

The Ashes 1011

Chapter 1011

Back when Montgomery was in Chetvine, he ran into trouble. In the end, it was Marvin who stepped in to help, and that was how the bond between their families began.

Walking ahead, Luna asked, "How is Marvin doing these days?"

Andrew replied, "Perfectly fine. He still puts away full plates at every meal. What worries me is his refusal to find a wife and settle down."

Luna frowned. "You're his junior, and your flippant attitude displeases me. Moreover, an elder's affairs are none for you to casually judge."

Andrew said flatly, "I'm speaking within reason. No issue here."

Luna stopped walking and turned, her face icy. "Marvin once saved my grandfather's life. That's why I respect him. But you? All you've done is cause trouble and pick up bad habits."

"Out of respect for Marvin, the Phelan family is willing to give you a place in the capital. But if you keep this lazy, hopeless attitude, we don't take in trash."

Luna was never one to argue. After all, no one around her was worth her attention, let alone her anger. Yet, Andrew's words stirred something in her calm heart.

She thought maybe he was so rotten to the core that it triggered her disdain. If even she could not stand the sight of him, that was a talent in itself.

Francis growled, "Andrew, remember this: The only reason you're stepping into the Phelan estate is out of respect for Marvin. Otherwise, you'd already be a corpse rotting in some back alley in the capital." 1

Andrew shrugged. "First, I never asked for the Phelan family's charity. So, Ms. Phelan, Francis, spare me the condescension. Second, I'm only here because Marvin asked me to check on Mr. Phelan Senior. Otherwise, I'd never set foot in this nightmare you call home."

Francis flushed with rage. "Ms. Luna, did you hear this brat's nonsense? Let's just throw him out. He doesn't deserve an audience with Mr. Phelan Senior!"

Luna sneered. "It's fine. The Phelan family welcomes all-geniuses, prodigies, and even mediocre deadweights." Andrew was getting annoyed. If he had known earlier, he would not have listened to Marvin.

He silently grumbled, 'So much for the Phelans being a top-tier family in the capital-everyone here is an idiot!! Francis was bad enough, an old man still posturing like a big shot when he was actually just here to serve Montgomery. And Luna? A young major-general, a true prodigy-but arrogance was the

worst sin of all.

If not for his promise to Marvin, Andrew would have walked out already.

After winding through opulent halls, they reached Montgomery's room. Inside, a crowd of specialists-doctors, professors, and experts-debated his condition.

The capital's famed miracle doctor,

Mosby Lake, declared, Mr. Phelan Senior just has mild indigestion and a seasonal chill. A single prescription to regulate his blood flow will suffice."

The others hurried to agree.

"Dr. Mosby's genius diagnosis strikes again!"

"No one in the capital compares-where he goes, illness flees!"

Chapter 1012

Someone joked, "Let's clear the room. With Dr. Lake here, the rest of us are just background decor."

"Once Mr. Phelan Senior takes Dr. Lake's medicine, he'll recover in no time!"

The chorus of flattery made Mosby smile. He tried to maintain his dignified image, but the praise still went to his head. He said, "You're all too kind. I just had a few extra years of study. Medicine is a vast field, and I'm sure you'll all reach greatness someday."

His humble reply earned another round of admiration.

Luna stepped forward, and she was actually smiling for once. "Dr. Lake, thank you for tending to my grandfather."

Mosby flushed with pride. "Ms. Luna, it's my honor. Keeping; Mr. Phelan Senior healthy is my privilege."

The others quickly bowed to Luna as well. After all, she was the Phelan family's prodigy, the capital's undisputed genius-her military rank of major-general at such a young age rivaled even Chetvine's elite.

Her status made her the capital's brightest star, outshining even Joe from the Driscoll family.

Amid the fawning cheers, Andrew's calm voice cut through. "Mr. Phelan Senior's constitution can't handle strong meds. He shouldn't take that prescription. Also, it's lithiasis, not indigestion."

Francis gasped, then snapped, "Shut your mouth! This room's full of the capital's elite-you don't get an opinion here!"

He could not believe Andrew would speak up and wondered who gave this kid the audacity. With Mosby and the capital's top medical minds present, questioning them was suicide.

