

RIISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

Chapter 1231



Yara let out a furious laugh. "Andrew, you really are an arrogant bastard! Fine. If you think so little of me, I'll find someone else. You're not the only player in town."

Andrew waved a hand. "Be my guest."

"You—" Yara's chest heaved with rage, but she was too calculating to let her anger show fully. With one last icy glare, she turned on her heels and stormed out, her stilettos clicking sharply against the floor.

She had come here looking down on him—some nobody from Jayrodale who'd clawed his way into Blumedale through sheer luck and stubbornness. In her eyes, he was still just an insect. Her so-called "partnership" had always been a ploy to use him.

However, Andrew had not taken the bait. Worse, he had dismissed her as if she were beneath his notice.

What a bastard.

Aspen scowled as the door slammed. "Was pissing her off really necessary? If she'd actually worked with us, her resources alone would've been worth it—forget about Quinton's backing."

Andrew sipped his tea. "Relax. She'll be back."

"Back?" Aspen snorted. "You think those high-society types swallow their pride that easily?"

"She's got pride," Andrew said, smirking. "But mine's ten times bigger. That woman's ruthless and smart. Trust me, she'll return."

No sooner had he spoken than the door flew open. Yara strode back in, her long legs eating up the distance. This time, she slammed something onto the table in front of Andrew.

"I said I came in good faith, Mr. Lloyd. You doubted me. You insulted me. So tell me, do I have your attention now?"

Andrew set down his cup. Aspen leaned in first and blanched.

"Ms. Wright, is this..."

Yara's face was rigid, but a tremor in her jaw betrayed her.

Andrew did not need to look to know what she was forcing down.

He whistled. "Using your own nudes as collateral? Now that's what I call commitment."

"Are we clear?" she hissed.

Andrew grinned. "Crystal. But we're still not working together."

Yara's control shattered. "You're fucking with me?"

"Wouldn't dream of it," Andrew said, spreading his hands. "Even if I wanted to, you'd never allow

right?" tel

"You son of a bitch!" Her elegant poise evaporated. "You looked at those photos!"

"You

force you to do it!" Andrew said,

unfazed. "But hey-thanks for 1

generosity."

Even Aspen gaped. Goodness. How is he this shameless?'

Yara's voice dropped to a lethal

You just violated me,

Andrew. Either you partner wil net

me,

or burn your world to the ground."

Chapter 1232



Andrew was completely speechless. "Ms. Wright, you can eat nonsense if you want, but you can't just say nonsense like that! I haven't even touched a single hair on your body! And now you're accusing me of violating you? That's just making things up out of thin air!"

Yara was so furious that her whole face turned bright red. The way she glared at Andrew made it seem like she wanted to kill him.

Aspen snapped, "Andrew, that's enough! You did look at her photos. Don't act innocent!"

Andrew sighed. "Fine, I'll accept Ms. Wright's proposal to work together. But there's one condition-and you need to agree to it. If not, then we're done here."

Yara gritted her teeth. "Say it."

Andrew said calmly, "The only reason I'm even considering this is because I can tell you're serious about this. You and your half-brother Quinton must be at a point where you're ready to destroy each other.

"But even so, I still don't fully trust you. So from here on out, I'm in charge, and you follow my lead-no questions asked."

Yara snapped, "Absolutely not. That's completely unreasonable!"

Andrew's expression did not change. "What's so unreasonable about it?"

Yara flushed with anger. "So if you told me to sleep with you, to go to bed with you, I'd have to say yes?"

Andrew shook his head. "You can relax. My little assistant is way more fun in bed than you'd ever be."

Yara paused and glanced at Aspen, then nodded thoughtfully. "Alright. I believe you. That secretary of yours isn't bad. Probably good enough to keep you satisfied."

Aspen clenched her fists and shouted, "Andrew! You filthy jerk! When did I ever let you touch me? Don't you dare slander my name like that!"

Andrew frowned. "Such a mouth on you. Talking back to your boss like that in front of outsiders? Aspen, looks like you need to be reminded who's in charge. Aren't you mine? Didn't we already do something together?"

Aspen was fuming. "Oh really? Then tell me what exactly happened? I'd love to hear what story you'll make up now!"

Andrew replied coolly, "Nothing much. Just smacked your ass a few times, and my hand ended up getting wet."

