

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) 1351-1360

The examiner reminded him, "Instead of fighting for first place, you're still over here, playing the charming hero, flirting around. Gotta say, you're the boldest contestant I've ever seen!"

Andrew chuckled. "Oh, come on, you're too kind. I'm just doing okay."

The examiner's bald head twitched visibly, his scalp tightening with annoyance. He thought, 'Damn, this kid really has an attitude problem, strutting around like he owns the place.'

The examiner did not like it one bit, but there was nothing he could do. He could not take Andrew down, and that made his blood boil.

The examiner felt extremely frustrated.

Despite his laid-back demeanor, Andrew's mind was always sharp. He kept a careful eye on the ticking clock and the shifting dynamics of the competition. He glanced over at Francesca, who seemed to be handling her side just fine.

Satisfied, he turned back to his own patient, a deaf-mute with severe burns covering a large part of his body-one of the most challenging cases on the floor.

Andrew worked quickly, disinfecting and anesthetizing his patient before using his gold acupuncture needles to carefully unblock the clogged eardrums. He tackled the patient's complex issues one by one, methodically clearing each hurdle.

For him, this was routine-nothing he could not handle.

Still, a shadow of suspicion crossed his mind.

Was it just a coincidence that he had drawn one of the toughest cases, or had those two old foxes at the Advanced Medical Institute arranged this on purpose?

He did not bother pondering it further. His approach was simple: crush every challenge in his path. Despite that, he made a mental note of the Advanced Medical Institute's targeted approach.

Time flew by, and half an hour had passed. Both Thomas and Mosby had already finished treating their patients. After a quick check, the examiners confirmed their success, allowing them to advance

Someone cheered, "As expected of Blumedale's renowned medical master. Dr. Lake is truly incredible!"

"Dr. Bozzelli of Blumedale Hospital is no less impressive. These two seem destined for the championship!"

"Oh, look at that! The petite, attractive lady doctor from Blumedale Hospital has also passed. She's truly a dark horse!"

Francesca completed the treatment of her patient in less than an hour. She passed smoothly and immediately received a round of enthusiastic applause.

An hour passed, and Preston and

Clifford's deadline-setting voices et

echoed around the venue. "There are 20 minutes left! One hour and twenty minutes is the absolute limit!"

One contestant, hearing the countdown, started to panic. His hand trembled as he stitched a wound, causing internal bleeding. It

was not a fatal mistake, but

was

enough to fail him. '

Two specialists quickly stepped in, stabilized the patient, and whisked them away.

As the final three minutes ticked down, Andrew paused, letting out a low curse. "Those two old bastards, and Mosby, too... They're really trying to mess with me here."

It was not that the procedures were complex for him, but even small problems piled up could wear anyone down. Still, in the end, he made it through.

"Lucky bastard. He managed to scrape by again," the bald examiner muttered through gritted teeth, unable to hide his envy.

Andrew just smirked. He knew the old guy was bitter. Surviving the seventh round meant he was now a standout—a rising star in the medical world, someone powerful.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Derek nodded with satisfaction. "Andrew really didn't let me down!"

Chantelle, for once, seemed impressed. "Yeah, his personality sucks, but his medical skills are definitely legit!"

Preston and Clifford, however, just sneered. "Sure, he's got some skills, but this is where it ends. In our field, we'd say he's got a little something, but not much!"

Chantelle quietly cursed at them, annoyed by their condescending attitude. Those two old fools from the Advanced Medical Institute clearly had their hopes pinned on Mosby. Naturally, they did not want to see Andrew keep blazing through the rounds.

On the spectator side, Christina shifted uncomfortably, debating whether to leave again. The higher Andrew climbed, the more she felt crushed, humiliated, and defeated.

Yara, on the other hand, clapped with excitement. "Great! Go ahead and leave! I can cheer for Andrew all by myself!"

Quinton could not hold back anymore and snapped, "Yara, stop pushing it! Shut up, you hear me?"

Yara just scoffed, unfazed. "Oh? Supporting him bothers you? Jealous, huh? If you're so mad, why don't you go up there yourself and prove your worth? If you can't, then stop throwing a tantrum here!"

Quinton roared back, "You're just a stupid woman! Do you think that Andrew can keep up this winning streak forever? The hardest rounds are coming up next- let's see if he makes it out alive!"

Yara just snorted. "Even if Andrew had to quit right now, his achievements would still put you to shame!"

