“Going somewhere?” I step from the shadows, blocking her path.She startles, genuinely this time, before composing herself. “Lord Draven. I was just returning to my quarters after my duties.”“Were you?” I advance slowly, watching her instincts war with her pretense. “Tell me something, Evelyn. Where exactly did a simple wanderer learn to catch a falling blade with perfect form?”

Her face goes pale. “I don’t know what you mean.”“Don’t insult us both.” I stop close enough to see her pulse jumping in her throat. “I watched you in the training yard today. That catch wasn’t luck. That was years of drilling.”“I’ve had to learn to defend myself on the road. Survival teaches hard—”“Lessons, yes. So you’ve said.” I cut her off, letting frustration sharpen my voice. “But survival doesn’t teach the grip I saw today. That positioning comes from formal

training. High House training.” Fear flickers in her striking blue eyes, but then something harder rises to replace it. “And if it does?” She lifts her chin, meeting my gaze with sudden defiance. “What difference does it make where I learned? I’m here now. Working. Causing no trouble.” “The difference is that you’re lying to me. And I don’t tolerate liars in my territory.” “Everyone lies about something.” Her voice doesn’t waver. “Even powerful lords with rare black dragons at their command. Nobody could claim perfect honesty in all things. Even you, I suppose.” The audacity steals my breath for a moment. She tries to sound casual, careful, but her eyes are anything but. They’re full of fire. No one speaks to me like this. No servant, no prisoner, certainly no desperate rogue begging for shelter. “She has fire,” Khaira observes with unmistakable appreciation. “We were right to keep her.” “You’re either very brave or very stupid,” I say slowly. “Perhaps both.” A ghost of a smile crosses her lips. “Stupid enough to run into Black Dragon territory. Brave enough to still be standing here.” “Standing here won’t last if I decide otherwise.” “Then decide.” She spreads her hands, and smiles. Almost teasing. Almost light. Almost as if saying ‘take it as a joke I meant it to be.’ “Kill me or question me. But don’t expect me to crumble just because you loom impressively in dark corridors.” I stare at her. This thin, exhausted woman who should be trembling before me. Who should be spilling every secret just to survive another day. Instead she stands her ground like a warrior facing execution. Afraid, yes—I can smell the fear on her skin—but refusing to let that fear control her. It’s infuriating. It’s fascinating. It’s precisely the wrong reaction for me to have. “She intrigues you,” Khaira murmurs. “More than you want to admit.” “Where did you truly train?” I ask quietly. “And don’t give me another story about roadside lessons and destroyed villages.” “Why does it matter?” Something raw bleeds into her voice. “I’m not a spy. I’m not here to harm your house. I just want to survive long enough to build something new.” “Because someone trained you well. Someone invested time and resources in making you dangerous. I want to know who.” “People who are dead to me now.” Her jaw tightens. “People I’ll never see again.” “That’s not an answer.” “It’s the only one I have.” We stand there, locked in silent combat. Her secrets press against her skin, visible in the tension of her shoulders, the shadows in her eyes. She’s hiding something enormous. I feel it like heat from a fire. But beneath the deception, beneath the fear, I see something else. Strength that shouldn’t exist in someone so broken. Defiance that should have been beaten out of her long ago. Before I can press further, footsteps echo from around the corner. Multiple sets, growing louder. We both freeze. Cedella is a passionate storyteller known for her bold romantic and spicy novels that keep readers hooked from the very first chapter. With a flair for crafting emotionally intense plots and unforgettable characters, she blends love, desire, and drama into every story she writes. Cedella’s storytelling style is immersive and addictive—perfect for fans of heated romances and heart-pounding twists.

