

RIISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

Chapter 1211



Andrew let out a cold laugh as he stared at the trembling Aspen right in front of him. "What am I doing? What do you think I'm doing? When you were trying to suppress Christina and Davon earlier, you used my presence to scare them off. Don't tell me you forgot that?"

Aspen flushed, both embarrassed and angry. "I didn't forget! But what I said- was any of it wrong?"

Andrew snorted. "No, it wasn't wrong. But you did get one thing messed up: your grudge with Christina has nothing to do with me, so don't drag me into it just to make yourself look good. You used your own boss as a pawn. That takes some guts, Aspen."

Aspen instantly felt a chill. She shrank back and begged, "I-I-I... I won't do it again, okay? Andrew, just let me down first. My butt's right up against the window, and if someone walks by and sees this, how the hell am I supposed to live that down?"

The corner of Andrew's lips curved into a teasing grin. "Isn't that perfect? You're my little secretary. This? This is very fitting."

Aspen almost blurted out, "Fitting your ass!"

Her position was humiliating-bent over in the passenger seat with her ass stuck up in the air. Anyone walking past the luxury car could instantly tell what they were doing inside. Just the thought of it made her want to vanish into a hole in the ground.

She struggled and shouted, her face burning with shame, her voice trembling with fury. "Andrew! Let me go! Let go of me right now or I swear I'm not going to be nice!"

Andrew's hand came down hard twice, right on her backside. The heavy slaps sent a jolt through her, and her whole body tensed. The pain was sharp, making her eyes well up on the spot.

She hissed, "You bastard! You actually hit me?"

Andrew's voice was flat and cold. "What, did you think I was here to whisper sweet nothings to you?"

Just like that, he gave her a few more hits, solid and heavy.

Aspen did not even need to look. She could feel her butt had to be red and swollen by now.

The tears finally spilled over, clenching her teeth hard. Her hands were tied, and with nowhere to vent her fury, she did the stupidest thing imaginable—she lunged and bit down on Andrew's mouth.

Caught off guard, he jerked back as pain exploded across his lip. Her bite had broken the skin, and he tasted blood instantly, the metallic tang flooding his mouth.

Andrew could not believe his servant was being so disobedient and dared to bite him. His anger erupted, and his arm tightened around her body, yanking her firmly into his chest.

The mix of stinging pain and a strange, tingly numbness made Aspen let out a soft whimper, caught between a sob and a moan. Her eyes were glassy with tears, But the fire inside her had not gone out.

She clenched her teeth and thought, 'Screw it. If I'm going down, I might as well take this bastard with me!'

She opened her mouth again, going straight for his lips-hell, even his face if that was what it took.

Andrew's brows furrowed, and his voice dropped low. "Enough. Or do you actually want to die?"

Panting, her chest heaving, Aspen glared at him with hate burning in her eyes. "You hit me, humiliated me-what the hell do you think that is?! Either kill me now, or I swear I'll bite your damn face off!"

She lashed out again, baring her teeth like a wildcat.

Andrew let out a mocking snort. One hand pinned her in place, the other grabbing a firm fistful of her ponytail.

Aspen's head was yanked back, her lips smeared with a mix of lipstick and blood. Despite the tears running down her cheeks, she smiled-fierce and full of spite.

"What? You gonna kill me now? Go ahead! I already know you're not the type to show mercy anyway!" Her voice trembled, but the fire in it refused to die.

Andrew stared at her blankly. "You know what you look like right now?"

Aspen had already thrown caution to the wind. She sneered and shot back, "Of course I do. A crazy bitch. A whore. Trash. Middle-aged luhatic. I've lost all my dignity already, so say whatever the hell you want!"

Chapter 1212



Andrew shook his head slowly and said, "No, you're not like some middle-aged lunatic, and you're definitely not trash or a hooker. You look like a cute little bunny rabbit, just begging to be eaten up. You forced my hand, Aspen!"

As soon as he finished speaking, Aspen's eyes widened in sudden panic, realizing what was about to happen. She struggled fiercely, desperate to escape Andrew's grasp.

Her voice trembled with tears as she pleaded, "No, no, no! Andrew-Mr. Lloyd- I'm sorry, I admit it, I was wrong! I swear, I won't do it again, please don't do this- please, no!"

Her frantic protests ended abruptly with a soft, electric whimper as Andrew silenced her, pressing his mouth firmly onto hers.

What followed was a hungry, unstoppable kiss, intense and overwhelming.

Aspen's clear eyes widened, her expression first filled with shame and anger, then disbelief, and finally melting into a dazed, dreamy blankness.