Quinton clenched his fists so tightly his nails dug into his palms, drawing blood. He had come here to watch Andrew fail, not rise to fame. Seeing Andrew succeed hurt more than anything else.

Preston and Clifford announced coldly, "The final three rounds are about to begin! All five remaining contestants, prepare yourselves. The last three rounds will be extremely challenging!"

The audience and the big shots on the stage all leaned forward in anticipation. They were all eager to witness just how hard the Grand Medical Summit's "extremely challenging" rounds were.

They were excited to see how the contestants, especially Mosby and Thomas, prepared themselves for what promised to be a jaw-dropping showcase.

As for Andrew, not many people believed he could keep going. Making it to the eighth round was already considered his limit. Nobody thought he had a chance

left.

Preston and Clifford

continued,

revealing the next challenges. "The eighth round will be the Vein Whisperer, while the ninth round is for you to formulate the Golden Cure. As for the tenth round

it's

undecided. Only those who make it to the tenth round will know the

challenge."

Their intention was clear-to give the contestants a bit of preparation time. But frankly, it hardly mattered. The difficulty level of those two

rounds alone made even the level

including Francesca and the

Advanced Medical Institute student, furrow their brows.

Even Andrew raised an eyebrow.

The Vein Whisperer and the Golden Cure were high-difficulty techniques that required extraordinary skill. Without dedicating half a lifetime to practice, even so-called geniuses could not grasp the basics

As for mastering them completely? That was beyond imagination.

Unsurprisingly, the Advanced Medical Institute student raised his hand and said, "I request to withdraw!"

He continued with shame, "I'm sorry, Mr. Fuentes and Mr. Phelps, but I was born with weak sensory perception. The Vein Whisperer technique is something I could never master in my lifetime."

Preston and Clifford both snorted coldly at the withdrawing student. "How pathetic. You don't even have the courage to try! Get out of here, and when you return to the institute, train for 30 more years!"

The student turned pale, realizing that by the time he finished those years of training, he would be almost 60.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

A sinking realization hit the student-he had not even lost his virginity yet.

Was this how his bloodline was supposed to end?

Francesca took a deep breath and spoke up, "Andrew, I might have to drop out here."

Andrew paused for a moment before nodding. "Fran, just do your best. Of course, if you want to keep going, I can help you figure something out."

Francesca shook her head firmly. "No, I just want to push my skills to their limits. Cheating for a better rank isn't my style."

Andrew did not push the matter. He respected her pride and determination. Sure, he could probably find a way for her to pass this pulse diagnosis test through deception, but she could not live with herself if she did that.

Mosby glanced over at Thomas and Andrew, a smug grin spreading across his face. "Well, gentlemen, I guess this is where we part ways. The Vein Whisperer and the Golden Cure are tough even for me, but doable. For you two, though? It's probably impossible!"

However, Thomas was not fazed. His resolve was as solid as ever. "If you can push through, Dr. Lake, then I can at least try to reach new heights myself."

Andrew, on the other hand, had no interest in their back-and-forth. If anything, he felt like telling them to just stop. Because no matter how hard they tried, they would still be trash in his eyes.

As the host announced the start, eight specially selected audience members stepped onto the competition stage. Four contestants: Mosby, Thomas, Francesca, and Andrew. Each contestant had to diagnose two audience members simultaneously and identify their physical ailments.

This was the terrifying challenge of the dual-handed Vein Whisperer technique. Most gifted medical prodigies could perform the Vein Whisperer with one hand at their absolute limit, but using both hands increased the difficulty exponentially.

What was the Vein Whisperer? The audience was amazed when they saw thin silk threads with one end placed on the patients' wrists and the other end held in the contestants' hands.

"Holy crap, checking pulses through silk threads? That's insane!" someone exclaimed.

"Becoming a medical master is damn hard. Who could actually pull this off?" another wondered.

"Magnificent, absolutely magnificent. Using hair-thin threads to check pulses is one of the ultimate skills of our ancient Holtrien medicine!" a third person commented.

Andrew held a silk thread in each hand, working both sides

simultaneously. What annoyed him greatly was that, despite the

claiming the audience members

were randomly selected, his two patients did not seem random at all.

One of them was Lauren, that seductress. After sitting down, she gazed at him with a beaming smile.

On the other side sat another beautiful woman who stared at Andrew with tender affection—Aspen, his little servant girl.

