

RISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

Chapter 1171



Chapter 1171 At the Golding family estate, Elon exclaimed in disbelief, "What did you just say? Black Wolf is dead?" The butler, face tight with unease, replied, "Yes, sir.

Early this morning, his body was found dumped in the sewer.

The cause of, death matched the last group of assassins perfectly.

There's no doubt that it was Andrew who killed him." Elon's expression darkened instantly.

"Even Black Wolf failed and ended up dead? Andrew...

you've clearly been hiding more strength than we thought." The butler nodded gravely.

"Sir, that man is definitely not some pawn on the board.

Not only is Black Wolf gone, but the Srovika Federation mercenary commander the Haywoods brought in also died at Serenity Villa." Elon gasped.

"Even Xavier's overseas hitman got wiped out? Are you absolutely sure?" The old butler's brow twitched.

"Completely sure.

This morning, both bodies Black Wolf and the mercenary captain were found side by side in the sewer on Blumedale's main street." Elon clenched his jaw.

"This is Andrew sending a message he's warning us.

He's making a statement to the elite families." Just then, Richard approached, and Elon quickly stepped forward.

"---- Father, I apologize.

I failed again." Richard waved a hand.

"This time, you're not to be blamed.

If a legendary assassin like Black Wolf was taken down, it only proves one thing Andrew has some powerful figures protecting him." Elon asked, "Then what should we do next, Father? Do we hire more killers?" Richard snorted.

"If Black Wolf couldn't get the job done, throwing money at lesser trash won't make a difference.

Sure, money talks but when it comes down to it, most people are cowards.

With Black Wolf dead, many will think twice before taking the job." Elon's eyes widened.

Are you saying there are people the Goldings can't even kill?" Richard gave a slow, chilling smile.

"If a bounty can't get it done, that doesn't mean the Goldings can't.

But right now, there's no reason to be the first to strike.

The Haywoods just lost Seth.

For now, we'll let things cool and see how Roy and Xavier handle this humiliation." Elon was clearly frustrated.

"But Father, if Xavier does end up taking Andrew out, doesn't that make the Haywoods look stronger than us?" Richard sneered.

"I used to think like you, but after seeing how hard it is to kill Andrew, I've realized that it's not going to be easy.

If the Haywoods want the glory, let them fight for it.

Sure, they might win the bragging rights, but they'll bleed for it.

Their best men, their resources it'll all come at a cost.

And that kind of reckless pride? That's something we should avoid." Elon finally nodded and smiled.

"You're right, Father.

We'll sit back and watch the tigers fight.

No matter who wins Andrew or the

Haywoods we'll be the real let

Richard's expression shifted

and

he changed the topic.

"You still don't have a wife that can't continue.

Among the Five Apex Families, the Keller family reigns supreme.

"You remember what I've always told you if yo

you can marry into the net

you'll be next in line to feed the Goldings." Elon looked sheepish.

"But Emily thinks I'm too fat.

I can't help that." Richard's jaw tightened.

"She thinks you're fat? Then lose the damn weight! Whatever it takes, make it happen.

If you can align with the Keller family, we'll crush the Haywoods like ants."
Elon forced a smile.

"Alright, Father.

I'll do my best." Meanwhile, over at

the Haywood residence, the butler approached Xavier with a gentle reminder early that morning.

"sir, today marks the third day since Mr.Seth's passing, and it's ---- also the day

you promised to honor him with Andrew's head.

If this doesn't go well, we'll have no choice but to proceed with Mr.Seth's burial.

His remains can't be preserved much longer."

Chapter 1172 Since the night before, Xavier had been fully suited in military attire, standing vigilant and sleepless.

He gripped a massive broadsword, and when the butler spoke, his voice was ice-

cold." Don't worry.

Andarov won't fail me.

That bastard Andrew is as good as dead." Though those were his words, doubt lingered in Xavier's mind.

After all, Andarov never took this long to finish a kill.

Nonetheless, the sun was risinghe should be back any minute now.

Andarov, commander of the Blood Wolf Mercenaries, was ruthless and battle-hardened.

Xavier met him while stationed overseas, and after several missions together, they became close allies.

"With the entire Blood Wolf squad under him, it doesn't matter if Andrew has bodyguards.

He won't last five minutes," Xavier sneered, confident.

He was already planning the next step should Seth's memorial as soon as Andarov returned, then introduce him to Luna to score even more clout.

