

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

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Andrew took down Aidan in a flash, and before anyone could react, he had Kenny and Sherilyn on their knees. His attack was so fast and fierce, it stunned the entire Rhodes family like a lightning strike.

Jerry clutched his chest and collapsed on the ground, his face frozen with shock.

Jameson was holding onto Tiana, so stunned he forgot about his own pain. He mumbled, "No way... Tiana... I told you, you misjudged him!"

"No... I was blind too," she admitted. "This guy is so powerful!"

Tiana's heart was pounding from the impact of what she had just witnessed. She had always known Andrew was dangerous, and she knew he was smart, always ten steps ahead of everyone else.

She had even considered the possibility that he might be at the peak of senior grandmaster level-maybe even something insane, like her own semi-martial king rank.

But even with all that in mind, it still was not enough. After all, with someone like Joe from the Driscoll family in the picture, Andrew was still second place in her eyes.

Joe was still the better fit for Lauren, but now she realized she had made a huge mistake a massive one.

She suddenly remembered what Andrew had said earlier that he was going to teach her a lesson. She finally understood exactly what he meant.

"Mr. Haywood Senior! Help us! Please, help us!"

"Kill him! Kill this bastard, Mr. Haywood Senior!"

Kenny and Sherilyn started screaming in panic. Especially Sherilyn-ever since marrying into the Golding family, she had been pampered like royalty. She was used to slapping others, breaking people down, and doing whatever she pleased. Never in her life had anyone dared lay a finger on her, let alone actually hurt her. But now, the searing pain in her knees nearly made her pass out.

On the other hand, Aidan could not care less about Kenny and Sherilyn. In fact, he could barely take care of himself at the moment, let alone anyone else.

"You're not just some ordinary punk. Who the hell are you? Where did you come from?" he growled.

He looked like a wild beast trapped in a cage, roaring in desperation.

Andrew's earlier onslaught had made one thing very clear—he had messed with the wrong guy. This man in front of him was not some random martial artist.

Aidan had connections with every expert in the entire state. He even knew most of the top-tier martial artists across the entire region. Yet, this guy? He had zero clue who Andrew was, and that terrified him.

An unsettling fear crept up in Aidan's chest.

Andrew said calmly, "Who I am doesn't matter. The only thing you need to know is this—you're not walking out of the Rhodes residence today."

Aidan snapped coldly, "Don't talk like

you've already won, friend. You're

strong, I'll give you that. You're at

least on the same level as me. But just because you win a fight doesn't mean you win in life. If I fight to the death, you better be ready to die right along with me!"

Andrew chuckled. "You sound just like my mother-in-law. That weird, baseless confidence and that inflated ego? Classic."

Aidan's face turned deathly pale as he realized Andrew did not take him seriously. This was infuriating and humiliating.

Tiana was not thrilled either. She thought, 'What is this jerk trying to say? Is he low-key insulting me now? Wait, why is she even mad? He said his 'mother-in-law'. I'm not his mother-in-law!'

Without any pause, Andrew attacked again. His palm strikes were flawless, flowing like water as they lashed toward Aidan. His footwork was tricky, and with one sudden step forward, he was already pressing in close, catching Aidan completely off guard on his blind side.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

As Andrew stepped back, he widened the distance just in time, causing Aidan's furious iron punch to swing through thin air. It felt like punching into a pillow-no resistance, nowhere for the force to go, leaving him frustrated and thrown off.

A strange, muffled crack echoed through the air.

Andrew flicked his fingers lightly against Aidan's face. In an instant, half of Aidan's cheek swelled up, skin split and bleeding. The sheer precision and power of the move left everyone in the Rhodes family gripping their chests in disbelief.

Andrew followed up with a sharp elbow strike, landing squarely between Aidan's shoulder blades.

Aidan roared, his body crackling with strain as he unleashed every ounce of strength he had left, determined to go down fighting.

Andrew just smirked with disdain. With another palm strike heading toward Aidan, he suddenly shifted mid-motion. What had begun as a soft open-hand strike transformed instantly into a straight, vertical knife-hand blow.