Before Andrew could say anything, one of the two elders from the

Advanced Medical Institute personally approached him and sneered. "Start your diagnosis! These two patients were specially selected for you. Don't even think about playing tricks. If you make the slightest mistake, you're out!"

This old man was Clifford, the most venomous-tongued of the two elders.

Andrew frowned and said, "I know both of these women. Mr. Phelps. Shouldn't that be considered a conflict of interest?"

Clifford scoffed. "Do you think I

personally came to supervise because have nothing better to do? So what if these two girls are your acquaintances? I'm here to judge your medical skills, not how

impressive what's in your pants is!"

For once, Andrew's face darkened. This old bastard was clearly out to mess with him.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

"Weak digestion and inflammation," Mosby declared confidently. "The other patient is two months pregnant—make sure to focus on prenatal care."

Almost as soon as the words left his mouth, the examiner beside him burst into applause. "Impressive, Dr. Lake! Flawless diagnosis, not a single mistake!"

"Round eight, contestant Mosby, pass!" the judge announced, and Mosby slowly released the two threads in his hands, letting them drift down.

His patients, clearly impressed, could not stop showering him with gratitude, their voices blending with the roaring applause from the stands.

A triumphant grin spread across Mosby's face, his eyes flashing with an unspoken challenge. He regarded Thomas and Andrew as mere obstacles in his path. The prize the treasure map fragment—would be his, no matter who stood in the way.

Meanwhile, Thomas' thick eyebrows were tightly furrowed as his fingers rested on the threads, focusing all his attention on sensing the pulses. Mosby's early success did affect his mindset somewhat, but not significantly.

Soon, Thomas reported, "The person on the left has heart failure accompanied by asthma. The person on the right has hypoglycemia and should be mindful of eating regularly."

The examiner overseeing him smiled with satisfaction. "Completely correct. Congratulations on passing, Dr. Bozzelli!"

Thomas politely responded, "Thank you!"

Secretly, he exhaled a long breath and wiped the cold sweat from his forehead. Even a medical expert of his caliber was beginning to feel the heavy pressure.

Thomas glanced sideways toward Francesca and Andrew before looking away. Francesca was a promising talent with unlimited future potential. However, she was still young, and her skills needed strengthening. Being eliminated in this round was almost expected. As for Andrew, Thomas did not want to waste any thought on him—he would undoubtedly slink away in failure.

Ultimately, Thomas believed it would come down to him and Mosby for the final showdown.

Francesca held two silk threads in her delicate hands, her heartbeat accelerating under countless watchful eyes. Finally, she smiled bitterly and shook her head. "For the person on the left, I can roughly sense that they probably have cardiopulmonary issues, but for the person on the right, I can't sense anything."

The old doctor examining her smiled kindly. "Your diagnosis for the left patient is already sufficient to pass.

For the right one, would you like to try again?"

Francesca shook her head, looking somewhat drained. "No need. I accept my failure."

If she could diagnose patients directly with her hands, it would not be difficult for her. However, diagnosing through silk threads was simply torturous. She knew her skills were still far from adequate.

The examiner said nothing more and made a gesture toward the platform.

Preston immediately announced, "Blumedale Hospital's Dr. Francesca Aicker is eliminated! But I have to say that you have the potential to become a legendary physician if you're interested, the doors of the Advanced Medical Institute are always open to you."

Hearing this, Malcolm, seated nearby, sneered in annoyance. "Mr. Fuentes, you shameless old fox! Are you poaching my talent right in front of me?"

Preston shot back, his tone dripping with disdain. "To us at the Advanced Medical Institute, Blumedale Hospital is nothing but a joke."

At this, every gaze in the arena turned to the last remaining contestant-Andrew.

Francesca had fallen. Mosby and Thomas, the two giants of the medical world, had both cleared the round. Only Andrew remained, his fate still undecided. Clifford, who had been supervising him, barked, "Boy, if you don't have what it takes, just give up now! Don't waste my time!"

Andrew snorted coldly, "Old man, if I'm not in a hurry, why are you?" Concentrating deeply, Andrew began diagnosing Lauren and Aspen. The Vein Whisperer technique was a remarkable skill-intricate and demanding, even for him.

It was, admittedly, a small challenge-yes, just a tiny challenge. Nothing more.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Lauren and Aspen exchanged tense glances-both silently terrified that their conditions might cost Andrew the competition.

