

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) 1361-1370

In the audience, the crowd had already sensed that something was off.

Derek frowned and asked, "What exactly is happening here?"

Before Chantelle could even respond, Clifford spoke with a complex tone, announcing to the entire venue. "Andrew has... passed with flying colors! His Golden Cure's color and potency are absolutely flawless! He's beaten Dr. Lake and Dr. Bozzelli!"

A brief moment of dead silence followed. Then, came a roar, electrifying the entire venue. Not only had he passed, but he had also outperformed Mosby and Thomas.

Someone asked, "How is this even possible?"

Many people could not believe what they were witnessing. They thought Andrew's comeback was nothing short of miraculous.

Rafael had kept a low profile since the Grand Medical Summit began, and he asked with a trembling voice, "Mr. Fuentes and Mr. Phelps, in your opinion, how much would this batch of Golden Cure be worth?"

Clifford snorted and replied rather rudely, "Mr. Driscoll, just as expected of a businessman—always measuring everything in terms of money! Listen close: this batch of Golden Cure is priceless!"

Preston chimed in bluntly, "Let me put it this way, Mr. Driscoll—you've got money, but compared to this batch of Golden Cure, it's worth nothing! In a critical moment, this could save your life!"

Rafael's face immediately flushed red as he looked toward Andrew with gleaming eyes. "I want this batch of Golden Cure! Young man, name your price—ten billion? 20 billion? 50 billion? Just give me a figure!"

Everyone was electrified and completely stunned. What had started as a proper Grand Medical Summit had somehow turned into a bidding war.

The Driscoll family was one of the Three Titans, and Rafael was famously wealthy. He was ready to go all out for Andrew's medicine.

Derek shouted coldly, "Mr. Driscoll, aren't you getting ahead of yourself? I've got my eye on this medicine too. If you think you can have it all to yourself, think again!"

With a loud laugh, George, the patriarch of the Keller family, slowly stood up. "Governor McCormick, Mr. Driscoll, you're both pillars of the state, but all this squabbling is beneath you!

"Anyway, my son, Logan, is Andrew's sworn brother. So, I'm pulling rank as an elder and claiming this medicinal brew for him."

When he said this, both Rafael's and Derek's expressions changed dramatically.

At that moment, Kevin, the head of the Wrights family, actually spoke up too. "Our family doesn't really have any connection with Mr. Lloyd, but my daughter Yara apparently has a business partnership with Mr. Lloyd!

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"Here's what -do-our family will only take a portion of your medicine, Mr. Lloyd, As for payment, it's simple im willing to become sworn brothers with you, Mr. Lloyd, in my capacity as head of the Wrights and leader of the Five Apex Families."

As if worried his sincerity was not convincing enough, Kevin looked Andrew dead

in the eye and vowed, "We ride together, we die together."

Everyone was stunned, and the expressions on countless faces could not have been more dramatic.

Rafael and Derek's little competition was still understandable, but no one expected the head of the Wrights family to join in, practically groveling and asking to become Andrew's sworn brother.

This move instantly left countless people speechless.

Quinton muttered to himself, "Father, have you lost your mind? If you become sworn brothers with this bastard, what does that make me? Wouldn't that make my level lower than Andrew's?"

Several other prominent families and major corporation leaders also spoke up, wanting to join the bidding war.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

The crowd could even see the bodyguards from various families in the audience stands, getting ready for action. From the looks of it, they were prepared to use force and take what they wanted if the deals fell through.

Preston and Clifford saw the situation spiraling out of control, and their faces turned extremely grim.

Clifford roared, "Everyone, quiet down! Any party that dares to cause more trouble will be making an enemy of the Advanced Medical Institute!"

Preston did not speak, but his powerful martial arts aura exploded outward, and the oppressive presence of a top-tier fighter instantly enveloped the competition platform.

Only then did the agitated audience gradually calm down.

Rafael's face showed extreme greed as he snarled, "Mr. Fuentes and Mr. Phelps, my family never walks away empty-handed! The Grand Medical Summit might be your Advanced Medical Institute's home turf, but Gabo Creek is my family's territory!"

He scoffed. "The Driscolls will get a share of Andrew's Golden Cure no matter what! Otherwise, we'll all go down together!"

A wave of gasps rippled through the crowd, loud and continuous. Many did not expect that Rafael would actually challenge the Advanced Medical Institute so openly.