Their rapid breathing mingled in the confined space of the Ferrari, the air growing hot and heavy, filled with a mix of cologne and perfume.

Aspen gripped Andrew's shirt tightly, pulling at it until the buttons popped open, revealing his strong, toned chest.

When her fingers first brushed against his heated skin, she flinched as though burned. Yet, lost in the wildness of their kiss, she soon found her hands eagerly wandering back, craving the sensation of his muscular frame beneath her fingertips.

Andrew's hot hand traced the smooth curve of her waist, sliding downward until it rested firmly on her backside.

"Oh... no-Andrew, please don't... I'm begging you, please..." Aspen whispered faintly, a pained expression mingling with an unmistakable hint of desire.

Her skin glistened with sweat, eyes fluttering half-open, her mind already slipping into a fog of yearning and confusion. But Andrew paid no attention, consumed entirely by a burning need to possess her, unable to think of anything else.

After giving her backside another playful smack, he boldly slid his hand further, exploring her most sensitive place.

Aspen, who had been softly resisting before, jolted fiercely, eyes wide with disbelief, staring at Andrew in shock.

At that moment, only one thought echoed loudly in her mind, 'How could this bastard be so shameless? How could he dare do this to her?'

A sudden, electric thrill exploded through her body from deep within her abdomen, surging upward like a lightning strike.

It was an unfamiliar sensation—so intensely pleasurable, yet deeply humiliating. She wanted to vanish into thin air, yet she couldn't help sinking into its addictive warmth.

Andrew frowned slightly as he withdrew his hand, a surprised expression crossing his face. He looked down at his fingers and realized they were wet.

The heat from their heavy breathing had fogged the windows completely, sealing them off from the outside world. Just as abruptly as it had started, everything suddenly stopped.

Andrew glanced down with a teasing, knowing expression at the trembling woman

in his arms.

Aspen turned her face away, desperately struggling to look indifferent and cold, yet her body betrayed her completely, quivering uncontrollably from the aftershocks that rippled through her.

She clenched her lips tightly shut, determined not to let even the smallest sound escape. Secretly, she wished a bolt of lightning would strike from heaven, frying this jerk right on the spot.

No, even better-it should strike them both dead. Because at this very moment, Aspen felt she could not bear living another second.

Andrew's low voice broke the silence as he whispered into her ear, "I never thought you'd be so quick to react."

Aspen covered her face with both hands, refusing to respond.

Chapter 1213



The awkward silence lasted for almost half an hour. Eventually, Aspen regained enough strength in her legs to move again. Without a word and her face icy cold, she reached for the car door, desperate to leave.

Andrew quickly grabbed her wrist and said, "I'll drive you home so you can change clothes. Especially your skirt and stockings-they're completely soaked."

Aspen immediately blushed crimson, embarrassment flooding up her neck and across her cheeks. She ground her teeth angrily and snapped, "No need!"

Andrew ignored her protests completely, starting the Ferrari and driving straight back to The Sovereign Residences.

Neither said a word during the entire drive.

Andrew genuinely did not know what to say. Everything had been perfectly normal until he suddenly crossed the line with Aspen.

It was just like those old movies, where the wealthy guy ended up sleeping with his favorite maid. Technically, Andrew had not done anything wrong; Aspen was his slave, after all.

Nonetheless, this was not the old days, and openly taking advantage of someone who worked for him was not exactly something to brag about.

On the other hand, Aspen was drowning in a very different kind of regret. She desperately wanted to slap herself for acting stupidly-why on earth had she bitten that devilish man?

Although they had not gone all the way, Aspen miserably admitted to herself that it hardly mattered. As far as her body was concerned, they had basically done everything else.

Her legs still trembled, and the lingering sensation between them was an unwanted reminder. Sure, Andrew had not technically claimed her fully, but the feeling was not far from it.

She vividly remembered his hand and exactly what he had done to her.

As they approached The Sovereign Residences, Aspen spoke icily, finally breaking the silence, "If you tell anyone about what happened, I'll jump off a building and make you regret it!"

Andrew chuckled lightly and said, "Seriously? Are you that weak? Honestly, if anyone should be complaining or threatening suicide, it's me, not you!"

Aspen stared at him, eyes wide with disbelief.

Was this guy even a man? Did he have no shame at all?

After everything he had done to her, how could he possibly play the victim now?

Andrew responded naturally, "Don't look at me like that. I'm just stating facts! If you hadn't provoked me-biting me, teasing me, and creating that provocative

atmosphere-do you really tell
of that would have happened?
any

"Aspen, I had no idea you were so cunning, deliberately seducing your own boss like that..."

Andrew said all this with an entirely straight face, not a hint of shame in sight. Aspen took a deep breath, barely
suppressing the impulse to fight him to the death right there and then.