Aspen nearly died of embarrassment, and she wanted to tear that devil's mouth off.

How could he just say it like that?

How was she supposed to show her face after this?

Yara laughed mockingly. "Mr. Lloyd sure knows how to have fun. Sounds like you

and my bastard brother would get along just fine."

Andrew looked disgusted. "Sorry, but I'm nothing like your brother."

Aspen seized the chance to take a

jab. "Oh yeah, they're definitely

the same. Your brother's a

velove

beast-but Mr. Lloyd? He's even

worse than one."

Andrew chuckled, deciding to rein himself in a little. This little assistant of his clearly had not gotten over what happened.

He figured it was fine. As a man, taking advantage with his hands was enough—

he could let her win a round with her words.

Yara picked up the stack of racy

photos from the table and looked at Andrew. "Well then, here's to a successful partnership. Mr. Lloyd,¹ can tell you're not just some average guy. Just don't let me down in the end. Oh, and one more thing-you'd better keep a close eye on Quinton. I think he's onto something, and he's moving fast with his investigation."

Andrew snorted. "That bastard brother of yours is always up to something. As long as he doesn't get in my way, I don't care."

Yara frowned, "You should care

because Quinton's got his sights on the Rhodes family. And I overheard him talking to Christina-something about a treasure. He said that once he finds it, not even you, Andrew, or the Five Apex Families, or even the Three Titans, could stop him; he'd crush them all under his feet."

Andrew cursed silently. That bastard Quinton really was quick on the draw-sharp

as hell too.

Chapter 1233



Andrew did not expect Quinton to know about the treasure.

There was no doubt what Quinton was after had to be the same treasure that Ronan's family had been guarding for generations. And now that Quinton had his sights set on the Rhodes family, it could only mean one thing: he was targeting the fragmented treasure map in their possession.

Clearly, it was time to give Tiana and Jameson a heads-up.

As Andrew thought it through, he suddenly called out, "Ms. Wright, wait a second!"

Yara stopped and turned back around. "Mr. Lloyd, is there something else?"

Andrew pointed at the stack in her hand and gave a sly smile. "Nothing big-just figured you should leave a token of your sincerity behind."

The relaxed look on Yara's face instantly vanished, replaced with one of irritation. She silently cursed at him for being a pervert.

With a loud smack, she dropped a few risque photos onto the table for him.

That was the foundation of their partnership-Andrew needed leverage over her to feel secure working together.

Aspen scoffed, "Happy now? Take those home and jerk off to them every night."

Andrew shook his head and replied seriously, "No need for that. If I wanted action, I'd go for the real thing. Why would I use my hand when I've got a sexy secretary sleeping just one room over?"

That did it. Aspen had taken enough-now she was downright furious. "Andrew, you are disgusting!"

As Yara left the Supreme Capital Group building, her eyes turned icy cold. "Quinton, you pushed me into this. You deserve to die. I might be unable to take you down, but Andrew definitely can."

She pulled back her sleeve, revealing pale skin lined with red welts. All of them were marks from her darling brother, Quinton-proof of the abuse she had endured.

He had not just hurt her physically-he tried to own her. Nonetheless, Yara fought back with everything she had, narrowly escaping his control.

That was why she would rather sacrifice everything, even give those explicit photos to Andrew, just to bring Quinton down.

In the Wright family, Yara's existence had always been seen as shameful.

Her mother had been nothing but a mistress, and Yara herself was nothing more than a bastard in the eyes of the family.

From a luxury car parked on the curb, Christina stepped out with a cold glare. "Yara, what did Andrew say? Quinton made it clear-your job is to crush the Supreme Capital Group."

Yara had been planted by Quinton to carry out his revenge on behalf of Christina,

Hearing Christina's words, she just laughed. "Christina, didn't you use to have a thing with Andrew? So why does it feel like you're wishing him dead now?"

Christina's tone turned frosty. "I gave him a chance. He didn't appreciate it."

"Instead, he let that bitch Aspen humiliate me. So now he can't blame me for fighting back."

Yara stared at her flatly. "You're cold, that's for sure. No-let's be real. You're a bitch. A spiteful, ungrateful, arrogant little bitch walking straight to her own grave."

Christina froze. "Yara, what are you talking about?"

