

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) 1281-1290

Half a day had passed, but Jameson, Lauren, and several key members of the Rhodes family still waited anxiously in the backyard of the Rhodes residence, outside the secret chamber,

"Mr. Rhodes, do you think something might have gone wrong?" an elderly man could not help asking.

Jameson waved his hand dismissively. "No, I trust Andrew. With his abilities, even if Tiana doesn't succeed, she shouldn't be in any danger!"

Lauren reassured herself. "Yes, I believe in Andrew! Both he and Mom will definitely be fine!"

At that moment, the stone door of the secret chamber slid open on both sides. Lauren looked over immediately and exclaimed with delight, "Andrew, is it over? Wait, why do you look like that?"

The chamber was pitch black inside, and nothing could be seen.

Andrew emerged holding onto the doorframe, his body completely soaked with sweat. With a weak smile on his face, he addressed the Rhodes family members, "It's over. Mrs. Rhodes is fine."

As for why he looked the way he did—well, that was something to ask Tiana about.

Fortunately, Andrew was only drenched in sweat, and his clothes were not in disarray. If that had been the case, Jameson and the others, no matter how much they trusted him, would probably have started to think otherwise.

Jameson quickly said, "Lauren, help Andrew to the front hall to rest!"

As he spoke, he was about to rush into the secret chamber.

Andrew hurriedly called out, "Mr. Rhodes, it's not appropriate for you to go in right now. Let Lauren go instead."

Jameson paused, somewhat puzzled. But he had unconditional trust in Andrew, so he smiled and said, "That works too. Lauren, check on your mother quickly. I'll help Andrew to the rest area."

"Oh," Lauren replied before quickly running into the secret chamber.

Meanwhile, Andrew followed Jameson and the others to the front hall to rest. He did not want to create a scene where Jameson entered the chamber and found Tiana completely undressed.

Lauren, being female and having complete trust in him, seemed to Andrew to be the more appropriate person to see Tiana. At the very least, She could help Tiana get properly dressed before coming out to meet everyone.

The elders of the Rhodes family were all very eager to know, "Mr. Lloyd, has Mrs. Rhodes broken through to the martial king level?"

Andrew shook his head, then nodded. Everyone exchanged confused glances, not understanding what Andrew meant.

Jameson, while hoping Tiana would leap to become a top-tier martial artist and propel the Rhodes family to new heights, could also accept failure gracefully. After all, Tiana had indeed been too hasty in her pursuit.

He waved his hand and smiled at Andrew, "Andrew, you shouldn't feel any guilt or psychological burden. Tiana's martial arts skills could reach a higher level, it would certainly be wonderful news for the Rhodes family.

"But if she didn't achieve it, neither I nor anyone else would be disappointed. After all, the time wasn't right, and you've already done very well!"

Andrew smiled and said, "Mr. Rhodes, actually, Mrs. Rhodes's martial arts have indeed broken through. She has entered the martial king ranks, though she can only be considered at the entry level of a martial king.

"Her advancement relied too heavily on external forces. She'll need to spend a lot of time settling and refining her skills before she can be considered a true martial king."

Jameson and the other family elders of the Rhodes family were stunned at first, then broke into wild jubilation. They immediately expressed their profound gratitude to Andrew.

Jameson, in particular, grabbed both of Andrew's hands and excitedly said, "Andrew, stay for the night! Later, the entire Rhodes family and I will host a family banquet for you.

"Oh, and Lauren's court dance is extraordinarily brilliant! I'll arrange for her to dance solo for you tonight, so you can enjoy the pleasure fit for an emperor!"

Andrew smiled wryly and declined, "I'll pass, Mr. Rhodes. Right now, I couldn't appreciate any dance performance."

He was exhausted and only wanted to rest. More importantly, he just wanted to stay far away from Tiana.

This mother-in-law was becoming increasingly unpredictable and dangerous to him.

Jameson was about to arrange other entertainment when Tiana's calm voice came from behind them.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

"Jameson, since Andrew doesn't like it, stop fussing! Just prepare a table full of delicious food, and we'll eat, drink, and chat as a family!" Tiana said.

She had changed into fresh clothes and wore a frosty expression, walked out gracefully, accompanied by Lauren.

Andrew looked up and caught Tiana's gaze directly focused on him. Their eyes met briefly in the air between them.

