

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) 1271-1280

In Thomas's office at Blumedale Hospital, Bernard was not the only visitor present. Thomas's prized student, Blumedale Hospital's star doctor, Jared, was also there.

"Dr. Bozzelli, I heard you had a meeting with Malcolm about bringing Francesca from Jayrodale to Blumedale Hospital?" Jared asked excitedly.

Thomas set down his teacup and replied indifferently, "That's correct, but what does it have to do with you?"

Jared blushed and smiled awkwardly. "Well, it doesn't really concern me much. I just thought it would be nice to see my junior, Fran, again."

Bernard grinned. "Jared, even if you do see Francesca again, I doubt it will matter much. She's already spoken for. I heard you've had a crush on her since your student days. Unfortunately, even someone as exceptional as yourself couldn't compete with a scoundrel."

Jared's brow immediately furrowed. "Bernard, what exactly do you mean by that?"

Bernard smirked and was about to elaborate further, intending to provoke Jared.

Thomas interrupted with a cold snort. "Bernard, shut your mouth! I don't tolerate gossipmongers in my presence!"

Bernard quickly fell silent, though inwardly he smirked since his objective had already been achieved.

Jared's face darkened. "Dr. Bozzelli, is Francesca already involved with someone else?"

Thomas replied sharply, "Whether she is or isn't is her business! You should focus on studying your medical books and advancing your professional title! You can have any woman you want when you reach the top!"

Jared suddenly became agitated. "No, Francesca is the only one I want! I've been waiting so long for her to come from Jayrodale to Blumedale. No one but me is worthy of her!"

Thomas erupted in anger. "Nonsense! Do you even hear what you're saying? How could such words come out of your mouth?"

He continued, "Where is the humility and composure I taught you? You're jumping around like a madman over a woman! How can I trust you to participate in the Grand Medical Summit when you're acting like this?"

Jared's face remained dark as he stubbornly replied, "Don't worry, Dr. Bozzelli. I won't let you down at the Grand Medical Summit. At the very least, I'll live up to my reputation as Blumedale Hospital's top young doctor.

"But I won't give up on Francesca. As a man, I've put in more effort than others and possess more extraordinary talent. Therefore,

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must have the woman I desire. Otherwise, what's the point of all my hard work and struggle?"

Thomas's expression turned extremely unpleasant. He raised his hand as if to throw his teacup, but ultimately restrained himself. After all, he still had a soft spot for his star pupil.

"Fine, as long as you perform well, I'll even swallow my pride and speak to Malcolm about arranging a match for you," Thomas conceded.

He emphasized, "But the prerequisite is that you cannot disappoint me! At the Grand Medical Summit, we, as mentor and student, must emerge victorious!"

Jared clenched his fist, his face brimming with confidence. "Rest assured, Dr. Bozzelli. You handle Dr Lake and leave everything else to me! I might not boast about other things, but when it comes to medical skitts, I consider myself superior to all others of my generation."

Thomas waved his hand. "Don't be so boastful humility is an eternal virtue for medical practitioners. Also, I should inform you that our Blumedale Hospital team will consist of four people. You and me, plus Francesca, and we've added one more person."

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Jared dismissed the news casually. "Fran had talent rivaling mine even as a student, so it makes sense for her to go. As for this last person, they're probably just filling a spot."

Thomas laughed coldly. "This last person is hardly a space-filler! He's personally appointed by Malcolm, who has placed virtually all his hopes on this individual!"

Jared was stunned. "Dr. Goddard values him that highly? Who is he?"

Thomas said flatly, "His name is Andrew Lloyd."

Jared snickered. "Never heard of him. Must be a nobody."

Bernard, unable to resist stirring trouble, smiled meaningfully. "Jared, this Andrew is far from a nobody! The object of your affection, Francesca—her beloved happens to be this very Andrew!"

Jared's expression instantly darkened, becoming filled with gloom. "He's Fran's beloved? He's not worthy! At the Grand Medical Summit, I'll show him the gap between a nobody like him and me, Jared!"

"Fran is brilliant—I believe she can distinguish between precious gem and common stone..." he added confidently.

Thomas smiled. "It's good to have someone challenge you. It might help temper that proud nature of yours. I've been concerned that without worthy opponents for so long, you might become arrogant and complacent."

Jared responded proudly. "True champions have earned the right to be proud! As for opponents, to say something you won't like hearing, Dr. Bozzelli-I don't consider this Andrew worth my attention at all!"

Bernard smiled sinisterly from the side. Thomas and Jared were nothing like him -when Andrew played with these two, it would be like a chick facing eagles.

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Andrew arrived at the entrance to The Sovereign Residences by cab. Despite being a billionaire worth tens of billions, he did not have a single car to his name. It was something he would not dare mention to others out of embarrassment.