Having a famous international mercenary as a personal friend? Even someone as proud as Luna would be impressed.

Suddenly, one of the Haywoods' top fighters came rushing in and reported, "Mr.

Xavier, there's been an incident! Mr.

Markovic has returned to the Srovika Federation." ---- Xavier's brow furrowed.

"What do you mean, returned? He left without notice?" The man shook his head, visibly shaken.

"Not exactly, sir...

Andarov has fallen in battle.

He's dead.

His body was discovered early this morning in the sewer.

The last two surviving members of the Blood Wolf squad retrieved his remains and took him back to the Srovika Federation for burial." Xavier froze in place, clearly dumbstruck.

He exclaimed in disbelief, "Andarov is dead? Did the bastard Andrew die too? Please tell me he died with him!" The fighter hesitated, then shook his head.

"We don't know if Andrew was harmed.

But there have been no reports of trouble at The Sovereign Residences.

Chances are, he made it out alive." Xavier's expression turned lethal. His eyes blazed with fury, like a predator ready to maul its prey.

"Even Andarov fell to that bastard...

Have we confirmed who's backing

with

Who the hell is protecting disbelief and ragefilled growled, his voice filled

He refused to believe Andrew took out Andarov alone, thinking there had to be

someone powerful pulling strings behind the scenes.

The Haywoods' fighter trembled and quickly reported, "Yes sir.

We looked into it.

Just one personChantelle Garcia, Governor McCormick's secretary.

Other than her, Andrew has nothing in Blumedale.

Just a few nobodies from Jayrodale." ---- Xavier swung the broadsword, slicing a

full set of vintage furniture into splinters.

The damages were worth at least a million, but the money meant nothinghis fury could not be soothed.

He barked, "Bring me my full uniform.

If Andarov couldn't do it, then I'll go myself.

I'll end Andrew's pathetic lifewith my own handsas a soldier of honor!" People from all over the Haywood residence rushed in, drawn by the commotion.

They stared at the wreckage and the war-drenched aura around Xavier, exchanging uneasy glances.

Just then, Roy stepped forward and spoke solemnly.

"Xavier, wait." Xavier's eyes burned.

"Father, don't stop me.

I swore I would use Andrew's head to honor Seth's deathwithin three days.

A man's word is his bond; I will keep mine." Roy's gaze was cold.

"I'm not stopping you.

I'm telling yougo, and make sure you come back.

Our family's name has already been dragged through the dirt by Andrew.

The only way to reclaim our place among the Five Apex Families...

is with his blood.

Xavier donned his colonel's uniform and slung the broadsword over his shoulder, and the bloodlust in his aura had reached bone-chilling levels.

One of the Haywood elders stepped forward.

"Sir, shall we send a team to escort you?" - ---- Xavier walked to the door alone and

said flatly, "No need."

Chapter 1173 Andrew was sitting on the lawn outside Serenity Villa, watching the crew from The Sovereign Residences repair his home.

After the attack last night, it was a miracle the place was still standing if the villa had not been built to the highest security standards, it would have been reduced to nothing but ash and rubble by the Srovika Federation mercenaries.

Felix Daughtry, the security captain from The Sovereign Residences, a semi-martial king-level fighter, walked over with a grim expression and reported, "Mr.

Lloyd, Serenity Villa took quite a hit.

Full restoration might be difficult." Andrew glanced at him and said coldly, "I want it restored exactly as it was, and not just that. The Sovereign Residences will need to compensate me for all damages, including emotional distress.

If that's too much, then I don't want the house anymore.

"I'll go to the press and let the world know just how useless your brand really is." Felix's face darkened, turning almost pitch black with anger.

He silently cursed the damn Srovika Federation mercenaries to hell as he walked off to make a call, clearly going to ask the higher-ups for a solution.

Chantelle let out a low chuckle and said, "You've got quite the temper, huh? Don't you know the people backing The Sovereign Residences are the Three Titans?" -- -- Andrew scoffed.

"So what? I paid good money for this house.

Shouldn't they take full responsibility now?" Chantelle replied flatly, "Of course they should.

I just think your attitude is a bit over the top." Andrew said with disdain, "I deal in facts.

I couldn't care less about the Three Titans or whatever power plays they're involved in." Aspen stepped in and said, "You were shot.

Go inside and get some rest." Andrew shook his head.

"I'm fine." Aspen gritted her teeth.