Andrew immediately looked away, pretending to act natural. A subtle, ambiguous smile appeared at the corner of Tiana's lips, showing her delight. The smile was so slight that no one except Andrew noticed it.

Jameson chuckled and said, "That works too. We'll follow your arrangement. It's perfect timing for Andrew to join me for a few drinks."

Soon, the Rhodes family banquet was set up. Besides Jameson's family, the elders of the Rhodes family also joined in.

The conversation inevitably centered around how Tiana's martial arts could finally uphold the Rhodes family's reputation. From then on, the Rhodes family would join the ranks of the great families and participate in the competition for power.

Lauren sat next to Andrew, hesitating to speak.

Andrew knew what the girl wanted to ask, so he took the initiative and said, "Lauren, it's not what you think."

Lauren smiled and asked, "Dr. Lloyd, you know what I was going to ask you?" Andrew laughed awkwardly and replied, "I have some idea."

Lauren pouted unhappily and mumbled, "Lower your voice! I just want to know why my mom wasn't wearing anything."

Andrew sighed inwardly, realizing the inevitable questions had finally arrived. As he was racking his brain for an explanation, Tiana put down her utensils and said calmly.

"Breaking through to higher realms in martial arts creates tremendous dangers within the body. Andrew assisted me with his eyes covered the entire time. He knows nothing else about what happened."

Lauren stuck out her tongue sheepishly. "I knew Andrew wouldn't look at you in that state, Mom! But Mom, really. At your age, and being his mother-in-law, putting yourself in that situation is hardly proper!"

Tiana's stern face turned slightly red as she glared at Lauren. "Do you think I wanted to? I did it for your father and for the Rhodes family. If I don't improve my realm, how will the Rhodes family advance in the future?"

Lauren smiled brightly. "So, thank you for your hard work, Mom! And thank you too, Andrew. Here, let me get you both some more food. Eat up....."

Tiana maintained her composure, lying smoothly as if it were her second nature. "Andrew, you should try those two techniques I taught you earlier when you get the chance. Don't underestimate these breakthrough methods. They're closely guarded secrets of our sect. You never know when you might need them!"

Andrew had no desire to use her dual cultivation technique, though the Divine Enlightenment method was indeed excellent.

Tiana glanced at him meaningfully. "You shouldn't think that some techniques are unorthodox. If used properly, or if you find a suitable partner for dual cultivation, the effects, believe me, will exceed your imagination!"

Andrew frowned,

his mind

involuntarily recalling the previous experience. Indeed, the dual cultivation technique Tiana taught him ultimately helped her overcome her crisis. The only issue was that it tested the willpower and endurance of the assisting person.

Now that Andrew had mastered this method, he certainly would not repeat such an experience with Tiana again.

Nonetheless, with Lauren, Francesca, and the others, Andrew could confidently employ these techniques. Especially with Aspen and Natasha, whose martial progress was extraordinarily rapid.

When they truly needed to break through to higher realms, if there were no better alternatives, Andrew could follow the same pattern and use the dual cultivation technique.

However, there was one troublesome aspect to this approach-Andrew's body simply would not be able to withstand that kind of strain.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

After several rounds of drinks, Andrew was full and satisfied, ready to leave.

Lauren said, "Dr. Lloyd, I'll walk you out."

Andrew was about to agree when Tiana interjected, "Lauren, you don't need to get up. I'll see Andrew off."

Andrew smiled and said, "It's fine, Mrs. Rhodes. You should rest more. Lauren can walk me out."

Tiana had already stood up and said expressionlessly, "I'll do it. Don't argue."

Andrew had no choice but to silently curse this crazy woman, wondering what new trick she was planning. He obediently got up and, accompanied by Tiana, walked out of the Rhodes residence.

Outside the main gate, Tiana smiled and said, "Andrew, I need to thank you personally for what happened today. Honestly, I never thought I would reach the martial king level one day."

For a family like the Rhodes, producing a martial king was an extraordinary achievement, as warriors of that caliber were typically only found in top-tier families like the Five Apex Families.

Andrew waved his hand dismissively. "Thanking me feels too formal. I just hope you won't put me in difficult situations in the future."

Tiana's face, now more radiant after her martial breakthrough, showed a slight blush as she snorted, "I don't feel like I lost anything, yet you're acting like you've been wronged."

Andrew spoke seriously, "Mrs. Rhodes, one thing is separate from another. Don't you think we were walking a tightrope today?"