George responded coldly, "Mr. Driscoll, talking big is easy. Since the Driscoll family is shamelessly greedy and tries to snatch Andy's medicinal brew, let me be the first to experience what you're really made of."

The crowd was tense. George had just openly taken Andrew's side and was now ready to go head-to-head with the Driscolls. No one expected the ninth round of the Grand Medical Summit to turn into this mess. At this rate, it was not a summit anymore-it was about to turn into a full-on brawl.

Right in the middle of the chaos, Andrew's calm voice rang out, unhurried and indifferent. "Sorry, but that medicinal brew is mine. So, how I deal with it and who I give it to is my business! Now, if you all could stop yelling like it's already yours, that'd be great."

The venue fell silent. After all, no matter how hard everyone fought over it, in the end, it was Andrew who had the final say.

Clifford seized the moment and tried to win him over. "Andrew, hand the medicinal brew to us at the Advanced Medical Institute! From now on, you'll be my junior. Within the institute, you'll rank just below our leader himself. How about that?"

Andrew shook his head immediately. "Sorry, not interested."

Clifford stiffened, then gritted his teeth. "Ungrateful, huh? Fine, I'll raise the stakes! Give the brew to us, and you'll become my senior! You'll be ranked as a First Elder of the Advanced Medical Institute!"

Yet, Andrew still shook his head. "Still not interested. Thanks, but no thanks."

Preston snapped, "That won't do, and this doesn't interest you either! What do you want in exchange for the brew?"

Andrew chuckled softly. "Becoming an elder at your institute? That's lame. Here's an idea- why don't you call your leader right now? Tell him I want his position as head of the Advanced Medical Institute. If he's willing to step down, then the brew is all yours."

Preston and Clifford were stunned for a second, then immediately flew into a rage.

"Preposterous!"

"Outrageous!"

He was actually eyeing the position of the Institute's leader. The two elders were nearly driven mad by Andrew on the spot. This was not just greed-it was insatiable greed, the kind that bordered on lunacy.

In the end, Derek stepped in and sent his men to take custody of the Golden Cure. The Grand Medical Summit had to continue, and the matter of the brew would be handled later.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

"The tenth round will showcase the most advanced technique in ancient medical practice alchemy!"

Back at the judge's podium, Preston and Clifford announced the round with zero energy left in their voices, then slumped into their chairs in defeat.

The Advanced Medical Institute had hosted the Grand Medical Summit countless times, and Preston and Clifford had presided over it just as often. However, none of the previous summits had ever been this draining, this chaotic, or this nerve- wracking.

From the top platform, the two judges stared daggers at Andrew, their minds flickering with one vicious thought-if he could not be brought into the Institute, then he had to be eliminated for good.

Three cauldrons had been set before the finalists-Mosby, Andrew, and Thomas. Compared to concocting the Golden Cure, alchemy was an even higher-level art, without question. Hence, it was also considered the pinnacle of ancient medical practice.

Many of the spectators had never witnessed alchemy firsthand, so now, every pair of eyes was locked on the three contestants. Especially Andrew-he had become the undisputed

center of attention. He was the one nobody had expected to make it this far, yet he had clawed his way into the finals.

Moreover, that was not even the most shocking part. The Golden Cure he made earlier had almost triggered a riot. Even if he did not win the championship, it was clear that his name would be on everyone's lips far more than the actual winner after this summit.

Mosby and Thomas stood frozen in front of their furnaces, unable to begin. They were not stalling for show-both were genuinely shaken. When the summit began, they had each believed they would walk away as the undisputed champion.

Yet, before the final round even ended, Andrew had mercilessly shattered that dream of theirs.

Mosby, especially, was seething with resentment. He wanted nothing more than to rip Andrew to pieces. Even if he somehow pulled off the win, even if he stood alone at the top, the spotlight had already been stolen as Andrew had taken 90% of the glory.

Based on the crowd's obsession with Andrew now, Mosby knew that even taking the championship would not restore his edge.

'Andrew, you little bastard... Go to hell!' Mosby cursed silently, forcing himself to push aside his emotions and focus on the alchemy.

Meanwhile, Thomas kept his head down, quietly throwing himself into the process. There was only one thought in his heart-he had to win this. Only then could he look Andrew in the eye with a shred of pride.

Otherwise, with Andrew's Golden Cure causing that massive commotion, Thomas would be unable to catch up even if he spent a lifetime trying.

"The only way to counter Andrew's impact is to bet on Mosby's final win," Preston whispered.