She thought the shameless, arrogant jerk was truly the most despicable man she had ever met in her life.

She silently comforted herself, thinking, 'It's just this once. Next time-no, there definitely won't even be a next time...'

She had no choice but to comfort herself like this; otherwise, she would never get over it.

Yet, one huge question still lingered in her mind: was this really her first time experiencing such a thing? If so, how had it happened so quickly?

Even someone without experience knew it should not have ended in mere moments. Besides, she was a woman known for her resilience, not someone who would collapse so quickly.

Confused and frustrated, Aspen decided to look it up online later to figure it out.

When the car stopped in front of the Serenity Villa, Aspen opened the door and nearly fell out, her legs weak. She turned back, glaring furiously at Andrew, then limped inside the house.

Andrew immediately called over Natasha, instructing her, "Keep an eye on Aspen. Make sure she doesn't try anything reckless like jumping off the building."

Natasha stared at him in surprise and asked, "Why? Did you hurt her pride or something?"

Andrew shook his head, "No, nothing like that. Just keep an eye on her, okay?"

Natasha nodded thoughtfully and said, "Alright."

Then, Andrew turned the Ferrari

around and headed straight for Cak Apothecary. Ronan had promised to gather some medicinal ingredients for him, and Andrew wanted to check on his progress.

These ingredients were not particularly rare, but Andrew needed them urgently to

craft a special pill that would help Tiana advance to the next level.

Chapter 1214



Ronan's Oak Apothecary had built a modest but respected reputation in Blumedale, so having him gather the herbs was a huge time-saver for Andrew.

However, the moment Andrew stepped into the shop, Janice Bates came running toward him in tears.

"Andrew! My grandpa... he got hurt! Someone beat him up!" she cried, sobbing uncontrollably.

Andrew's brows furrowed. "Janice, stop crying for now. Take me to him."

In the back room, Ronan was lying on a bed, clearly injured. Two red handprints burned across his cheeks, and his forehead was bruised and bleeding as if someone had shoved him hard against something.

"Mr. Lloyd... you came," Ronan said weakly, trying to sit up. "Forgive me, I've failed you."

Andrew quickly motioned for him to stop talking. "Don't waste your breath. Let's get you patched up first."

After checking him over, Andrew was relieved to find that Ronan had only suffered surface wounds and a badly twisted waist. He worked swiftly, massaging the injured muscles and applying medicine to the cut on his forehead.

It was all done in less than ten minutes-fast and precise.

Janice stood nearby, watching with teary eyes full of gratitude. "Andrew, thank you so much! If only I had studied medicine... I could've helped him myself!"

Andrew smiled lightly. "Janice, not everyone's meant to be a doctor. You can't think like that. Your grandpa's alright now. Come outside with me and tell me exactly what happened."

Once outside, Janice wiped her tears, clenched her fists, and said through gritted teeth, "It was the people from Genesis Dispensary. They attacked Grandpa!"

Andrew's expression turned cold. "Genesis Dispensary? So this is Mosby's doing?"

Janice nodded. "Yeah, it's his clinic. In Blumedale, Genesis Dispensary is where all the powerful families go. Mosby has deep connections in the city's medical scene, and he's been suppressing other practitioners for years.

"He's been trying to monopolize the entire traditional medicine market, especially the traditional medicine sector. Grandpa's just been holding on the best he can. Mosby's people have come by more than once, demanding he shut down Oak Apothecary. But Grandpa kept refusing, so Mosby made him a target."

Her voice cracked as the tears returned, and she wiped her eyes again.

Andrew handed her a tissue and gave her time to breathe, saying, "Take your time."

Janice composed herself and continued, her lips trembling. "Even with all this pressure, Grandpa kept the place open-he didn't want to let go of our family's legacy. But this time, he thought the herbs you requested might be available at Génesis Dispensary, so he went to buy them.

"But the staff there held a grudge, and they took it all out on him. They accused him of working with you, said he was a traitor, and that Mosby would destroy both of you sooner or later.

"Grandpa's old... he didn't want to start a fight, so he stayed quiet and tried to leave. But as soon as he walked out the door, they surrounded him and beat him

up!"

Andrew's jaw tightened as a cold fury welled up inside him. "Did you call the cops?"

Janice gave a bitter smile and shook her head. "We've reported them so many times... but Andrew, it's ve

absolutely useless. Sure, we've got some toyal customers, but compared to Mosby's wealthand influence, no one's going to take our side.

"Plus, Mosby's got people in the Blumedale Police Department. Every time we report it, they sweep it under the rug."