Tiana's eyes sparkled mischievously as she suddenly asked, "Remember when I said that if you helped me break through, I'd give you an opportunity? Do you want it now? If you do, I can arrange it."

Her seductive gaze and blatant suggestion made Andrew inwardly curse furiously at this crazy woman.

"Sorry, I'm not interested," Andrew flatly refused.

Tiana smiled. "Your loss. Many people would be desperate for such a great opportunity. Let me tell you, if you could experience it just once, you'd never forget that heavenly feeling for the rest of your life."

Hearing this lunatic becoming increasingly outrageous, the veins on Andrew's forehead began to throb visibly. "I finally understand why my father got together with you back then. It's because you're truly a flirt."

Tiana was startled and furiously replied, "You little punk, how dare you! When your father and I got together, was still a young girl in the bloom of youth. He was always the one pursuing me; I wasn't throwing myself at him!

"Besides, do you misunderstand something? The opportunity I mentioned was to

let you and Lauren have intimate contact without my interference! But now, seeing how ungrateful you are... Well, just forget it!"

Andrew was stunned. "What? The opportunity you mentioned was about Lauren, not yourself?"

Tiana was mortified with

embarrassment and wanted to slap Andrew across the face as she clenched her fist and hissed, "Idiot, did you really think I was being that suggestive? Damn it, don't you dare have those impure thoughts in your head, understand? I was talking about Lauren all along!"

Andrew was incredibly embarrassed and repeatedly apologized with awkward laughter. "So that's what you meant! Just a misunderstanding... Purely a

misunderstanding! In that case, thank you for your blessing."

Tiana sneered. "Your thoughts are impure, so I'm taking back my offer. You and Lauren still cannot cross the line."

Andrew snorted coldly. "After helping you so many times, you still like to interfere in other people's business. If something really happens between Lauren and me, I'd like to see what you could do about it."

Tiana kept creating situations that led to misunderstandings and embarrassment, and Andrew, not being made of clay, finally showed his temper.

Tiana did not get angry, though, and instead earnestly advised, "Andrew, I'm serious. Lauren's virginity cannot be taken for now."

Andrew could not help saying, "What era are we living in, Mrs. Rhodes? Your thinking is truly outdated!"

Tiana scoffed If I were that

old-fashioned, would I have been completely naked in a room with you? There's another reason for this. Since you already know about the

treasure map, I might as well tell you everything. Lauren's virgin blood is the only way to make the incomplete map of the Rhodes family reveal itself!"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Tiana asked, "So now you understand why I've always said you can't have relations with her, right?"

Andrew had not expected the treasure map to involve such a secret requirement. "Virgin blood makes the Rhodes family's map fragment visible? That's quite unusual! But Mrs. Rhodes, why does the fragment I got from Mr. Bates at Oak Apothecary already have visible lines?"

Tiana replied, "There's nothing strange about that. Ronan probably used the virgin blood of a Bates family descendant to make the lines on his fragment appear early. That's why the Bates family was targeted so early-a foolish, self- destructive move!"

Andrew frowned. "So, according to what you're saying, all the treasure map fragments require virgin blood from descendants of their guardians?"

Tiana nodded. "That's exactly right. The Rhodes family fragment has been sealed away, and no blood has been applied to make it visible. That's why Jameson and the previous generations of the Rhodes family haven't been targeted by those with ulterior motives.

"But last time you warned me that Quinton of the Wrights knows that our family has a fragment, and he's planning to make a move soon."

Andrew quickly asked, "That's correct. Have you notified Mr. Rhodes to keep the fragment secure?"

Tiana gave a cold smile, her face full of murderous intent. "Jameson can't protect the fragment-only I can keep it safe. I keep it under my pillow and carry it with me at all times. Anyone who wants to take it will have to get past my fists first and see if they can keep their head attached to their body..."

Andrew nodded and said, "That's certainly a foolproof strategy. With your current strength, ordinary people really wouldn't stand a chance. But the Rhodes family should still be careful.

"When Quinton says he'll make a move, he means it. And knowing how devious he is, he probably won't use direct force but some other stealthy method."

Tiana growled, "Quinton's approach will likely involve bribing someone in the Rhodes family to steal from within. Don't worry about that—I've already got my eye on several suspects. If they dare betray the family, I'll send them six feet under!"

Andrew shrugged and replied, "Well, now that you're stronger, you don't really need my help. But I do have one last question. You and Mr. Rhodes have two daughters, right?"

