

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) 1311-1320

Chapter 1311 "Oh God, my reputation is ruined! I don't want to live anymore!" Jared sobbed as he tried to get out of bed and rush toward the window.

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Francesca panicked. "Jared, what are you doing?" Jared shouted, "Fran, don't try to stop me! Just let me jump and end it all! I was supposed to be a medical prodigy, destined to become a renowned medical expert someday. But the humiliating incident today has completely destroyed me.

I don't want to live anymore, I just can't..." He continued crying and screaming while breaking free from Francesca's grip and rushing to the window. Francesca turned pale with fear. "Dr. Goddard, Dr. Bozzelli, quick! Stop Jared, hurry!" Malcolm commanded in a stern voice, "Jared, stop right there! Don't do anything stupid, you understand?" However, Thomas just smirked. "So you want to kill yourself because you can't handle a little setback, is that it? Fine, open the window and jump.

Do it right now!" Both Francesca and Malcolm were shocked as they stared at Thomas. ---- Malcolm asked, "Dr. Bozzelli, do you realize what you're saying?" Thomas replied indifferently, "If he wants to die, let him!

He made a mistake and embarrassed himself, but instead of figuring out how to restore his reputation or examining where he went wrong, he's acting like a coward, threatening to kill himself!" Thomas turned to Jared and added harshly, "If that's how it's going to be, I'll grant your wish and pretend I never had you as a student." Jared's face turned bright red, feeling utterly humiliated by the scolding and shouted angrily, "Dr.

Bozzelli, you really think I'm a disgrace and want to watch me die, don't you? Are you really this heartless, forgetting all we've been through?" Thomas laughed coldly. "If you want to die so badly, then jump. Why waste time with all this talk? As your mentor, don't you think I know your personality? You don't have the guts to jump, not a chance.

So get your ass back here, reflect on your actions, and prepare for the upcoming Grand Medical Summit Jared putted back the foot he had already placed on the windowsill and said with an air of

self-righteousness, "You're right, I can't jump. The Grand Medical Summit is coming up soon. Blumedale Hospital absolutely cannot do without me. "although I'm not afraid to prove my integrity through death, I'm willing to endure humiliation and stay alive for Blumedale Hospital!

I'll use the honors I'm about to achieve to prove myself and rebuild my image!" Malcolm praised him, "Well said! Excellent! Now that's Thomas's star pupil and the true

representative of Blumedale Hospital's young doctors!" Francesca, however, felt like covering her face, as these words sounded so fake and hypocritical to her. 'Thomas smiled. "I'm glad you think this way. You haven't disappointed me, after all. Alright, get some rest.

I knew you wouldn't let us down." Jared immediately returned to bed. Noticing a fruit basket nearby, he grabbed an apple and skillfully peeled it before offering it to

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Francesca with a smile. "Fran, have

an apple!" He appeared very

attentive, clearly someone who

genuinely cared for others. However,

Francesca looked somewhat embarrassed and shook her head. She said, "Jared, you eat it. I'm still full and can't eat anything right now." Jared felt disappointed.

His beloved junior was clearly distancing herself from him more and more. Nonetheless, this was not the time for romance, so he

smoothly offered the apple to Malcolm instead. "Dr. Goddard, have an apple." Malcolm smiled awkwardly. "You're the patient, you should eat- more. Don't worry about me. We older folks don't have much of an appetite anyway!" Jared then offered the apple to Thomas with a sincere expression, saying, "Dr. Bozzelli, I'm very grateful for your guidance and kindness. I owe you more than I can ever repay, but this is all I can offer due to my

condition right now."

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## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

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Chapter 1312 Jared insisted, "Dr. Bozzelli, have this apple. Please don't refuse!" 'Thomas waved his hands repeatedly. "Jared, you eat it. I have no appetite right now!" "Then let me peel a pear for you. I remember pears are your favorite!" Jared continued. "save it for yourself, Jared. I really can't stomach anything right now," Thomas replied. "How about

some grapes or peaches? The fruits this season are sweet and juicy," Jared persisted. 'Thomas, growing impatient, shouted, "Enough!