A sharp gleam flashed in Andrew's eyes as he said coolly, "Good. If the cops won't do anything, then I'll make sure your grandpa and Oak Apothecary get some justice."

Janice's eyes widened. "Andrew, no! Please don't act impulsively! If Grandpa finds out that I said something and it got you in danger, he'd never forgive me!"

Andrew let out a cold laugh. "Dangerous for me? No, Janice-the ones in danger are Mosby and the scum running Genesis Dispensary."

Without another word, Andrew walked out of Oak Apothecary, slammed the car door, and floored the gas pedal toward Genesis Dispensary.

Janice tried to run after him, but she was panicked and flustered, unsure of what to do. After all, charging straight into Genesis Dispensary alone was like having a death wish.

Chapter 1215



The red Ferrari screeched to a stop in front of the famous Genesis Dispensary like

a streak of lightning. The dramatic entrance instantly caught the attention of pedestrians walking by.

"Who the hell do you think you are? Driving that flashy piece of crap like you own

the place? Move it before we lock your ass in!"

Two burly security thugs stationed at the entrance of Genesis Dispensary stomped over, cursing as they approached.

Janice jumped out of the car in a panic and rushed to explain, "I'm sorry, sirs, really sorry! We'll leave right now, please don't—"

However, before she could even finish her sentence, Andrew stepped forward and slapped both men across the face.

Each blow landed with a crack, and neither man had time to react before their heads slammed into the pavement, completely unconscious.

Janice stood frozen, wondering if Andrew had always had such an explosive temper. How had she never seen this side of him before?

"You bastard! You think you can hit our guys and walk away?!"

Within seconds, a group of 15 goons armed with steel pipes and thick wooden batons stormed out of the dispensary, their faces twisted with rage.

Andrew glanced at them with casual contempt. "So this is Genesis Dispensary? Doesn't look like a medicinal clinic to me. Looks more like a mob-run shakedown joint."

Old Hayface—a sharp-jawed man with a ratty ponytail, a mole on his chin, and one long black hair sticking from it—stepped forward with a sneer. He

looked at Andrew and barked, "You little punk, who the hell are you? Do you even know where you are?"

Andrew remained unfazed. "Name's Andrew Lloyd. I'm here to ask why your dispensary beats other people up."

Old Hayface's expression darkened before curling into a cruel grin. "Well, well, look who it is. You little bastard. Funny you should come knocking Heaven's got a door, and you walked straight into Hell instead.

"You pissed off Mr. Lake, and I was just thinking it's time someone settled that debt. Since you're here, don't even think about walking out."

With that, he raised his hand and gave the signal. All 15 men rushed forward, weapons swinging, their muscles flexed and ready to break bones.

"Don't kill him! Make sure to break all three of his legs, and make it so that even his parents won't recognize him!" Old Hayface laughed darkly from the side.

Janice cried out, tears falling as she screamed, "Andrew, run! Please!"

Yet, Andrew did not move. His voice remained calm and steady. "Janice, stay back. The one who laid a hand on your grandfather-I'll be taking his arm. And as for how Genesis Dispensary treated Oak Apothecary, I'll make sure they get it all back, blow for blow."

His eyes flashed with cold fury, and without another word, he launched forward, his fist meeting the first attacker's wooden club.

The club snapped like twigs under the force of his punch. The same fist drove straight into the attacker's chest, and with a wet crack, blood sprayed from his mouth as he crumpled to the ground.

Old Hayface took an involuntary step back, his confidence shaken. He thought, 'Damn... this kid is stronger than he looks.'

Still, he grinned wickedly. So what if he was tough? One guy could not take oman entire squad. That was why Genesis Dispensary kept muscle around-to maintain their grip on Blumedale's medical world.

No matter how strong Andrew was, eventually, he would be nothing more than a broken body lying in a pool of his own blood.

However, what happened next made his blood run cold. His handpicked brawlers -men who could take down five ordinary guys each—fell like bowling pins in Andrew's path.

Those who merely brushed against him howled in pain and collapsed, unable to get back up. Meanwhile, those unlucky enough to take a direct hit flew back coughing blood, eyes bulging in agony.

The few who got struck full force by Andrew's palm or sweeping kicks did not even get the chance to cry out-they dropped instantly, eyes rolling back as they hit the ground, twitching or unconscious, maybe worse.

Chapter 1216



Barely two minutes had passed, but every single one of Genesis Dispensary's enforcers lay sprawled on the ground—some unconscious, some writhing in pain, and some not even moving.

Janice clutched the edge of her sleeve, her face pale as a sheet. She stared at Andrew in shock, as if not recognizing this man. The Andrew she knew was gentle, refined, eloquent—someone who had won her grandfather's respect the moment they met, a miracle doctor with endless skill.