Tiana looked puzzled. "And?"

Andrew scratched his head and mumbled with an embarrassed smile, "And what I'm trying to say is you have two daughters! If Lauren loses her virginity by being with me, it's not that big of a deal, right? After all you still have Cece, don't you?"

Tiana chuckled and said, "Go to hell!"

Andrew sighed, knowing he could not convince this crazy woman. Fortunately, Francesca had already arrived in Blumedale, so he was not lacking beautiful companions around him these days.

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Arriving at the roadside, Andrew prepared to hail a cab to go home. For an outstanding gentleman like him, a billionaire CEO, there was no need to ride in fancy luxury cars anymore. Taking cabs and living like an ordinary citizen made him stand out in a different way.

Suddenly, a sleek black Mercedes coupe screeched to a halt in front of him. The passenger door opened, and Yara, wearing sunglasses, said, "Mr. Lloyd, please get in."

Andrew did not move and smiled. "How did you know I was here?"

Yara replied coolly, "Wasn't it easy to find out from your secretary?"

Only then did Andrew get into the car and ask, "Ms. Wright, what can I do for you?"

Yara said, "We're currently in a cooperative relationship. Earlier, I reported Quinton's movements to you, Mr. Lloyd. I mentioned then that you would owe me a favor. Now, I'm here to ask you to repay that favor."

Andrew sighed resignedly. "Fine, whether it's murder and arson or drinking and whoring—just lead the way."

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

The Wrights, one of the Five Apex Families, built their empire on real estate as their pillar industry. As everyone knew, property developers were typically extremely wealthy.

Of course, they could also be extremely indebted, like Grandever Holdings, which currently owed the government two trillion dollars and ranked among the most indebted companies in history.

However, the Wrights were nothing like Grandever Holdings. In Gabo Creek province, the Wright name had always been prestigious and unwavering. Like many patriarchs of first-class families, the head of the Wrights was also quite a ladies' man.

In his younger years, unable to control his libido, Kevin Wright had pursued women everywhere, frequenting exclusive clubs. This behavior had resulted in numerous offspring, with Yara being one of the victims.

After a brief conversation with Yara in the car, Andrew understood the situation. It seemed that Kevin, having grown older and had diminished vitality, could no longer keep up with women. He had begun to focus on nurturing the younger generation and selecting his successor.

Without question, the next head of the Wrights should rightfully be the eldest son, Quinton. Legitimate, exceptionally talented, and deeply favored by the Wright patriarch, Quinton was the obvious choice.

However, as the head of a major family with numerous children, Kevin could not possibly focus only on Quinton. So, he provided resources to all his exceptional children, allowing them to make their own way in the world.

This arrangement also served as a test; any child who performed outstandingly might earn Kevin's favor. Such favoritism could potentially challenge Quinton's position as the heir apparent.

When this test began, Quinton personally crippled several of his siblings. Those ignorant fools who dared to compete with him were simply asking for death.

By now, among the Wright family's younger generation, there was not a single person who could stand against Quinton. Almost all had become Quinton's prisoners, with Yara being one of the few who refused to submit. As a result, she received special treatment from Quinton, who relentlessly oppressed her.

This situation led to her alliance with Andrew.

Smacking his lips, Andrew raised an eyebrow and asked, "So, you're saying this wonderful brother of yours is truly a beast?"

While manically pressing the gas pedal, Yara replied coldly, "Calling him a beast would be a compliment. I think he's the premium-grade stenchselected from all the dog excrements in the world-just one whiff makes people vomit

Andrew smiled faintly, privately suspecting that Quinton must have done something unspeakable to his sister Yara. Some questions were better left unasked, though-mere speculation would suffice.

Yara suddenly asked, "Mr. Lloyd, you men who stand high above others, wielding great power and enormous wealth—are ordinary beautiful women no longer enough to satisfy your tastes?"

Andrew chuckled and replied, "I wouldn't put it that way, but certain exceptional beauties are indeed very attractive."

Yara sneered. Of course. Like how

some beast-like brothers enjoy

playing with their own sisters. Some shameless men fantasize about their mothers-in-law. And some fat-gutted executives keep both

mother and daughter as mistresses, enjoying a double pleasure... I

wonder if you have experienced any

of these?"

After speaking, Yara's gaze burned into Andrew.