However, Mosby and the others had already heard. Soon, dozens of eyes turned to Andrew, glaring.

Someone hissed, "What did you say? Are you doubting Dr. Lake's diagnosis?" "Ignore the fool-he's just a clueless kid."

Another chimed in, "What trash! Since when does the Phelan family let strays wander in? Disgraceful!"

Every response dripped with scorn. They took one look at Andrew and dismissed him.

Only Mosby kept smiling. "Young man, are you a medical student?"

Andrew shrugged. "I know a thing or two."

Mosby nodded. "Questioning authority takes courage. I admire that spirit. But youth often leads to recklessness. Consider this a lesson from your elders."

His tone was patronizing, like a wise teacher schooling an ignorant pupil.

Andrew just scoffed. To others, Mosby sounded courteous, but Andrew heard the contempt beneath his words. Obviously, his interruption had bruised Mosby's ego, and this was the retaliation.

Mosby did not expect Andrew to be so dismissive and scoffed at him. His face turned grim, and he asked, "Oh, you find this amusing? You disagree?"

Andrew met his gaze. "Dr. Lake, you misunderstand. I'm not questioning you. I'm correcting you."

The room instantly erupted. The professors and experts, all Mosby's devotees, exploded in outrage.

"You arrogant brat! How dare you!"

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"You arrogant brat! How dare you!"

"Dr. Lake is the capital's leading physician! Who do you think you are?"

"Apologize now! We won't tolerate this disrespect!"

Amid the shouting, Luna's icy voice silenced them. "Andrew. Apologize to Dr. Lake

and then get out. The Phelan family doesn't welcome stubborn fools."

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Chapter 1013

"Apologize?" Andrew sneered, scanning the room of so-called capital experts. "I wasn't wrong, so why should I apologize?"

His words ignited the assembled professors and specialists who had been currying favor with the Phelan family. One shouted, "How dare you question Dr. Lake's diagnosis!"

Another snapped, "Young man, don't think your superficial knowledge qualifies you to challenge us. Our combined medical expertise would take you lifetimes to learn!"

"Young upstarts like you always lack patience," a third added with condescension. "Come back after ten years of serious study if you want to be taken seriously!"

The group erupted in mocking laughter, as if debating Andrew was beneath them.

Francis growled, "Ms. Luna, let me throw this trash out. He's completely unworthy to examine the Mr. Phelan Senior."

Luna barely glanced at Andrew. To her, such mediocrity was not worth her attention. She decided to simply explain to Marvin later how hopeless his recommendation had been.

Surprisingly, Mosby intervened. "Wait. I'd like to hear this boy justify his claims."

He fixed Andrew with a glare. "Young man, you shouldn't speak carelessly. If you say I misdiagnosed, prove it. Don't you know how serious the consequences are for ruining my reputation?"

Andrew remained unfazed. "Actually, I don't feel compelled to prove anything to you. And your precious reputation? Well, it means absolutely nothing to me."

Mosby barked out a bitter laugh, shaking his head. "I see now-you're just seeking attention through controversy."

His tone turned patronizing. "As your elder, I'll be merciful this once. But remember: medical ethics come first technical skills second. You still have oceans to learn."

The sycophants immediately began singing Mosby's praises. "Dr. Lake's wisdom

alone is worth ten years of study for this ignorant brat!"

Another added, "Ms. Luna, please remove this arrogant fool immediately. Proper scholars like us shouldn't have to be in the same room with his kind!"

Luna's frosty gaze finally settled on Andrew. "Do you have anything else to say? There are limits to how far attention-seeking behavior will be tolerated. I truly can't comprehend why Marvin would recommend someone like you."

Andrew's eyes narrowed. "Disrespect me all you want-I don't need the Phelans.

But insult Marvin indirectly, and you've crossed a line."

Luna smirked. "Then show us your supposed skills instead of complaining."

Without hesitation, Andrew strode to Montgomery's bedside.

Francis exclaimed in shock, "Get your hands off him! What the hell do you think you're doing?"

