

RISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

Chapter 1141

Aspen's hands were bound tightly behind her back, with the ropes crossing in front of her chest, pushing her curves into full display.

"Seth, you're absolutely insane," she shouted, her voice full of fury. "Do you even realize we're working for Mr. McCormick right now?"

She struggled hard, but the ropes did not budge at all.

Meanwhile, a dozen enforcers from the Haywoods' private club stormed Supreme Capital Group's office space and smashed everything to pieces.

Seth was grinning as he gripped Aspen's chin, his fingers digging in so hard that pain twisted across her face. He sneered, "Save your strength, Aspen. So what if you're working for Mr. McCormick? Let's be real—Andrew is just that man's lapdog."

"Remember when you first got to Blumedale, the day we met?" His voice dropped low as he leaned closer. "From the second I saw you, I made up my mind I was going to make you mine."

Then, without warning, he slapped her across the face, hard.

"But you little bitch, you just didn't know what was good for you," he snapped.

"That bastard Andrew treated you like crap, but you still defended him at every turn, obeying him like some loyal little servant."

He added bitterly, "Sometimes I just don't get it. What does Andrew have that I don't? I come from a better family, I know how to treat a woman right, I've got charm, and I would've treated you like a queen..."

His voice cracked with frustration. "But you? How did you treat me?"

By now, the smirk had vanished from Seth's face. All that remained was rage and bitter resentment. He struck her again and again, each slap landing harder than the last.

Blood trickled from the corner of Aspen's mouth, and one side of her delicate face was swelling fast.

"Andrew may not be perfect, but let's be honest-even at his worst, he's still a thousand times better than you," she spat, her voice laced with scorn. "You think I don't see through your so-called affection, your fake concern?"

"All you ever wanted was my body-and the billions that come with Supreme Capital Group, right?"

Even after being beaten, Aspen did not flinch. Instead, she lifted her head and stared straight at Seth with a cold, mocking look.

That look made his blood boil.

Enraged by her defiance, Seth

lashed out with another brutal series of slaps. He growled, "Damn it, I really hate ruining that pretty face of yours used to fantasize about having you beneath me, watching your expression twist between resistance and pleasure. That's what I'd call the pinnacle of indulgence..."

He hissed, "But Aspen, you're too smart, too stubborn for your own good. Yes, I wanted your body. I wanted to play with you, and yeah, I wanted your billions too. I wanted it all-beauty and fortune in one go. But even if you figured that out, you should've kept your mouth shut!"

With a twisted smile, Seth lowered his head, aiming for her lips.

Aspen turned away sharply and spat in his face.

Seth wiped it off, unfazed, and let out a slow, dark chuckle. He said, "Andrew's probably on his way to rescue you right now. Once he shows up, I'll cripple him first. Then, I'm going to take my time with you right in front of him."

He leaned in closer, his voice dripping with filth. "I've already got the whole thing planned out. First from behind, then with your legs up, and finally with you straddling me, just like a goddess on her throne."

Fear gripped Aspen's heart, but she refused to let it show. Instead, her tone stayed icy. "If Andrew shows up, the only one getting destroyed will be you. And let's get something straight—if I wouldn't even give in to Andrew, what makes you think I'd ever let a worthless, disgusting coward like you touch me?"

Chapter 1142

Aspen said through gritted teeth, "I'll never submit to any men. If you try to force yourself on me, I swear I'll die before I let that happen!"

Seth's temper flared. "Even now, you're still rejecting me? Still looking down on me?"

Aspen shot him a cold glare. "Damn right I am. Seth, if you weren't part of the Haywoods, what the hell would you even be worth?"

Seth roared, "You think I'm worthless?! Then what about Andrew? That bastard- what the hell is he supposed to be?"

Aspen let out a scornful laugh. "You clearly have no idea how terrifying Andrew really is. You wanna know what he is? Let me tell you when it comes to combat, to medicine, to tactics, he's way out of your league. You're not even in the same universe."

Seth's lips twisted into a manic grin. "Yeah, yeah, he's amazing. Sure, he's got skills. But no matter how good he is, he's still just a bug to me! This is

Blumedale -we play by my rules here. And I don't care if that bastard has nine lives, he's dying tonight!"