Andrew maintained a calm expression. "I haven't experienced any of those things you mentioned, nor am I interested."

Inwardly, he thought that Yara was quite knowledgeable about such matters. Unconsciously, his thoughts drifted to Tiana.

Yara was silent for a moment, then said in a muffled voice, "Quinton is exactly the type of beast-like brother I described."

Andrew was not surprised by this and replied calmly, "What do you want to do?

Kill him or castrate him? Don't worry, I'll support whatever you choose."

Yara slammed on the brakes,

stopping the sports car in front of a construction site. She turned off the engine, turned to Andrew, and smiled. "I don't want to kill him, and I don't want to castrate him either!"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Yara declared, "Because even though Quinton is a beast, I'm no pushover either. The one time he tried to assault me, I almost made mashed potatoes out of his balls. In return, he broke half my ribcage, but in the end, I still didn't submit, and from then on, I became a shadow in his mind."

Andrew smiled and said, "You're a tough one."

The two got out of the car and stood side by side, watching the bustling construction site before them.

Yara pointed in one direction and said to Andrew, "That area over there is where they're building standalone luxury villas. The pricing has already been planned- 500 million each, making it the most luxurious residential area in all of Blumedale. Even compared to The Sovereign Residences, it might lack heritage, but not opulence."

Andrew nodded and asked, "So this entire construction site belongs to you?"

Yara responded with a hint of pride, "Of course! Currently, I'm the only person in the Wright family who can threaten Quinton. Once this site is fully developed and completed, I can openly compete with him.

"My womanizing father, despite his flaws, has one good quality-he never shows favoritism. In the entire Wright family, whoever has the ability can take the position of family head."

Andrew smiled and said, "Then obviously, your beast of a brother won't just sit by and wait for you to complete this construction."

Yara gritted her teeth and growled, "That's why I need your help, Mr. Lloyd, to solve my problems."

Andrew shook his head and said, "Your problem is not a small one-it far exceeds the favor you did by tipping me off earlier."

Yara had already thought of a countermeasure and smiled. "On this construction site, Mr. Lloyd, you can choose any area or villa you want. This will make up the difference."

Andrew directly raised his hand and pointed to an area by the lake. "I want those two adjacent villas over there."

Yara became anxious. "Mr. Lloyd, I said one villa, not two! And the location you're asking for is the lakeside area. That's the most expensive spot!"

Andrew shrugged and asked, "So?"

Yara was speechless with frustration, but ultimately had to compromise and said resentfully, "You drive a hard bargain. Deal!"

Two lakeside villas were worth at least a billion dollars, which meant Yara was taking a tremendous loss. Nonetheless, she had no choice-her troubles could only be resolved with Andrew's help.

Knowing exactly what she was thinking, Andrew had no qualms about making his demands. It was not that he was greedy or asking for too much, but rather that Yara's problem was clearly not a small matter.

Since she had come to him, it must have been quite troublesome, which meant that Yara would have no choice but to accept whatever price Andrew named.

Hence, if Andrew wanted to sleep with her, as long as Yara still wanted to compete with Quinton, she would have to spread her legs for him.

Just then, Yara warned, "Mr. Lloyd, I suggest you call your people to come and provide backup, because soon, there might be bloodshed."

After giving this warning, Yara, still furious, led the way toward the project office on the construction site.

Andrew understood her frustration-giving away two luxury villas before they were even built would be painful for anyone, including himself.

"There's no need to call for backup," Andrew replied with a smile as he followed her, stepping into the project office.

Inside, the atmosphere was chaotic.

A group of shirtless men were

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playing cards and shouting loudly. The moment Yara appeared, a dozen predatory gazes locked onto Ker. s̄wnovel

The leader, a pockmarked man named Earl Cummings, leered and said, "Ms.

Wright, you're not gonna send us away on your own.

"Like I said before, just put on some black stockings and let me have my fun with you, then I'll take my men and leave!"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Yara coldly replied, "Go home and have fun with your mother. I'm warning you once-leave now! Otherwise, none of you will be walking out of here."

Earl laughed heartily and said, "As expected from a girl from a big family-so feisty! Ms. Wright, if that mouth of yours serviced me, it would definitely leave me begging for more!"

The group of rough men burst into laughter, showing absolutely no respect for Yara.

Seeing Yara's fists clenched so tightly that her knuckles turned white, Andrew stepped forward with a smile and said, "There's no need to get angry with a bunch of lowlifes. Since I've accepted two villas, let me handle the rest."