Mosby's face purpled with rage as he shouted, "You insolent bastard! How dare you lay a finger on someone of Mr. Phelan Senior's stature? Back off now!"

However, Andrew tuned them out completely. His fingers moved with practiced ease as golden

acupuncture needles slid silent

from his sleeve. With fluid precision, he began inserting the needles into Montgomery's chest.

Some moved to stop him, but Luna raised a hand and said, "Wait. Let's see what he's trying to do."

Chapter 1014

Francis spoke in a panic. "Ms. Luna, Mr. Phelan Senior isn't some average Joe- how could you let a complete nobody treat him out of nowhere?"

Luna did not respond. Instead, her eyes stayed locked on Andrew's hands as he worked the needles. Every single needle landed with incredible precision, striking the right acupoints even through Montgomery's clothes.

What really shocked her was how fast Andrew moved. Not only was he fast, but every needle hit exactly where it should.

Luna did not know much about medicine, but her martial arts skills were exceptional, and she knew the human body like the back of her hand. To be able to locate such precise pressure points through clothing and do acupuncture quickly took some real skill.

'Maybe this guy actually knows a thing or two about medicine,' she thought to herself.

Mosby and the others did not interrupt anymore. Instead, they all stared at Andrew's every move.

"Dr. Lake, that acupuncture technique looks familiar, doesn't it?" asked a man with a goatee, his voice filled with doubt and curiosity.

Mosby took a deep breath and forced down the surprise in his chest. He said, "Ninefold Needles. It's a rare and ancient medical practice."

The goatee man, Joshua Davies, looked stunned. "Ninefold Needles? Isn't that supposed to be an exclusive technique from the Advanced Medical Institute? How could this kid know it?"

Mosby let out a cold snort. "These days, there aren't many people who know Ninefold Needles, but it's not like it's a lost art either. Calling it an exclusive secret technique might be a bit of a stretch."

As he spoke, Mosby raised his hand and flicked a few silver needles into the air. They cut through the space with sharp, whistling sounds, causing everyone around him to gape in awe.

Someone gasped, "Dr. Lake, wait-so you know Ninefold Needles too?"

"Dr. Lake, you're seriously a hidden master!"

Another mocked, "Hah! This kid probably just got lucky and stumbled on the technique. Now he's out here putting on a show!"

"But compared to you, Dr. Lake, he's just showing off in front of a real expert!"

Just like that, everyone quickly downplayed Andrew's display from earlier. Or maybe, they were just choosing to ignore it. Either way, if they had to bow to someone, it was going to be Mosby-not Andrew.

Luna's eyes, however, glimmered with admiration. People like Mosby had earned their reputation by navigating through the most powerful families in the capital, and it was not without reason.

She thought the needle technique Mosby had just performed was truly jaw- dropping, and when she compared it to Andrew's, his did not seem all that impressive anymore.

Right then, Andrew finished the treatment. Nine golden needles, fine as hair, were stuck neatly in Montgomery's chest.

"The needles can't be moved. They need to stay in for at least half an hour," Andrew said calmly as he pulled his hands back.

Mosby commented, "Mr. Phelan Senior isn't seriously ill. He just has some

indigestion and a bit of a cold, that's all. All that flashy needlework you did... wasn't it a little over the top?"

Andrew replied, "I already told you, the issue isn't indigestion—he's got lithiasis in

his chest area. That's why they have to be dissolved."

Mosby scoffed. "Even if you're right,

and he does have lithiasis, what

does that have to do with the

Ninefold Needles you just used? Are you seriously telling me those

golden needles of yours can dissolve the calculi buildup from lithiasis?"

Andrew nodded. "Smart guy. That's exactly what I'm telling you, Dr. Lake."

With that, he turned around and headed for the door. "I'm gonna hit the restroom. Also, Ms. Luna, get two bowls of Ghostroot soup ready for Mr. Phelan Senior-I'll need them."

Without waiting for her reply, Andrew walked off and made his way to the bathroom.

Chapter 1015

Mosby and the others looked at each other, clearly baffled.

"What a load of hocus pocus," someone muttered.

"Mr. Phelan Senior has always been healthy as a horse, and now this guy's

saying he's got lithiasis? He's clearly trying to stir up trouble."