Clifford scoffed. "It's fine. The overall situation is still under our control.""

Preston and Clifford quickly pulled themselves together, regaining their composure.

The Grand Medical Summit had only one real climax: the crowning of the final winner as the Grand Physician.

Everyone else, no matter how bright they shone, would just be supporting characters.

Soon, a thin curl of smoke rose from the cauldrons, mingled with a fragrant, woody-like scent.

There was already movement coming from both Mosby's and Thomas's cauldrons. The fragrance of medicines drifted over, causing many audience members to show intoxicated expressions.

Elixirs were truly valuable items, and high-grade elixirs were precious treasures worth countless times more than gold and silver.

On the other hand, Andrew's

cauldron was tightly sealed with no scent escaping. All anyone could see was him occasionally dropping

herbs into the furnace. Beyond that, there was nothing else.

Mosby, in contrast, was putting on a dazzling display-controlling the flames checking the heat by lifting the lid, and even slapping the sides of the cauldron to make it spin and heat evenly.

Thomas was not far behind either. His cauldron let out rhythmic pops and bangs, releasing a thick, intense fragrance that was refreshing.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Alchemy did not require much time. There were only two real keys to mastering it - perfect control over the flame and complete mastery of the process to minimize the risk of failure.

Midway through, Mosby's cauldron exploded once, but he remained unfazed. He calmly cleared away the debris and got straight to work on his second batch.

Per the summit rules, each contestant had three chances to attempt alchemy.

Thomas was the first to produce a completed batch of pills, but the moment he saw the results, he simply shook his head and fired up the next attempt. It was clear he was not satisfied with the quality-he was aiming to break into a higher- grade elixir.

Francesca asked, "Dr. Goddard, how high a grade can Dr. Bozzelli refine?"

Malcolm smiled. "Thomas may be representing Blumedale Hospital, but in his younger years, he studied widely and deeply. He even trained under a renowned master to specialize in alchemy. After all these years, he should've reached the level of a fifth-grade grand alchemist."

Francesca's eyes widened. "Fifth-grade? That's already incredibly high!"

Malcolm nodded. "It's impressive, but we still need to see how Mosby performs." Technically, he should also be at the fifth-grade level. But considering his close ties with the Advanced Medical Institute, it's possible he's learned even higher-level techniques from them."

He added, "If he's already stepped into the sixth grade-an Alchemy King-then he's likely to be the ultimate winner of this summit."

Francesca grinned. "It's fine. We still have our secret weapon-Andrew!"

Malcolm shook his head. "Andrew's performance in round nine already hit the ceiling. I don't think he can break through again in round ten. After all, the universe runs on balance."

He continued, "If one person dominates everything, what room is left for anyone else? That's not talent-that's cheating fate. And the universe always collects its debt."

Francesca puffed up her cheeks. "Dr. Goddard, you old folks are always so pessimistic. But I believe in Andrew-he can defy fate."

Malcolm shot her a look, but he could not bring himself to argue with his favorite student. Still, deep down, he knew Andrew had little chance of winning this final round.

Defy fate? It sounded bold enough, but not many people could pull it off.

At last, Thomas was the first to officially declare his batch finished. However, he did not lift the lid of the cauldron right away. Instead, he smiled confidently and waited for Mosby and Andrew to finish.

Soon after, Mosby followed suit and completed his alchemy process as well. Just like Thomas, he kept the furnace sealed tight and flashed them a smirk.

"Game over, gentlemen," Mosby said to both Andrew and Thomas.

Clifford casually strolled over to Andrew's side, and his tone had softened significantly compared earlier. "Andrew, why not admit defeat? You've already

accomplished so much. The el

shame in knowing when to stop." Content

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Andrew grinned. "But giving up just so happens to be my least favorite thing to do!"

Clifford

ckled. "Sometimes we

chucked.

have to accept things we dislike-it's

just part of being human. Sure, you stunned the whole crowd in round nine. But the real prize lies beyond the tenth round, and if you can't

clear that final hurdle, all you'll be left with is regret. That's life."

Andrew replied, "Exactly why I plan to make sure I don't have regrets. So I guess

I'll have to crush Dr. Lake and Dr. Bozzelli one more time—just for good measure."

Clifford's smile twitched as his brow furrowed. "Andrew, you certainly have the skill to back up your

arrogance, but you better keep that attitude in check! Don't think you can

keep showing off-you're not

qualified!"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew paused, stopping all movement. Then, in a calm voice, he said, "Qualified or not... we'll find out when the lids come off."