"Why are you so damn stubborn? You literally got shot how is that fine?" Andrew looked at her with a strange expression, intrigued that she had just yelled at him, which was something new.

Chantelle raised a brow, clearly entertained.

"Ms.

Stevens, your condition seems worse than I thought.

Studying people like you is honestly fascinating." Aspen's cheeks turned a little red

as she replied flatly, "Sorry, but I don't think I'm sick.

If you're so interested in people's minds, maybe study someone else." Chantelle smirked.

"No thanks.

I'm only interested in you, Ms.

Stevens.

Most people are just full of predictable, boring thoughts.

But you're different your swing between longing emotions

and restrain.

You pretend not to care when you clearly do.

Honestly, your contradictions, your layered psyche...

they're worth studying." Aspen was mortified and furious.

Chantelle had bared her entire emotional state, and accurately, too.

Nonetheless, she would never admit it, no matter what.

she gave a cold laugh and said, "Ms.

Garcia, you're delusional.

That's the only diagnosis I'd give you." Chantelle shrugged.

"No rush.

You already know I practice psychology.

Being Mr.

McCormick's secretary is really just one part of my job.

So anytime you're ready, drop by my studio.

I'll help you see your own heart." Aspen cut her off.

"No thanks!" Andrew raised a brow.

"Ms. Garcia, your specialty like a

mix of witchcraft and

. el

guesswork. Content beset

So, how about this tell me what's going on in my head?" Without

missing a beat, Chantelle laul net

and Said, "You're a brute whodives

for violence.

You manipulate your team, chase power, and love playing little games."

Chapter 1174, Chantelle sneered, "All in all, you're just an ordinary man, a slave to your desires with a pathetically mediocre mind.

She had finally caught an opening to hit Andrew where it hurt, and she was not about to waste it.

Andrew chuckled.

"Ms.

Garcia, you really do live up to your title as a master of psychology.

You got most of it right.

But you still missed one tiny detail like the fact that, right now, I've got a very clear image of your naked body in my mind." The bluntness of that line stunned Chantelle, and her expression twisted in outrage.

She snapped, "Andrew! That was in the past how dare you bring it up like it's nothing? Aren't you worried I'll kill you?" The usually cold woman was genuinely furious now.

Andrew shrugged lazily.

"I'm sitting right here, wounded and unarmed.

Go ahead, kill me.

But even if you did, you still wouldn't erase the fact that you once stripped bare in front of me." Chantelle raised her hand in fury but forced herself to lower it again with a trembling breath.

"Shut your damn mouth!" Andrew let out a low laugh.

This ruthless woman had never liked him she was either mocking or criticizing, always finding faults.

---- Well, he was not planning to take that lying down he would bite back.

Aspen stood frozen, wide-eyed at the verbal battle unfolding between them.

Wait Andrew had seen Chantelle naked? Chantelle was the secretary to the state governor, spokesperson for the Blumedale government, and hands down the most powerful woman Aspen had ever crossed paths with.

Yet, even she had fallen into Andrew's clutches? She glanced at Andrew who looked annoyingly calm and felt a fresh wave of frustration and confusion rise in her chest.

Was this man seriously planning to seduce every beautiful woman he met? How did he even manage? suddenly, a furious voice roared from the front gates.

"Andrew, get out here! I, Xavier Haywood, am taking your damn head today!" Xavier, the eldest son of the Haywoods, stormed up to Serenity Villa in full battle gear

dragging an enormous broadsword behind him. s̄novel

---- The sight of him, drenched in fury and radiating bloodlust, made both Aspen

and Chantelle's faces pale slightly.

However, Andrew did not even flinch.

He looked Xavier dead in the eye and said, "You're no match for me.

But because you're in uniform, I'll give you one chance to walk away." Xavier swung his sword through the air, kicking up a gust with a terrifying hum.

He laughed, "You're giving me a chance? Please.

Who do you think you are, Andrew? Did you think you survived the hit lists of two elite families because of skill? You don't know how much of that was just dumb luck and outside help, do you?" He hissed, "Sure, you've made a little noise.

You've earned a bit of attention, but to me, you're nothing, Just a lamb I could crush anytime I wanted." To him, Andrew was nothing but backwoods trash from Jayrodale a

lowly rodent playing rich man's games.

Xavier had never taken him seriously, not even once.

Chantelle snapped, "Colonel Haywood, you're military.