Yara sneered. "I said you're an ungrateful, suicidal bitch. A guy like Andrew is rare. You had him in your hands, and you blew it. Not only are you not sorry, but you want revenge and fight him?"

Yara landed two sharp slaps across Christina's face, then said with contempt, "I really don't get it. What makes a fake-ass girl like you think you can compete with Andrew?"

"You thought you could get Quinton to back you up? Thought I'd help you settle the score? Please. You're not even on Andrew's level. Hell, you don't even compare to that Aspen girl, Andrew and Aspen humiliated you, you deserved it."

Christina stood there, stunned, holding her burning cheek. She stared at Yara in disbelief. "Y-Kon

actually dared to go against

Quinton's orders? You're siding with Andrew? Are you insane?"

Chapter 1234



Looking at Christina, who looked like she was about to lose her mind, Yara sneered. "Did I say anything wrong? Christina, let me ask you—what makes you think you're even qualified to go against Andrew? His company is worth billions. If he really wanted to crush you, you'd be dead a hundred times over by now."

Christina shouted in fury, "Yara, whose side are you on? Are you with the Wrights, or are you with Andrew?"

Yara laughed coldly. "Does that even matter? I already know you're going to go running back to Quinton to tattle, but I couldn't care less. You're nothing but a curse in human form a scheming little parasite."

"Don't think I don't see what you're doing. You're trying to use our family—the Wrights to get back at Andrew. But too bad for you, while Quinton might be dumb enough to help you, I'm not. Because no matter how I look at you, you're just a manipulative bitch with an agenda."

Christina clutched her stinging face, too humiliated to speak, and climbed into the car. With one slam on the gas, she sped off. It was humiliation like she had never known before, and it made her feel like her nerves were splitting apart.

How did it come to this?

Yara was Quinton's sister, the one who was supposed to stand up for her. Yet, not only had she refused to help, she had slapped her across the face twice.

For the first time, Christina felt something close to total despair, mixed with helpless rage.

Was Andrew really untouchable?

Was there truly no one, and no situation, that could bring him down?

She hated him so much.

Back at the hotel, Christina did not say a word. Her face was so dark that it scared the staff.

Irene and Leroy were chatting casually about the upcoming holiday and where they should travel.

"Mom, I wanna go to Drubae! I wanna stay in one of those fancy hotels! And I wanna date a hot blonde bombshell!" Leroy giggled like an idiot.

Irene rolled her eyes. "Forget Drubae. I wanna go back to Jayrodale and play mahjong with my girlfriends! I'll show those ladies just how well I'm living in Blumedale! We're staying in five-star hotels, spending thousands a night! And my sweet daughter? She's dating the eldest son of the Wrights!"

She giggled and added, "I can already imagine those jealous, sour looks from your aunties and cousins. Oh, just thinking about it gives me life!"

Her goofy grin was not much better than Leroy's.

Christina could not take it anymore. All that shallow chatter hit her like a hammer.

"Having fun is all you two ever do! All you care about is luxury and pleasure while doing absolutely nothing useful! I'm warning you-if I go down, you both go down with me! You'll be left with nothing—you'll be begging on the streets!"

Her voice had turned sharp and shrill, practically vibrating with rage and bitterness.

Irene and Leroy fell completely silent.

After a long, awkward pause, Irene finally muttered, "Christie, what's gotten into you? Did you wake up on the wrong side of the bed? If you think it's such a burden for Leroy and me to live off your money, just say it.

"I'll take your brother and head back to Jayrodale! Don't worry-we won't stick around Blumedale embarrassing you!"

As she spoke, she wiped her eyes dramatically and began to sob like she had been horribly wronged.

Leroy chimed in, annoyed. "Christie, look what you've done. You made Mom cry! You've made it in life, and we just benefit a little from it-so what? Do you really have to yell and curse at us for it?"

Christina, already in a foul mood, finally snapped-all her usual composure, all that cold and haughty pride-gone in a puff of smoke. What remained was a mind on the brink and a soul crushed under pressure she could no longer bear.

Irene spent every day flaunting Christina's status, pushing her to suck up to this person or flatter that one-hell, she would probably sell her off to some rich old man if it meant getting ahead.

And Leroy? He was absolutely useless. She had pulled strings to get him a stable government job, but he called it boring and soul-sucking, saying it would dull his edge.

Then, she set him up in business—he tanked. Worse than a clueless freshman trying to pitch to sharks.