"You bastard!" Aidan howled, realizing he was inches from death. He twisted his body at the last second, barely dodging a lethal hit to the heart, but the edge of Andrew's strike still slashed deep into his shoulder blade.

Aidan let out a twisted cry. "You little punk! Since you're so determined to kill me, then I'll make sure you don't walk away whole-say goodbye to that arm!"

He gathered every last bit of strength and hurled a vicious blow straight at Andrew's arm.

Tiana shouted, panicked, "No! Pull your hand back now!"

However, Andrew did not move an inch. Next, almost unnoticed, his fingers spread, revealing a needle pinched between his index and middle finger. With a casual flick, he sent it flying.

The needle shimmered faintly in the air, almost invisible. Just like that, the fifth-ranked name on the Underworld Index, the unbeatable powerhouse Kenny and Sherily relied on to drop dead.

The cause of death was Andrew's needle had pierced directly into Aidan's temple, killing him instantly.

Aidan tried to lift his hand as if to point at Andrew in fear or to beg for his life. Yes, in that final moment, he wanted to surrender-he was terrified to his core.

He finally realized that this man was someone he should never have crossed.

Andrew was a monster, a devil from a higher dimension, tearing down everything he thought he knew. Sadly, those were just dying thoughts-nothing more than a flash before the end.

Aidan did not even have the strength left to say a single word. Before everyone's horrified eyes, the martial arts legend who had nearly wiped out the entire Rhodes family collapsed with a loud thud and lay there, completely lifeless.

The hall went completely dead silent.

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Andrew slowly withdrew his hand and began walking toward Tiana. He asked, "Mrs. Rhodes, have you learned your lesson yet?"

Tiana opened her mouth, but no words came out. She stared at Andrew like she was seeing him for the first time, her expression frozen in shock.

It finally dawned on her that Andrew was not normal. He was a hidden power, a terrifying force lying in wait. She did not know where he came from.

Nonetheless, just like Aidan had realized before his death, she now understood something crystal clear-Andrew was anything but ordinary.

Andrew was anything but ordinary. She once believed Andrew was just a pawn in Marvin's grand scheme.

It seemed like she had it backward. The chances were that Marvin-the billionaire and number one figure in all of Jayrodale-might just be his pawn or not even qualified to be one.

"Andrew, what level are you really at?"

Tiana's voice trembled as she spoke, her words nearly dragging from her throat. She did not even realize that her tone carried a mix of fear, respect, and quiet submission.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew smiled and said, "Relax, Mrs. Rhodes. Don't worry-I'm not here to settle the score for the things you did in the past."

Tiana instinctively wanted to snap back. However, the moment she remembered this guy could probably pin her down with one hand, she swallowed her temper fast.

She huffed, "Fine. You did the Rhodes family a huge favor today and even saved both our lives. If you wanted to come after me, I'd honestly have no choice but to take it."

Jameson chuckled and said, "Tiana, you don't need to be so passive-aggressive. Andy's not that petty. He never had any intention of coming after you."

Andrew nodded. "Mr. Rhodes gets me."

Jameson looked Andrew up and down with admiration in his eyes. "Andy, I totally misjudged you. I never thought you were hiding your true power-you're on a whole other level!"

He laughed heartily, adding, "You and Lauren are a perfect match!"

Tiana scoffed unwillingly. "It's too soon to say things like that! Aidan might be gone, but Kenny and Sherilyn are still standing!"

Jameson's expression darkened as he glanced toward the door, where Kenny and Sherilyn were already trembling with fear.

Sherilyn's voice was shaky with disbelief. "Dad, how could Mr. Haywood Senior lose? And to Andrew, of all people? Maybe he's just too old and past his prime?"

Kenny looked like he had swallowed poison, his face twisted in disbelief. He had gone through hell to bring Aidan here, hoping to win it all in one move and take over as head of the Rhodes family.

Old and weak? Not a chance. After all, Aidan was ranked fifth on the Underworld Index. His strength was at its peak; even Tiana had nearly fallen under his hand.