Andrew said, "Lauren, your pulse is strong and deep, with elevated metabolic rate it could be adrenal overload or autoimmune flare-up."

"As for my little servant," he continued, "her pulse is weak, her blood flow is thin. She has probably lost a considerable amount of blood."

Without pausing, Andrew released the threads from his hands, letting them slip. The audience collectively gasped, their shock rippling through the hall.

Was he really so confident in his diagnosis that he did not even bother to confirm it with a second attempt?

After all, the Vein Whisperer technique allowed for two attempts-even if you made a mistake on the first, you still had a second chance to adjust. However, Andrew clearly did not think he needed it.

Clifford stared at him in silence, his wrinkled face twisted in surprise. For a long moment, he said nothing, and the crowd grew restless.

Tiana, Jameson, Malcolm, Derek, and Chantelle all leaned forward, their nerves tightening.

Could it be that Andrew had finally stumbled?

Quinton's mocking laughter echoed from the stands. "Karma! It's about time he got what he deserved!"

The audience's whispers grew louder, a wave of doubt spreading through the stands. Yet, Andrew just stood there, his gaze locked on Clifford, completely unfazed by the noise around him.

Finally, Andrew broke the tension, snapping, "Old man, just hurry up and announce the results! Dragging this out will make people think I'm not as skilled as I am."

Clifford ground his teeth, his fingers clenching at his sides. "I really

underestimated you, boy. I didn't expect you to clear this round at all, but it looks like I was wrong."

With that single sentence, Clifford had confirmed that Andrew had passed the eighth round.

Thunderous applause erupted from every corner of the hall. Those who had been so sure of Andrew's failure felt their hearts race, caught off guard by the sudden twist.

Derek and the others let out long sighs of relief-it had been a close call.

On the other hand, Quinton felt his smug grin freeze on his face. "Damn it. How the hell did he pull that off?"

He nearly threw his phone in frustration.

Christina's expression had gone completely blank. She was not even angry anymore just numb, utterly worn down by Andrew's repeated comebacks.

Yara's eyes stayed locked on

Andrew, her mind racing. She wondered just how much more this man was hiding. She did not mind surrendering herself to someone so powerful, someone so unshakable.

Lauren and Aspen, overwhelmed with relief, clung to each other, tears streaming down their faces. Their fear of dragging Andrew down had finally melted into pure, unrestrained joy.

Meanwhile, Mosby and Thomas stood frozen, their faces set in identical expressions of disbelief.

Mosby simply had not expected Andrew to clear the round.

Thomas felt a deeper, more unsettling shock. Since the start, he had dismissed

Andrew as an unworthy rival, someone not even worth considering.

But now, seeing this young man match him and Mosby stride for stride, cutting through to the eighth round of the Grand Medical Summit, he could not deny the truth that he himself, at Andrew's age, could not have achieved even a fraction of what Andrew had accomplished.

On the main stage, Clifford stormed back to Preston's side.

"Clifford," Preston hissed, his jaw clenched, "what the hell happened? Did that brat really have the skill to clear this round?"

Clifford's face twisted with rage. "I miscalculated, damn it! I handpicked those two girls, knowing they have

know how

opposite symptoms. Y

draining that is on the Vein Whisperer technique! The slightest mistake can mess with your energy, even cause you to collapse on the spot."

He kicked the edge of the stage in fury. "But that kid didn't just survive he got the diagnosis exactly right!"

Preston's eyes narrowed, his teeth grinding together. "Fine. Let him have this one. But the ninth round is coming, and I refuse to believe that brat's luck will hold forever."

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

The eighth round, the Vein Whisperer challenge, had officially ended.

Stagehands quickly cleared away the excess props from the platform, leaving just three remaining figures standing in the left, center, and right positions. From the audience, it was an unobstructed view of the three contestants.

On the far right stood Andrew, now undeniably the center of attention.

Thomas and Mosby making it this far was expected, but Andrew? He had bulldozed his way here with one shocking move after another, turning every expectation on its head.

People could not help but wonder—was he just insanely lucky, or had he been hiding his true strength all along, playing the fool to catch his opponents off guard?

Up on the judges' platform, Clifford's expression was as dark as a storm cloud. He leaned forward and barked, "Andrew, this is your last chance. Will you withdraw now and walk away with a respectable third place, full of honors?"