Over the years, she had handed him millions, and without fail, he blew every cent, leaving her to clean up the mountain of debt he racked up.

Now, Christina finally saw it—her world was full of leeches. Not a single normal, reliable person around her.

And the worst part? She'd been too blind, too stubborn to see it until now.

Meanwhile, look at Andrew. Aspen had become his most trusted right hand. Dylan and Natasha had even come to Blumedale as his personal protection squad.

Rumor had it that he was sworn brothers with the Kellers—the top of the Five Apex Families.

Her head throbbed like a siren as rage surged through her veins. The more she thought, the more her blood boiled.

Why?

Why was her world filled with trash, drama, and parasites?

Why did every person and situation around her only drain her?

And why did Andrew have everything?

Since she made it her mission to take him down, reclaim her pride, and crush him

beneath her heel, nothing had gone her way.

Not one single thing.

But what had she done wrong?

Where, exactly, was she any less than Andrew?

In a sudden dizzy spell, Christina lost her footing and collapsed with a scream. Luckily, Leroy caught her just in time. "Christie! Christie, don't scare me like that! Are you sick?!"

Irene rushed over, wailing. "Christie! My sweet baby girl! What happened to you? With Mr. Wright backing you, who could possibly hurt you? Tell me! Was it that bastard Andrew? Did he push you this far? If it was i swear I'll go over there myself and tear him limb from limb!"

Her tone was so aggressive, it actually sounded like she meant it.

Christina clutched her forehead, the pain in her skull so sharp it felt like someone was stirring steel needles inside her brain.

It hurt like hell.

Her pride had always been sky-high, and her ego unshakable.

However, the blows had come too fast and hard, and she could not take it anymore.

And on top of everything, the bickering from Irene and Leroy, their endless noise

and nonsense, made it all worse.

"Shut up. All of you just shut the hell up!"


Her voice exploded into a full-blown scream, her face twisted with fury.

The outburst stunned Irene and Leroy into total silence.

Because never, not once in their lives, had they seen Christina like this.

Chapter 1235





"Mom, something's seriously wrong with Christie," Leroy said urgently, noticing how her expression had completely collapsed. It's like she's about to have a breakdown-we should stop arguing and just let her rest!"

Irene, pacing in circles and dabbing at her tears, wailed, "How could this happen to my sweet girl? She was fine just this morning! Christie, how am I supposed to go on if anything happens to you? I'm still counting on you to take care of me when I'm old!"

Leroy rolled his eyes. "Seriously, Mom? Christie's losing it, and all you can think about is who's going to fund your retirement? You've got to be the most selfish mother on the planet-all you ever think about is your own little world!"

Irene snapped, eyes wide. "You brat! You've got a lot of nerve talking to me like that! Don't forget that you've been bleeding Christie dry too! I'm your mother! I raised you, fed you, and gave you everything! Expecting my kids to support me is not a crime!"

She added, "And what about you? You're young, able-bodied, and still useless- Christie's a woman, and she's done more than you ever have! You're a disappointment!"

Leroy's face flushed red with shame. Her words stung like a slap, burning his pride. He hated being called weak, hated hearing that he was not a real man.

If anyone else had said that to him, he would have lashed out at them already, fists flying in rage.

"Fine! You're my mom, so I won't fight you on it," he growled. "You think I'm pathetic? That I'm not a man? That I'll never amount to anything? Great. Then I'll prove you wrong. I'll show you what I'm really made of!"

He grew more agitated by the second, face twisting in fury, then stormed out and slammed the door.

Irene chased after him, yelling, "You brat! Where do you think you're going? Don't you dare cause trouble!"

Somehow, Leroy had gotten his hands on a long kitchen knife, which he tucked into his hoodie. His eyes burned with rage.

"You think I'm useless, huh? Just

wait. I'll prove it to you, and to

Christie! I've got blood in my

and I've got guts to back it up! Christie's like this because of bastard Andrew. I'm going over there right now to make him pay!"

Irene gasped. "You idiot! Don't do anything stupid! Have you already forgotten what happened last time?"

Leroy's mouth t

twisted into a wicked grin. "Of course I remember. But it's like they say-every dog has its day Don't look down on someone just because they're struggling! You and Christie always thought I was just wasting time in Blumedale, doing nothing. Truth is, I've already built a little empire here, just behind the scenes."