I said I didn't want to eat. Why are you being so insistent? You're never this attentive normally!"" Jared was stunned by the outburst, and tears of hurt began to well up in his eyes again. "Dr. Bozzelli, you're refusing everything. Are you disgusted with me? Are you disgusted because my hands aren't clean enough? Because I used my hands to scratch... down there?" 'Thomas's face twitched as he silently cursed, "This damn kid knows exactly why, so why the hell is he still trying to make me eat?!

However, he could not bring himself to reopen old wounds, ---- especially with his favorite student. So, he chuckled and said, " Jared, let's just leave the past in the past. You always overthink things. I like you very much, how could I ever be disgusted with you?" Jared held up the apple, looking expectantly. "Good, since you're not disgusted, please accept this token of respect. Don't worry, I've washed my hands with hand sanitizer ten times.

They're completely clean with absolutely no bacteria left." 'Thomas's expression did not improve; in fact, it became darker. He thought, "This young fool must have had his brain fried by the rabies fever. I've told him I didn't want to eat any, yet he kept insisting. After all, Jared had dug his asshole Even if he used hand sanitizer a hundred times, Thomas thought the mental barrier was simply too much to overcome. Malcolm tried to mediate. "Thomas, just eat one piece.

I can see that Jared's intentions are genuinely sincere, so don't make the kid worry, Just take it and eat it!" Francesca chimed in, "Yes, Dr. Bozzetti, Jared really needs your approval right now. Just take it and eat it to put Jared's mind at ease." 'Thomas, fuming, turned his head and huffed, "Fine, I'll eat it. But Malcolm and Eran, you two will join me.

The three of us will ease Jared's

mind and help him release his stress together, okay?" If he had to do it, they would all have to do it together. Malcolm suddenly slapped his forehead and exclaimed, "Oh my! I just remembered Ms. Garcia called asking about the situation. I need to go call her back right away." Then, he bolted out of the room. Francesca's eyes darted around as she forced a smile. "The Grand Medical Summit is coming up soon, and I need to study every minute I can.

So sorry, Dr. Bozzelli, Jared. I can't

Yet

stay any longer. I've got to go!" With that, she excused herself, running even faster than Malcolm, as if. escaping for her life The hospital room suddenly became quiet to be precise, it was deathly silent. Only Thomas and his beloved student remained, staring at each other awkwardly. Thomas racked his brain, debating whether to escape or not. If he

stayed, could he actually swallow an apple peeled by hands that had been scratching an ass?

'Meanwhile, Jared wore an expression of utter despair and dejection, as if mourning the death of a loved one. He knew it- these people might comfort him verbally, saying it was nothing, just a small issue. Yet, in reality, they all thought he was a pervert, that he was dirty. ---- Jared wished his life would just end there and then.

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## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

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Chapter 1313 Only one day remained until the Grand Medical Summit began. Andrew had nothing left to do but wait calmly for the conference to arrive.

"Darling, we'll all be there to cheer you on!" Natasha said cheerfully in the living room of Serenity Villa Dylan remarked, "I've heard that everyone attending this Grand Medical Summit is quite extraordinary, even top-tier organizations like the Advanced Medical Institute, which usually stays above worldly affairs, are sending representatives." Andrew appeared unfazed and simply asked, "Where's Aspen?" Natasha nodded toward the second floor.

"She's hiding in her room and hasn't come out at all." " " Andrew frowned. "She hasn't come out since yesterday?" Natasha confirmed, "That's right, not since yesterday. But don't worry, she's fine. I've been keeping an eye on her." 'Andrew stood up and headed upstairs. "I'll go check on her!" Natasha pouted. "Such a princess!" Dylan laughed. "You can't really say that. Aspen comes from an elite family, after all. She's definitely different from rough folks like us!" ---- Natasha scoffed.

"I don't see any difference. With darling, we all eat well! She's just being dramatic, threatening to leave, still acting like a pampered little socialite. Darling has already been good enough to her!" Dylan chuckled. "Good enough indeed. I heard he even gave her Serenity Villa! But women are mysterious. Obviously, what Aspen wants now isn't wealth or luxury. She wants Mr. Lloyd's affection, preferably with some intense action, if you know what I mean." Natasha nodded. "You're absolutely right.

I believe Aspen has some masochistic tendencies. It's like she's practically begging for Darling to mistreat her." Upstairs, Andrew knocked on Aspen's door. "Go away!" a cold voice called from inside, clearly keeping people at a distance. "Tt's me. Open the door!" Andrew said firmly. After a brief silence, the voice remained cold. "I'm not opening it. I don't want to see you!" Andrew laughed in disbelief. "Aspen, get your position straight.