Yara stepped aside and could not help asking, "Mr. Lloyd, are you sure you don't want to call for backup?"

Andrew shook his head and replied, "I already said there's no need. It's not like we're dealing with the President of Meurico-no need for such a big production."

Yara was speechless. Although she believed in Andrew's financial power and intelligence, she had not witnessed his fighting ability, so she had her doubts.

"Kid, I advise you not to interfere and stick your neck out," a bald man said, staring at Andrew threateningly.

Another chimed in, "We've got this Wright bitch right where we want her. Anyone who tries to stop us, I'll fucking cut them down."

Andrew flexed his wrists and smiled. "Come on, guys, is this really necessary? She's trying to build houses here, trying to run a business. And you all come and occupy her project office, causing all this chaos. Honestly, it's a bit much."

The bald man pointed at his own nose and sneered, "So what if it's too much? Do you even know who we are or where we come from?"

One of his underlings boasted loudly, "Kid, our background would scare you to death if you knew it! Listen up—above ground in Blumedale, there are the Three Titans.

Underground in Blumedale, there are the Three Dragon Kings! Mr. Earl Cummings here works for the Azure Dragon King himself!"

Andrew replied calmly, "Azure Dragon King? Never heard of him. Is he really that powerful?"

Earl gloated, "It's not just about power-it's about being able to

control the life and death of

countless people as we please. Now, you either get lost, or stay and watch us play with this Wright girl. Of course, you can only watch and drool-we won't let you have any leftovers."

Andrew beckoned with his hand and smiled. "Seeing how disgustingly vulgar you are, I've decided to give you my watch."

Seeing the luxury watch on Andrew's wrist, Earl's eyes immediately lit up with greed. "You're really giving it to me? Fuck, I don't care if you're giving it or not. Since you've flashe@your wealth, it's mine now!"

Earl laughed as he charged toward Andrew, reaching for the watch on his wrist. However, he received a straight punch from Andrew that landed right on the bridge of his nose instead.

Earl fell backward, blood gushing out from his nose, reaching the ceiling ten feet above. "Damn it! I can't believe he had the guts to put a hand on me! Kill him!"

The remaining thugs roared in anger, grabbed whatever weapons were nearby, and charged toward Andrew in their flip-flops.

Loud bangs echoed, and Yara watched in astonishment as Andrew took down one opponent after another in just a few moves.

Spinning around, he launched a powerful kick. A thug with clearly visible ribs crashed through the project office door and flew outside.

With a sideways elbow strike, Andrew delivered a powerful blow to the stomach of the last thug, who clutched his abdomen and collapsed to the ground, looking as if he was about to vomit out all his internal organs.

Dusting off his hands as he returned to Yara's side, Andrew said nonchalantly, "All done."

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

"By the way, take out your phone. I'll need to use it in a moment," Andrew said.

The fight had ended so quickly that Yara had not even processed what had happened yet. She stammered, "Wait... Y-You... No, what do you need my phone for?"

Andrew explained, "These guys are just bottom-feeding crawlers who do the grunt work. You've read novels, right? Usually, at this point, when the minions get beaten up, they immediately call for backup and summon their boss. So, I need your phone to let them make those calls."

When Yara heard this, she could not believe her ears and stared at Andrew in disbelief. She asked, "Mr. Lloyd, are you mentally ill?"

He had just beaten people up and then actively offered a phone so they could call for reinforcements. Being so thoughtful and considerate-was Andrew actually serious?

Earl, his face covered in blood, got up from the ground and shouted, "You bastard, you think you're tough? In this world, what matters is power and connections. Just you wait, motherfucker!"

Andrew tossed Yara's phone to him, calmly saying, "Your phone got stomped on. Use this one. Don't waste time-call everyone you can. If you can't bring anyone worthwhile, I'll bury you alive in the concrete foundation of this construction site today."

Earl instinctively caught the phone, his Adam's apple bobbing as he stared at Andrew like he was looking at a madman. His expression mirrored Yara's from moments ago.

"Fine, you're fucking crazy. I'll call our boss right now, and we'll see how you die," Earl growled.

He could not believe there was someone so eager to meet their death.

Yara asked uncomfortably, "Mr. Lloyd, even if you want them to call for backup, why use my phone instead of yours?"