However, the Andrew standing before her now was the complete opposite-ruthless, cold-blooded, and surrounded by a sea of blood from the beatings he had just handed out.

Old Hayface's legs trembled as he stared at Andrew like he had seen a ghost, thinking this was beyond insane.

How could some young punk wipe out all of Genesis Dispensary's muscle like it was nothing?

He shook his head furiously in denial. "Andrew, you've messed up big time-real big. Mr. Lake is on his way and-"

Before he could finish, Andrew delivered two fierce slaps across his face, knocking out a front tooth and ripping the single black hair clean off the mole on his chin.

Old Hayface clutched his bleeding mouth, howling in rage, his eyes bloodshot. "You little bastard! How dare you hit me! I'm Mr. Lake's apprentice! Laying a hand on me is like spitting in Mr. Lake's face! He's gonna—"

Clutching his groin with shaking hands, he shrieked in pain. "Stop! Dr. Lloyd, please! Let's talk this out! I-It was all a misunderstanding!"

The pitiful scream and groveling were almost too much to believe. This was the Genesis Dispensary's head manager-the great apprentice of Mosby himself. The guy who usually acted like royalty whenever patients came by was now reduced to a sobbing mess on the ground.

Where was all that arrogance now? Where was that smug, superior air?

Andrew looked down at him with icy detachment. "Let me ask again-was it you who hit Ronan?"

Old Hayface nodded, then quickly shook his head, trembling so hard it looked like he might collapse again.

Andrew's hand shot out once more, slapping him so hard his already swollen face turned lopsided. Blood flew from his mouth again, and stars exploded in his vision.

His mind buzzed, and his fear of Andrew had officially evolved into full-blown terror.

This guy was insanely powerful. Old Hayface had been extorting money for Mosby for years, but he had never met anyone who dared to hit back, let alone someone who hit this hard.

"Dr. Lloyd, please, no more! I'll talk! I'll talk! I did hit Mr. Bates, but I wasn't the only one!"

Andrew's tone was flat. "Who else?"

Old Hayface's voice shook. "It-it was Ellis..."

Before he could finish, a loud, mocking shout rang from inside the building.

"Andrew! So that old fossil Ronan got roughed up? Good!

you think you're some hero, chong

up to avenge him? Then you'd better get ready-because I'm about to break you into pieces!"

With those venomous words echoing, a wiry bald man stepped slowly out of Genesis Dispensary's entrance, his eyes cold and murderous.

Old Hayface lit up like a Christmas tree the moment he saw him. "Ellis! Thank God you're here! Take him out! Avenge me! Bring back our reputation! Kill him-tear him to shreds!"

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His crazed, hate-fueled roar sent a chill down everyone's spine. The crowd watching was struck speechless.

This was Ellis Rush-Mosby's third apprentice, trained under a master from Silverthorn Monastery. If he was getting involved now, then maybe Andrew really was walking into his own funeral.

Chapter 1217



The bald man, Ellis, was not some no-name street thug-he was well-known in Blumedale. Among Mosby's apprentices, he was one of the rare few with zero talent in medicine but exceptional prowess in martial arts.

Insiders knew the truth-Mosby had not taken Ellis in to pass on his medical legacy or help heal the sick. He wanted muscle, someone who could handle the dirty work behind closed doors.

The whispers began almost instantly among the growing crowd. "This is bad. That's Mosby's third apprentice-trained under the monks at Silverthorn Monastery. I heard he's so powerful he can crack stone with his bare hands."

Another chimed in, "Genesis Dispensary isn't the kind of place you just stroll into looking for trouble. That young guy's finished."

"Well... I don't know. Judging from what I saw earlier, the guy's no amateur either."

"Amateur? My ass. Ellis doesn't hold back. People have died under his fists before. That punk's either going to be crippled or dead in minutes..."

More and more onlookers gathered outside Genesis Dispensary, drawn by the tension.

Most watched Andrew with mocking eyes and thinly veiled schadenfreude, certain he was out of his depth. To them, anyone crazy enough to pick a fight with Genesis Dispensary must have had a death wish.

Janice clutched Andrew's arm in fear. "Andrew, please, you can't fight him! Ellis is not someone we can mess with! Even Grandpa always told me we have to endure. Let's just leave while we still can!"

Andrew understood where she was coming from—she was timid and cautious, and with good reason.

Genesis Dispensary was not just backed by Mosby; Mosby himself was treated like a living legend in the city.

Ronan, by contrast, was just a humble healer who relied on skill and hard work to survive. Compared to someone like Mosby, who used medicine to cozy up to the elite, Ronan did not stand a chance in a power struggle.