"Hmm, it seems that little servant girl needs another lesson," he muttered. He let out a cold laugh as he thought about Aspen.

Just then, a man with a piece of grass between his teeth slowly approached from nearby. The stranger announced in a pretentious tone, "I said to let the bullet fly a while longer. Now, it's time for the bullet to land."

Andrew glanced at him and could not help but smile. "You've got a death wish or something?"

The newcomer was none other than Rio Atkins, Mosby's senior apprentice. He spat out the grass from his mouth and smiled. "That's what I should be saying to you. You reduced Ellis, my junior, to a vegetative state and stole from Mr. Lake. Now, it's time to settle accounts!"

Andrew looked at him expressionlessly. "How do you intend to settle this?"

Rio's pace quickened, eventually moving like lightning as he charged toward Andrew. He shouted, "By taking your life, of course!"

He had been following Andrew all along but had not found an opportunity to strike with Logan and Chantelle present. Now, seeing Andrew about to enter The Sovereign Residences, this was his perfect chance to make a move.

Andrew put down his bag and shook his head resignedly. "I really don't want to kill anyone, but you seem determined to die!"

His eyes turned cold as he struck out with his palm. The disturbed air caused Rio to momentarily pause his stride.

He thought, 'This guy's palm strike is incredibly powerful!'

The two clashed violently with a loud bang.

Rio roared in fury, "I'm a martial arts prodigy who can go toe-to-toe with elite talents like Xavier! What makes you think you can challenge me, Andrew? Just die!"

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Rio thought killing a small fry would be simple. It would not take him more than three minutes from start to finish. However, as the fight continued, his expression gradually changed.

Andrew countered each of his moves. In fact, Andrew's strength was no weaker than Rio's.

Two loud bangs echoed, and the two men exchanged another palm strike, causing Rio's legs to tremble slightly as he stumbled backward, shattering floor tiles beneath him.

Feeling the burning pain in his palms, Rio's face darkened considerably. "Damn it, you're at least at semi-martial king level. I never expected you to hide your true abilities so well!"

He spat at Andrew with intense hatred. That earlier casual, arrogant attitude—as if Andrew was already defeated—had completely vanished without him realizing it.

Andrew replied coldly, "I never concealed anything. You were just blind."

Rio scoffed. "So what if your fighting skills match mine? You'll soon witness my true killing technique."

He raised his hands, moving his forearms so quickly they left afterimages. While appearing to attack Andrew from a distance, two pencil-length venomous snakes shot out from his sleeves, baring their fangs as they lunged toward Andrew.

Rio smiled viciously, knowing that just one bite from his Nine-Ringed Vipers would ensure Andrew's death.

Two sharp sounds cut through the air. Andrew had also launched projectiles—two slightly gleaming golden needles that instantly pierced the heads of both snakes. By the time the snakes reached Andrew, they were already dead, flopping lifelessly to the ground.

Rio exploded with rage, "You're dead! How dare you hurt my babies! I'll kill you!" These vipers had been painstakingly trained specifically for surprise attacks. Even his Mosby did not know about them, as Rio had been planning to use them one day if he ever needed to betray and kill his mentor unexpectedly.

To create these venomous weapons, Rio had dealt with deadly poisons countless times, narrowly escaping death himself. Experience had proven that these poisonous creatures were incredibly effective for ambushes. They were even more reliable than conventional weapons.

Yet, Andrew had effortlessly killed them, which both enraged and shocked Rio.

From his sleeves, he launched two more scorpions and a centipede—all highly poisonous—attacking Andrew from multiple angles.

Andrew stepped backward methodically and calmly. He fired two more golden needles, finishing off the scorpions. The centipede, flailing wildly, had already reached his face. However, his expression remained unchanged as he raised his other hand and sliced downward.

Just like that, the centipede was cut in two midair by his hand chop.

Seeing this, Rio was not distressed. Rather, he was ecstatic. "Andrew, you've been in direct contact with my Seven-Tailed Centipede! You probably don't know that this centipede feeds exclusively on deadly poisons. Right now, at least 100 different toxins are spreading through your body."

Andrew looked at him as if he were an idiot and strode forward, appearing completely unaffected.

Rio crossed his arms behind his back, presenting himself as a lonesome master. He even flipped his long hair and chuckled, "Andrew, your time is up. I won't even fight back. I'll count to three, and you'll die from the poison!"

He knew too well what happened to someone bitten by his poisonous pets- Andrew could take at most three steps, which was about three breaths' worth of time. Then, he would foam at the mouth and collapse, convulsing on the ground.

His body would shake and gradually stiffen. Finally, his eyes would bulge, his face turning blackish-blue, dying with eyes wide open...

Watching Andrew approach, Rio's smile grew even broader. In his mind, he was already picturing Andrew's death. This method of killing was truly stylish and impressive.