Qu

Don't act out of line!" Xavier growled back, "This man killed my brother and wiped out my friend Andarov just last night! This isn't just revenge.

This is blood for blood.

I am Xavier Haywood, a soldier born to conquer the world and serve my country.

I never planned to waste time on ants like him, But if he's hellbent on seeking death, then I'll do him ---- the favor!" Chantelle's expression tightened.

This was bad.

Xavier was not just any soldier he was a colonel, and more importantly, not under

the state governor's jurisdiction.

Moreover, judging by his expression, he was not just angry.

He was enraged beyond reason.

Andrew had truly stirred up a storm this time, and it was only getting worse.

Chapter 1175 "Colonel Haywood, you know full well that with your rank and position, you can't just go around killing people on a whim," Chantelle warned coldly.

she added, "Besides, your friend Andarov used banned weaponry on Holtrien soil, which is a serious offense.

You can be sure Mr.

McCormick won't just let that slide." Left with no other option, Chantelle had to drop Derek's name to try to rein Xavier in. However, Xavier was not intimidated at all.

His voice dripped with venom as he said, "Ms.

Garcia, I respect Mr.

McCormick. He governs this province, and I'll give him that.

But do you think the Haywoods' name should be trampled like dirt? Especially by some no-name punk who doesn't know his place? "I'll chop him into pieces, and if

I have to, I'll apologize to Mr.

McCormick myself.

But with the military accolades I've earned, the Haywood family's backing, and my deep ties in the defense department, killing this bug wouldn't even cause a blip on the radar." Chantelle's stomach twisted.

Xavier was not just brutish. He was cunning and calculating beneath it all.

Before swinging his sword, he had already mapped out every consequence and connection.

---- Gritting her teeth, she said sharply, "Colonel Haywood, I don't care what personal reasons you think you have.

You're not touching Andrew today.

Mr.

McCormick sent me here to protect him, and I will not stand aside." Xavier's voice thundered, "Ms.

Garcia, move! I don't want to clash with you over a worthless bug." Aspen urgently pulled at Andrew's arm.

"Let's go back inside, now! However, Andrew stood up and ignored her completely.

Instead, he gently moved Chantelle aside and walked straight toward Xavier, earning a death glare from her.

Andrew said, "You go around calling people bugs and talking like some noble patriot.

You talk about honor and justice like it's your religion, screaming about glory and serving your country..." He smirked.

"But Xavier, don't you think all that sounds just a little fake? A little pathetic?" Aspen gasped while et

Chantelle cursed under her breath, but Andrew kept walking right up to Xavier's giant sword.

He stopped just two inches from the blade, eyes locked with Xavier's, his expression flat and unflinching.

He added, "If you're a real soldier and a true colonel, then you should know Seth brought his own death upon himself.

I never held any deep grudge against the Haywoods.

All of this started

with you guys

using your status as one of the Five

Apex Families to bully others.

Xavier's lips curled into a cold smile, laced with mockery.

"And now you wanna talk things out? Don't you think it's too late for that? Did you think begging would save you? That you'd get to walk away?" He had to admit that this so-called bug had enough guts to stand this close to a bloodstained sword without flinching.

He would have to make his death extra painful.

Andrew shook his head.

"You're getting it all wrong.

I'm not here to beg, and I'm definitely not here to explain myself.

I just wanted to make it clear you think you're standing on some moral high ground, trying to execute me in the name of justice.

"But in my eyes, you're nothing.

Neither you nor your precious Haywoods mean a damn thing to me.

You wanna play? Then let's play.

I'm not afraid.

Colonel? Military backing? I'll still kill you and your bosses won't be able to do a damn thing about it." By the time he finished, Andrew was full of scorn.

He looked at Xavier the way one might look at a roach.

Xavier roared, "Andrew, you arrogant bastard go to hell!" He raised his massive sword high, ready to bring it crashing down.

This man had risen through the military ranks by slaughtering his enemies and racking up victories.

He had seen it all, done it all ---- and he was about to do it again.

Chapter 1176 Yet, of all the fearless, reckless men they had encountered, neither Aspen nor Chantelle had ever seen anyone as stubbornly arrogant as Andrew.

Both women were completely stunned, wondering where he even got the guts to say things like that.

In this world, commoners fear officials but officials? They fear the men with guns the military.

However, here was Andrew, treating a colonel like Xavier as if he were worthless weeds.