Andrew replied with a straight face, "Because I don't want them touching mine-it would get dirty."

Yara could not help but grit her teeth. If he thought it was dirty, did he not consider that she would feel the same way?

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They did not have to wait long before the people Earl called arrived at the construction site. Eight luxury SUVs pulled up, looking impressive and intimidating. Then, about 30 men in black suits rushed toward the project office as soon as they got out of their vehicles.

Leading them was a short man wearing sunglasses with an extremely grim expression.

Yara's face turned pale as she said in a trembling voice, "This man is one of the heads of the Azure Dragon King's, Stumpy Cummings-Tristan Cummings. He's known for his ruthlessness. Be careful!"

Andrew smiled and said, "He doesn't look like much-just a dwarf."

Yara became extremely anxious and angrily growled, "Mr. Lloyd, you'd better not underestimate this man Tristan once single-handedly fought against over 50 skilled fighters from another group. His body was completely covered in wounds, but he didn't fall and instead killed all of his opponents."

Andrew was not impressed and just smiled. Fighting 50 opponents was nothing special to him since he had seen people take on 500 at once, so this was not particularly remarkable.

Earl hurried over to greet Tristan with a fawning smile and said, "Sir, you're here! This little punk's got a death wish! He beat us up, then had the batts to hand me his phone and tell me to call you-like he's not scared of what you'll do!"

Tristan replied in an icy voice, "Get out of my way, you embarrassment!"

Earl was rebuffed and stood aside awkwardly, but inwardly he was sneering. Tristan's temperament was dark and violent, often killing people on a whim. He believed that Andrew would at least lose a limb or two today.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

"Kid, so you're the one who beat up my men, huh?" Tristan slowly removed his sunglasses and squinted at Andrew.

Andrew smiled. "That's right, I'm the one who beat your guys up."

Tristan sneered. "You look unfamiliar. Don't you know who I am?"

Andrew shook his head. "Actually, I don't. Besides, are you really that famous? Why should I know who you are?"

Tristan's already gloomy face turned even uglier, unable to believe he was being looked down upon. The group of underlings behind him revealed fierce looks in their eyes, just waiting for his command.

Yara was so frightened that her legs grew weak, but she forced a smile and said, "Mr. Cummings, it was your men who came to my project office first and disrupted my construction progress. You're a gang leader working under the Azure Dragon King, a big shot with status and position. Surely you wouldn't stoop to such disrespectful behavior, would you?"

Tristan coldly replied, "Ms. Wright, don't blame me for bullying you. It's just that your brother Quinton offered too much for us to refuse."

Yara's pretty face filled with hatred as she said, "Quinton is a beast, but I've never had any grudge with you, Mr. Cummings, have I?"

Tristan licked the corner of his mouth, his short stature giving him an upward view of Yara's voluptuous figure. He chuckled and teased, "Ms. Wright, a beauty like you would make not only Quinton turn into a beast."

He grinned as he added, "Even I can't help wanting to become an animal and have some fun with you!"

Yara was furious and embarrassed, but she bit her tongue and remained silent. She still did not want to escalate things too far with someone as dangerous as Tristan.

Tristan pointed at Andrew and commanded, "You bastard, come over here! Get on your knees and admit your guilt! Otherwise, just for daring to hit my men, you'll die on this construction site today!"

Andrew laughed outright and asked Yara, "Are all the gangsters in Blumedale this arrogant?"

Yara's expression turned grim, not knowing where Andrew's confidence came from. At this critical moment, he was not calling for backup and was still joking around casually.

Was he really that confident, or did he simply not fear death?

Earl laughed and said, "Sir, this little punk seems to want a taste of your power!"

Other underlings also snickered. "The last guy who got killed by Mr. Cummings was just as cocky!"

Another chimed in, "These pretty boys all like to show off in front of beautiful women. But in the end," they all end up kneeling before Mr. Cummings, snot and tears running as they beg for mercy!"

"Sir, let's kill this guy first, then let us have some fun with this Wright girl. Damn, those thighs and those breasts are to die for..."

Tristan fixed his malicious gaze on Andrew. Kid, I'll give you one last chancez Come here and get on your knees! Otherwise, you'll see your own brains splattered on the ground, I guarantee it!"

Andrew strode toward him, smirking. "Your lines are pretty smooth, but do you

really think you're some kind of action movie villain?"

He launched a kick with thunderous force.