Rio loved it.

However, in the next second, he saw Andrew take his third step. He could not help but wonder why Andrew was not falling down yet.

Andrew took a fourth step, bringing him right in front of Rio.

"How are you unaffected?" Rio looked terrified, his soul nearly leaving his body. Nonetheless, it was too late.

Andrew had no interest in talking further with him. He raised his hand and delivered two hard slaps across Rio's cheeks. With two cracking sounds, Rio's cheekbones shattered instantly.

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Rio's head was buzzing. He could not believe that his Seven-Tailed Centipede had failed.

Andrew raised his foot and slammed it into Rio's chest. With a splatter, a large gush of blood burst from Rio's mouth as he flew back a few yards, crashing hard into a flower bed.

This impact finally knocked some sense into him. As he struggled to get up from the ground, his eyes bulged with rage.

"Andrew, this isn't over. Just you wait..." Rio let out a miserable scream through his blood-filled mouth.

He never imagined his usually foolproof poison attacks would fail. Even more unbelievable was that he, Mosby's senior apprentice-skilled in both medicine and martial arts-had been reduced to such a severely injured state.

The tearing pain on his face and the burning sensation in his chest with every slight breath made Rio realize how badly he was hurt. These injuries might even leave him with permanent damage.

With this thought, his murderous intent toward Andrew expanded endlessly. He secretly swore that after escaping and healing his wounds, he would not care about the Keller family anymore he would personally tear Andrew to pieces.

"Thinking of leaving? You'll have to get past me first," Andrew uttered coldly as he watched Rio turn to flee.

His speed suddenly increased as he fired another golden needle, aiming directly at the back of Rio's head.

Rio's fleeing body came to an abrupt halt as a vicious grin spread across his face. He laughed and said, "Kid, you fell for it! Now, die!"

He grabbed his shirt with both hands and violently tore it apart. Immediately, dozens of poisonous snakes, centipedes, and scorpions that had been hidden inside his clothes swarmed toward Andrew in a dense, crawling mass.

So, he deliberately pretended to escape, intending to lure Andrew into pursuit. Once the distance closed, he would suddenly stop and counter-attack.

'With so many venomous creatures, even if you were immortal or indestructible, you'd still die from festering wounds...' Rio thought smugly.

To his astonishment, he watched wide-eyed as Andrew passed through the swarm of poisonous creatures, leaving a trail of dead bodies on the ground. Andrew himself was completely unharmed, without a single visible wound on his body. Before long, the distance between them was just a few inches.

Rio could not believe his eyes, as if seeing a ghost. "How is this... possible?" Andrew replied casually, "I forgot to tell you-since birth, I've been immune to all poisons."

The fear and terror on Rio's face instantly froze. Andrew raised his hand and drove a golden needle directly into the center of Rio's forehead.

How loyal-Mosby's senior apprentice volunteering to test Hell's hospitality first.

Looking at the corpse on the ground, eyes wide open as if the soul had been scared out of it, Andrew's face showed nothing but disgust. He took out his phone, planning to call Chantelle to clean up the mess.

"Andrew, what now?" Chantelle asked over the phone. "I told you before, if you're calling me again to back you up, I refuse!"

Chantelle was at her wit's end. Since meeting Andrew, she had had nothing but headaches. Every other day, he was causing trouble, and he always picked fights with powerful figures and dangerous characters.

Chantelle was convinced this man must be a walking disaster.

Andrew calmly replied, "I don't need you to back me up. I just need you to come collect a body."

"What body?" Chantelle asked.

Andrew said, "Mosby's senior apprentice, an ugly, long-haired ghoul who looked about as handsome as a bulldog. He's already dead at The Sovereign Residences' entrance. Figure something out. If it's not handled, this might make the news tomorrow!"

With that, Andrew hung up. Then, he walked back to where he was before, bent down to pick up his bag with the still-warm barbecue inside. With a grin, he strolled leisurely into The Sovereign Residences.

The two martial artists guarding the entrance looked deathly pale as they both saluted him. "Good evening, Mr. Lloyd!"

Andrew smiled. "Thank you for your hard work!"

The two guards shouted in unison, "At your service, sir!"

Andrew chuckled. "Come on, you two. Did you forget your lines or walk onto the wrong movie set? I'm not some government official—I'm just a law-abiding, ordinary citizen!"

The faces of the two guards twitched violently. After all, he had just killed someone minutes ago. Yet, he called himself an ordinary citizen.

Both guards thought the same thing: Andrew might not be a government official, but he was far more terrifying than any official could ever be.

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Half an hour after Andrew left, Chantelle arrived at the scene with law enforcement officers.

The medical examiner immediately rushed over to examine the body. Then, he looked up and reported, "Ms. Garcia, the cause of death is skull penetration by a golden acupuncture needle. It's hard to imagine that a needle meant for healing could have such lethal power."