However, Andrew's expression remained calm. "Janice, I gave you my word. I said I'd make things right for your grandpa and Oak Apothecary-and I will."

He turned back to Ellis, regarding him as if he were nothing more than background noise.

Ellis licked his lips and grinned. "Interesting. Most people would be pissing themselves in front of me. You? You're not even flinching. I won't say you're the bravest, but you might be the dumbest I've seen in a long time."

Old Hayface bared his teeth, pointing at Andrew with a furious glare. "Ellis, don't waste your time talking to him! This bastard dared to come to

Genesis Dispensary and mane

trouble! And he's insulted MoLake over and over! Kill him already! Give Mr. Lake some justice!"

But instead of agreeing, Ellis turned and spat a thick glob of phlegm straight onto Old Hayface's face. "Get lost, you useless sack of garbage. Do you really think you're worthy of being so friendly with me? You're the reason Mr. Lake's reputation is going down the drain. You're a disgrace. Pathetic."

Gasps rippled through the crowd. No one had expected Ellis to treat his fellow apprentice with such contempt.

Old Hayface wiped the spit off his face in silence, not daring to say a word. Yet, in his eyes, the hatred burned brighter than ever. And all of it was directed at one man-Andrew.

He could not challenge Ellis, so he focused all his humiliation and resentment on Andrew instead.

Andrew clicked his tongue. "Wow. Mosby's disciples really are close, huh? Real brotherly love."

Ellis let out a dry chuckle and shrugged. "I know you're mocking me. I don't care. Honestly, I've always hated that idiot. Watching you smack the teeth out of him? That was pretty satisfying."

Andrew smiled. "Don't worry. You'll be joining him soon. That way, your whole little family can be reunited in one nice, broken heap."

Ellis's face darkened. His smile

vanished as a cold sneer curled on his lips. "Andrew, you're not just suicidal you've got a filthy mouth too. I've made up my mind. I'm not only going to break your arms and legs... I'm going to rip that tongue right out of your head."

The crowd collectively cringed.

Even now, even on the edge of getting destroyed, this guy Andrew still had the

nerve to talk trash?

Chapter 1218



The crowd could not help but wonder if Andrew was just that hurried to die, "Dragon Claw Strike!" With a low, lethal growl, Ellis struck, his eyes full of murder.

His hands curled into claws, shooting straight for Andrew's chest and eyes, going for nothing less than a kill shot right from the start.

However, Andrew's expression did not change. He stepped back once, then again, calm and fluid. It looked casual, but every move was calculated-just enough to slip right past Ellis's deadly thrusts.

"Not bad. That's some decent footwork," Ellis sneered, his tone mocking even as he circled again.

Then, his wiry frame lunged low, sweeping toward Andrew with a lightning-fast kick.

Andrew's voice remained quiet and steady. "Dragon Claw Strike and Golden Cicada Stance are elite techniques from Silverthorn Monastery. Too bad you only learned the shell, not the substance."

He stopped moving. Like a rock in a river, his stance suddenly locked in place.

Ellis's sweeping legs, fast as a blur, collided full-force into Andrew's planted stance, right as his own momentum was fading.

A dull ache pulsed up Ellis's leg, enough to make him wince. He pulled back, rising to his feet with an unsettled look in his eyes. 'What the hell? How did

this punk just read the flaw in my strike that clearly? That wasn't supposed to happen.'

His thoughts raced, but he shook them off. It had to be luck-dumb luck. He let out a deep breath, then roared, his palms flying forward.

One strike after another echoed through the air like whip cracks.

"Let's see how you handle this!" Ellis snarled. "This is Palm of Hollow Truths-another Silverthorn technique. If you recognized Dragon Claw and Cicada, let's see what you do with this one!"

The crowd recoiled at the sheer force of his blows. The air vibrated with every strike-shockwaves blasting through the alley.

Palm of Hollow Truths was a devastating technique. Legend had it that it was almost impossible to withstand.

To counter it? You would need to be someone at the level of a martial king.

Ellis never even considered that possibility. That kind of power was a pipe dream, unreachable for almost anyone.

If Andrew were already a martial king, Ellis would have bowed down instead of picking a fight.

But right then, Andrew's body shifted. He arched like a drawn bow, braced by his hands and feet, forming a low, grounded frame that refused to budge.

Ellis's crushing palms blasted downward, but Andrew did not flinch.

Then, it happened.

Andrew's eyes snapped into focus, like a hawk zeroing in on prey, and he surged forward like a cannon shot.

His counterstrikes were just as open and forceful-one palm slammed into Ellis's wrist, the other straight for his forehead.