Another chimed in, "Ninefold Needles may look fancy, but in reality, there are very few situations where it's useful. And now this kid's using it to treat lithiasis? Honestly, it just looks like a performance piece to me!"

As the group murmured in growing suspicion, Francis turned to Luna with doubt in his eyes. He asked, "Ms. Luna, you're not actually buying into this guy's nonsense, are you?"

"Dr. Lake's explanation made perfect sense-Mr. Phelan Senior's just got a mild cold and some digestive buildup. Some medicine to clear it out would've done the trick. There was no need for acupuncture or that ridiculous Ghostroot soup. Andrew's clearly just trying to show off and claim credit!"

Francis looked visibly annoyed, his expression growing darker by the second.

However, Luna remained calm. "Just do as he said. The Phelan family isn't so petty that we'd refuse a different method of care just because it's unconventional. But if it turns out he's grandstanding and making up symptoms that don't exist, then he'll have to deal with the consequences-and trust me, they won't be mild." Francis hesitated, then said, "Alright, I'll have the kitchen start preparing the soup. I really want to see how this kid plans to clean up the mess he's made."

Just then, Mr. Phelan Senior, lying in bed, suddenly let out a pained groan in his sleep. His hands moved unconsciously to his chest, clawing at it.

One of the specialists called out, alarmed, "This is bad! That guy's needles are triggering something in Mr. Phelan Senior!"

Another exclaimed, "It must be those needles-far from helping, they're making things worse!"

"I knew it! That punk was bound to mess something up. Quick, pull the needles out before this turns into a real emergency. If anything happens to Mr. Phelan, we're all responsible!"

Luna's expression darkened as she turned to Mosby. "Dr. Lake, what's going on?"

Mosby gritted his teeth and snapped, "Ms. Luna, can't you see? That little bastard's treatment has clearly backfired!"

As he spoke, he stepped forward and reached for the needles.

Luna held him back. "Dr. Lake, Andrew said the needles must stay in place. Shouldn't we wait until he returns before doing anything?"

Mosby replied with a self-righteous tone. "A true doctor values life above all else. If Mr. Phelan Senior's in danger,

won't just stand by and

watch! Besides, those needles are nothing but smoke and mirrors-they won't actually do anything meaningful."

Luna said nothing more. Despite everything, Mosby's words still carried weight.

However, as Mosby grabbed a needle to pull it out, he suddenly let out a confused grunt. "What the hell... I can't pull it out?"

The others were skeptical, so they

stepped up to try removing the

needles themselves. But to their shock, the tiny silver needles felt like they had fused into Montgomery's body rooted there as if they were a part of him.

The goatee man, Joshua, scoffed and stepped forward. "Let me handle this!"

He did not bother with finesse and simply yanked at one of the needles with brute force, which turned out to be a terrible idea. The moment the needle came out, Montgomery's body began to convulse violently.

The healthy color drained from his face in an instant, turning ghostly pale as if his entire life force had been sucked out in a flash.

"Huh?"

Everyone froze. They quickly pulled back, terrified to touch the remaining needles. Joshua stood there in a panic, looking helplessly at Luna. "Ms. Luna, I-I didn't mean..."

Luna felt a flicker of frustration rise in her chest. She waved her hand and said, "It's fine. Just get Andrew-fast. We need to figure out what's going on."

She had barely finished speaking when Andrew returned. He walked straight to the bed, took one look at Montgomery, and his face immediately darkened. "Who pulled out my needle? Who told you that you could touch them?" Joshua stammered, "I-I just..."

Chapter 1016

Mosby stepped forward, his tone righteous and stern. "Kid, do you realize your needles nearly killed Mr. Phelan Senior?"

Andrew, clearly irritated, snapped, "Bunch of backwoods mutts. You don't know anything, so get the hell out of my way!"

The insult made Mosby and his crew fume with rage, their faces turning red with fury.

Luna interjected quickly, "Andrew, forget about them for now. Just focus on my grandfather-what's going on with him?"

Andrew pressed two fingers to Montgomery's chest with rapid precision. Two breaths later, the old man's color stabilized and stopped fading.