I'm your master, and when I tell you to open up, you'd better do it! -

Some angry cursing came from

inside, followed by the door

swinging open. Aspen stood inl

doorway wearing light sleepwear, her face pale and deliberately distant. "What do you want? If it's nothing important, please don't disturb my rest," she said coldly. Andrew smiled. "I do have something, but let me come in first before we talk." Aspen gritted her teeth.

"Don't you know that you can't just barge into a girl's room whenever you want?" Andrew's smile didn't

waver. "I'm not entering a girl's

roomm entering my servant

room!" Aspen was furious but obediently stepped aside anyway. Andrew walked around the room and was surprised to see several packed suitcases in the center. "You've packed everything up. Are you planning to leave?" Aspen crossed her arms and gave a curt nod, maintaining her coldness.

Andrew was silent for a moment, looking at her. "Are you sure about this?" Aspen turned her head away avoiding eye contact with Andrew.

Yes, I'm sure. The Grandine

Summit has the attention of the entire Gabo Creek province. My father and the rest of my family have come to Blumedale to watch it. When they return to Bridgefields, I'll go with them." Andrew nodded. "If you want to leave, that's fine. Let's go out then. I'll go meet your family with you.

It's a good opportunity to talk to them as well!" Aspen frowned. "Talk about what? You don't need to explain anything!" Andrew laughed at her defensive posture. "Don't worry, I'm not some evil tyrant who bullies people at every turn. You've helped me quite abit, after all. When I meet your family, I'll treat them to a meal, get to know them, and express my gratitude!"

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## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Chapter 1314, Aspen shook her head. "Let's not bother. I don't think it's necessary!" Andrew smiled. "Fine, if you don't think it's necessary, then stay home. I'll go meet the Bridgefields' Stevens family by myself." When she saw that Andrew was actually going to go, Aspen grew anxious and irritated. She wondered if he would cause problems if he met her family alone.

If any conflict arose, her family members would not stand a chance against this tyrant's quick moves—they could be completely destroyed. She hurriedly changed clothes, applied a touch of lipstick, grabbed her purse, and rushed after Andrew. "I thought you weren't coming? Why are you running after me now?" Andrew asked with an amused smile as he started the car in the driveway. Aspen gritted her teeth. "Mind your own business!"

"Do I need your permission to see my own parents?" Andrew shook his head and laughed it off. His obedient and capable little servant was about to leave, so he might as well let her have her way this time. The eye-catching red Ferrari LaFerrari sped through Blumedale streets like a fish gliding through water. Then, Andrew made a ---- right turn at an intersection and drove into Blumedale's most luxurious shopping district.

"My dad and the others are staying at the Veridian Hotel on the other side of town. You're going the wrong way!" Aspen pointed out. Andrew smiled. "I'm not wrong. Before meeting your family, I should at least get them some gifts. It would be rude not to." This statement left his little servant stunned. "Andrew, are you running a fever or something? You're bringing gifts for my family?"

"Since when are you this nice?" Andrew did not bother to argue with her and simply parked the car along the shopping street. As soon as they got out, they were at a Chanel boutique. "The attendant greeted them with a flattering smile. "Sir, ma'am, welcome!" Andrew tossed him the keys. "Park the car for me, please." "The attendant's smile became even more respectful. From their demeanor, he could tell that this young couple was not ordinary.

He thought they might even be from one of Blumedale's prestigious families. Especially that handsome Andrew the way he drove the Ferrari one-handed was so damn cool. The attendant wondered if he could ever reach Andrew's level. ---- "Pick out whatever you like first. Feel free to choose anything that catches your eye," Andrew said casually after scanning the luxury store. Aspen maintained her cold expression. "Don't waste your money.

"I don't like anything here, and I don't need anything either." Andrew ignored her and asked the sales associate to bring out a pearl necklace from the security display case. The sales associate beamed with delight. "Sir, you have excellent taste! The pearl on this necklace is called 'The Radiant Light'—there are only five pearls this size in the entire world! If you buy it, you'll own something truly limited edition!" "How much is it?" Andrew asked.