Clifford was so furious that he actually laughed. "Fine! You really are the type who won't give up until you hit a wall."

He returned to the podium and raised his voice. "Finalists, lift the lids and present your elixirs for judgment! Of course, high-grade pills beat low-grade pills; among pills of the same grade, the one with superior quality wins!"

The entire arena held its breath as this was the most heart-pounding moment of the Grand Medical Summit. With a single reveal, the new champion would be decided.

Someone said, "I'm rooting for Andrew! Who knows, maybe this dark horse really will pull off a miracle!"

The person beside him scoffed. "Miracle? That's delusional. Dr. Lake's been the favorite to win from the start."

Another chimed in, "Dr. Bozzelli's steady and skilled. I'd say he has the best shot at winning the title."

"No point arguing the truth's about to come out."

"Whoever takes the crown will be hailed as the next Grand Physician, showered with glory, and set for life!"

Three dull thuds echoed through the hall as the lids were lifted from the cauldrons. From left to right, Preston and Clifford led a team of over 100 experts and medical elites from the summit to inspect the elixirs.

This was the most critical step, and there could be no errors, no chances for cheating, and no room for misjudgment. Moreover, every senior judge would have to step up personally for the final verification.

"Dr. Bozzelli-sixth-grade elixir, medium-high quality!"

The crowd burst into cheers, especially the team from Blumedale Hospital—they were over the moon.

Malcolm's expression shifted with emotion. "I didn't expect Thomas' alchemy to reach sixth-grade... he really pulled it off!"

He laughed and cheered. "It's done! Fran, we've got this in the bag—Blumedale Hospital's taking home the win!"

Even Mosby's expression flickered, looking genuinely surprised.

Thomas, who had kept his composure for most of the

competition, finally broke into net

wide, triumphant grin. He strode confidently to the center of the stage and laughed aloud.

"Victory belongs to Blumedale Hospital! It belongs to me!"

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But in the very next moment, Mosby let out a loud, wild laugh of his own—arrogant and unrestrained. "Thomas, you're celebrating way early! Open your damn eyes and take a good look at my elixirs. Sure, your skill is unexpected, but you're still no match for me!"

As his maniacal laughter rang out, Preston and Clifford exchanged gleeful grins— they looked downright giddy."

They announced, "Dr. Lake also made a sixth-grade elixir, but the quality is high- grade, one level above Dr. Bozzelli's! This means the final winner is... Dr. Mosby Lake!"

Thunderous applause shook the venue once again. No one had expected this twist-Thomas had soared high, but Mosby soared even higher.

Thomas, who was laughing moments ago, looked utterly defeated. He stumbled back two steps, barely staying on his feet. Then, with blood rushing to his head and grief boiling over, he coughed up a mouthful of blood.

"How? I gave everything I had, only to lose in the end! Oh heavens... I refuse to accept this-I refuse!"

His broken cry tore through the hall, making many spectators avert their eyes.

In the midst of the chaos, a calm,

oft

cool voice rose from the edge of the

stage. "Hey, everyone... would you

mind showing me a little respect?

You're all throwing a party and crowning a winner already, but did anyone bother to check with me first?"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

As soon as Andrew spoke, everyone turned to look at him. They could not believe that even at this point in the competition, he still had the nerve to challenge Mosby's win.

Someone said, "Just give up! Dr. Lake produced a high-grade sixth-grade elixir!"

"With that level of mastery, there's no need for further debate!"

Another chimed in, "Experience still wins-Dr. Bozzelli's loss was understandable, and Andrew's defeat was even more justified. After all, he lost to Dr. Lake."

Countless people had already made peace with the outcome, believing both Thomas and Andrew were rightfully beaten.

Even Derek sighed. "In the end, Andrew still needs time to grow."

Chantelle shook her head with a hint of regret. "Exactly... The Advanced Medical Institute truly deserves to be the pinnacle of medicine. They're too strong."

However, Andrew was starting to feel a little pissed. He was baffled by everyone's mentality, worshiping Mosby without even inspecting his elixir.

Were they out of their minds?

He stormed forward in a few quick strides and shoved Mosby right off the winner's spot, shocking everyone.

"Andrew! What the hell are you doing?"

"You're insane-how dare you show such disrespect to the Grand Physician?"

"Come on, Andrew, be gracious! You can't seriously be acting like a sore loser now!"