How could anyone say he was washed up?

"It wasn't Aidan who failed. It was us who underestimated Andrew!" Kenny growled, his hatred burning hotter with every word.

Back in Jayrodale, he had taken a humiliating slap from Andrew just because it was not his turf. He had swallowed that loss because he had no other choice.

However, this was the state capital-his home turf. He had the Goldings backing him, and he had brought in someone as legendary as Aidan.

Even so, they still lost badly.

It was simply unbelievable. If things kept going this way, how was he supposed to take Andrew down?

If so, Michael's death would be for nothing.

Jameson suddenly spoke in a cold voice. "Kenny, this ends here. I won't hold you accountable for everything that's happened, but from this point on, all past grudges must be buried. Agreed?"

Kenny let out a harsh, mocking

laugh. His expression was twisted. "Wow, listen to you, dressing your

words up like you're doing me a favor! You make it sound like I'm on my knees begging you to spare me!"

Jameson frowned. "Aren't you? You brought outsiders into our family and almost caused a massacre. By family law, that's a death sentence. But we're brothers, and over the years, you have done things for the family. s̄wnovel

"If I kill you, that's blood on blood. It'd be fratricide. So I'll let you go this one time. But from now on, you're done with me, with Andy, and with the Rhodes family. We're finished."

Kenny roared, "In your dreams! You listen to me, Jameson-the position of head of this family? That's mine and I'll take it no matter what! And if you think I'll just make peace and walk away? Keep dreaming! You got lucky again today, Andrew. But next time... I swear, I'll make you wish you were dead!"

Sherilyn glared and hissed, "That's right, Andrew. We underestimated you. We

didn't expect you to actually take down Mr. Haywood Senior!"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Sherilyn sneered, "But don't forget-I'm the daughter-in-law of the Goldings. So what if you killed Aidan? To me, you're still nothing but a bug under my shoe!"

The entire Rhodes family looked visibly uncomfortable.

Sherilyn, now part of the Goldings by marriage, was no longer just their problem- she had serious backing.

And the truth was, none of them dared to lay a finger on her, because the Rhodes family could not afford to provoke the wrath of the Goldings.

Amid the tension, Andrew chuckled. "Is that what all the fuss is about? Do you seriously think marrying into the Goldings makes you untouchable? Like you're too good to slap?"

As he walked toward her, Sherilyn burst out laughing in fury. "What, are you actually going to hit me? Please! I'm standing right here, Andrew. If you've got the guts, go ahead-hit me!"

Kenny stepped up quickly, warning, "Andrew, I know you're reckless and fearless, thinking the world owes you nothing. But I'm warning you now-Sherilyn is carrying the Goldings' child.

"If you so much as scratch her, you're hurting the Goldings' bloodline. And the consequences of that? You won't survive them."

Andrew did not even blink-he raised his hand and slapped Kenny clean across the face twice. Kenny stumbled backward, falling flat on his butt as his hair flew wild and rage twisted his expression.

Sherilyn screamed, "Andrew, are you insane?! You're dead! I've already called Elon, and he's on his way here with backup! When he arrives, not just you, but the entire Rhodes family will go down with you!"

Jameson and Tiana gasped in shock.

"Andy, don't act on impulse!"

"Andrew, stop! Don't touch Sherilyn-we can't give the Goldings any excuse to retaliate!"

Andrew looked at Sherilyn and said, "Yeah, you're pregnant. So, I'll admit, hitting you outright doesn't feel right. But you and Kenny better listen-if you want revenge, come at me directly. Leave everyone else out of it. swñovel

Sherilyn placed her hands on her hips and let out a vicious, smug laugh. "What, getting scared now, little punk? I know you're tough, I'll give you that. But you can't dodge us forever.

"You might be untouchable for now, but Lauren and her parents? They won't be so lucky. You're screwing that tramp, right? I'll make you watch as I destroy her entire family, one by one!"