Chantelle's expression darkened as she responded with a curt mumble without saying anything further.



The officer who had been checking the victim's information said, "Ms. Garcia, we've confirmed the victim's identity. His name was Rio Atkins-Mosby's senior apprentice. He was somewhat of a celebrity in Blumedale!"

"Package the body and send it to the deceased's family," Chantelle ordered coldly.

One of the officers asked, "Ms. Garcia, should we issue a warrant?"

Chantelle shook her head. "No need. I know who the killer is."

The officer smiled. "That makes things easier. Ms. Garcia, you can lead us to make the arrest. This guy was ruthless he smashed Rio's face completely. Not to mention his chest, with who knows how many broken bones. We need to bring this outlaw to justice..."

Chantelle said flatly, "There's no need to make an arrest. The killer, knowing the severity of his crime, couldn't bear to continue living. By now, he's already jumped into the river and drowned himself."

The investigating officer, being somewhat slow on the uptake, asked dryly, "Ms. Garcia, which river did the perpetrator drown in? I'll send a team to recover the body immediately."

Chantelle looked at him, practically gritting her teeth as she replied, "Not only did the killer drown, but his body was completely devoured by piranhas in the river. Those piranhas were then all electrocuted by some fishermen. And those fishermen have all been thrown in jail. So, do you still want to continue the investigation?"

The single-minded officer gave a forced chuckle and quickly replied, "No more investigation needed! Your word is all we need!"

In his mind, he was secretly wondering if the killer might be that ice queen's pretty boy toy. Her cover-up could not have been more obvious.

Inside Serenity Villa, Andrew put down the food bag and took off his jacket.

"Come out and eat. I brought you something good," he called out, clapping his hands a couple of times.

Natasha immediately sauntered over, her curvy hips swaying, with Dylan following close behind. Aspen, wearing pajamas and sporting a cold expression on her pretty face, also opened her door and came out.

Andrew laid out the barbecue, and everyone began devouring it ravenously. Andrew could tolerate Dylan and Natasha's lack of table manners, but seeing the little maid eat like she was starving really bothered him.

"What's going on? Didn't you have dinner?" Andrew turned to look at her.

Aspen's face reddened slightly, but her voice remained ice-cold. "No, I didn't. I worked late and just got back."

Andrew frowned. "No matter how busy you are, you need to eat on time." "My business is none of your concern," Aspen replied with a frosty expression. Andrew just smiled, choosing to spare the little servant some dignity.

Natasha winked suggestively. "Darling, where's that dominant attitude of yours? Let me tell you, some women actually like it when you're forceful. The more gentle and nice you are to them, the more uncomfortable they feel, and the less respect they show you."

"Really?" Andrew asked skeptically.

"Really!" Natasha replied with a seductive smile. "For example, our precious Aspen is exactly that type of person."

Aspen exploded with anger. "Madam Vostokoff, please don't make baseless accusations!"

After shouting, she threw down her napkin and stormed back to her room, slamming the door with a loud bang.

"Darling, I think that maid of yours needs to be disciplined," Natasha said with a cold snort.

Dylan chimed in with a smile. "Mr. Lloyd, pardon my intrusion, but I agree with Natasha. She definitely needs to be disciplined!"

Andrew sat down with a headache. "Fine, I should handle it. But tell me, how should I deal with her?"

Natasha and Dylan simultaneously punched the air and exclaimed, "Do her!" Andrew fell silent-deeply silent.

The next day dawned clear and bright, a rare, beautiful day. When Andrew walked into the kitchen, he found no breakfast prepared. His smile quickly turned cold. He had let the little maid off once last night, but he had not expected her to become even more defiant.

Perhaps Natasha was right-Aspen really did need some discipline.

However, when Andrew burst into her room, he found the bed neatly made and no sign of Aspen. Looking outside, he saw that the Ferrari was gone too.

Andrew felt an urge to rush to the company and give that little maid a good thrashing. However, Tiana had already repeatedly urged him to deliver the medicine for her breakthrough.

So, Andrew had to put aside thoughts of making Aspen's backside bloom with pain and headed to the Rhodes residence instead.

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

"Dr. Lloyd, did you know Fran has come to Blumedale?" Lauren asked with a bright smile as Andrew stepped into the Rhodes residence's grand hall.

Andrew smiled. "Yes, I saw her yesterday, actually."

Lauren's smile immediately turned suggestive as she lowered her voice. "So, did you two immediately go at it for hours when you met?"

Andrew gave a wry smile. "No, nothing like that happened. But Lauren, you seem quite interested in these matters."

Lauren's cheeks flushed pink as she boldly admitted, "Of course I'm interested! That busty Francesca got to enjoy what should've been mine first!"