'The sales associate replied, "Three million dollars. If you're really interested, the price can be negotiated further!" Andrew shook his head. "Put it back. I don't want it." The confused sales associate asked, "Do you not like it, sir?" "No. It's too cheap." Too cheap? Those words left the sales associate stunned for a few seconds before she snapped back to reality with extreme excitement. She thought, 'Holy mother of God!

I've met a real big spender!" -

"Bring out your store's most valuable

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and luxurious products currently available. I want to see them," Andrew continued. The sales associate immediately went to retrieve them, secretly amazed at his extravagance. This level of spending was not typical even for the sons of wealthy families. Aspen frowned. "Andrew, what exactly are you trying to do? Honestly, buying these things suddenly won't make me happy at all.

On the contrary, I know you don't care about money and that you have countless amounts of it. But using money to pay me off just makes me feel sick!" Andrew replied calmly, "I'm not paying you off. I just want to give you some things, even if they're just mementos."

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Chapter 1315 At that moment, the sales associate returned carrying a crystal box. Inside was a diamond-carved brooch shaped like a flower bud, absolutely stunning in its beauty. She explained, "Sir, this diamond brooch is the most luxurious item in our store. The price is a bit steep-ten million dollars." Andrew frowned. "Don't you have anything more expensive?" The sales associate wanted to curse, unable to believe that ten million dollars was not expensive enough for Andrew.

Nonetheless, she forced a laugh and replied, "Currently, we don't have anything more expensive in this store. If you need something pricier, I can immediately contact Vestra headquarters, or perhaps Holtrien's Chetvine flagship store!" Andrew waved his hand dismissively. "I don't have time to wait, so this brooch will do. Don't bother wrapping it-take it out and put it on this lady." "The sales associate looked at Aspen with a complicated expression.

Some people really did have different destinies. She already made good money selling luxury goods, but a beautiful woman who had aman casually buying her ten-million-dollar



accessories-now that was truly heaven's darling. Aspen was reluctant to wear it, but Andrew's stern expression ---- made her obediently comply. "Don't think I'll be grateful just because you're buying me these things," she muttered, her face still cold. Andrew smiled.

"The brooch looks nice, but the person wearing it is even more beautiful." Aspen's heart skipped a beat as she secretly huffed. She thought, 'Is this guy actually flirting with her?' After charging ten million dollars to his card, they left the store and went to the next one. Again, Andrew purchased the most expensive and finest items without hesitation. Then, they moved on to the next store, and the next.

They had practically visited every luxury boutique on the entire shopping street before Andrew finally stopped. Looking at the bill, he had spent nearly 200 million dollars. "alright, now let's go meet your parents," Andrew said with satisfaction. Aspen was carrying bags of all sizes, her delicate face turning red with anger. Andrew had bought so many things but was not carrying a single item-he had dumped everything on her. How could he be so inconsiderate?

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While she was fuming, the women on the street were envious. Most shoppers in this area were not exactly strapped for cash, but - there was nobody like Andrew who could spend over 100 million in one go. Just looking at the nearly 20 bags that Aspen was struggling to carry made everyone around them burn with jealousy, desire, and longing. "He must be from one of the Five Apex Families-that kind of wealth is terrifying!" someone whispered. "Bullshit!

I've seen the scions from the Five Apex Families, and none of them could possibly spend like this," another countered. "If not from the Five Apex Families, then who could he be? Perhaps from one of the Three Titans?" a third person wondered. "I don't know This handsome guy looks unfamiliar. Maybe he's a top-tier big shot from Chetvine in Terror Town!" Andrew ignored the attention and discussion around him. He walked straight to his car and opened the door, ready to leave.

"andrew, Aspen, it's actually you two!" a voice called out-cold, layered with something unreadable. Andrew looked over, his expression indifferent. It was Christina's family of three-Irene and Leroy were with her, Leroy, who had lost one kidney, was now out of breath and lacking strength after walking just a few steps. ---- Irene was vain, and Leroy was not much better. They had brought Christina to the shopping district to splurge.

Seeing a crowd gathered around Andrew and Aspen, they approached out of curiosity to see what was happening. Then, they spotted Andrew and Aspen, who were dressed in designer clothes from head to toe and carrying luxury goods worth 200 million dollars. And of course, they could not miss the gleaming LaFerrari at the curb. The family of three felt as if they were hit in the gut, and they felt incredibly uncomfortable.