Tristan was both shocked and furious. Caught off guard and hampered by his dwarf-like height he was sent flying by Andrew's kick. However, being the head of the Azure Dragons, Tristan did have some skills. His body flipped twice in midair before landing steadily on his feet.

"Kill him!" he screamed in a shrill voice filled with rage. He was always the one to strike first and teach others a lesson-no one had ever gotten the drop on him before.

The 30-plus men in black suits roared as they charged toward Andrew. Compared to Earl's men, Tristan's subordinates were much more formidable.

However, to Andrew, there was no difference-just as in the eyes of an eagle, a chick and a large rooster were essentially the same, both destined to be its prey.

Half a minute later, Andrew stood in front of Tristan, the two separated by less than two inches. One looking down, one looking up, staring at each other.

Except Tristan's eyes were filled with terror, while Andrew's gaze was completely indifferent.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Behind Andrew, not a single one of Tristan's men remained standing. The scene was a mess of blood and even severed limbs-utterly devastating.

Yara covered her pale face, staring at Andrew with shock in her eyes. She could not help but wonder if he was even human.

She had been surprised when he single-handedly took down Earl's amateur underlings, as many people couldn't have achieved such a feat.

However, for him to defeat all of Tristan's men with such ease, cutting through them like nothing, Yara knew this was on an entirely different level.

She believed that Andrew was a true martial arts master hiding his true abilities. He was wealthy, powerful, and backed by the Keller family and the governor. Now, he had just demonstrated his most astonishing quality-incredible fighting

prowess.

He seemed perfect in every way, without a single weakness.

Suddenly, Yara felt a surge of excitement in her heart. Though she hated Quinton, she had always felt powerless against him because he dominated her in every aspect.

Yara reluctantly admitted that Quinton was indeed a very capable man. But now, seeing Andrew, she realized that Quinton paled in comparison.

Earl stood at a distance, mumbling in disbelief, "How is this possible? These are all Mr. Cummings' top fighters. How could they be defeated so easily?"

These words reached Tristan's ears, making his face twitch violently. He silently cursed Earl for being such an idiot.

Was he blind? It was not that his men were weak-they had encountered someone truly formidable today.

Despite his own glorious combat record of single-handedly defeating 50 opponents, Tristan immediately spoke up, his voice hoarse and dry, "Sir, no hard feelings. Consider this brawl our introduction. How about this-I apologize and make amends. Then, we can put this matter behind us. Don't worry, I absolutely won't bother Ms. Wright's construction site again."

Both Earl and Yara were stunned, unable to believe their ears that Tristan had backed down so easily. He was even speaking humbly and begging for mercy.

Andrew looked down at him and

oked

smiled. "Little dwarf, weren't you the one who wanted me to get on my knees and beg earlier? Look at our height difference-even if I knelt down, you'd still have to look up at me. Why don't you try jumping to see if you can reach my waist?"

These words were extremely insulting.

Tristan's eyes blazed with real anger, but he could only force a laugh. "You're such a funny man! What I said earlier was just thoughtless nonsense-don't take it seriously, please don't take it seriously!"

Andrew shook his head and sighed. "Boring!"

Tristan breathed a sigh of relief, thinking to himself, 'So you think this is boring,

huh? Fine, I'll let you have your moment of triumph. Just wait until later you'll get what's coming to you!'

Andrew delivered two quick slaps across Tristan's head, knocking him to the ground.

Tristan clutched his head and shouted angrily, "Bastard, how dare you hit me?"

Andrew smirked. "Why wouldn't I?"

Tristan bit his tongue hard, swallowing his anger and not daring to speak.

Andrew dusted off his hands,

looking bored. "Get lost. Today was

just a minor punishment to teach you a lesson. I know what you're thinking—are you considering asking your Azure Dragon King to come and get revenge for you?"

Tristan opened his mouth, almost asking how Andrew knew. However, he stopped himself in time, only offering a cold sneer.

Andrew gave him another resounding blow. This time, he had crouched down to deliver it, leaving half of Tristan's face completely numb.

"Stand at attention when you're being punished. You don't actually think I give a damn about your pathetic title as the leader of a random organization, do you?"

Andrew grabbed him by the collar, lifting him up as easily as if he were picking up a child.

Earl watched from the sidelines, swallowing hard, so scared he nearly wet himself. He had seen aggressive people before, but in all his years in the underworld, he had never seen anyone as ferocious as Andrew.