Andrew wiped his brow. "Hey, I'm not some 'thing' to be enjoyed!"

"Oh, I know," Lauren giggled, "Fran already told me all about your... big equipment."

Well, Andrew was thoroughly defeated in this battle of wits. When it came to dirty talk, he realized he was no match for experienced players like Francesca and Lauren.

"Hey, Andrew, glad you're here. Did you manage to get those rare medicinal herbs from Dr. Goddard that I mentioned to you last time?" Jameson asked with a beaming face as he and Tiana approached together.

Andrew nodded. "Yes, I did. I really have to thank you for that, Mr. Rhodes."

Jameson looked surprised. "Dr. Goddard's supplies aren't easy to obtain! No need to thank me being able to get them is all due to your own ability."

"Andrew's talents go beyond just getting a few herbs. It's second nature to him," Tiana chimed in with a smile.

Lauren gave her mother a strange look. "Mom, your attitude toward Andrew has really changed, hasn't it?"

Jameson also wore a suspicious expression. "Tiana, you're starting to look at him like a mother-in-law who's growing fonder of her son-in-law."

A blush appeared on Tiana's face as she replied coldly, "Andrew and I have business to attend to. You two are not to interrupt us."

Lauren pursed her lips. "Fine, got it."

Jameson advised earnestly, "Tiana, your martial training has reached a critical moment. Don't push yourself too hard."

Turning to Andrew, he added, "Andrew, I'm counting on you. Our family will owe you a huge favor for this."

Andrew waved his hand with a smile. "Mr. Rhodes, there's no need to be so formal. Mrs. Rhodes advancing in her martial arts is a happy occasion, and I'm glad to help."

Tiana had already started walking toward the backyard of the Rhodes residence- a place Andrew was always reluctant to visit. She instructed, "Andrew, follow me."

In a pitch-black secret chamber in the Rhodes family's backyard, Tiana lit several candles with a match to provide illumination.

"Whether I can advance to the martial king level depends on this attempt. Honestly, I'm not entirely confident, but I've made all necessary preparations. This secret chamber completely isolates us from the outside world and can only be opened from the inside. Andrew, let's begin," she said as she sat cross-legged on the floor.

Andrew surveyed the chamber, noting its simple furnishings. Wealthy families typically built secret chambers like this for meditation retreats and breakthrough attempts in martial arts training. It was also why there was not even electric lighting the goal was absolute safety and isolation.

"Mrs. Rhodes, here are the medicines you requested. Please check them," Andrew said, taking out Tiana's requirements from his small bag.

After examining everything, Tiana smiled with satisfaction. "Excellent, very thorough preparations. Andrew, your medicine-making skills have reached a high level. You truly live up to your reputation as the Lloyd family prodigy. I've rarely seen someone as well-rounded and gifted as you."

Andrew responded to Tiana's praise with calm indifference. "Mrs. Rhodes, now that everything's ready, what method do you plan to use for your breakthrough?"

Previously, Tiana had mentioned that her lineage had a unique method for breaking through barriers. Attempting to reach the martial king level was extremely dangerous.

Originally, Andrew had not supported her advancing so quickly in her martial arts training. However, given Tiana's headstrong nature, he was unsure he could dissuade her.

Moreover, since Tiana was very confident in her special method, Andrew was curious to see what it entailed.

"Hehe, my method is called 'Divine Enlightenment,' passed down from my martial lineage," she explained.

Divine Enlightenment? Under Andrew's puzzled gaze, Tiana slowly began removing her upper garments.

First, her outer clothing. Then, her undergarments. Finally, only a lace bra remained covering the essential parts of her fair body.

"What are you doing?" Andrew demanded, both angry and shocked.

Tiana's fair cheeks had already turned pink. However, she acted as if nothing unusual was happening, saying calmly, "Relax, don't make such a fuss. The Divine Enlightenment method requires exposing the body to release heat, allowing the body's meridians and energy points to interact with the surrounding environment.

"That's why I brought you to this secret chamber-it's a necessary approach..."

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew had not expected this crazy woman to be more outrageous each time. The previous two times, although uncomfortable, at least she had not gone this far. But now, Tiana had actually taken off her clothes.

Andrew could do whatever he wanted if he chose to, but the troubling part was that this would be his future mother-in-law.

What kind of person would do something so bizarre?

"Andrew, you're a medical practitioner after all," Tiana said with a cold snort. "Just treat me like any patient who's come to see you. If your mind isn't in the gutter with inappropriate thoughts, then why are you getting so upset and angry?"

Andrew laughed bitterly. "Mrs. Rhodes, whether I have inappropriate thoughts or not, isn't the point. Don't you think it's inappropriate for an elder, especially Lauren's mother, to be undressing in front of me?"