Only then did Andrew carefully remove all the needles and finally speak. "The point of the needles was to dissolve the stones in his system, but at the same time, they temporarily sealed off his internal energy flow, so it was normal for him to feel a bit unwell during the process.

"But an idiot pulled one out, which basically leaked his vital energy and essence. It's not life-threatening, but now he'll need a few months of rest to recover fully."

The so-called experts and professors looked utterly embarrassed.

Andrew had stabilized Montgomery in just a few moves, and the results were undeniable. They had nothing to argue with.

Luna shot a cold glance at Joshua, making him instinctively look away, guilt written all over his face.

Right then, Francis returned carrying two bowls of Ghostroot soup. Andrew took one and handed it straight to Luna.

She blinked in confusion. "What for?"

Andrew rolled his eyes. "What do you mean, 'what for'? You're his granddaughter. Isn't it your job to feed your grandfather soup, or do you want someone else to do it?"

Luna felt flustered from the scolding but could not find a single word to argue back.

Meanwhile, Francis, Mosby, and the others were wide-eyed in disbelief. They could not believe Andrew was bossing Luna just like that. Where did he even get the nerve?

Mosby let out a cold chuckle. "You've done your needling, and the soup's on the way down. Now let's see if this diagnosis of yours is real or just an elaborate bluff."

The moment those words left his mouth, Montgomery groaned from the bed and suddenly sat up. "Quick-someone, help me to the bathroom! I've got to go— now!"

Francis rushed over right away, dutiful as ever.

However, Andrew held out a hand. "Hold it. Let Dr. Lake and his team handle that."

Francis froze. "What? Why?"

Luna looked just as confused.

Andrew glanced over at Mosby with a half-smirk. Dr. Lake, weren't you just questioning whether Mr. Phelan Senior actually had lithiasis? Then go. Grab a basin and catch it. Once it's out, you'll get your answer loud and clear."

Mosby's face turned a deep shade of red in an instant. This little punk was making

him collect poop-he was clearly doing this on purpose to humiliate him.

Yet, Montgomery clearly could not hold it in any longer and even started cursing out loud. Under pressure, Mosby had no choice but to suck it up and go himself, along with a few others, to help Montgomery to the bathroom.

A short while later, they returned. Mosby looked like a man who had just been through a war—his face was twitching, and his spirit looked crushed.

"Fine," he muttered bitterly. "Your treatment worked. Mr. Phelan Senior did, in fact, pass out some calculi."

Andrew raised an eyebrow with a teasing smile. "Really? Did you dig through it thoroughly and get a good look at everything?"

Mosby clenched his jaw. "Don't push it, kid. Even a blind squirrel finds a nut sometimes. Don't get cocky."

This time, no one backed Mosby up—no one dared speak out against Andrew anymore. Even the so-called medical experts were staring at him, their eyes full of shock and awe.

Not only had he identified the problem, but he treated it and flushed the calculi out in less than an hour. There was no doubt that this guy was not some one-trick showoff.

He was the real deal.

Chapter 1017

Luna leaned in with concern. "Grandpa, how are you feeling?"

Montgomery lay back on the bed and gently touched his chest, smiling with relief. "Much better... It felt like a hard lump inside me just vanished."

Ever fair and direct, Luna pointed toward Andrew and said, "Grandpa, it was Andrew Lloyd—the one Marvin introduced—who cleared out the calculi from your system."

Montgomery looked over at Andrew, ready to offer his thanks. However, as his eyes settled on the young man's face, he suddenly froze.

He stared at Andrew for a long moment before murmuring in disbelief, "No... it can't be... but..."

Luna blinked, startled. "Grandpa, what do you mean, 'can't be'?"

She had rarely seen such a shaken expression on Montgomery's face. However, the latter simply shook his head and gave a small, bitter smile. "It's nothing. Just... some old memories suddenly came to mind."

After that, he exchanged a few words of gratitude with Andrew. Clearly, the old man was exhausted, so Andrew wisely excused himself without overstaying.

As Andrew stepped into the courtyard outside, a sharp voice rang out.