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## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

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Chapter 1316 Leroy muttered, "He used to drive a Mercedes G-Wagon, but

now he's driving a LaFerrari in Blumedale! Andrew's doing incredibly well-he's like

a top-tier family's scion! If he were my brother-in-law, would I possibly get to touch the steering wheel of that LaFerrari? God, it hurts... I want to cry..." Looking at the luxury sports car he would not dare dream of owning, Leroy was overwhelmed by envy. Irene was no better.

Although she did not care much about sports cars, she was practically salivating at the sight of luxury clothes, handbags, and jewelry. She exclaimed, "Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Gucci... Goodness, all top luxury brands, and so many of them! Aspen, Andrew, where did you get so much money? Tell me right now!" shamelessly, her overweight body moved with surprising speed as she rushed in front of Aspen, nearly grabbing the bags from her. Aspen sneered. "Could you please get lost?

Where our money comes from is none of your business!" Seeing the greedy expressions on Christina's family's faces gave her a huge boost of satisfaction Christina was not as direct or as visibly greedy as her family, but her desire was just as strong. She was jealous of Aspen and even ---- more jealous of Andrew's generosity toward her. Walking up to Andrew, she smirked. "Andrew, you were never one to spend money lavishly on women.

I never thought you'd show such a vulgar side of yourself just to please Aspen!" Andrew replied flatly, "That's my business, Ms. Stevens. It has nothing to do with you." Christina nearly broke down. "How is it not my business? Andrew, I was with you once too. But what did you ever buy for me? Does Aspen mean more to you than I did? Don't you think what you're doing is really ungentlemanly?" Andrew laughed coldly. "What's this? Can't keep it together anymore?

Since you asked so directly, I'll give you a straight answer this one time. Indeed, in my heart, there's

absolutely no comparison between you and Aspen. "To be precise, Christina, you mean absolutely nothing to me now! But Aspen-I'm happy to spend money on her. I simply enjoy spoiling her..." Christina's body trembled, and she nearly lost her balance. The color drained from her face. She laughed bitterly and mumbled, "Andrew, you're so cruel." Andrew snorted. "You brought this upon yourself!

Christina, you didn't cherish what you had then, and now you come around clinging to the past. I can only say you weren't destined for it-you were blind to what was right in front of you." ---- Aspen could not help but break into a sweet smile that had been absent for a long time. Her heart felt a hint of sweetness. Andrew had just said he enjoyed spoiling her and was willing to spend money on her. With just those words, he had instantly elevated her far above Christina.

At the same time, her heart fluttered, skipping beats, unsure of Andrew's true intentions. Was this his way of indirectly expressing his feelings for her? This man was cold and powerful, while she had once been difficult and part of the surrender

faction. Their relationship had

always been ambiguous and

unclear. Their last kiss had kept her

awake for several nights as she

could not help but replay it in her mind. Aspen still did not know what she meant to this tyrannical master.

Whether she had any place in his heart at all, she did not know- she truly did not know. Irene was now furious. "Andrew, what's so great about you anyway?" She shouted, "What do you mean Christie was blind? All these things you bought for Aspen, Mr. Wright could easily buy them for Christie!" Andrew sneered. "Madam, do you think I care about any of that? Whether Mr. Wright buys things or whether Christina wants them is their business, not mine."

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Chapter 1317 Aspen climbed into the car as Andrew was about to leave. Irene shouted, "Andrew, I'm giving you one last chance! If you change your ways and come back to Christie to rekindle your relationship, our family will treat you well. I'll definitely regard you as my son-in-law!" Andrew chuckled dismissively and said, "Please get out of my way. You don't really want me as a son-in-law, do you? What you're actually after is my connections and my money.

Unfortunately for you, while you're interested in my money, I'm not interested in you." Irene opened her mouth but could not respond, feeling furious and nearly losing control. Andrew had easily exposed her true intentions, making her feel humiliated. "Turning to Christina, Aspen covered her mouth and giggled," Christie, here's a little secret-Andrew and I have already kissed. How should I put this? We're very compatible!