He added, "Don't ask too much. Just stay here and take care of Christie. If I can't get justice from Andrew today, then I'm no man. I'm not even worthy of being Christie's brother!"

The way he said it-full of bravado, fists clenched, chest puffed-he almost looked like some tragic hero marching off to battle.

But the moment he was out of Irene's line of sight, his entire demeanor flipped.

With a greasy smile, he whispered into his phone, "Hey, Sergey! It's me, Leroy- yeah, yeah, the guy who paid protection money last time! Listen, I need a favor. Christie's in trouble-she passed out from stress!

"I was hoping you could roll with me, maybe help me scare the guy who did this to her. Don't worry, Sergey. If you back me up on this, I'll make sure you're well compensated. You won't regret it!"

Back in the hotel suite, Irene mumbled to herself, squinting toward the door. "This dumb kid actually looked pretty serious just now. Could it be... maybe my

useless son actually carved out a life in the underworld?

"Who knows? Maybe he's secretly the kingpin of Blumedale's underground scene,

running everything from the shadows..."

Chapter 1236



"However, you know, he's always kept things on the down low, hiding who he really is, so he never let us in on his secret. Kinda cute how he thinks he can pull that off, right?

"However, this is my kid we're talking about. He could totally pull a stunt like that. I mean, come on, my kids? We're all about big dreams."

"His sister's the boss lady of her own company, so there's no way he's lagging behind..."

The more Irene dreamed up scenarios, the more convinced she became!

She had sky-high hopes for her son Leroy!

They say true gold always shines, and she was sure her boy Leroy was just like hidden treasure, ready to show his true sparkle any moment then!

"Christie, sweetheart, just kick back and relax, okay? Don't worry your pretty head about a thing!"

Tucking Christina in and making sure she was cozy, Irene's smile turned into a smirk.

"Your brother's out there fighting your battles, doesn't matter if it was that jerk Andrew who messed with you! Today, he's gonna get a taste of his own medicine, courtesy of your brother. That'll teach him!

"Sure, Andrew's got his big-shot company, but that's nothing compared to the likes of Mr. Quinton. Once your brother makes his mark, he'll have his crew ready to even the score. Andrew's money? Pfft, that won't save him from shaking in his boots..."

The thought of Quinton made Irene's mood shift, her face clouding over.

She grabbed her phone and dialed Quinton with a tone ready for battle.

"Mr. Quinton, Christina was doing your bidding, and now look at her-hospitalized from stress... And those slap marks on her face? Yeah, they're still there!

"You're my daughter's friend, I'm aware of that, and you've got a crush on her too. So here's your shot to make things right for my Christina! If not, you can bet I'll think less of you, Mr. Quinton, from here on out!"

Irene did not even wait for Quinton to answer before she slammed the phone down with a resounding click. She was done playing nice.

The Stevens family trio had been kissing up to him just to scrape by in the capital.

However, Irene had been around long enough to get a taste of the high life and the glittering world of the rich. That itch for the finer things had come alive in her. She figured Quinton was not all If he really wanted to win her playing by her rules and tere daughter's heart, he had better start whatever she dished out.

If he could not handle that, he could kiss his chances with her daughter goodbye!

At the Wright family's grand estate in the capital.

Quinton's face turned stormy as the line went dead.

"That nerve! Who does she think she is, talking to me like that?" he muttered.

However, then he shrugged it off. "Whatever, she's just a vain, simpleton of an old lady. I won't stoop to her level."

To Quinton, Irene and her son Leroy were never more than a blip on his radar, just a couple of ants.

He signaled to one of the house servants with a chilly gesture. "Go fetch Ms. Yara for me."

The servant leaned in close, his voice barely above a whisper, "Mr. Quinton, Ms. Yara's stepped out. She's not on the grounds!"

Quinton's response was a harsh, dismissive snort. "Well, get her on the phone, now. Tell her her loving brother's got urgent business with her! And tell her to hurry back, or I'll be the one paying her a visit with a whip in hand!"

The servant shuddered at the thought and scurried away to do as he was told. He could not help but feel sorry for Yara. Born to a mistress, she was under Quinton's thumb there at the Wright family estate.

Chapter 1237



Outside the grand gates of The Sovereign Residences, a van skidded to a stop. Out tumbled a bunch of roughnecks, looking like they owned the place.