"Hold it right there!" Mosby barked from behind.

Andrew turned around slowly, his face calm and unreadable.

Mosby stepped forward and asked, "How exactly does the Ninefold Needles break down gallstones?"

Andrew answered flatly, "How? It just does. I don't make the rules. In fact, the Ninefold Needles can also bring someone back from the edge of death, prolong life, and cure all kinds of illnesses. Is that a problem?"

Mosby was taken aback, then let out a scoffing laugh. "You're not the only one who knows Ninefold Needles-I can use it too. Bring someone back to life? Please. Kid, if you're gonna brag, at least come up with something halfway believable."

Andrew smirked, clearly

unimpressed. "What you've learned isn't the real Ninefold Needles. It just looks the part. You haven't even reached the first major tier of the Ninefold stage, let alone anything close to the Transcendental stage. Honestly, you probably haven't even heard of it."

Mosby's face twisted in shock. "You're telling me that kind of power actually exists?"

Andrew sneered. "Why don't you take a guess?"

That nearly caused Mosby to burst a vein on the spot. His followers and the other medical professionals nearby looked displeased, thinking Andrew was arrogant and lacked the humility a true healer should have.

Mosby's expression shifted uncertainly, and then he spoke again. "Your technique is impressive. Name your price-I want you to teach me."

Andrew shook his head. "It's not about the money. Even if I tried, you wouldn't be able to learn it."

Mosby's temper snapped. "Are you looking down on me? Do you even know who I am? In all of Gabo Creek Province, my medical skills are considered top of the mountain!"

Andrew chuckled. "Sure. And frogs in a well think their puddle is the ocean."

Having hit wall after wall, Mosby finally reached his breaking point. His tone turned dark as he said, "You're arrogant, kid. Not giving me any face, huh? Hmph! Here in the capital, my network runs deep. If I put out the word, plenty of people would fall over themselves to win my favor."

Andrew did not even look back as he waved a hand dismissively. "Dr. Lake, maybe don't go around

spouting threats. Like you

said-Words have consequence

You and I have no beef, but if you're looking to start something well, that's a whole different story."

A flicker of greed flashed in Mosby's eyes as he made a subtle gesture to have someone stop Andrew.

The truth was, he was absolutely itching to get his hands on Andrew's Ninefold Needles. If he could master such an incredible technique, it would not just elevate his reputation—it could redefine his entire legacy.

From that day forward, Mosby imagined he could ride the waves of influence across Gabo Creek, and maybe even all of southern Holtrien-just by mastering that miraculous acupuncture technique.

Just then, a calm voice broke through the tension. "Dr. Lake, I suggest you show some respect."

Luna had quietly appeared and spoke coldly. "Andrew saved my grandfather's life. And my grandfather personally told me to look after him from now on while he's in the capital."

Mosby gave an awkward chuckle. "Well, if Ms. Luna says so, I won't give this young man any trouble."

Nonetheless, he was already secretly scheming. The moment he got the chance, he would have Andrew captured and tortured until he coughed up everything he knew about the Ninefold Needles.

Luna gave a curt nod, then turned to Andrew. "Come with me. The Phelan family has a reward for you."

When it came to rewards, Andrew was not planning to be polite. The Phelan family was one of the most powerful in the region, and if their inner vaults held any rare medicinal herbs, he definitely wanted in.

Once they reached a quieter corner, Andrew asked plainly, "Let's talk here. Ms. Luna, what exactly does this reward include?"

Luna glanced back at him, a flicker of sarcasm flashing across her face. "Funny... I thought you were too noble to care about rewards from the Phelan family."

Andrew shook his head. "It's not about the reward. What I want is a rightful compensation. I treated Mr. Phelan Senior and saved his life. It's only fair that I receive something in return."

Luna let out a faint scoff. "Don't worry. You'll get credit for what you did. Just say it what do you want? Money? Property? Jewelry? Or maybe women?"

She listed off the most tempting worldly pleasures like they were nothing more than catalog options.

However, Andrew was uninterested and replied, "I only want one thing-rare medicinal herbs."