He's given me everything I could want-and a few things I didn't know I needed." After saying this, she ignored Christina's twisted expression. She jumped into the Ferrari, which roared to life and shot forward. Irene was filled with resentment and cursed, "I hope you crash and die, you shameless couple!" ---- Leroy looked on enviously and mumbled, "If I crashed in a luxury car with a beautiful woman beside me, I'd die happy!" Irene exploded with anger, "You bastard!

Can't you see that Christie is in pain because of those two? Even at a time like this, you're admiring them? Do you have any conscience?" Leroy grumbled unhappily, "Mom, stop being so delusional. Andrew and Aspen are the golden couple now, living a life like royalty. But look at our family -we've been in Blumedale for so long with no success in our business. I even had one of my kidneys removed, and now I feel weak doing anything. What are we even doing here?

Why is it always our family who suffers?" Leroy's body began to shake with agitation as he complained, and he started coughing violently. Irene quickly tried to comfort him, "Leroy, you're scaring me!

I won't blame you anymore, just please be okay!" Seizing the opportunity; Leroy immediately said, "Fine, if you want me to be well and to continue our family lineage, then have Christie buy me a LaFerrari too!" Irene hesitated for a moment before turning to Christina, "Christie, you heard him, right? Leroy is so pitiful. Why don't you spend some money and buy him one to fulfill his dream of owning a luxury car? And while you're at it, give me a few hundred thousand dollars too.

I haven't been shopping at the mall for a long time!" ---- Christina's face cycled through shock, pain, and disappointment before finally

settling into icy detachment. Her

empty gaze swept over Irene and Leroy. "Money? I don't have any. I can barely keep my own head above water these days. Hell, I can't even afford high-end skincare products! Besides, all you do is demand handouts! But where would I get money from?

I haven't achieved anything in Blumedale, so what do I have to support your extravagant spending? Leave! All of you-just leave!" As Christina spoke, she became increasingly upset. By the end, she was in unbearable pain and started yelling, Irene and Leroy exchanged glances, cheeks burning as bystanders turned to stare. The once proud Stevens family from Jayrodale was now a public spectacle. And the cruel twist? Andrew, that bastard, kept rising higher while they floundered.

Irene and Leroy simply could not understand it. Meanwhile, Christina's regret curdled into something venomous-how dare Andrew refuse to help her and revolve his life around her!

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## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Chapter 1318 The Bridgefields' Stevens family members were staying at the Veridian Hotel. "Zephyr, didn't you say Aspen was coming over? Why isn't she here yet?" asked the elegantly dressed woman with concern. She was Aspen's mother, Esther Bowles. Zephyr appeared tense, but he still replied, "Let's wait a bit longer. Perhaps Aspen is busy right now. Don't worry, Andrew probably isn't being too harsh with her." Esther sighed, feeling heartbroken.

Her precious had fallen into someone else's hands and was at their mercy-how could that end well? Moreover, she knew Aspen's personality and beauty all too well. She feared Aspen was already battered and bruised. Esther did not want to think further, but she could already imagine that she had lost her once pure and obedient daughter. The well-dressed man beside her let out a cold snort, his polished exterior belying the menace in his voice.

"If Aspen has suffered any harm, even a scratch, I'll make sure Andrew pays with his life." Zephyr waved his hand and said, "Oscar, don't be impulsive! We came to Blumedale for two reasons-first, to attend the Grand Medical Summit, and second, to safely bring Aspen back to Bridgefields. So it's best if we avoid provoking Andrew if possible.

---- He's someone our family cannot afford to antagonize." Oscar was from the Hopkins family in Bridgefields, which, like the Stevens family, was among the leading families in Bridgefields. The Hopkins were slightly more powerful than the Stevens family. Oscar sneered, his words excluding dominance. "Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, don't worry. I won't do anything rash that would cause trouble for Aspen.

But if Andrew goes too far and actually hurts Aspen, then I'll use my connection here in Blumedale and make him pay the price." Esther smiled and asked, "Oscar, your connections in Blumedale are with the Goldings of the Five Apex Families, am I right?" Oscar grinned smugly and confidently replied, "That's right, Mrs. Stevens. Elon Goldings and I are old acquaintances. When he visited Bridgefields before, I was the one who arranged his reception. If ask, Elon will definitely help us.

In front of him, Andrew is nothing. Let's be charitable and call him irrelevant. Or we could be honest-he's just their lapdog, begging for scraps." Esther's interest was piqued, and she could not help but look at Zephyr. "Zephyr, look at that-Oscar has such a relationship with the Goldings.