A flash of murderous rage shot

across Andrew's face. He growled, "I already told you. If you've got a

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problem, take it up with me. But net

you? You spew nothing but

filth your mouth might as well be a trash can! You can insult me all you want, but what you don't do-what you never do-is insult my woman!"

Sherilyn coldly sneered, shouting, "Yeah, I called Lauren a tramp! What are you gonna do about it? You're nothing but a lowborn bastard and she's just a filthy whore! The both of you are trash!

"You dare mess with me? Elon and my father-in-law-the head of the Goldings- will crush you into nothing!"

Sherilyn was in the middle of her tirade, shrieking like a banshee, when Andrew's palm flew straight across her face.

"Sherilyn!" Kenny's voice cracked in disbelief as he watched.

Andrew's slaps landed fast and hard, and in seconds, Sherilyn's face had swollen like a balloon.

Even Jameson and Tiana stood frozen, completely stunned. After all, Andrew had just declared all-out war on the Goldings.

Sure, he had taken down Aidan-but the Goldings were one of the Five Apex Families. They could not help but wonder if Andrew was simply ignorant of the consequences.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew said coldly "Weren't you the one bragging about carrying the Goldings'

heir? Didn't you think marrying into the Goldings made you superior, untouchable? Well, I just slapped the hell out of you, and now you're bawling like a child. So go on, keep insulting me."

He lowered his hand, face expressionless, eyes locked on Sherilyn.

Sherilyn's head was spinning, her face completely numb from the strikes. She stammered, "You little bas-Andrew, you actually hit me... You actually hit a pregnant woman. I swear, you're finished. My husband will kill you!"

Her rage burned to the point she wanted to rip Andrew apart, but the words stuck in her throat.

After that last round of slaps, Sherilyn had started questioning reality itself. Just then, a Rhodes family guard burst into the room, out of breath.

He shouted, "Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes! We've got trouble-the Goldings are here!"

Jameson's face changed. "Shut the gates. Tell them we're not receiving visitors today!"

Tiana shook her head. "That won't help! The Goldings don't take 'no' for an answer. If they want in, they'll force their way through."

She turned to Andrew urgently. "Go out the back. Now. Leave before it's too late!"

However, Andrew stood his ground. "There's no need to run, Mrs. Rhodes. They're already here? Good. Let's settle everything while they're at our doorstep."

Tiana's voice rose in fury. "You idiot! The Goldings are nothing like Aidan! If you don't leave right now, no one will be able to protect you! I get that you're confident, but believe me—the Five Apex Families here in the capital aren't people you can take lightly!"

Jameson quickly added, "Andy, please listen to her. Just leave first. Whatever happens, they won't dare openly go after the Rhodes because they need to upkeep their reputation. We'll buy you time!"

Andrew did not budge. He said calmly, "Leaving? Not happening. I haven't even seen Lauren yet."

Hearing that the Goldings had arrived, Sherilyn suddenly regained her arrogance and shouted, "You

bastard, how you're dead! Elon's net

here, and he brought the Goldings' top fighters! You told me to keep insulting you, right? Fine! Listen

close, you little-"

Andrew struck again, two more slaps cracking across her already swollen face. Blood smeared her cheeks, and her eyes went dazed.

The filthy insult she was about to scream got caught in her throat and choked back down.

Kenny's body trembled. "Andrew... You've really lost it. You're still hitting Sherilyn? Are you insane? The Goldings will tear you to pieces!"

Tiana and Jameson stood frozen, completely speechless. They knew Andrew was strong—but they never imagined he would be this brazen.

Outside, the Goldings had arrived in full force. Elon stormed into the

Rhodes estate with over a dozen elite bodyguards. Anyone who tried to block their path was shoved aside

or sent flying-no hesitation

mercy.

Flanking Elon were two semi-martial kings who radiated power and arrogance.

Their very presence forced the crowd to part before them.

"Honey, you're here! Thank God!" Sherilyn ran straight into Elon's arms, sobbing pitifully.
"If you came That

even a minute later, I'd be donet

bastard nearly beat me to death!"