Luna paused, surprised, then shook her head. "The Phelan family probably has plenty of that stuff lying around, but I'm not exactly in the mood to dig it out for you. you'd asked for money or women, I could've arranged something for you on the spot."

Andrew said calmly, "No rush. I can wait until you find what I need."

Luna gave a cold laugh. "Andrew, do you know how annoying your self-righteous attitude is? Acting like you're above all material things... et e me guess, you're doing this to impress me, right? Trying to make me see you as unique? Someone different from the rest?"

Andrew took a step closer, eyes locking onto her flawless face, and studied her for a beat.

Luna was just about to throw in another sarcastic jab. In her experience, all men fell into one of two categories when facing her either they bowed before her power, or they got completely swept up by her beauty.

Before she could speak, Andrew calmly said, "Luna, you've got issues-and they're serious."

With that, he turned and walked away. Her excessive pride was seriously starting

to piss him off. If it had been his old self-the prodigious heir of the Lloyds-he

might have already slapped her across the face just for fun.

She thought she was tough? Back then, he was tougher.

Luna gritted her teeth. "You better

stop right there! If I hadn't stepped in earlier, do you really think Mosby would've let you walk out of here? Andrew, I'm giving you one last chance. Beg me-just once. If you do I'll make sure you stay safe here in the capital."

Andrew did not even bother looking back. "Fuck off."

With that, he walked right out of the Phelan estate and vanished into the busy streets beyond.

Chapter 1019

Luna's chest rose and fell with anger, her gaze cold as ice. "The nerve... No one's ever dared speak to me like that, especially not some backwater hick. You're the first."

Nonetheless, he did not plan to take Andrew to heart. He was just a small-time nobody at most, a temporary annoyance. Now that he had left the Phelan estate, she figured it was better this way. Out of sight, out of mind.

...

Back at the mansion, Luna found Montgomery resting in his room.

"Grandpa, earlier... when you said Andrew looked familiar, what exactly did you mean? Who does he remind you of?"

Montgomery's eyes grew distant as he murmured, "He really did look familiar. Back when I was in Chetvine, I caught a glimpse of a young man like him once—dashing, bold, and absolutely unmatched in presence."

Luna was caught off guard and grew even more curious. "Grandpa, who exactly are you talking about? You always say I'm the only one worthy of praise—now you're giving that to a stranger? I don't like that!"

Only in front of Montgomery did Luna ever drop her guard and act like a playful granddaughter.

Montgomery chuckled. "Oh Luna, don't shake me around like that—these old bones can't take it. The one I'm thinking of... Well, you've heard his story before— the prodigious heir of the Lloyds, from the royal family of Chetvine."

Luna froze, her whole body stiffening as disbelief washed over her. "The prodigious heir of the Lloyds? But didn't the rumors say... he's already dead? Grandpa, you don't seriously think Andrew is him, right? We can't just say things like that—someone from the Lloyds could catch wind of it!"

Montgomery smiled gently. "That's why I said he only resembles him. Honestly, it was just a fleeting impression... probably nothing more than an illusion. But he's a good young man. Marvin brought him here, and I still trust Marvin's judgment."

Luna scoffed. "I saw his medical skills and thought about bringing him into the Phelan family's service. But the guy's arrogant and full of himself. He already walked out the door, and I couldn't care less."

Montgomery nodded with a warm smile. "You're the jewel of the Phelan family. I know there aren't many men in this city who can catch your eye. But this young man came all the way from Jayrodale, and Marvin already put in a word on his

behalf-so Luna, do give him a bit of support."

Luna smirked. "Even if you hadn't asked, I would've helped him anyway. Marvin

did so much for our family back then-I won't forget that."

She added, "But that guy... He's wild, reckless, and acts like he fears nothing. Letting him suffer a little might do him some good."

Montgomery looked at her with

pride. "Good girl. I know you carry yourself with pride, but deep down your heart is kind. After Andrew's treatment, I'm feeling much better. Honestly, I haven't had this kind of energy in years.

"And since I'm in the mood, would you like to hear the story of the prodigious heir of the Lloyds?"

