

# The Hollow Crown

Feature (Excerpt)

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FADE IN:

INT. FAMILY ESTATE - MORNING

Soft light filters through tall windows. Everything is composed. Symmetrical. Quiet.

The room is beautiful in a way that discourages touch.

A long dining table. Linen pressed flat. Porcelain aligned precisely with silver. No dust. No warmth.

LUNARIS sits near the end of the table. Not the head. Not the center. Close enough to belong. Far enough to be optional.

She is dressed simply, elegantly. Perfectly appropriate. Almost severe.

Across from her, MARXTI, composed, immaculate, pours tea with measured care. She does not rush. She does not look at Lunariss.

A beat.

Marxti sets the teapot down. Aligns the handle. Only then speaks.

MARXTI

The water cooled faster today.

Her tone is neutral. Observational. It could be kindness.

Lunariss nods.

LUNARIS

It's colder outside.

Marxti considers this. A faint smile, polite, not warm.

MARXTI

Yes. Winter arrives earlier here.

A pause. The silence stretches, unchallenged.

At the head of the table sits THE FATHER, reading. He does not look up. He turns a page carefully, as if sound itself would be impolite.

Lunariss folds her hands in her lap. Her posture is practiced. Years of stillness.

Marxti lifts her cup, finally meeting Lunariss's eyes.

MARXTI

Did you sleep?

The question lands softly.

LUNARIS

Yes.

Not quite true. Not challenged.

Marxti nods, satisfied. She sips her tea.

MARXTI  
Good.

Another pause. No one fills it.

A servant enters silently, adjusts a chair that is already straight, and leaves. No acknowledgment.

The Father clears his throat. A minor disruption.

FATHER  
We'll be late this evening.

No explanation. No audience specified.

Marxti nods. Lunaris nods too, a half-beat later.

LUNARIS  
I can dine later.

The Father looks up briefly now. Just long enough to register her presence.

FATHER  
There's no need.

He returns to his reading.

Marxti places her cup down. Aligns it again.

MARXTI  
We'll see how the day unfolds.

The sentence is gentle. It offers nothing.

Lunaris watches them both. Not accusatory. Observant. As if she's studying a language she already speaks fluently.

A distant clock chimes. The sound is soft, precise. Time here does not rush.

Marxti stands.

MARXTI  
Try not to linger in the west wing.  
They're restoring the floors.

A courtesy disguised as instruction.

LUNARIS  
Of course.

Marxti hesitates, just briefly, as though considering something else. Then she smiles.

MARXTI  
It's good you're home more these days.

Lunaris searches the sentence for warmth. Finds none.

LUNARIS

Yes.

Marxiti exits. Her steps are measured. Unhurried.

The Father continues reading.

Lunaris remains seated.

No one notices.

She looks around the room. The polished surfaces. The quiet order. Everything preserved. Nothing held.

Her reflection catches faintly in the glass cabinet behind her. Fragmented by shelves. Plates. Heirlooms.

She stands. Smooth. Controlled.

As she moves toward the door, the Father speaks without looking at her.

FATHER

Lunaris.

She stops. Turns.

He glances up, just long enough to confirm she's listening.

FATHER

Be mindful today.

A vague instruction. Impossible to disobey. Impossible to satisfy.

LUNARIS

Always.

She waits. He returns to his page.

Dismissed.

Lunaris opens the door and steps into the hallway.

As it closes behind her, the silence resumes its perfect shape.

She pauses, alone now, the faint echo of voices still lingering in the air. The house does not move around her. It watches.

For a moment, she has the distinct sense of being held in place by politeness alone.

CUT TO:

Lunaris stands in the corridor, composed, contained—

—observed, but not protected.

INT. FAMILY ESTATE - HALLWAY - DAY

Lunaris walks the long corridor. Her pace is measured. The house absorbs sound.

Ahead, Marxti moves with purpose, already in motion. Lunaris adjusts her pace to follow.

She does not catch up.

At an intersection, Marxti turns without looking back. Lunaris slows, hesitates, then follows at a respectful distance.

They enter—

INT. SITTING ROOM - DAY

Light spills across pale furniture. Everything faces inward, arranged for conversation that rarely happens.

Marxti crosses directly to the window and opens it a precise amount. She inhales, satisfied.

Lunaris remains near the doorway. Unsure where to place herself.

Marxti sits first. A chair closest to the window. Commanding without effort.

Only then does Lunaris choose a seat. Not opposite. Adjacent, but offset.

A beat.

Marxti reaches for a folder on the table. It is already there. Lunaris notices she didn't see it placed.

Marxti opens it. Reads. Does not acknowledge Lunaris.

Lunaris waits.

The Father enters quietly from another door, already mid-thought.

FATHER

—if it rains again, the grounds won't be ready.

He stops when he sees Marxti. Redirects his attention naturally.