

Devereux rebuffed ~~her~~; and that made her furious, so she set out to ruin him. ~~Then~~ ~~s~~She started spreading the rumor that his eldest son was a bastard and so could never inherit. ~~Then~~ ~~s~~She paid a woman in Neukirk Market to swear that she was the mother. ~~Then~~ ~~s~~He even got a midwife to swear that she'd delivered the child and immediately handed it over to Lord and Lady Devereux and that both mother and midwife had been rewarded handsomely for their silence.

Comment [PJT1]: Recommend semicolon here instead of a comma. The next two thoughts in this sentence are cause-and-effect, so the semicolon helps the reader to "breathe" at the right place.

Comment [PJT2]: The repetition of "then" doesn't provide any emphasis and, in fact, it implies that these things happened in sequence. Has more impact without the "then's", and it really doesn't matter what order she did them in.

"None of this made much sense, because ~~each~~ ~~both~~ of the women ~~were~~ still living in relative poverty. But as with these sorts of things, no one thought it through. The story was rampant all over the kingdom, and it kept getting embellished ~~over and over~~ ~~with~~ each repetition.

Comment [PJT3]: Mismatch of subject and verb. Should either be "each of the women was still living" or "both of the women were still living." My recommendation is the latter because there isn't any reason to deal with them individually.

Comment [PJT4]: The "over and over" is redundant with "each repetition."

"Devereux had no choice but to tell Father exactly what had happened. Isabella denied everything, pretending that it was she who was wronged and being maligned; but Father was having none of it. He gave her a choice. She could immediately take the veil, or she could accept a marriage he would arrange for her in a far-away land and make her home there forever after. Even if she wanted to bring her children to visit ~~there~~ ~~their~~ grandparents, she must first secure his permission, and no ~~such~~ visit was to last longer than a week. For Isabella, there was only one choice — she ~~couldn't~~ ~~ever~~ ~~could~~ ~~never~~ accept the religious life. So Francis helped Father find a suitable family that would ~~except~~ ~~accept~~ her — and I've no doubt a handsome dowry was part of the bargain. We've never spoken of those events since."

As Rupert finishes, Mother says, "That explains a lot."

Turning to her, I ask, "What do you mean?"

"When I mentioned Isabella's letter to Emrys, he bristled and then looked very grim. He first tried to dismiss it as nothing. But when I pressed, he finally said, 'It's better she stays away' and would say nothing else on the subject."