With a loud rip, he suddenly tore open Aspen's shirt, exposing the pale skin of her chest to the open air.

Seth's throat bobbed, and his eyes burned with desire. "Goddamn... you're perfect. Don't worry, sweetheart. I'm gonna enjoy every single inch of you—until your body forgets its own shape.

"At first, I thought I'd wait for Andrew to show up before wrecking you. But that mouth of yours—it just keeps running. So now, I've got no choice but to fuck you right here, right now!"

Tears burst from Aspen's eyes.

Back in Jayrodale, she had already been touched inappropriately once. Since then, she could not stand being touched by any man. Now, her worst nightmare was happening all over again, and she was powerless to stop it.

Seth sneered. "Go ahead and cry. Better yet-scream. That'll make it even more fun for me."

He licked his lips and laughed like a demon, then reached toward her chest.

Aspen squeezed her eyes shut as tears poured down her face. For the first time, she found herself wishing that Andrew-that annoying, cold bastard-would show up right this second.

Because if she really lost her body to Seth, then she swore she would take her

own life. There was no way she could live with that kind of filth inside her.

Suddenly, two of the Haywoods' enforcers were sent flying across the room. Their chests caved in, and they dropped dead on impact.

Everyone else froze in horror.

Seth whipped around, his face

darkening in an instant. "Andrew. So you finally decided to show up. Perfect. Now get your ass over here and get on your knees. Then watch real close-watch how I ruin this woman right in front of you."

Andrew said nothing, but the look on his face was ice-cold. He did not even spare Seth a glance. Instead, eyes locked straight on Aspen, who was tied up and bruised.

As their gazes met, tears streamed down Aspen's cheeks. Her eyes held a flash of hope—but more than anything, they held heartbreak, bitterness, and blame.

A strange pang of guilt shot through Andrew's chest. Soon, that guilt turned into pure, seething rage.

"You Haywood bastard—if I don't kill you all today, I swear I'm no man!" he growled.

Then, he charged forward. Like a storm unleashed, he launched

himself straight at Seth. The

remaining guards went pale as the air shifted with his sudden burst of speed.

Seth's heart skipped a beat, and his face twisted with panic as he cursed,

"What

the hell? How is he this fast? I'm so dead!"

"You're asking for death!" One of the older Haywood enforcers snarled and launched a palm strike toward Andrew's head.

"Get out of my way," Andrew growled without even sparing the man a glance, throwing a punch sideways in one smooth motion.

The man, a peak senior grandmaster, flew backward, his face contorted in shock and disbelief. His arm, which had met Andrew's punch, shattered instantly. He hit the ground hard, screaming in agony while clutching the mangled remains of his limb.

That brief moment of destruction was enough to jolt Seth out of his daze. He started stumbling backward and screamed, "All of you, attack him now! Kill that bastard!"

Yet, no one moved. The Haywood men froze, their faces pale with fear, looking at Andrew like they were staring at a monster. They backed away instinctively, their courage completely drained.

It was not just fear-it was terror that ran bone-deep.

Andrew's strikes were lethal and merciless, each blow either killing or disabling instantly. It was enough to shake even the most hardened of thugs to the core.

"You useless cowards! I said attack!" Seth shouted, veins bulging from his forehead.

He was losing it. At this critical moment, his entire crew was folding. Yet, no matter how much he screamed and threatened, not one of them dared to step forward.

He barked, "Useless dogs! All of you are worthless! Once I'm done with Andrew, I'll deal with you pigs next!"

Nonetheless, it was clear that his men had given up. Their morale had completely collapsed.

Realizing he could not rely on them, Seth had no choice but to steel himself and raise his fists.

Andrew kept walking toward him, step by step, with murder written all over his face.

Andrew growled, "You made the worst mistake of your life. Touching someone who's mine was your final offense. You kept pushing it, and now, I'll finish what you started."

Seth gritted his teeth and forced a twisted smile. "Andrew, don't get cocky! Do you think I didn't plan for this when I laid my hands on her? Yeah, you're stronger than I

expected. I'll admit that. Rvelt

compared to the Haywoods, you're still just a weak nobody!"