Adorned with gold chains, their pointy shoes clicking on the pavement, they sported tattoos of a jade beast on one arm and a white tiger on the other, gripping an assortment of homemade weapons-steel pipes, machetes, and whatever else they could swing.

Leroy was right there with them, grinning up at a burly guy with a buzz cut. "We're here, Sergey," he said with a nod and a bow. "I'm counting on you and the boys to back me up later, okay?"

Sergey took a drag of his cigarette, trying to look tough. "Kid, you're asking a lot. I agreed to help you rough up this Andrew guy, and that was me being generous.

"Now you want more? That's gonna cost you."

Leroy bit back a curse. Sergey was nothing but a greedy thug. However, he kept his smile plastered on. "More money? You got it! Don't worry, Sergey. As long as everything goes smoothly, you'll get paid."

Sergey blew out a smoke ring and rocked back on his heels. "Alright, spill it. What's this 'cooperation' you're talking about? What's your angle?"

Leroy's smile turned sly. "Easy. When we get to Andrew, you and the crew knock him down first. Once he can't fight back, I'll step in and give him the thrashing of his life!"

"Hey, Sergey, do me a solid and shoot a video for me," Leroy said, his voice tinged with a mix of excitement and malice. "Make sure it shows Andrew totally wrecked at my feet, head busted open and bleeding out!"

Sergey chuckled, his deep voice rumbling like thunder. "Gotcha. You wanna show off a bit, huh?"

"No problem, as long as the money's right, I'll take care of everything for you!"

With a grin, Leroy rubbed his hands together in anticipation.

In his heart, he sneered. 'Andrew, oh Andrew, you never saw this coming, did you? Back in Jayrodale, you were the big shot, the tough guy, right? However, this isn't Jayrodale. This is the capital, and around here, Sergey and his crew are top dogs.

Sergey had assured Leroy that in the capital, there was not a soul he could not handle. Even the high-and-mighty from The Five Apex Families had to tip their hats to Sergey.

Leroy had bought into it hook, line, and sinker, convinced that Sergey was the real deal. That's why he was shelling out big bucks for Sergey's help-to flex his muscles, to take Andrew down a peg or two. It was a win win. After that, he would see if his mom and sister still had the nerve to look down on him.

"What's your business here?"

The security guard at the entrance of The Sovereign Residences eyed Leroy and

his posse, stepping up to challenge them.

Leroy cleared his throat, ready to puff up his chest and declare, "I'm here to handle some business. If you don't wanna get hurt, beat it and chill somewhere else!"

Leroy barely saw it coming before a stinging slap cracked against the back of his head.

Sergey had him by the collar, yanking him back. "Leroy, that twerp you're after, he's holed up in The Sovereign Residences?"

There was a clear note of panic in Sergey's voice.

Leroy, rubbing the back of his head, was confused. "Sergey, why'd you hit me? And hey, it's pretty nice out today. Why are you sweating buckets, Sergey?"

Sergey bellowed, "I'm asking you about that Andrew guy you're supposed to handle. Is he shackled up in The Sovereign Residences?"

Leroy, still not getting it but telling the truth, said, "My sister mentioned that Andrew lucked out big time and snagged a place in The Sovereign Residences. However, does it even matter? We bust in there and finish him off, end of story!"

Sergey, seething, lifted his hand and delivered another brutal slap to Leroy's face.

Chapter 1238



"You trying to get me whacked? Hey, I'm asking you, are you trying to get me killed here? I thought I was gonna make some easy cash with you, what's this mess you've got us into?"

As he ranted, Sergey plastered on a fake grin for the security guards walking up, looking like he had just seen a ghost.

"Hey there, fellas, no worries, we're just here to check things out! Time to go, we're heading out!"

The two guards eyed them with suspicion, and one of them snorted, "With those get-ups, you two are just street-level punks, right? Out with it, what's your game at The Sovereign Residences? Are you here to swipe something?"

Sergey, nearly out of his mind with fear, scrambled to explain, "No way, that's not what we're here for, honest!"

"We were just walking by, stealing stuff? Come on, this is the fanciest part of town. We wouldn't dare pull anything here!"

A security guard swung hard, landing two solid slaps that sent Sergey, towering at six-foot-two and tipping the scales at over 600 pounds, flying through the air.