Tiana fell silent for a moment. Then, she hissed through gritted teeth, "You punk, you think you're the only one who feels awkward? I feel uncomfortable too, but I'm not like those shy, pretentious women. I'm doing this to reach a higher level in martial arts and

not to have some inappropriate relationship with you! So stop dawdling and do as I say immediately!"

Andrew's expression remained dark. "What exactly do you want me to do? I've already gathered all the supplies for you there's nothing more I can help with."

Tiana bit her lip, which turned bright red, and lowered her voice. "You need to help guide the energy channels throughout my body in a complete cycle. The Divine Enlightenment method requires two essential conditions: powerful medicinal pills and someone to guide, assist, and prevent energy deviation."

"Why couldn't you find a woman to help?" Andrew blurted out.

Tiana explained helplessly, "A woman won't work. It requires a balance of feminine and masculine energies, so it has to be a man. Additionally, his strength must exceed mine to withstand the impact when I break through the barrier. So, I have no choice but to ask you, which means you get to enjoy benefits that many desire but can't obtain."

Andrew found himself unusually flustered. "Mrs. Rhodes, even if everything you're saying is true, honestly, I have zero interest in these so-called benefits."

Tiana snapped, "Stop being sarcastic and do as I say. And don't think I don't understand what goes through men's minds. If not for your relationship with Lauren, you probably wouldn't be able to resist taking advantage of me right here and now."

Andrew laughed from sheer frustration. "Mrs. Rhodes, you're far too old for my taste."

Tiana smirked. "You know what they say-cougars bring good luck. But date a woman old enough, and she'll have you seeing God."

She continued, "And me? At my age, I'd wreck you harder than Lauren's wildest dreams."

Before Andrew could respond, she continued with a cold smile, "Andrew, I know you're not an ordinary man, but I'm well aware of my appeal. In Blumedale, countless young men your age are trying to flatter me.

"Those young men with their dirty, inappropriate thoughts-how could I possibly be interested in them? You're the only one I find truly acceptable."

Andrew hurriedly interjected, "Stop! Enough! I'll do as you say. Let's begin-get ready."

Without waiting for Tiana's response, Andrew gently placed both palms on her smooth back. Tiana let out an ambiguous soft moan as she grabbed the medicinal pills in front of her and swallowed them one by one.

Andrew asked, "Mrs. Rhodes, are you feeling unwell? You're shaking badly. Should we pause for now?"

Tiana replied in embarrassment, "Don't talk. Just focus on helping me channel the energy and not worry about anything else."

Of course, she was shaking. With a handsome young man behind her, touching her back with his palms—it would be strange if she were not trembling.

Tiana was inherently a proud, somewhat arrogant person with a complicated nature. She restrained her feelings toward Andrew. Sometimes, she viewed him with the appreciation an elder might have for a younger generation, or the fondness a mother-in-law might feel for her son-in-law.

However, occasionally, she could not help but get distracted, seeing glimpses of Andrew's father in him.

That man was the one who had taken her virginity. Tiana wanted to forget and hate him, but found it impossible. Instead, in moments of emotional intensity, she could not help but release feelings of longing and tenderness toward Andrew.

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Tiana felt deeply ashamed about this situation, but she consistently refused to admit anything was wrong with her feelings. She was the type of person who, even after making a mistake, stubbornly refused to back down.

Wisps of heat began radiating from Tiana's body and head. Andrew's expression turned solemn as he recognized they had reached a critical moment in the energy channeling process.

Following Tiana's guidance, his palms began moving across the pressure points on her body. These moments severely tested Andrew's nerves and willpower. After all, he was neither a saint nor immune to temptation.

Andrew hated to admit it, but Tiana's figure was indeed perfect. Each time their skin made contact, Tiana would release unnatural murmurs, which only tortured Andrew more.

The small chamber quickly filled with mist as time passed. A martial king's power relied on immense internal energy and bodily strength. Combined with Andrew's powerful medicinal pills, Tiana had become a walking furnace. The fierce fire within her, if released, could completely obliterate an ordinary person.

Large drops of sweat dripped from Tiana's forehead. It was evident that she was desperately restraining something, enduring tremendous difficulty.

With a loud bang, her shorts suddenly exploded into fragments.

Andrew's heart skipped a beat as he silently cursed. He knew Tiana could no longer maintain control as her internal energy fluctuated.

The powerful external force shattered everything on her body, which meant Tiana was now completely naked without any covering.

"Andrew, if I can't hold on, just open the chamber door and leave by yourself," Tiana quickly instructed before shutting her mouth to avoid distraction.

Andrew's face remained impassive as he replied, "That won't work. If I leave when you can't hold on, you'll lose at least half your life."

Tiana gasped for breath and struggled to say, "Losing half my life is better than being unable to withstand the internal energy surge, becoming mentally confused, and ending up doing something inappropriate."