Andrew did not waste another word and threw a punch straight at Seth. He was not here to argue with a weakling he was here to crush it.

Seth roared and raised both fists. In his palm, a hidden blade flashed-he planned to slice Andrew's radial artery the moment they clashed.

It was a trick that had never failed him. Yet, this time, reality was far crueler than his plan.

Andrew's punch tore straight through his guard and smashed into his chest. Blood immediately gushed out of his mouth, along with fragments of ruptured organs.

The blade fell from his hand as he collapsed backward, completely stunned. His eyes widened in disbelief. "Y-You've already reached the martial king level?"

Andrew's expression did not change-his eyes were cold, completely devoid of emotion. He completely ignored Seth and marched over to Aspen instead. Then, he tore the ropes off her and shrugged off his coat to gently wrap it around her.

After that, he turned back around and slapped Seth across the face. The sound echoed like a whip crack, half of Seth's face caved in instantly.

Blood poured from his chin, and several teeth were scattered across the ground.

"Andrew, you son of a bitch!" Seth screamed, clutching his mangled face. "You're dead! The Haywoods will hunt you down for this!"

His voice was filled with venom and panic.

That single punch had debilitated him. He used to be so smug, convinced that taking down Andrew would be easy with his strength and his men. However, he finally realized that he had lit a fire he could not put out. What was worse was that the fire was already licking at his throat.

Meanwhile, Andrew remained quiet. He just kept slapping Seth with brutal precision, one hit after another, his expression ice-cold.

"This one's for Aspen, and so is this one!"

Chapter 1144

Andrew hissed, "This third slap? No reason at all. I just don't like the look of your face and feel like beating you to death. And this fourth one's for your parents- since they clearly failed to raise you, I'll handle it for them."

After the string of brutal slaps, Seth's head was spinning. His ears rang like sirens, and his vision started going black around the edges.

"Andrew... I swear..." he gasped, his voice shaky. "I'll kill you. I'll kill you, you arrogant bastard!"

However, just as he spat out his threat, a blood-curdling scream ripped from his throat-Andrew had suddenly snapped five of his fingers.

"Keep going," Andrew said coldly, his voice like a death sentence.

Seth's mouth bled as he glared up with bloodshot eyes. "You're dead. You're so fucking dead..."

"How dare you treat me like this? My family-everyone in the Haywoods-they'll never let this slide!"

His scream pitched into hysteria as Andrew crushed the remaining five fingers on his other hand, rendering both of Seth's hands completely useless.

All ten of his fingers were shattered.

The sight was so horrifying that the rest of the Haywood men stood frozen, faces pale as ash. Some were trembling, and one even pissed himself.

Aspen forgot all about her own fear. She just stared, stunned, as Andrew tore Seth apart like it was nothing.

This version of Andrew was something else entirely-colder, darker, far more terrifying than she had ever imagined.

As she watched Seth's mutilated body twitch on the floor, even her own scalp tingled from the fear crawling down her spine.

"Go on," Andrew said, pressing his hand against Seth's battered face with a cruel smile. "Keep threatening me with the Haywoods. See if I so much as blink."

Seth had no more courage left. All ten of his fingers were gone, and he could not take the pain anymore. He could not even speak properly, let alone throw out more threats.

Even so, the hatred in his eyes burned brighter than ever. He was screaming inside, swearing that if he ever got out of this alive, he would go through hell itself to destroy Andrew.

"You've got nothing left to say? Great. Then, let me send you on your way," Andrew said flatly, rising to his feet.

Seth's body went cold, and a chill like midwinter crept up his spine.

"A-Andrew, what are you doing?" he stammered, voice hoarse, practically pleading. "I'm a Haywood, one of the Five Apex Families! If you kill me, you and that bitch Aspen will both die! Do you hear me?"

His words were fast and panicked, his voice breaking. He could feel it-Andrew was not bluffing. He was really about to die.

Chantelle finally stepped in. "Andrew, you've made your point. You've hurt him, humiliated him-you've made him pay! You can beat him, break him, even bury his pride. But you cannot kill him. That's a line we do not cross."

Andrew turned to her with a faint, amused smile. "And what if I do cross it? Then what?"