Andrew rolled his eyes, clearly unimpressed. "Why would I quit now? Third place isn't nearly enough for me."

The crowd burst into laughter. This guy had guts, no doubt, but was he not worried about biting off more than he could chew? Most would have been thrilled to secure third place at this stage.

Clifford's patience was wearing thin, and he snapped, "Third place isn't enough for you? What, do you think you can take second?"

Andrew smirked, raising two fingers and shaking them dismissively. "Nope. I'm not interested in being the eternal runner-up either. I said it before—my goal is the championship."

Clifford let out a bitter, mocking laugh. "You're out of your mind! That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard!"

Andrew's eyes narrowed, his tone turning icy. "You'll find out soon enough, old man. Just sit back and watch."

His blunt, unfiltered challenge sent a ripple of shock through the audience. This guy was seriously going head-to-head with the

Advanced Medical Institute's net

top

dogs, Preston and Clifford, without a hint of fear or restraint. Even figures like Thomas or Malcolm would

never dare speak this boldly.

Jameson let out a strained chuckle. "Andy's attitude gets more explosive by the day."

Tiana snorted. "So what? With his skills, he has every right to act like a demon in human form. When you're this strong, why not be a little

arrogant? The Advanced Mediocrity

Institute and Mosby have been throwing their weight around for years-Andrew's just giving them a taste of their own medicine."

Zephyr and Esther exchanged uneasy glances. They felt too insignificant to speak up, lacking the influence of families like the Rhodes. Andrew had stormed his way

to the summit, and even their family could only look up at him now.

Meanwhile, on the sidelines, Lauren leaned closer to Aspen, whispering, "Hey, Aspen, didn't Andrew mention you're weak because you've been bleeding lately? Is it... You know, that time of the month?"

Aspen replied, "No, it's not. I'm not supposed to get my period for a few more days."

After all, how could she go wild with Andrew for hours last night if she was on her period?

Lauren frowned. "Are you anemic, then? Maybe you should have Andrew check you out later, just to be safe."

Aspen's cheeks flushed a deep red, a shy, awkward smile spreading across her face. "Um... no, it's not that. It's just... well, let's talk about it later."

Of course, she was not anemic. As a senior grandmaster-level martial artist, it

would be ridiculous for her to suffer from anemia.

was far more

The truth was

embarrassing. Her recent bleeding had a much simpler

explanation-she had only just lost her virginity last night. The sheets had been speckled with a faint amount of blood, and her energy had been completely drained. Her legs still felt weak, trembling slightly every time she tried to close them.

Every time her thighs brushed together, a sharp, stinging heat reminded her of just how merciless Andrew had been.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Of course, Aspen was not about to share any of this with Lauren. If word got out, she would never be able to face anyone again.

The short break passed in a flash, and the host's energetic voice boomed through the stadium once more. "Ladies and gentlemen, prepare yourselves! The final two rounds of the Grand Medical Summit are about to begin!"

Thunderous applause and roaring cheers filled the arena. Tens of thousands of spectators leaned forward, eager to witness the final showdown.

Even Derek, a seasoned veteran who had seen countless high-stakes competitions, found himself clenching his fists in anticipation. After all, the next two rounds would decide the ultimate victor of the Grand Medical Summit.

The fame, honor, and tangible rewards awaiting the champion were immeasurable. Every past champion had gone on to become a legend in the medical world—none had ever faded into obscurity.

For example, the head of the Advanced Medical Institute has won the Grand Medical Summit three times in a row.

For the ninth round, the challenge was to prepare "The Golden Cure." According to legend, this ancient formula was first conceived by the legendary physician, who is said to have received the recipe in a divine dream.

It was rumored to have the power to heal the gravely injured, even to regenerate flesh and bone. While the real thing might not be quite that miraculous, it was still considered one of the most potent restorative elixirs ever conceived.

Before Andrew, a massive assortment of herbs was laid out, enough to make any ordinary person's head spin. Over a thousand different ingredients, each varying in color, texture, and aroma, created a chaotic, almost overwhelming scene.

The mix of potent herbal scents was so intense that even the front-row spectators felt a sudden wave of dizziness, their heads buzzing from the sheer sensory overload.

Preston and Clifford spoke up, their voices cold and solemn.

"The Golden Cure is one of the pinnacles of Holtrien medicine," one of them announced.

"Let's see what you can do. Remember, there is no 'perfect' Golden Cure, only a 'better' one. Throughout history, only a handful have ever managed to create a truly complete version of this elixir."