It was utter madness like a sparrow challenging an eagle, a lamb taunting a wolf.

It was sheer recklessness bordering on suicide.

With a thunderous swoosh, Xavier's massive broadsword came crashing down with enough force to split boulders and level trees.

Just the murderous pressure from that swing made Chantelle's face go pale.

She was starting to doubt if she could even stand up to Xavier herself.

After all, Andrew looked like he was about to be torn in half by that blade.

What infuriated her even more was that, at the height of danger, Andrew just stood there like a stunned idiot.

He did not dodge, nor did he move it was utterly pathetic.

Chantelle felt a deep surge of disappointment.

This was the man she had nearly slept with? He caused all this mess, talked all that ----

- trash, and now he could not even lift a finger to fight back, just standing there waiting to die.

She thought he had not just let Derek down, but he had let her down too.

"stop!" The moment the blade was about to strike, a sharp, commanding voice cut through the air like ice.

A pale hand appeared out of nowhere, blocking Xavier's sword with a single, effortless strike.

Chantelle's eyes widened in disbelief as she exclaimed.

"Ms.

Phelan!" The newcomer, dressed in full military uniform, was none other than Luna Holtrien's famed general, a woman who drew every eye wherever she went.

She gave Chantelle a brief nod in greeting before turning to face Xavier with calm authority.

She said flatly, "I'll give you exactly one chance.

Sheathe your sword and write a formal report.

Submit it to the military command.

"Or I'll charge you with unlawful use of force and drag you in front of the military court myself." Xavier's face flushed red with frustration.

He gritted his teeth.

"Ms.

Phelan, it's not that I'm trying to abuse my authority.

But Andrew insulted the Haywoods again and again.

I had no choice but to eliminate him!" ---- Luna's voice stayed steady.

"You're a colonel.

Everything you say and do represents the military.

It represents Holtrien.

If the Haywoods have a problem, then let the Haywoods handle it.

"This isn't some life-or-death crisis that demands your personal intervention.

You've been asking to transfer under my command for years, haven't you? Well, if you actually kill someone today, you can kiss that opportunity goodbye for life." Xavier's expression lit up.

"So, you're saying you'd consider it?" Luna replied, "We'll see.

For now, put away your sword and get lost.

Xavier reluctantly sheathed his weapon and gave Andrew one last glare.

He growled, "You got lucky that Ms.

Phelan stepped in.

But just because I can't touch you doesn't mean the Haywoods can't ruin you.

If you know what's good for you, you'll kneel at Seth's memorial and beg for mercy, then wait for our decision.

Otherwise your ending will be the

same death." As Xavier walked away with his massive sword slung behind him, Chantelle finally let out

a

long breath.

She shot Andrew a look of pure contempt, then noticed he was still standing there

in a daze.

Her disappointment only deepened.

He could not even muster a simple

'thank you!' for the woman who

had just saved his life. Luna, one of

the most respected generals on all of Holtrien.

He was truly clueless, absolutely hopeless.

Chapter 1177 Luna turned around, clearly reluctant to even look at Andrew, and said flatly, "I can save you once, maybe even twice but not a third time.

To be precise, the only reason I stepped in at all was because you've done favors for the Phelans...

and for Marvin.

"But next time? Your life or death will have nothing to do with me.

So, here's my advice tone it down.

This is Blumedale, not Jayrodale.

You could show off back there, and no one cared, but here? Power and politics clash every second.

Dying young might be the only fate you're headed for." Andrew frowned.

"Luna, are you sick or something? Did I ask you to save me?" That one line did not just offend Luna it also lit a fire in Chantelle.

"Andrew, what the hell is wrong with you? General Phelan just saved your damn life.

You didn't even say thank you, and now you're blaming her? Are you even a man?" She was speechless, thinking the guy was seriously unbelievable.

Andrew shot her a cold glare.

"Shut your mouth.

No one asked for your opinion.

Keep running your mouth, and I'll make sure the entire world knows I've seen you naked." Chantelle's fury exploded inside her, but she gritted her teeth and swallowed it back.

---- This bastard was really asking for it.

Andrew turned back to Luna and said coldly, "You ruined everything." Luna let out a cold laugh.

"Oh, I see.

Saving your life ruined your plan to die a glorious death?" Andrew said in a low voice, "I told you not to interfere.

If you hadn't stepped in, Xavier wouldn't have walked out of The Sovereign Residences.