Chantelle felt the contempt in his tone and clenched her fists. "If you do... then it's

a blood feud. The Haywoods won't stop. Not even Mr. McCormick can protect you after that."

Andrew chuckled and shook his head. "Sorry. But I never planned to rely on Mr. McCormick to protect me."

Aspen's eyes widened as she realized what he was about to do. "Andrew, don't—" Sadly, it was too late.

Andrew stomped down, snapping Seth's neck in one clean blow.

Seth's body collapsed to the floor, lifeless, blood pooling fast. His eyes remained wide open in disbelief, even in death.

Andrew turned slightly and looked at the stunned Aspen beside him. Then, he glanced back at Chantelle's frozen face and grinned.

He said, "I've got my own rules. You can mess with me, push my buttons, and I'll let it slide. But the moment you touch my people, I'll personally send you straight to hell."

Chapter 1145

"Y-You actually dared to kill someone?" Chantelle stormed up to Andrew, her chest heaving with rage as she shouted, "You do know that murder is a crime, right?"

Andrew replied flatly, "Then go ahead and arrest me. But you saw it too—this dead mutt barged into my company with a gang of thugs and trashed the place. He kidnapped my secretary, tortured her, and tried to get away with it."

Chantelle fumed. "You had every right to fight back, but you had no right to kill him, do you understand?"

Andrew's voice sharpened with impatience. "Ms. Garcia, that's enough! So what if I killed him? The guy came stomping into my space, and I'm supposed to just roll over and play dead?"

Chantelle let out a bitter laugh and hissed, "Andrew, Mr. McCormick favored you. You've got incredible medical skills, and in Blumedale, you were this close to making your mark."

"You had a bright future ahead of you-respect, success, everything within reach. But why would you throw it all away like this? Don't you see you're ruining yourself?"

Andrew stared at her coldly. "The Haywoods? To me, they're nothing. And I don't need you telling me how to run my life. Oh, and by the way-remember back at my house? Weren't you hoping I'd lay a hand on you so you could kill me and call it self-defense?"

Chantelle snapped, "That was in the past! Why bring it up now?"

Andrew's voice dropped. "No reason-just wanted you to understand something. If I ever had laid a hand on you, you wouldn't have walked out. You would've been pinned beneath me and left with nothing.

"So don't think that being Mr. McCormick's secretary makes you untouchable. If I wanted to deal with you, you wouldn't end up much better than Seth."

Chantelle was shaking now, furious and humiliated. "You bastard! I was trying to help you, and this is how you repay me? You wanna fight?"

Andrew scoffed. "Fight you? I'd break you."

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Then, his gaze turned cold as ice while sweeping across the remaining Haywood enforcers. "Take Seth's body and get the heft out of here. Tell the Haywoods to get their facts straight before they come barking at my door again.

"If they keep trying to flex their power, or if they so much as touch my people or

my company again, I won't be sending back just a corpse to them."

The men scrambled to lift Seth's body, trembling in fear as they rushed out of Supreme Capital Group.

Chantelle's expression shifted,
uncertain and tense. "I'll talk to Mr. McCormick right now and see if he
can
help you out of this mess. But
listen to me-you absolutely cannot afford to lose control like this again."

Andrew did not respond. To him, everything Chantelle was doing now was just
noise.

"Come here. Let me see your face," he called out to Aspen.

Her cheek was still swollen, with delicate skin split in a few places. She shook
her head and replied stiffly, "I'm fine. I don't need you fussing over me."

Andrew frowned. "I told you to come here. Or are you ignoring my orders
now?"

Aspen bit her lip, silently cursing, 'Damn it, Andrew! Why do you have to be so
bossy!'

Still, she walked toward him without protest.

Andrew reached out and gently touched her wound, causing her to suck in a
sharp breath from the

sting She glared up at him and
hissed, "What the hell was that for?"

"It's just a surface wound," Andrew said calmly. "Let's go. I'll patch you up-
shouldn't leave a scar if we treat it fast."

As they passed by Chantelle, Aspen caught her murmuring something laced
with meaning. "Ms. Stevens, your boss seems awfully concerned about you."