"I'll be generous—you don't need to achieve perfection. If you can even reach half or two-thirds of that level, you'll pass this round with flying colors."

None of the three contestants moved.

Mosby and Thomas closed their eyes for a moment, focusing their breaths, centering their minds. Even for these seasoned masters, this round was a minefield—a single mistake could crush their hopes of advancing. They could not afford to be careless.

Andrew, on the other hand, seemed almost bored. If this Grand Medical Summit had thrown him a truly complex medical conundrum, he might have felt some pressure.

To his surprise, they were tasked with creating The Golden Cure. This was something he had practically grown up drinking during his time with the Lloyds. When he occasionally got tired of drinking it, he would even use it as bathwater.

For Thomas and Mosby, this was a life-or-death challenge. For Andrew, however, it was as routine as a daily meal.

While Andrew felt completely relaxed inside, the audience did not share his confidence. They all believed Andrew had reached his limit.

Suddenly, Andrew moved. His action immediately drew everyone's attention, and they wondered what he would do in this seemingly

exasperate

hopeless situation. A second later, everyone groaned in and burst into mocking

laughter—Andrew had simply raised his arms and stretched lazily.

Someone remarked, "Using unnecessary movements to hide his anxiety and helplessness. This Andrew is panicking—no, he's finished!"

"Both Dr. Lake and Dr. Bozzelli have already started working, but he's just standing there stupidly. Looks like his journey as a prodigy ends here!" another spectator commented.

reis difficult by nature! If

"Golden Cure

girl

now.

I were Andrew, I'd just forfeit After all, even third place would make him an exceptional medical talent He could date any wanted afterward and live comfortably off others' success..." Content

comfortably off oth net

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Quinton snickered from his seat, clearly enjoying the moment. "With so many ingredients, just remembering their names and effects is enough to drive someone insane. Andrew, you've dodged failure so many times this has to be the end of the line for you."

Christina remained silent, but the bitter knot in her chest began to loosen. If Andrew finally stumbled here, maybe she could breathe a little easier.

Finally, Andrew reached out, slowly sifting through the mountain of herbs in front of him. He moved without urgency, casually picking and discarding ingredients as if he had all the time in the world.

Preston and Clifford exchanged a quick glance, a silent smirk passing between them. In their eyes, Andrew's slow, meandering approach was a clear sign of someone struggling to stay afloat, just grasping at straws.

In stark contrast, Mosby and Thomas moved like lightning, their hands darting through their respective herb piles with practiced precision.

Mosby, in particular, seemed to radiate an intense, almost otherworldly focus, his long hair and beard stirring gently as if caught in a phantom breeze. His hands flew as he plucked the needed herbs and tossed them into the gently simmering cauldron beside him.

The essence of The Golden Cure lay in balancing the medicinal properties of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of different ingredients, reducing them down into a single, potent elixir. The depth of one's skill and the sophistication of one's technique determined the potency of the concoction.

Malcolm's expression was extremely grave. From what he could see, the quality of Mosby's concoction was superior to Thomas'. Mosby had already selected over a hundred ingredients from the thousand available.

"Thomas is in trouble," Malcolm muttered.

Francesca, seated beside him, leaned in. Her voice was filled with worry as she whispered, "Dr. Goddard, what's going on with Dr. Bozzelli?"

Malcolm explained, "You see it, don't you? Dr. Lake is still steadily adding herbs, not slowing down at all. The man might have taken the wild road to mastery, but his skills are the real deal. He's every bit a Medical Master."

He continued, "But Dr. Bozzelli has clearly hit a wall. His pace is slowing, and if this keeps up, his elixir's quality will fall far below Mosby's."

Francesca paled, quickly adding, "But even if Dr. Bozzelli's elixir is slightly weaker, as long as it meets the basic standard, he can still pass this round, right? That's what Mr. Fuentes and Mr. Phelps said!"

Malcolm gave a weary smile. "True, meeting the minimum requirements is enough to pass. But think about it-if one person barely scrapes by with a passing grade, while another produces a near-perfect result, it sends a clear message about the gap in their skills. It would make our Blumedale Hospital look like a minor league player compared to the Advanced Medical Institute and Dr. Lake."

Francesca's fists clenched in her lap. "It's okay. We still have Andrew."