A chorus of angry shouts erupted from the stands, voices full of outrage.

Mosby let out a hearty laugh, playing the bigger man as he waved them down. "Easy, everyone-let me say a word or two!"

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Once the audience quieted, he approached Andrew with a smug grin on his face. He said, "Andrew, this is the difference between you and me. It's like heaven and earth, the North Pole and the South Pole-we're not even close. I'll admit, your Golden Cure was a

masterpiece.

"But my alchemy? It's strong enough to dominate all of Gabo Creek, maybe even the entire southern medical scene across Etharia, for 100 years straight. With that kind of power... what do you have to compare?"

His tone was overflowing with arrogance. Surprisingly, many in the crowd nodded to themselves.

Mosby's words were cocky, sure-but not wrong.

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Andrew replied evenly, "Etharia's south is vast, Dr. Lake. Gabo Creek is just a tiny corner, one single province. The Holtrien region stretches wider than you can imagine, filled with

talent and masters beyond count. Even I wouldn't dare boast that much. Are you sure you haven't gotten a little full of yourself?"

Mosby burst into laughter, clearly pleased with himself. "With this kind of power under my belt, how could I not be full of myself?"

Preston and Clifford glared furiously at Andrew.

"Andrew, stop this nonsense. The result is clear-give it up already."

"You'll always be second place at this summit! The winner's crown belongs to Dr. Mosby Lake!"

Andrew let out a cold snort. "You two old geezers are in cahoots with Mosby. Don't you feel embarrassed? Why don't you open your damn eyes and look at my elixir before making your judgment?"

Clifford stomped his foot in rage. "Fine! Since you're still so delusional, I'll make sure you lose fair and square!"

He stormed over with a group to check Andrew's elixir himself.

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Thomas, pale as a sheet, suddenly shouted, "Andrew, it's over-we already lost! What right do you even have to argue anymore? Who hell do you think you are, still running your mouth like this If I couldn't beat Mosby, what chance do you think you have?"

Andrew scoffed. "Dr. Bozzelli, I honestly don't get your logic. You couldn't beat Dr. Lake—that's your problem. But I'm not you. Did you seriously think I'm just as useless?"

Thomas' face twisted in rage. "Fine, fine! You win-you're amazing, a freaking medical genius!"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

"Then I'd love to see if your ending is really any better than mine!" Thomas

snapped, his defeat fueling the bitterness he now hurled at Andrew. The sting of failure had clearly twisted his mood, and Andrew became the target of his

frustration.

Meanwhile, Mosby stood with his hands behind his back, beaming toward the judges' platform.

He said proudly, "Clifford, Preston, my fellow peers in medicine. You've all checked this kid's so-called elixir by now, haven't you? If my guess is right, what he made isn't even an elixir-it's just trash, plain and simple."

He followed it up with another burst of arrogant laughter. He had noticed earlier that Andrew's cauldron had not released even a trace of medicinal aroma. It was like cooking a meal with no smell coming out-there could only be one conclusion: total failure.

Just then, startled voices rose from behind, followed by the sound of hurried shuffling and clattering.

"Huh? W-What is this..."

Suddenly, Mosby's brow furrowed, wondering what Preston and Clifford were doing. Were they really that shaken by Andrew's failed elixir?

He turned to look, just in time to meet their eyes. In that instant, Mosby's heart skipped a beat. Their eyes were filled with something akin to horror, pure disbelief like they had just seen a ghost.

Then, chaos erupted. The expert panel and high-ranking medical professionals all surged forward at once, shouting over one another.

"My god! That fragrance—so concentrated it's contained—and its surface is gleaming!"

"This... this is a seventh-grade Imperial Pill! It completely outclasses any sixth- grade Royal Elixir!"

"You know what this means? Andrew... Andrew must be a seventh-grade alchemist—an Imperial Alchemist!"

"It's over! Dr. Lake has been thoroughly crushed! Andrew is the real winner-we have to revise the results!"

The news spread like wildfire—quick, uncontrollable, devastating. Just like that, silence fell over the stadium.

Yes, another stunned silence.

Once again, the man who caused it was Andrew.

Derek's hands were trembling as he leaned against Chantelle for support. "Elle... we're going to the main stage."

"But Governor McCormick, the rules clearly state we're not allowed-"

"Screw the damn rules! Did you not hear? Andrew just refined a seventh-grade Imperial Elixir! He's a once-in-a-century prodigy! This boy is destined to carry Gabo Creek's entire medical legacy on his back!"