He even lost two molars from the force of those hits talk about a heavy hand!

"Last chance, buddy. Spill it. What are you really here for? Make any more noise, and you and your lowlife friends won't need to bother coming back!"

The guards at The Sovereign Residences did not mess around—they were tough as nails, always ready to throw down and throw threats.

Anyone caught sneaking around The Sovereign Residences was in for it, no exceptions.

Lately, there had been extra tension. The big shot from Serenity Villa, Andrew, was on edge, and even their top guard—a semi-martial king—had gotten chewed out until he was nothing but dust and ashes!

So, they were on high alert. If any of those nobodies had caused trouble for the high roller from Serenity Villa...

Well, they could have been out of a job faster than they could say "fired."

Clutching his bleeding mouth, Sergey staggered to his feet, looking all kinds of sorry for himself. "Look, I'll talk, okay? Isn't that enough for you guys?"

He glared at Leroy, pure loathing on his face. "It's all his fault. He's the one who dragged us here! He said we had to take care of some guy named Andrew living in The Sovereign Residences.

"If I had known that Dr. Lloyd lived at The Sovereign Residences, no way would I have messed with him-not in a million years!"

Two security guards went white as sheets "What? You actually t
you could mess with Dr.

Seriously, you're asking for get

Fuming, the two guards whipped out their batons!

Sergey was on the receiving end of a relentless beating!

Meanwhile, one of the guards was on the pager, summoning over a dozen of The Sovereign Residences' finest security!

Each one was as tough as a special forces soldier. The squad from The Sovereign Residences laid intoel:

Leroy, Sergey, and his crew, leaving them bruised and swollen

A few

were lying on the ground, crying out in pain, with their dignity trampled

S nere in such bad shape t

of them!

Leroy was clutching his head, reeling from a kick down below that twisted his face

with pain!

Why?

How did their attempt to look tough go so horribly wrong?

Why did the security freak out at the mention of Andrew's name, like they had seen a ghost?

He just could not make sense of it!

"Scram, and don't even think about causing trouble again. Next time, it won't be just a beating!"

After giving them a taste of their own medicine, The Sovereign Residences' security backed off.

They were not about to kill anyone, after all.

However, they sure did not hold back.

Where did those guys get their guts from? God himself?

To think they would have the nerve to come to The Sovereign Residences and

hassle the owner of Serenity Villa!

Chapter 1239



They must have had the courage of a lion and the audacity of a fool to do something like that!

Sergey, with his crew and Leroy in tow, scrambled into the van, their hearts pounding as they made a mad dash to escape!

Right then, Sergey's face was so swollen, he could pass for an actual grizzly. As he mashed the gas pedal and jerked the wheel, he bellowed, "Leroy, if I don't make you wish you were dead today, then I'm no man..."

Leroy, his face a mask of blood, wailed, "Sergey, what did I ever do to you? I paid you, fair and square. You wouldn't take care of Andrew, okay, but to turn on me? Where's your honor, man?"

Sergey's growl was terrifying, "You're still plotting against others, Leroy, you're asking for it! Haven't you learned your lesson yet? Don't you get it? Any resident of The Sovereign Residences could snap us up in a heartbeat!

"You've trashed my rep, my whole life's work, thanks to you! So, you're gonna pay!"

Sergey had almost met his maker at the gates of The Sovereign Residences, and he was seething with fury!

If only he had known Leroy was after the residents of The Sovereign Residences! He would not have stirred up trouble there, not for all the money in the world!

The way The Sovereign Residences' security was acting, scared stiff of Andrew... it had to be someone from The Five Apex Families, right?

The thought alone sent shivers down Sergey's spine, and he felt like his guts were about to jump out of his skin!

His heart boiled with a mix of hate and fury for Leroy, like a storm had just turned the world upside down!

Meanwhile, Leroy was clueless, asking, "Is it really that bad? Sure, The Sovereign Residences are fancy, but trust me, Sergey, that Andrew guy is just a small fry!"

"With your connections, rubbing elbows with the big family heirs, you don't have to be scared of Andrew!"

The van screeched to a halt at a scrapyard that looked like a graveyard for forgotten things.

Sergey's face was thunderous as he grabbed Leroy and dragged him out.