Perhaps we should use Oscar's

connections to thoroughly settle our grievances with Andrew?" Zephyr frowned and said, "Unless absolutely necessary, it's best if we avoid direct conflict with Andrew." Oscar smirked. "Don't worry, Mr. Stevens. If I can get Elon involved, that guy will be begging on his knees and will let Aspen go without a fight." Zephyr still shook his head and replied, "Oscar, I appreciate your good intentions! Your feelings for Aspen are clear to both Esther and me.

However, there are certain circumstances you're unaware of. Andrew is not an ordinary person, and our family doesn't want to s provoke him again." Oscar despised Zephyr's attitude, thinking Andrew was just a small-time thug from Jayrodale. They were in Blumedale, and Andrew was nothing here. He thought Zephyr was acting like a coward. Despite his contempt, Oscar did not say much more.

He had come for Aspen, the long-legged beauty, and as long as he could successfully help the Stevens family bring her back to Bridgefields, Zephyr and Esthe would owe him a favor. Afterward, when he expressed his interest in Aspen, the Stevens family would not be able to refuse him and would

have to agree. After waiting for another ten minutes, as the Stevens family grew increasingly anxious, Judith Stevens, a young girl from the Stevens family, suddenly exclaimed, "Mr. and Mrs.

Stevens, Aspen is here! The guy next to her is so handsome! And he's driving a Ferrari! Wow! Aspen isn't suffering at all in Blumedale!"

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"She's living the life of a rich heiress, like a wealthy socialite!" Judith exclaimed.

Through the window, Zephyr and Esther quickly glanced down. They indeed saw their daughter getting out of the Ferrari with shopping bags. She looked radiant, free of any sign of suffering or mistreatment.

Zephyr and Esther exchanged surprised glances, both somewhat stunned. This was far different from what they had imagined.

Oscar pulled back his gaze, burning with jealousy, and sneered, "Sure, she looks glamorous on the surface, but it's just a show put on for your benefit! I've seen this kind of thing many times-people living miserable lives behind closed doors, but when they

meet family, they suddenly act wealthy and fashionable. That Ferrari might even be rented, just to deceive you both!"

When Esther heard this, her momentarily relieved heart tensed up again. She asked worriedly, "Zephyr, could it really be as Oscar says?"

Zephyr's expression was hesitant, clearly unsure if Oscar's assessment was accurate. However, as the head of the family, he kept his cool and replied firmly, "Let's have the kitchen start serving the meal. It doesn't matter what the situation is now. Soon enough, our dear daughter will be free again."

Downstairs at the hotel, Andrew adjusted his suit and smiled, "It's strange today, I'm actually feeling a bit nervous!"

Aspen huffed. "You're the one who wanted to meet my parents, so why are you nervous? Are you afraid they'll find out you've mistreated me, that you haven't been good to me?"

Andrew shrugged and replied, "You know very well how I've treated you. Besides, I'm not really afraid of the Stevens family from Bridgefields!"

Aspen pouted. "Then what are you nervous about?"

Andrew smiled and said, "Well, I'm meeting your parents, aren't I? It's like a new son-in-law meeting his in-laws for the first time. Don't you think it's normal for me to be a little nervous?"

Aspen froze momentarily before realizing what Andrew meant. She was both embarrassed and angry immediately exclaiming, "Andrew, don't talk nonsense! Who said anything about meeting in-laws? My parents and my entire family from Bridgefields aren't that close to you!"

In truth, her heart was racing, and her cheeks flushed red. She was flustered as Andrew had made her nervous too. It really was just as he said-like bringing a boyfriend to meet her parents.

Aspen could not help but glance sideways at Andrew's beautiful face. Nonetheless, she quickly looked away, feeling her heartbeat go faster. She

thought Andrew was indeed truly handsome up close.

But wait. She was supposed to be angry with him, so why did she think he was handsome? She should have found him ugly instead.

Following the attendant's guidance, Andrew and Aspen took the elevator upstairs to the restaurant. In the

spacious private room, Zephyr's net'

family about a dozen people in total, plus Oscar, had already opened the door and were waiting.

Andrew entered and smiled. "Mr. Stevens, long time no see!"

Zephyr's palms were sweating as he stepped forward and smiled back. "Hello, Mr. Lloyd!"