I might not have killed him on the spot like I did his brother, but I would've crushed that Haywood arrogance the entire Five Apex Families need someone to put out their fire." He had deliberately provoked Xavier earlier, all to cripple the Haywoods' golden boy and send a loud message to Blumedale's elite.

However, Luna's appearance had completely derailed everything.

So you really think you could've survived his blade?" Luna's tone was mocking now.

This guy had the nerve to act smug after she had saved his life? What a joke. Andrew smirked.

"The real question is whether I'd choose to kill him...

or just leave him half-dead." Luna's expression did not shift.

It was as if nothing in the world ---- could move her anymore. "Xavier was right.

You really are an insect someone who doesn't know his place. It's a waste of time arguing with you.

"Let's just call it here.

Whatever favor the Phelans owed you? Consider it paid full.

Next time, won't lift a finger for

you." She threw those words like et

daggers, then turned on her heel, her military boots striking against the ground as she walked away.

Andrew said casually, "It's true that didn't need

since your help today, but

since you did step in, I'll did step in, I'll admit I'm not completely ungrateful,

Luna did not stop walking.

"Your gratitude means nothing to me." Andrew chuckled.

"Of course.

Ms.

Phelan, the shining moon in the skywhy would you care about us mortals? But since that's the case, I guess I'll go ahead and keep living at Serenity Villa."

Luna halted, turned, and frowned at him.

"Are you saying you were going to give up Serenity Villa as a thank-you gift?

In

that case...

I suppose I can accept itreluctantly."" Andrew shook his head with a straight face.

"That was the original plan, yes.

But since you're only willing to accept it so reluctantly, let's not bother.

I don't believe in forcing people into anything.

So, General Phelan, take care now." He turned around and strolled right back into Serenity Villa, with no hesitation, no guilt.

---- Luna stood there, frozen in place, a rare flicker of confusion on her otherwise unreadable face.

Had she, the decorated General of Holtrien, the second daughter of the mighty Phelan family, just gotten played by this nobody?

Chapter 1178 Aspen and Chantelle both gasped in disbelief.

They could not believe that Andrew had just toyed with Luna like she was some puppy.

He offered her a treat, dangled it right in front of her face, and then yanked it back when she reached for it.

Anyone with an ounce of pride would have snapped and Luna Phelan was not just anyone.

"Playing games on a razor's edge...

Andrew, I'll be watching," Luna said coldly.

"I'll watch how you destroy yourself." Her expression turned colder than it had been even when confronting Xavier.

With one sharp step, she kicked up a gust of wind and vanished into the air.

It was a clear sign that she was not just leaving, she was unleashing her fury.

That footwork was terrifying," Chantelle muttered.

Even Aspen looked shaken "Keep acting like this, Andrew, and someone's gonna hack you into pieces one day!" Chantelle snapped.

After one last angry glare, she stormed off too.

Aspen did not have quite the same fire in her.

This demon of a man was heartless to ---- her, but at least he was equally dismissive of Chantelle and even Luna.

Somehow, that thought brought a strange sense of peace to her heart.

Inside Serenity Villa, Andrew still felt annoyed.

Sure, he had taken down the Black Wolf mercenaries and killed Andarov.

He even killed Seth, which was no big deal.

Yet, none of that seemed enough to make Blumedale's upper crust actually learn their lesson.

It seemed that only pain could bring about change.

Crippling Xavier, the Haywoods' golden boy, had been part of Andrew's plan to

give these elite families a much-needed wake-up call.

However, Luna had swooped in mid-act and ruined everything.

Darling, that Ms.

Phelan is...

terrifying.

I really think you should stop pushing her buttons and just lay low for abit." Even

Natasha was advising Andrew to stay low.

Aspen sneered.

"Madam Vostokoff, don't bother trying to talk sense into him.

If he's not challenging the world, he's not Andrew Lloyd." Andrew narrowed his eyes.

"You sure sound like you've got a lot of ---- complaints.

Should I take it out on you tonight instead?" Aspen's face turned bright red.

"Drop dead, you jerk!" All she did was throw in a comment, and this man managed to twist it into something outrageous.

Just then, Reuben stepped forward.

"Mr.

Lloyd, as agreed, now that I've helped you through this assassination attempt, you're letting me go free.

Andrew waved his hand.

"Of course.

I don't go back on my word.