Ellis twisted his body with a shout, barely avoiding a fatal blow.

However, panic flooded his

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'What the hell?! How does the net

know Palm of Hollow Truths?!

guy

There was no time to process it. Andrew was already pressing forward again, his hands unleashing strike after seamless strike.

Each blow felt endless-fluid and powerful, like an unrelenting river crashing through rock.

Ellis could hardly breathe, recognizing this as the highest form of the technique -Waterlike Perfection', the ultimate level of Palm of Hollow Truths.

A technique so honed it became indestructible, yet flowing-unyielding and eternal like water itself.

Ellis had only seen it once in his life, during a rare demonstration by an elder monk at Silverthorn. Not even the master who had trained him had reached that level. fo

Yet, this nobody—this stranger—was displaying it effortlessly?

Andrew's voice rang out, cold and resolute. "So what if you studied under the monks of Silverthorn Monastery?" In my eyes, Ellis, you're just aslightly bigger insect than the rest. And you know what insects are for? To be crushed underfoot." Cóntent belongs to

The moment his final word dropped, Andrew drew back his palms and transformed his hands into hooked claws.

Like lightning, his Dragon Claw slashed across Ellis's chest, ripping cloth and skin alike.

Ellis let out a blood-curdling scream. His eyes were wide with terror, blood spilling from the corner of his lips as he stumbled back.

"Andrew... y-you know Dragon Claw too? Who the hell are you? There's no way you're just some nobody!"

But Andrew did not answer. He did not have the time or interest to respond to the dying curiosity of a man who was already finished.

Now that Ellis was on the brink, he wanted to know who Andrew really was.

Chapter 1219



It was too late for Ellis. Before he knew it, Andrew's Dragon Claw Strike clamped down on his shoulder with crushing precision.

Ellis let out a blood-curdling scream, his voice thick with agony. His shoulder twisted violently as he attempted to spin through the air—a full 360-degree motion meant to break free using a technique known as Dragon Molting.

Even while airborne, he gritted his teeth and launched a vicious counter-kick toward Andrew's abdomen.

Yet, Andrew did not even flinch. With a cold, soundless smirk, he snapped his knee upward, effortlessly intercepting the incoming strike.

Ellis's foot missed entirely, and the impact shredded ligaments along the way.

At the same time, Andrew's grip shifted, his Dragon Claw morphing fluidly as it locked onto Ellis's elbow joint.

A loud crack echoed, and the sound was sharp enough to make onlookers wince.

Ellis threw his head back and let out a tortured scream. "My arm! You bastard, I'll kill you—"

But it was too late. One of his arms had just been brutally dislocated-ripped from its socket like it was nothing more than a doll's limb.

No matter how much rage he summoned, no matter how much bloodlust filled his chest, Ellis was powerless. In Andrew's hands, he was nothing but a ragdoll.

Andrew grabbed the back of Ellis' neck and swung his body like a wrecking ball, smashing his face-first into the wall. Then, under the horrified gaze of everyone present, he kept going.

Dragging Ellis like a battering ram, Andrew plowed through over 30 feet of the building's wooden outer wall, reducing the iconic facade to splinters and dust.

The entire front of Genesis Dispensary collapsed into chaos-timber, smoke, and debris flying everywhere.

Ellis lay face down, twitching on the floor, his eyes bloodshot and bulging. He looked like a half-dead animal, wheezing through a mouth full of blood.

Old Hayface nearly choked on his own spit, trembling as he stuttered, "Y-You... you actually killed Ellis... M-Mr. Lake will never let you walk away from this..."

Andrew gave him a smile, but to Old Hayface, there was nothing warm in it—only an unearthly chill that sank into his bones.

Then, Andrew brought his foot down on Ellis's remaining arm. The sickening snap rang out like a gunshot, and just like that, Ellis was done. Both arms were shattered beyond repair.

A thick stream of blood poured from his mouth as his eyes locked onto Andrew's. There was no more anger in them-only a wild, desperate question.

'Who the hell are you? You're not some no-name punk from Jayrodale... You used Silverthorn's deadliest techniques like they were second nature... Could it be... Could you already be a martial king?'

Ellis's entire body trembled violently before freezing completely.

The answer had dawned on him. This man, this terrifying figure
front of him-Andrewmet

the

king.

power of a full-fledged

A one-man army, a walking calamity.

Yet, he could no longer speak. His body would not move, not even his tongue.
He was finished.

"Janice, we're leaving."

Andrew did not give Old Hayface or the remaining apprentices a single
glance.

He simply walked to the Ferrari, opened the door for Janice, and drove off,
smooth and unbothered, as if he'd never been there.