"Sergey, what what what... are you doing? Back off! I'm warning you, don't you dare start something my brother-in-law is Quinton Wright, the big shot!"

Leroy squirmed and threw out his warning.

However, Sergey was not having any of it. With how this guy was groveling and begging for help, Sergey did not buy for a second that

his brother-in-law was some hotshot from the Wright family!

Sergey's crew flashed their shark grins, all bloodlust and malice. They pinned Leroy down by his arms and legs.

Amid Leroy's horrified screams, Sergey slipped on a mask and donned a white

coat.

He hefted a box, grimy and filled with all sorts of scary-looking surgical tools.

Sergey grabbed a syringe and a scalpel that gleamed with menace.

He loomed over Leroy, a twisted smile on his face, and said, "Sorry, bro, but you've got to pay up. You nearly got us all killed! So, we're taking a kidney as a little consolation for our bruised hearts.

"Don't sweat it, we've got the good stuff-you won't feel a thing! I'm a pro at this,

do it all the time like it's second nature!"

In the junkyard, Leroy's screams cut through the air, panicked and pained.

"No, no, no, stop! My kidneys, oh no, please..."

Chapter 1240



At the Wright family's place!

Yara stormed back, cornered Quinton, and smirked, "I knew it! That backstabber Christina ran to you, didn't she?"

Quinton's face darkened. "I told you to help her, not to shame her! Why'd you do it, huh?"

Yara sneered, "No reason, really. Just can't stand her, that's all."

Quinton let out an icy laugh. "You're playing with fire, messing with my people. Think I won't put you in your place?"

Yara laughed in his face. "Please, Quinton, you don't scare me anymore! I used to cower, too scared to face you. However, now? Go ahead, make your move."

Quinton's gaze turned icy as he stepped closer, his smile twisted. "Look at you, all gutsy all of a sudden! You never had the guts to stand up to me before!

"However, let's face it, you're nothing but trash from a mistress. You can't hold a candle to the Wright family bloodline that runs through my veins..."

Yara met his gaze with a frosty smile. "All you've got is your Wright family heir title to flaunt, Quinton! However, really, you think you're better than me? As if I've ever cared what you think!

"You think you're the big shot, the golden boy of the Wright family, and the cream of the crop in the capital's youth, right? Do you think you're one of the top three hotshots?"

"Ever since Andrew showed up, you've been like a jittery little pug, bouncing around helplessly. What happened to your old swagger? Where's that tough guy act now?"

Quinton, red with fury, slapped Yara right across her face.

"You think you can just throw Andrew's name around in front of me, you little brat? Get this straight, in the Wright family, anyone who dares to utter 'Andrew' will have to answer to me-with their life on the line!"

Quinton's face was a mask of rage as he bellowed.

Yara, clutching her reddened cheek, did not back down and kept up her taunts.

"Look at you, all worked up, like a cornered rat in front of a cat! Quinton, Andrew's your boogeyman, huh? Judging by that sour face, it's like you've swallowed something nasty. I hit a nerve, didn't I?"

Quinton's face twisted with anger, and he looked ready to strike again.

However, he held back. Today's Yara was too fierce, too much for him to handle.

"Oh, please. You think I'm scared of Andrew? If I hadn't been tied up with bigger things lately, he'd be long gone!"

Yara sneered, her face oozing scorn. "Keep fooling yourself. Not even the Golding or Haywood family hit squads can lay a finger on him!"

"Who do you think you are, Quinton? You can't seriously think you're tougher than the Goldings or the Hawyoods, can you?"

Quinton was at a loss for words, his fists clenched so hard they popped and crackled.

"Yara, I have no clue where you're getting this gutsy attitude to backstab me, the top dog around here! However, let me give you a heads-up: if you keep playing with fire, you might just get burned for real!"

BUMS

Yara's unexpected defiance was driving Quinton up the wall.

Stone-faced, Yara declared, "Quinton, the days when you could push me around and make me feel small in the Wright family are over! Mark my words, from now on, I'm stepping up to the plate, and I'll be going head-to-head with you!" Content belongs to

"And when all is said and done, I'll be the one standing tall, with you under my heel, feeling all the hurt you've dished out..."

She took a couple of steps away,

then paused, turned around with an icy laugh, and added, "Oh, and one more thing! Christina used to be Andrew's girl, which means you're just picking up his sloppy seconds!"