Kenny pointed a shaking finger at Andrew and screamed at Elon, "You have to kill him!
For Sherilyn! For your unborn child! For Michael, who died because of him— kill him!"

Elon's icy gaze swept across the Rhodes family's grand hall.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Wherever Elon's eyes landed, no one dared meet his gaze.

Jameson's voice was firm but steady. "Elon, showing up uninvited-what exactly are the Goldings planning to do here?"

Elon's tone was icy. "Mr. Jameson, I'm here because Sherilyn was assaulted- right here in your home."

He scoffed, "And so what if I wasn't invited? What, you think the Rhodes family is in any position to go head-to-head with the Goldings?"

The arrogance in his voice made every member of the Rhodes family clench their fists-but none of them dared speak up.

Tiana stepped in, her tone sharp. "Elon, if you came to take Sherilyn with you, fine. She's right there. Take her and leave-now."

Elon grinned, but the smile never reached his eyes. "Mrs. Rhodes, are you really trying to rush me out like that? Do you think that's going to happen? I came all this way, fully prepared and with backup. You think I'm just going to walk away without drawing blood?"

As the chilling words left his mouth, Elon's beady eyes finally locked onto Andrew. His grin twisted into something vicious-bitter and burning with hate.

He hissed, "Andrew, I'm going to kill you today. I can't believe you had the guts to show your face in the capital. Good, now I won't have to fly to Jayrodale to hunt you down. Until I've broken every bone in your body and tortured you for three full days, I won't consider myself human!"

Andrew did not flinch. In fact, he looked amused. He waved a hand in front of his nose and frowned. "Oh my... Elon, did you forget to brush your teeth this morning? Your breath smells like actual crap."

Elon exploded. "Shut your damn mouth! You little bastard, shut the fuck up!"

His face twisted with rage. Being reminded of that incident pushed him right over the edge, and that disgusting moment would haunt him for life.

Sherilyn shrieked, clenching her fists. "Honey, what are you waiting for? Give the order-kill him already! Kill that bastard now! I want to see him rot in hell!"

Elon stared Andrew down and let out a dark laugh. "Andrew, I'll give you credit-you've got guts. You dared to touch me, and worse, you lied to my father. So today, you're not getting out alive."

His eyes went ice-cold, but just as he was about to order the attack, Andrew spoke up first.

His tone was calm and steady. "Go ahead, Elon-make your move. But before you do, there's something I think you need to hear."

Elon sneered. "Oh? What, now you want to beg for your life? Too late for that."

Sherilyn grinned wickedly. "I told you, bastard—you were doomed the moment you crossed me. This is what happens when someone insults me."

Kenny added smugly, "Andrew, once you're gone, I'll still be the head of the Rhodes family. No matter how you fought, you're just a loser crawling in the dirt."

Andrew's expression darkened,

voice turning sharp. "Kenny,

Sherilyn you pair of morons are celebrating too early. And Elon-no, I'm not begging for mercy. You don't have the power to make me beg.

"What I'm about to tell you is this: Sherilyn has been cheating on you... and you don't even know it."

Elon froze, then his face snapped into a twisted rage. "What the hell did you just say? Cheating? Who the hell would dare cheat on me?"

Sherilyn's expression flickered with panic. Her voice rose sharply. "Elon, don't listen to him! He's lying, just trying to mess with your head! Kill him! Kill this bastard now!"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew let out a cold laugh. "Fatty, let's not pretend you know your body better than anyone. Back in Jayrodale, I could already tell.

"You're overweight, constantly drenched in cold sweat, panting like you ran a mile after two steps. If I had to guess, I'd say you've got a rare form of obesity. One of those conditions where even drinking water makes you gain weight, right?"

Elon's eyes flickered with panic. "How... how do you know that?"

For a moment, the thought of ordering his men to strike completely vanished from his mind.

Andrew replied calmly, "How I know is none of your business."

"What I do want to tell you is this—your condition isn't just your average weight issue."