He came in with thunder and left with calm.

And Genesis Dispensary-once the

worldBlumedale's elite

-did not even have the

strength to lift a finger to stop him.

The crowd exploded with noise the moment the Ferrari roared away. People were buzzing, faces alight with awe.

"Holy crap, that was insane!"

"Ellis was a beast—the guy's been behind more deaths than anyone in the local underworld. And this dude turned him into pulp like he was nothing!"

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"That's real martial arts, man—true Eastern technique! Not some flashy showboating crap. That was kill-or-be-killed fighting!"

"I totally misjudged him... Genesis Dispensary's been untouchable for years. Anyone who tried got buried six feet under!"

"But today? Karma finally hit. Damn, that felt good."

Those who had bet against Andrew were now frozen in disbelief, looking like they had just swallowed nails.

They called him a dead man walking, but anyone capable of demolishing Ellis like that was no ordinary man.

That was a legend in the making.

And though most in Blumedale hadn't heard of him before, after today, no one would forget the name Andrew Lloyd.

Chapter 1220



Back at Oak Apothecary, Andrew turned to Janice and said calmly, "If anyone from Genesis Dispensary dares show up here again, you call me immediately."

The cold edge in his voice made Janice's heart skip. She nodded quickly and murmured, "Got it, Andrew."

Even now, standing back in familiar surroundings, her nerves had not fully settled. There was only one word she could use to describe him: unstoppable.

Just then, Ronan, supported by an assistant, walked slowly from the back room. "Mr. Lloyd, Janice... you two went to Genesis Dispensary, didn't you?"

Janice hesitated, then glanced at Andrew, unsure whether to speak.

However, Andrew did not make a big deal of it. He waved her on. "It's fine. Go ahead."

Janice did not hold back. "Grandpa, Andrew took me to Genesis Dispensary... and completely wrecked the place!"

Ronan nearly dropped his reading glasses. "What? Mr. Lloyd, you—"

Janice interrupted quickly, "Don't worry, Grandpa! We're fine. The ones who aren't are Genesis Dispensary—and that thug Ellis. Andrew practically beat him half to death!"

Ronan was caught off guard. Eventually, he said, "Janice, step outside for a moment. I'd like to speak to Mr. Lloyd alone."

Andrew remained silent, waiting for what the old man had to say.

Once the others had stepped out, Ronan made his way to a chair and gestured politely. "Mr. Lloyd, please, sit."

Andrew did not take the offer. His tone remained level. "Mr. Bates, if you think I overstepped today and brought unnecessary trouble to Oak Apothecary, don't worry. I won't bother you again."

Ronan shook his head and let out a long sigh. "No, Mr. Lloyd, you misunderstand. I asked her to leave not to scold you, but because I wanted to thank you. For those of us in medicine, integrity is everything. And you, Mr. Lloyd, have helped me reclaim the dignity I thought I'd lost forever."

Tears welled in the old man's eyes. He struggled to his feet, clearly trying to kneel in gratitude.

Andrew immediately stepped

forward to stop him. "Mr. Bates,

please don't. I had my own reasons

for acting today. The truth is, and I already had unresolved conflicts. And your injuries

happened because you were helping me gather the herbs I requested. So really, stepping in was the least I could do."

Ronan wiped away his tears and slowly sat back down. "Mr. Lloyd, you're not just courageous-you're fearless. To take on Mosby like that... I'm truly impressed."

He paused, then asked cautiously, "There's something I've been meaning to ask. I'm not sure if I should..."

Andrew offered a faint smile. "Go ahead, Mr. Bates. If I know the answer, I'll tell you."

Ronan hesitated for a moment, staring deep into Andrew's eyes. "Mr. Lloyd... the person shaking up all of Blumedale right now-the one openly clashing with the city's most powerful families... is that you?"

Andrew gave a small nod and smiled. "That's right. That's me."

Ronan had expected that answer, but hearing it out loud still left him reeling. Meeting Andrew had seemed like pure chance.

Up until now, he had believed the young man, despite his unmatched medical skills, was still relatively unknown. Definitely not someone from Blumedale's elite circle. But now, he realized he had been wrong.

This was not just some rising genius—this was a force of nature. Someone who struck first, asked nothing, and feared no one.

Ronan exhaled slowly, almost in

awe. "In Gabo Creek, I've met countless prodigies over the years. The Three Titans need no

introduction. Joe from the Drive). Ne

Luna from the Phelans—both are prodigies in every sense. Luna is nearly one of a kind."

He paused again and sighed deeply. "But someone like you, Mr. Lloyd—someone who's so direct, so fearless, so utterly dominant—I can't say I've ever met another like you in all my years."