Andrew's expression showed hesitation, unsure of what to say. Clearly, Tiana's attempt to reach the martial king level was showing signs of failure. His best option right now was to exit the chamber alone and let Tiana calm down.

If Andrew stayed longer, Tiana would inevitably lunge at him instinctively to disperse the enormous internal energy built up inside her.

If that happened, Andrew truly would not know how to face Lauren and Jameson afterward. What might seem like an incredible stroke of luck, envied by others, felt like holding a red-hot iron to Andrew.

'That crazy woman...' After mentally cursing Tiana again, Andrew focused even more intently on regulating her chaotic energy flow.

Tiana let out a muffled groan as blood suddenly seeped from the corner of her mouth. She opened her eyes and looked at Andrew with obvious desire, which she forcibly suppressed.

"I can't take it anymore, Andrew. The power of Divine Enlightenment is even more intense than I anticipated. If I go crazy in a moment, just leave the chamber!"

Her voice trembled significantly, carrying a hint of crying as her hot breath fell on Andrew's face.

Andrew remained as steady as a mountain, saying, "If I leave, you'll definitely get hurt. So I can't go if you lose control, I'll just knock you unconscious."



Tiana laughed between heavy breaths. "You punk, I was right about you. You're truly compassionate. It's no wonder women find you so appealing."

Andrew remained silent, not knowing what to say. Tiana's eyes shifted as if she had made some decision, and her already flushed body turned completely red.

Her crimson lips moved as her throat produced a plaintive tone. "Andrew, I don't want this breakthrough attempt to be wasted. So I have a bold idea I'd like you to cooperate with. Of course, if you're unwilling, I won't force you."

Andrew frowned. "At this point, forcibly pushing through seems to be your only good option."

Tiana hesitated briefly, exhaling hot breath as she embarrassedly said, "This method isn't difficult. The dual cultivation technique has existed since ancient times you must have heard of it. I was thinking..."

Andrew immediately interrupted her, incredulous. "Tiana, have you truly lost your mind?"

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

What was this dual cultivation technique?

Andrew was not some naive rookie who knew nothing about it. This method persisted from ancient times to the present and could be described as notoriously well-known.

Put simply, the dual cultivation technique involved a man and woman joining bodies, harmonizing feminine and masculine energies, extracting each other's essence, and refining it into their own bodies.

The practice was originally developed by Torasesy practitioners as a gentle, non-harmful method that was once celebrated and discussed enthusiastically. However, like any beautiful thing in this world, it could not escape one fundamental rule: beauty would eventually fall and become corrupted.

The dual cultivation technique was no exception. By modern times, countless practitioners viewed it as a deviant practice. This led to predatory "energy vampires" who drained countless virgins to refine dark powers and vindictive women who seduced innocent men, demanding their energy night after night until they were completely drained.

In Andrew's mind, dual cultivation was an unforgivable abomination that heaven and earth would not tolerate. Even more skin-crawling was the uncomfortable reality that Tiana was his future mother-in-law-his girlfriend's mother.

If they actually used this dual cultivation technique, Andrew dared not imagine further. The scene would be utterly explosive.

Tiana snapped angrily, "You brat, what are you thinking about? The dual cultivation method I'm talking about isn't about having sex! If it were what you're imagining, do you think I could ever face anyone again?"

Andrew's expression remained displeased. "Then what exactly is your version of dual cultivation?"

Tiana explained quickly, "My current problem is that the internal energy running wild inside me is too overwhelming. At the same time, attempting to break through

to martial king level has thrown my mind into chaos, making me think inappropriate thoughts. I need you to help stabilize my mind while using all your strength to calm the chaotic energy inside me."

Andrew grunted. "I've already done everything I can. I told you earlier that breaking through to martial king level isn't a simple matter."

"Saying all this n

Snow doesn't help the situation," Tiana said through gritted teeth. "Either you watch me fail and lose half my life, or you do as I say and help me with all your might. If I succeed, Andrew, I can grant you one request-even if it's extremely rude!"

As she spoke, Tiana's eyes burned intensely, appearing as if they might drip with desire as she stared at Andrew, incredibly seductive. Her pinkish red cheeks appeared and disappeared under the veil of heat radiating from her body.

Her lips parted slightly as she continued breathing. For a moment, Andrew

thought the woman before him was Lauren rather than the mature Tiana. To some

extent, mother and daughter did look quite similar!

Shaking his head, Andrew quickly discarded the evil thoughts that had briefly surfaced. This was not really his fault Tiana's current state,

drenched in fragrant sweate

and

completely naked, with glassy eyes carrying a hint of chaotic confusion that invited sinful thoughts, was extremely provocative.