"Your internal energy flow is completely imbalanced, your bodily systems are shot, and every ounce of nourishment you take in goes straight to your fat stores. And that means, when it comes to your sexual performance, your penis probably isn't just useless, it's starving.

"In fact, if I'm right—and I usually am—you could hire the best doctors in the world, take all the premium supplements money can buy... but in the end, all that nutrition still ends up feeding your belly fat.

"So when it's time to do the deed, I'm guessing you can't even last ten seconds before, boom—game over. And what comes out? Probably yellow water, not anything remotely healthy."

Elon's face turned the color of curdled milk because every single thing Andrew had said was true.

Sherilyn's nerves snapped. She clung to Elon's arm and pleaded, "Honey, don't listen to him! He's talking nonsense, just trying to mess with your head so you'll spare him!"

Elon gritted his teeth so hard his jaw trembled, but he did not speak.

Andrew spoke again, voice slow and deliberate. "You can fact-check me if you want, Fatty. The director of

That's me. The two bestselling miracle pills sweeping Jayrodale? My creations. When it comes to medicine, diagnostics, and

Jayrodale's Moonlit Apothecaryan et

treatment—I don't miss. My word is fact."

Elon clenched his fists. "Fine. Let's say you're right about all of that. But what gives you the right to claim Sherilyn cheated on me? She married into the Goldings-do you know how lucky she was? It's like her whole ancestry cashed in good karma! I don't believe she'd dare betray me!"

Andrew tilted his head, looking at Elon like he was an idiot. "For someone born into an elite family, I'm amazed at how stupid that sounded. Let me ask you-your body type already makes it insanely hard to get a woman pregnant, right?

"But suddenly, Sherilyn's knocked up. Heh. What does that tell you? You really can't put two and two together?"

He paused for dramatic effect, then let out a mocking chuckle. "And let's be real- your performance in the bedroom? We both know it's pathetic. Maybe she could tolerate it for a day or two. But over time? Please. Sherilyn's not going to suffer in silence forever.

"Let me break it down-these days, a man can be broke, have no house, no car... but there's one thing he can't be He can't be sexually

useless. If you're not getting the et

job

done, then your woman's going to find someone else who will. And

that's why your woman is cheating on you!"

Andrew's words were so vivid, so raw, that several people in the room had to turn away.

Even Tiana blushed faintly and muttered, "This little brat is completely off the rails now."

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Jameson nodded in full agreement. "How is that over the line? Andy's speaking the truth! A man can be without money, without a name-but the one thing he can't be is impotent! Look at me! I'm still going strong all these years... isn't that why you fell for me?"

Tiana's face flushed as she snapped, "Shut your damn mouth!"

Elon's expression was no longer just sour-it was pitch black, storm-level fury written across his face.

Kenny noticed things were going off the rails and shouted, "Elon, you'd rather believe some outsider than your own wife? Sherilyn has been nothing but loyal since marrying into your family-she's always by your side!"

"If she's pregnant, it has to be yours! What other explanation could there possibly be?"

However, Elon did not answer. He did not even look at Kenny.

Instead, he turned toward Sherilyn, his voice dropping low. "I'll ask just once. Is what Andrew said complete nonsense, or is there truth to it?"

Sherilyn exploded. "Elon, are you seriously losing your mind right now? You're actually believing that bastard over me? I'm telling you the baby in my belly is yours!"

"You think I wanted to carry your child? I did it for your family name, for your precious bloodline! You ungrateful bastard, how could you believe a stranger over your own wife? Go to hell-I never want to see you again!"

She collapsed to the ground, sobbing and screaming like she had just been stabbed in the back by the love of her life.

Kenny barked, "Elon, if you've got even a shred of manhood left in you, help Sherilyn up right now, and kill Andrew! Do it for Sherilyn-he humiliated her in front of everyone!"

However, Elon did not move. Instead, he raised his hand and slapped Sherilyn across the face. It was so loud that everyone froze in place.

Even Tiana and Jameson stared in stunned confusion.

Sure, Andrew's words had made sense-but there was no real evidence. There was no way to prove that the child was not a Goldings'.