Malcolm shook his head, his bitter smile deepening. "Don't count on Andy right now. You can see he's trying his best, but he's only selected about 30 ingredients so far,

compared to Mosby's elected

nearly

200-the difference is enormous!

"You can imagine how vast the quality gap between their concoctions will be. To

put it bluntly, Andy's mixture can't even be called the Golden Cure-it's just ordinary medicinal soup."

Francesca's heart sank, but she stubbornly insisted, "But I don't believe Andrew will lose!"

Malcolm chuckled. "Ah, young love.

You're too biased in Andy's favor.

But this is the Grand Medical Summit, which requires genuine skill and knowledge. From the looks of it, Andrew's ranking should be secured in third place. The first and second places will be decided between Dr. Lake and Dr. Bozzelli."

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Forty minutes flew by, and the crowd collectively stretched their necks, eager to see The Golden Cure finally completed.

Mosby clapped his hands together, brushing off the last bits of herbal residue, and let out a hearty laugh. "Done! Dr. Bozzelli, Andrew, it looks like I'm taking the lead!"

At this critical stage, regular examiners were no longer qualified to assess the results. Preston and Clifford stepped forward personally to conduct the final evaluations.

Clifford announced, peering into the simmering cauldron, "Dr. Lake's The Golden Cure has 305 ingredients. The color is excellent, and the medicinal effects are remarkable. You pass!"

The declaration triggered a wave of applause, particularly from Mosby's apprentices, whose cheers nearly shook the stadium.

Thomas' forehead beaded with cold sweat, and he also took his hands off the cauldron, signaling that he had finished.

Preston stepped over, leaning in for a closer look. "Dr. Bozzelli's Golden Cure has 280 ingredients. The color is decent, though slightly cloudy. The efficacy is acceptable. You pass."

Thomas exhaled deeply, feeling the crushing weight of anxiety finally lift from his chest. With that, only Andrew's Golden Cure remained unfinished.

Preston and Clifford strolled over to Andrew's station, their expressions darkening the moment they glanced into his pot.

"You little punk," Clifford spat, his eyes narrowing, "you've been fumbling around for hours, and you've barely thrown in 50 herbs! If you can't handle this, just admit defeat and stop wasting everyone's time! With this pitiful handful of ingredients, you dare call it the Golden Cure? At best, that's just a basic broth!"

The crowd erupted into laughter, their mockery echoing across the stands. The Advanced Medical Institute's students, known for their arrogance and lack of decorum, joined in with even louder jeers. Even Preston and Clifford, for all their seniority, made no effort to hide their disdain, their postures dripping with condescension.

Up in the VIP section, Derek let out a frustrated huff, a faint hint of anger coloring his features.

Chantelle sighed beside him. "Mr. McCormick, Mr. Lloyd has already done his best. The Advanced Medical Institute has been passing down medical knowledge for generations.

For someone of Mr. Lloyd's age to compete against Mosby and the like is already a remarkable feat."

Derek gave a bitter chuckle. "Maybe I've been too idealistic, always believing that Andrew has the potential to be a once-in-a-century genius."

Amid the chorus of disappointment, mockery, and pity from the stands, Andrew suddenly grabbed the small pile of herbs he had painstakingly selected and tossed them aside.

The move stunned the entire arena.

What the hell was this?

Was he throwing a tantrum?

Was he about to flip the stage?

Preston and Clifford's expression turned icy. "Boy, who the hell do you think you are? You wouldn't get away with causing trouble at our Advanced Medical Institute's Grand Medical Summit!"

Mosby smirked, his eyes brimming with mock sympathy. "Andrew, can't handle a little loss? Just admit defeat and step aside. Watching me claim the championship might teach you something."

Thomas' voice cut through the clamor, his tone stern. "Andrew, losing a match is one thing, but losing your dignity is another. For someone your age to make it

is already a remarkable

his far

achievement, but this tantrum? It's beneath you." Content bétongs to

Andrew looked completely puzzled and asked, "Wait, what exactly did I do? Why

are you all ganging up to attack and accuse me?"

Preston and Clifford stood with

hands on hips, cursing angrily, "You bastard, what did you do? Don't you know yourself? Why are you

throwing things around? Justel.n

because you can't pass, you dare to cause a scene here?"

Andrew remained completely calm and replied, "Not at all, not at all. I wasn't trying to cause a scene. Those ingredients I selected earlier—I don't need them, so I had to throw them far away!"