You're free to leave." Reuben lit up with joy.

Finally, he was getting out.

Dylan, however, frowned.

"Mr.

Lloyd, letting a semi-martial king go just like that...

feels like a waste." Andrew shrugged.

"A deal's a deal.

Besides, semi-martial kings don't carry much weight in Blumedale anymore." Everyone fell silent, glancing at each other.

They could not deny it considering

the monsters Andrew had pissed off lately, no wonder a semi-martial king felt underpowered InJayrodale, someone at that level could basically play king.

But here? It was not even close.

Aspen turned to Andrew.

"Now that the wave of assassins has passed, I need to head to the office.

I haven't been in for two days.

I ---- need to check on things personally." Andrew nodded.

"Go ahead.

If anything comes up, call m

discreter she left, Andrew

discreetly instructed Dylan to keep protecting her from the shadows.

Natasha, watching this, spoke with a hint of jealousy.

"Darling, you've been awfully sweet to Aspen lately.

Andrew replied matter-of-factly, "She's earned it.

Supreme Capital Group is surviving thanks to her leadership." Natasha pouted. "And what about me?" Andrew blinked.

"You have your own responsibilities, which don't clash with Aspen's role." Natasha gritted her teeth.

"I will handle my responsibilities, but if Tever catch you sleeping with that cold-on- the-outside, freak-in-the-sheets woman...

I swear, I'll tie you down and have my way with you until you cry!" Andrew gave a helpless smile.

Every single woman around him was

a handful, but if they were all this obsessed with his body, he figured he should better make sure he could keep up.

Chapter 1179 Tiana had already been urging Andrew to make a trip to the Rhodes residence.

With his current matters finally settled, Andrew made his way there.

Meanwhile, back at the Haywood residence, the funeral was underway.

The place was shrouded in white the last rites for Seth.

It should have been a major event, but the atmosphere among the Haywoods was lifeless.

No one looked remotely interested, and many of the younger members were outright slacking off, hiding in corners, smoking, drinking, and chatting.

Someone whispered, "Xavier's the eldest son of the Haywoods and a damn colonel in the military, yet he couldn't even bring back Andrew's head? What a letdown." Another chimed in, "No kidding.

seth got taken out like that, which is a direct slap to the Haywoods' face."""
"Honestly, I've never seen our family this humiliated.

Xavier even said he'd kill Andrew within three days or take his own life.

Big talk for someone who came back empty-handed..." After just a few gulps of alcohol, the younger Haywoods started running their mouths freely, loudly, and without a filter.

---- Suddenly, a kick flew out of nowhere and sent their table flying, knocking over drinks and snacks.

The trash talkers jumped to their feet in panic.

"Uncle Jude!" "Uncle Jude, we were just chatting why'd you kick the table?" Jude Haywood, a stern-faced middle-aged man, appeared with a freezing expression. Without a word, he slapped each of the young men across the face, one after another, until their ears were ringing and heads spinning.

"You little punks! Skipping your duties just to sit here talking crap? And who the hell gave you the guts to talk trash about Xavier?" Normally, none of them would have dared talk back to Jude.

Nonetheless, emboldened by the alcohol, their faces flushed red as they stood their ground.

One of them argued, "Uncle Jude, you can hit us, yell at us we'll still say what's on our minds!" "Yeah! Xavier's supposed to be the face of the Haywoods, our top.

guy! But what did he do? Just made empty threats and failed to even pluck a hair off Andrew!" "Seth was one of our own, and he got killed by a nobody.

You can't tell us that's not humiliating!" ---- Jude fell silent as their angry voices echoed off the walls, silently agreeing that they were not wrong.

The Haywoods had handled Seth's death with shocking meekness.

In the past, if any member of the Haywoods was bullied, revenge would be swift and brutal no questions asked.

And the killing of a direct bloodline member? That was unheard of.

To Jude, such an incident should have been impossible.

If it did happen, the perpetrators entire out

Odline would've been a

t hesitation wovenet

But now, here they were hosting a funeral under a cloud of shame

while Andrew, the killer,

unscathed. Content Belongs

Xavier had marched out like a conquering emperor, sword in hand, roaring about vengeance.

It had fired up everyone, and they had believed.

Yet, he had returned with nothing defeated, withdrawn, and empty-handed.

That had sent a wave of disappointment through the entire Haywood clan.

Jude's voice was low and cold.