Although Andrew had repeatedly warned himself not to do anything universally condemned, controlling his wandering mind was one thing, but controlling his body's reactions was another matter entirely.

With Tiana's exceptional martial prowess, she easily noticed subtle changes. She instinctively glanced toward certain parts of Andrew's body, her face showing panic and astonishment.

Forgetting to suppress the turmoil inside her, she hurriedly said in a trembling voice, "Andrew, you punk, you absolutely must maintain your principles and not do anything inappropriate! Y-You can't mess up at this moment!

"Remember what I said earlier—if you help me through this crisis, afterward... I can let you... Well, you know what I mean..."

Andrew had already tightly closed his eyes. Sweat dripped down his face in large drops as he visibly struggled with himself.

Suddenly, he shouted, "Enough! Don't say anymore! Mrs. Rhodes, if you cause me to behave like a beast today, I won't care afterward whether you're Lauren's mother or not—I'll definitely teach you a lesson!"

Andrew was genuinely angry at this crazy woman. Even at this critical moment, she was still using unspeakable methods to persuade him to help her.

Even if Tiana had not offered any rewards, Andrew would not have truly abandoned her to her fate.

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Yet strangely, this crazy woman's words were always ambiguous and arousing. If someone else had been in Andrew's place, he would have been shocked if Tiana had remained unscathed afterward.

Sometimes, Andrew truly could not understand why Tiana, a beautiful woman in her 40s, would behave like those girls in their 20s. She bewitched minds, exuded seduction to the bone, and in front of men, she would tease and flaunt her feminine allure unrestrained.

At her age, with a husband and daughter, would it kill her to be more proper and dignified?

But on second thought, Andrew realized that Tiana had always been cold and ruthless, strict and meticulous—even Jameson and Lauren feared her. She certainly was not some loose woman, and in front of other men, she appeared unapproachable, icy, and pure.

She only went crazy and acted abnormally when dealing with her son-in-law. His father was undoubtedly a factor, as Tiana saw him as his father's reflection, but did she really have no other unspeakable thoughts about her son-in-law?

No, he could not think further down this path. If he did, something terrible would eventually happen.

Tiana's cool voice gradually rose in his ears. "Andrew, success or failure hinges on this moment. I can clearly feel the martial threshold within me loosening, but crossing it remains challenging. So, listen carefully while I explain the dual cultivation method.

"Rest assured, this dual cultivation isn't what you're thinking. Like the Divine Enlightenment technique before, both methods are legitimate practices passed down through my lineage. Though we differ in generation and have a sensitive relationship, desperate times call for desperate measures you really shouldn't have any psychological burden."

"As long as I don't have to take off my pants, I'm willing to try anything else for you," Andrew replied somewhat angrily.

Tiana's cheeks had long turned as red, her eyes seductive as she laughed coquettishly. "You wishful thinker! If I really asked you to take off your pants, you'd be the luckiest man on earth. Lauren and I serving you together? You'd probably go straight to heaven!"

Andrew's face twitched as he gritted his teeth and chose to remain silent. Why did he always feel that Tiana was deliberately pushing boundaries?

Both of them were now in a state of expanding internal heat and blurred rationality. The instinctive desire to tease, to misbehave, to shatter moral taboos kept surfacing.

Even Andrew had nearly slipped up-let alone Tiana, who was caught in the midst of this turmoil. Following her guidance, Andrew confirmed that the dual cultivation method she proposed did not violate any taboos.

So, without further hesitation, he followed Tiana's movements as they pressed their palms together. An enormous wave of heat crashed into his body through Tiana's palms.

For a split second, Andrew wanted to open his mouth and roar, then devour Tiana whole. Thankfully, his resilient willpower once again pulled him back from the edge of impropriety.

Meanwhile, Tiana kept her eyes wide open during the procedure, not daring to close them for even a moment. The reason was simple-she knew the side effects of this dual cultivation method.

One moment of carelessness, and she might commit an immoral act with her wonderful son-in-law. However, Tiana had not told Andrew about these terrible side effects.

It was straightforward her cunning nature meant she was willing to risk anything to reach the martial king level.

Her previous words were

deliberately selective, only telling

Andrew the good parts. If she had revealed everything, Andrew would certainly have refused, as even Tiana herself was dying of shame. The potential situations were beyond her control.

She thought, Andrew, you must hold on! Not only does my martial advancement depend entirely on you, but my virtue does as well! If

you lose control, or if I

become confused by passion, the consequences would be

known

as unimaginable.'

For a moment, Tiana truly wanted to throw caution to the wind and let her desires overwhelm her. But she knew that once she did that, she would never be able to face Andrew again.

Because once it happened, it would

never happen again. She might be

unorthodox; but she did not want to become someone everyone would despise as trash, despite her true inner feelings not being as calm and restrained as she appeared. Instead, they were as wild as fire.