Luna blushed slightly and nodded. "If you're willing to tell it, of course, I want to hear it. I've had everything handed to me in life-it's like the universe favors me. But I still want to know... just how freakishly talented was that heir?" .net

Montgomery beamed with excitement, clearly eager to tell the tale. "Luna, you're brilliant-near perfect, really. But the Lloyds' prodigy? He was flawless. The one and only in my lifetime."

As the grandfather and granddaughter dove into their conversation, somewhere across the city, Andrew suddenly sneezed.

"Must be Lauren... or maybe Fran thinking about me again," he muttered.

In their culture, it was said that when you sneezed out of nowhere, someone was talking about you behind your back. At that moment, Andrew's thoughts drifted to Lauren and Francesca.

Chapter 1020

Just as expected, the moment Andrew left the Phelan estate, someone started tailing him. Even so, he did not care in the slightest.

He casually pulled out his phone and called Aspen. "Come pick me up. I'll send you my location."

Then, he spent the next few minutes strolling through the streets, purposely leading the tail through a maze of turns.

Once he reached a busy part of the city, Andrew made a few quick moves through the crowd and lost the stalker without breaking a sweat. At the arranged pickup point, a cherry-red LaFerrari was parked boldly at the curb, gleaming under the

sun.

Leaning coolly against the hood, wearing sunglasses and radiating confidence, was Aspen—a full-on showstopper. The second she saw Andrew, she did not say a word just grabbed him and shoved him into the passenger seat.

Then, she quickly slammed the gas and shot off like they were escaping a crime

scene.

"Okay, you're being a bit dramatic," Andrew said with a laugh, watching Aspen drive like she was fleeing from a car chase.

Grinding her teeth, Aspen muttered, "I still don't get how you have the guts to act like this. As long as that bounty is active, someone could take you out at any moment, you know?"

Andrew shrugged. "That's why I've got you running backup. What's there to be afraid of?"

Aspen snorted and said dryly, "Don't count on me. Honestly, I'd love to see someone take you out."

Andrew chuckled, a sly glint in his eye. "Been a while, but you've definitely filled out. But what really changed is your whole vibe-back in Jayrodale, you used to sound like a bitter housewife. Now you've actually got class."

Aspen sneered. "Wow, I didn't expect you to give compliments. I thought all you knew how to do was trash people."

Andrew ignored her bitter words and casually ran a hand along the car's leather interior. He raised a brow and teased, "This ride isn't cheap. Last I checked, this model costs over a few million dollars. Where did the money come from?"

Aspen hesitated. Then, she sighed like she was bracing herself. "I bought it as a reward-for myself. in the capital, if you want to be taken seriously in business, you need a car that turns heads. No one even looks at you otherwise. So, I used your money to buy it. If you're mad, take the car back."

Andrew laughed. "A

few-million-dollar ride isn't exactly pocket change. But since you already bought it, and you set up the company for me, I'll let it slide-consider it your bonus."

With a hard brake, the flashy LaFerrari stopped smoothly at a red light.

Aspen turned to him, genuinely surprised. "You're not mad? You're not going to scream at me for wasting your money?"

She had honestly been expecting

full-blown verbal assault-if not

something worse. After all,

had always treated her

Andrew

dike a

servant-in-training than a partner.

Andrew replied flatly, "I'm not as stingy as you think. Plus, I'm actually satisfied with how you've been handling things here. Take it as a reward well-earned."

Aspen let out a soft "oh" and went quiet.

Andrew did not say anything else either. He simply gazed out the window, watching the scenery blur past in streaks of sunlight and glass.

"We'll get lunch first. Consider it a welcome-back dinner for our fearless CEO," Aspen said as she pulled up in front of an upscale restaurant.

She turned and added, "I already made reservations. This place is known for being discreet—they've got private VIP access, so we'll be safe eating here." Andrew gave a nod. "I'll go with whatever you planned. But..... CEO?"

Aspen gave a smug little smirk. "That's what you are now-CEO of Supreme Capital Group."

Andrew raised an eyebrow and joked, "Supreme Capital Group'? You actually named the company that? That's so tacky it's almost impressive."

Aspen rolled her eyes. "I know it sounds tacky, but it's already registered, so deal with it!"