After saying this, Andrew offered no further explanation. He simply picked up the remaining 800 types of ingredients and dumped them all directly into the medicinal pot, then began brewing them over a fierce fire. s̄wnovel

This move shocked everyone present.

"Wait... What is he trying to do?"

"Could it be that his Golden Cure requires that many ingredients? How the hell is that possible? Even Dr. Lake only used a little over 200!"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Someone exclaimed, "My God, I get it now! This guy wasn't clueless when he was slowly picking through the ingredients! He was doing the opposite of what's normal! Dr. Lake and Dr. Bozzelli selected the needed ingredients, but Andrew first picked out what he didn't need, leaving only what he wanted!"

Once someone explained it this way, everyone immediately understood. The entire venue erupted in a chorus of gasps.

Medical experts like Malcolm could not remain seated—they stood up abruptly, their eyes widened in shock.

"About 800 ingredients were all thrown in to brew the Golden Cure at once! Andrew is either completely reckless or truly a freak of nature. His medical skill truly walks the line between madness and genius!"

Mosby let out a roar and rushed directly to Andrew, pointing at his nose in righteous indignation. "If this actually works, I'll quit medicine for good and hand over my title as a medical master to you!"

Thomas, equally shaken, shouted from his station, "Andrew, what you're brewing isn't the Golden Cure—it's a damn stew! At best, you'll end up with a pot of foul sludge. At worst, you'll poison everyone who drinks it!"

Andrew rolled his eyes. "If you don't understand what I'm doing, then stop flapping your gums and distracting me."

Without another word, he shoved Mosby and the two old examiners out of his way, stepping back to focus on the cauldron. He carefully managed the heat, occasionally plunging his hands directly into the boiling concoction to stir it, completely unfazed by the blistering temperatures.

After all, Andrew had brewed this very elixir countless times as a child, toughening his body through a relentless regimen. This was second nature to him.

Before long, the pot let out a low, rolling boil, and Andrew cut the fire, lifting the cauldron off the heat. Thick steam billowed upward, masking the color of the liquid within, its dense, swirling vapor making it impossible to see the broth beneath.

Mosby crossed his arms, his sneer deepening. "What a joke. That's nothing but swill—even pigs wouldn't touch it."

With veins pulsing on their foreheads, Preston and Clifford shouted over the rising clamor, "You brat! Those 800 herbs were rare, expensive materials! If you've ruined them, you'll pay every last coin in compensation!"

Andrew's expression remained flat. "Why don't you two old fossils come over here and actually check the results before running your mouths?"

Preston and Clifford shared a cold, skeptical glance before stepping forward. As the steam thinned, their eyes widened. The broth in Andrew's cauldron had settled into a deep, pure, golden hue, its surface smooth and thick, almost like liquid silk.

Both men stiffened, their eyes narrowing as they leaned in closer. The color was unnervingly perfect—too perfect. However, color alone meant nothing. The real test lay in the broth's potency.

Suppressing a surge of

nervousness, Clifford dipped a finger into the hot liquid, carefully drawing a single droplet to his tongue. He dared not take more, fearing that if it truly was a poisonous brew, it might kill him on the spot.

Preston, watching his colleague closely, asked, "Well? Is it just worthless sludge, like I said?"

Clifford did not respond at first, his face slowly darkening, his eyes widening with each passing second.

Seeing his reaction, Preston's heart skipped a beat. "Clifford? Don't tell me that one drop has already poisoned you!"

Clifford shook his head slowly, his lips trembling as he found his voice. "No... He's beyond our level. Just one drop-it's bitter at first, but quickly turns sweet as it hits the stomach, spreading a warm, invigorating heat through my limbs like my blood is coming alive.

"T-This is exactly as the ancient texts describe the perfect Golden Cure, just like the one the creator himself is said to have created. Such an achievement is something perhaps only our master could accomplish!"

Preston was stunned, completely at a loss for words. "Clifford, surely you're not so poisoned that you're making jokes?"

Before Clifford could respond, Mosby and Thomas, their eyes wild with disbelief, lunged for the cauldron, scooping up handfuls of the still-hot broth without hesitation, desperate to confirm it for themselves.

Both men's bodies shook violently, their faces showing expressions of disbelief.

Thomas stuttered, "T-This can't be. This absolutely can't be... The Golden Cure— this is the true Golden Cure! I admit my inferiority..."