So, why had Elon snapped so fast?

Kenny's face went red with rage. "Elon, are you insane? Do you just hit my daughter your wife! What the hell is wrong with you?"

Elon's eyes were bloodshot as he roared, "Get the hell out of my sight! You old bastard, say one more word, and I'll send you to hell to keep Michael company!"

The fury in his voice chilled the room. Even Kenny, full of fire just a moment ago, went dead silent.

Sherilyn shrieked, her voice breaking. "Wow, Elon Did you just hit me? Why don't you go ahead and kill me then? I'd love to see how you're going to explain that to your father! You'd murder the mother of your child? You heartless bastard!"

Elon's expression twisted, his voice full of murder. "Sherilyn, not only did I hit you... very soon, I'm going to bury you. Did you seriously think I slapped you just because Andrew got in my head?"

Sherilyn's eyes went wide with fear as Elon's face darkened even more. "You've got it wrong. You forgot something. When Dr. Lake came to treat me, he told me something important.

"He said my reproductive system was shot that I'd need long-term recovery before I could father a child for the Goldings. But I didn't suspect anything at the time because@back then, you weren't pregnant.

"And now, out of nowhere, you're claiming to be carrying my child? You don't see how insanely suspicious that sounds?"

Sherilyn's face drained of all color, her heart sinking.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Elon roared at the top of his lungs. "And another thing, you lying bitch! You're pregnant, but I had to hear it for the first time in this damn room, during a standoff with Andrew?

"Not a single word these past few weeks. If today hadn't gone down the way it did, I'd still be in the dark, wouldn't I?"

Sherilyn sobbed through her tears. "Elon, please just listen to me, okay? Just hear me out! It's not what you think! I-I just wanted to surprise you. That's why I didn't say anything!"

Andrew clicked his tongue. "Wow. What a surprise, alright. Sherilyn, I'm guessing the moment you found out you were pregnant, you realized the baby wasn't Elon's and that's when the panic set in.

"You kept your mouth shut, hoping to cover it up. And today, in front of everyone, you got cocky and slipped up. You thought carrying a Goldings' baby gave you prestige. Instead, you just tripped over your own lie.

"But hey, no need to drag this out, Fatty. Just go to the hospital and get a paternity test done-one check, and we'll know the truth."

Elon snapped his head up, eyes flashing. "Guards, take Kenny and his daughter into custody! If the test confirms this whore betrayed me, then execute them both -right on the spot!"

Kenny went pale, cold sweat pouring down his back as he turned to stare at Sherilyn. "Did you really cheat? Did you really betray Elon like that?"

Sherilyn did not answer and just kept crying harder.

Kenny felt his heart drop like a stone. He knew exactly what kind of woman his daughter was her silence said everything.

Sherilyn finally cried out, "I'm sorry, Elon... I'm so sorry! We don't need to go to the hospital. I admit it—I did something I shouldn't have."

With nowhere left to run and no lies left to hide behind, Sherilyn dropped to her knees and confessed.

Elon's massive body trembled. "So, it's true. You really cheated on me?"

Sherilyn wailed, "I didn't mean to! Elon, I swear-it wasn't intentional! It just... It just happened!"

Elon's face twisted with rage. He was not even bothered by her explanation and started beating her down in a violent fit of rage.

Within seconds, Sherilyn was covered in blood, barely conscious on the ground.

Kenny stumbled forward, begging, "Elon, please spare her! She's still your wife. Just forgive her once, just this one time! I swear, if she ever does this again, I'll hand her over to you myself!"

"Forgive her? You filthy old bastard!" Elon screamed, completely losing control.

He turned and kicked Kenny straight in the gut, knocking him to the floor and bruising his face.

Still not satisfied, Elon grabbed Sherilyn by the hair, yanked her upright, and snarled, "Tell me-who's the bastard that knocked you up? Who the hell did you cheat with? Spilk it, or I'll end you right now-both you and that damn baby!"