He was polite, though his smile seemed forced. After all, the trauma of that lesson from Jayrodale still lingered.

Upon seeing Aspen, Esther rushed over with tears welling up in her eyes. "Aspen, my sweetheart, I've missed you so much!"

Tears also immediately filled Aspen's eyes. "Mom!"

The mother and daughter embraced, both sobbing loudly.

Andrew felt inwardly awkward. He thought, 'Damn, Aspen is crying so loudly. It's making it seem like I've treated her terribly and caused her great suffering!'

Oscar snorted coldly, feeling it was

his time to shine. He rushed up to Andrew, pointing his finger at Andrew's nose, and shouted, "Lloyd, other might fear you, but I, from the Hopkins family of Bridgefields, don't give a damn about you! Let me make this clear today—if Aspen has suffered even the slightest harm, you won't be walking out of this door!"

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew raised an eyebrow and smiled, "Mr. Stevens, it seems you've come prepared and aren't exactly welcoming me."

Zephyr, already alarmed by Oscar's rashness, turned pale and quickly apologized with a forced smile. "Mr. Lloyd, it's a misunderstanding, just a misunderstanding! Oscar is young and impulsive; he doesn't know better. Please don't take offense!" Turning to Oscar, he scolded, "Oscar, sit down now, and don't be disrespectful to Mr. Lloyd!"

Oscar snorted coldly, already satisfied that he had made his point. He

straightened his expensive suit and sat down leisurely, not forgetting to add a warning, "Fine, since Mr. Stevens has spoken, I won't take this further with you, Andrew. But remember this—I'm here today, and if you dare to act out of line, you'll be facing the music!"



Andrew could not help but laugh at the idea that a small-time guy from

Bridgefields was threatening him. However, a hint of menace appeared in his expression.

Seeing this, Aspen quickly ran over and took his arm, coaxing him, "Come on, my parents are here today, so don't get angry. Sit down. You and my dad can take the head seats!"

Andrew waved his hand and replied, "No, I'm considered a junior here, so I'll sit further down."

Aspen felt somewhat grateful in her heart. At least this tyrant was showing her some respect and was not causing a scene. Before coming, she had worried that Andrew would be too domineering and embarrass her family.

Since this tyrant was actually being considerate of her, her heart warmed considerably. With a sweet smile, she said, "That works too. I'll sit with you!"

Observing how intimate the two were, and seeing how their precious daughter seemed quite thoughtful toward Andrew, Zephyr and Esther exchanged glances, both feeling somewhat confused. At the same time, they were secretly worried.

Could it be that Aspen had truly fallen into Andrew's grasp? If so, that would be troublesome.

Oscar sat on the other side, grinding his teeth in hatred, his eyes staring daggers at Andrew. He thought,

'Damn it! I've been making such et

big show, being as high-profile as possible, yet Aspen didn't even look at me once!'

Since her arrival, Aspen had not even greeted Oscar. But with Andrew, she was

all care and concern, acting like his doting wife. This made Oscar feel uncomfortable.

During a lull as the food was being served, Andrew said, "Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, since we came in a hurry we didn't prepare much. We just brought some small gifts as tokens for our meeting. I hope you won't find them inadequate."

Aspen added with a beaming smile, "Yes, Dad, Mom, and fellow uncles, I've brought some gifts and hope you'll like them!"

She clapped her hands, and immediately the attendant outside brought in several bags and set them down.

Oscar sneered. "The Stevens family of Bridgefields, or we, the Hopkins, may not be top-tier families. But we live in luxury with vast family wealth, and we certainly don't lack material possessions!"

The implication was clear to everyone he suggested that Andrew's so-called gifts were trash and not worth consideration.

However, Zephyr and Esther were much more courteous. They simply chuckled and said, "There's no need for gifts! We're already extremely grateful to you for taking care of Aspen."

But in their hearts, they were thinking similarly to Oscar-the gifts were just for show. It was not even certain whether the two were living well or poorly in Blumedale, and all this fancy display seemed completely unnecessary.

However, at that moment, a surprised exclamation rang out at the table.

"Oh my god, it's all Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Gucci-all these luxury designer brands... Aspen, these are all incredible items! They're far too expensive!"

Following these comments, the Stevens family members and Oscar all stared in shock.