"No matter what, Xavier's name is not something for you to mock.

I better not hear another word like what I just heard.

Next

buy You'll be answering to e could tell they had det

family

The young men

listened.

truly

They had grown up drunk on the Haywood name, too arrogant to be humbled by a few threats.

---- With a long sigh, Jude turned, pulled back the curtain, and stepped outside. But the moment he did, he froze in place.

"Xavier!" Xavier stood right outside the curtain, dressed head to toe in black. Obviously, he had heard everything all the mocking and insults.

Jude felt his heart drop.

He immediately stepped forward.

"Xavier, they were just talking nonsense.

Please don't take it to heart." Xavier's eyes were cold as ice as he stared him down.

"Even these half-blooded mongrels think they can run their mouths about me behind my back now?"

Chapter 1180 Xavier said, "Uncle Jude, you're in charge of internal discipline.

My request is simple either throw those losers out of the Haywoods and make them manage some backwater branch, or I'll kill them myself.

And I doubt anyone in the family would object." Jude's eyelids twitched violently as he cursed the brats under his breath.

Out loud, though, he nodded quickly and replied, "Don't worry, Xavier.

I'll make sure they're kicked out of the family for good.

They won't even get close to the front gate again." Xavier snorted and walked off, leaving Jude staring at his back, shaking his head.

Jude muttered to himself, "Xavier...

you really are the pride of the Haywoods.

But you're spoiled by your status.

With your father as the family head and all the elders favoring you, you've always kept the other branches under your heel.

That's understandable since you're the future heir and our strongest fighter among the younger generations.

But the fact remains you made a public promise and failed to deliver.

The Haywoods have lost face, and badly.

"You're too headstrong.

Too self-righteous.

Whether your dominance is a blessing or a curse to the Haywoods...

that remains to be seen.

He did not dare say any of this to Xavier's face.

If he did, he knew the consequences would not be pretty.

Jude did not realize that dissatisfaction with Xavier was already spreading like wildfire throughout the Haywood family.

Later, Xavier found Roy and spoke with a dark glint in his eye.

"Father, I need to clean out some of our own.

Elvin, Neil, and Samuel those dumbasses crossed the line." Roy frowned.

"They offended you?" Xavier's face twisted with barely contained rage.

"Those little bastards had the nerve to sit behind Seth's memorial and trash-talk

me, saying I broke my word and that I failed to avenge my brother.

So tell me, should I let them live?" Roy's expression darkened.

"Those ungrateful punks deserve to die.

But don't let it eat at you, Xavier.

I'll have Jude punish them properly." Xavier let out a bitter laugh. "No need.

It's obvious he's trying to protect them.

He said he'd kick them out, but that's not enough for me.

My status in the Haywoods must not be challenged, so those worthless mutts must die." Roy

paused, silent for a long moment

before asking, "Xavier, you're not acting out of frustration over the Andrew situation, are you?"

understand, Xavier.

You had no choice but to retreat once Ms.

Phelan stepped in.

But just because you couldn't do it personally doesn't mean the Haywoods can't handle it.

Don't beat yourself up." Xavier sneered.

"Father, true power doesn't do self-blame.

Luna only intervened because she pitied Andrew and wanted to repay a debt.

But that only makes me want to kill him more.

Luna is mine.

Even if her motives were pure, I won't tolerate the woman I intend to r that make my own standing up for lowlife." Roy looked at him with glowing proval.

"That's my boy.

That kind of ambition can bring you anywhere you want to be.

If you can really bring Luna into the Haywoods...

even our ancestors would rise in their graves to sing your praises." Just then, a voice rang out from the front hall.

"Logan Keller of the Keller family has arrived to pay respects." Roy and Xavier froze.

They immediately rushed to the front, Knowing there was no room for delay.

After all, the Keller family was the most powerful among the Five Apex Families. They greeted him with smiles plastered on their faces.

"Mr.

Keller, pleasehave a seat!" However, Logan's usually mild features were frozen stiff with ice.

" No need for pleasantries.

I came here for one reason only.

I'm here to tell you to call off the bounty on Andrew.

He's my sworn, brother.

If you keep pushing this, then the Haywoods will be going to war with the Kellers."

The shock rippled like a bomb.

Not just Roy and Xavier, but ---- everyone gathered for the funeral stared in disbelief.

The Keller family was speaking on behalf, and they all
to pull something like this off.

I who the hell Andrew et