The Goldings' guards looked at each other, uneasy and unsure. This was not something they could intervene in.

Sherilyn had betrayed Elon-publicly, shamefully. She was digging her own grave.

As for Andrew? No one even cared about him anymore. With Elon's world

collapsing, Andrew might as well have disappeared.

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On the Rhodes side, Jameson, Tiana, and the rest of the family stood in dead silence, each wearing a strange expression, too entertained to interrupt.

Sherilyn shrieked through her sobs. "Stop hitting me! Please-stop! I'll talk! I'll tell

you everything—just stop hitting me!"

Elon panted heavily, sweat pouring down his face. "Then talk. Spill it all before I send you straight to hell."

Sherilyn trembled and choked out, "I-I don't know exactly who the father is..."

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Sherilyn stammered, "I-I only remember that night at the private club, and we were partying hard. We all got drunk-me and my two girlfriends-and then..."

Her voice cracked, but she forced herself to continue. "After that, everything went black. When I woke up, there were eight male escorts in the room with us, along with me and my two besties..."

The room collectively sucked in a breath. It was just too much, too shocking, and too outrageous. Even Kenny stared at Sherilyn like she had morphed into some kind of monster.

Elon's massive body stumbled back a few steps with loud thuds. He could barely keep his balance, eyes wide with disbelief as he stared at Sherilyn.

"So, you, plus your two girlfriends... and eight male escorts? That's... 11 people! You had an eleven-person orgy? That's not just wild-that's straight-up animal behavior!"

Two of the Goldings' elite guards rushed forward and caught Elon just in time. They could tell that if they did not hold him up, he was about to collapse face-first onto the floor.

Even Andrew looked at Sherilyn in shock-this woman was indeed something else.

Jameson let out a low grunt. "11 people in one room... that's going to make it really complicated to figure out the baby's father."

Tiana gritted her teeth. "Forget figuring it out. Round them all up! Every guy involved should get snipped-turn them into eunuchs! And the girls? Toss them into a damn lake and let the pigs feast!"

Sherilyn wiped her tears and turned to Elon with puppy-dog eyes. "Elon, I swear there won't be a next time! I promise I'll wait until your health recovers. I'll give the Goldings a healthy baby boy. I'll restore your legacy!"

Elon's entire body was trembling-every roll of fat on him vibrating from sheer rage. He growled, "Tell me, other than that time... were there any other times?"

Sherilyn bit her lip, then figured since the truth was already out, she might as well go all in. "Well, there were two more times. But the second and third times were way more controlled!"

"It was still me and my two girlfriends-but we each only booked two guys. Eventually, we felt guilty... so we cut back to just one guy each."

Andrew stared at her, speechless that one each was what she called self-control. No doubt, this was peak big-city energy.

"You dirty, disgusting little-" Elon completely lost it.

"I'm going to kill you!" His voice cracked as he lunged forward, ready to end her right there.

However, his legs gave out, and with a guttural yell, he toppled straight to the ground, his face turning red and swollen like he was about to seize.

"Mr. Golding! Sir, are you alright?!"

The guards panicked and rushed in, frantically checking his pulse and propping him up.

Andrew stepped forward and said coldly, "His rage just maxed out, and with his body condition, his blood pressure must be through the roof. If you don't get him to the ER right now, you might as well start planning the funeral."

The Goldings' men all turned pale. They did not hesitate, and two guards lifted

Elon and bolted toward the exit, dragging Sherilyn and Kenny behind them.

From behind, Andrew called out,

"Hey, Fatty! What the hell was that? You came all this way looking for a fight, didn't you? Now you're getting carried out on a stretcher? What is that, some new tactic? Or do you just not think I'm worth your time?"

As Elon was being hauled out the front gates of the Rhodes estate, he heard

Andrew's voice and could not take it anymore.

With a furious roar, he coughed up a mouthful of blood right then and there. He wanted to tear Andrew limb from limb more than anything. Yet, he was helpless now, his rage boiling over, his body collapsing under the weight of Sherilyn's betrayal, shame, and public humiliation.