George, Andrew's most powerful ally, remained surprisingly composed. He whispered, "Logan, get the family security here

Whatever Andrew's stirred up is spiraling fast-and dangerously so. A seventh-grade Imperial Elixir? That kind of power drives people mad. I'm not letting this situation get out of hand."

Logan was drenched in cold sweat. "Father, doing that might spark an all-out war with the Three Titans!"

George growled, "Just do it! For Andrew, I'll go to war with the whole world if I have to! I told you before this boy is our family's chosen one. I'll kill anyone who dares touch him!"

His words were laced with a fury so primal, so deadly, he looked like a wild beast ready to tear into flesh.

Down on the arena floor, Mosby's eyelid twitched violently. He

shouted, "Shut up! You quacks don't know what you're talking about every one of you is full

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Get out of my way! Move! All of you, move! I'm the champion! I am the Grand Physician! It's always been me!"

His furious howls tore through the hall, drowning out every earlier trace of triumph and composure. All that pride, all that confidence, evaporated.

What was left was a disheveled man shoving people aside in a mad dash toward Andrew's alchemy cauldron He leaned in to look-and the moment he saw what was inside, his entire body went rigid. Then, his knees buckled, and he collapsed onto the floor.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Mosby felt weak all over, and his spirit was completely crushed. He mumbled, "A seventh-grade Imperial Elixir... It really is an Imperial Elixir! H-How could something like this actually exist in the real world?"

He growled, "Even if Andrew were the reincarnation of the King of Medicine himself, there's no way his skills should be this monstrous! W-Why did I have to run into someone like him? What's the point of living?"

His guttural, agonized roar shook the very roof of the Grand Medical Summit.

Moments ago, Mosby seemed unbeatable, and everyone believed he was the one, the uncontested champion. Yet fate had other plans. He met Andrew, and just like that, he lost miserably.

Thomas had already walked halfway off the competition platform, but hearing the revelation, he froze in place.

"A seventh-grade Imperial Elixir? Andrew actually refined a seventh-grade Imperial Elixir?"

No one answered him as they were all too stunned, reeling in disbelief. Then, he saw Mosby sitting on the ground, dazed, hollow-eyed, like he had lost his very soul.

That was when it finally sank in.

Andrew really had crushed Mosby with a seventh-grade elixir. And as for himself? Thomas was not even qualified to be compared to Andrew anymore.

With a strangled cry, Thomas coughed up another mouthful of blood and collapsed, tumbling down the steps.

"Fran, save Dr. Bozzelli!" Malcolm shouted, panicked.

Francesca stood frozen. "Dr. Goddard, but Andrew won. Doesn't that mean we won, too? Blumedale Hospital won! Why did Dr. Bozzelli collapse?!"

Malcolm clenched his jaw.

"Andrew's victory hurt Thomas worse than if Mosby had taken the title because Mosby was all the field.

legend a known monster in the field. Thomas had already lost to him at the last Grand Medical Summit-it was expected.

"However, Andrew came out of nowhere, and Thomas wasn't prepared for this. Put simply, Andrew shattered his faith, crushing his spirits entirely. It's only natural he could not handle it!"

Francesca suddenly chuckled. "Okay, I know Dr. Bozzelli's pretty pitiful, but... I can't help it, Dr. Goddard! Andy is just too badass!"

Malcolm glared. "Go help Thomas already! You're completely dazed by that kid!"

Then, despite himself, he broke into a wry smile. "Still, that boy really does have the kind of talent people bow to. I've never seen a medical genius like him."

At last, thunderous applause erupted, and the audience exploded into cheers. People leaped to their feet, some even rushing down from the stands, swarming toward Andrew on the platform.

They had all witnessed a miracle today.

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Countless girls stared at Andrew with stars in their eyes, some practically ready to leap onto him right then and there. After all, if you could bag the Grand Medical Summit's champion, the rest of your life would be spent in luxury and legend.

Suddenly, a loud, jarring crash split the air.

Mosby stood there, eyes bloodshot, face twisted with rage. He lifted a solid metal cauldron and slammed it onto the ground. The hundred-pound cauldron shattered into pieces, flying in all directions.

"Andrew, you little bastard! You're

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not the final winner yet, so don't get ahead of yourself! According to summit's advancement rules, yes-your seventh-grade Imperial Elixir does crush my sixth-grade Royal Elixir!

"But that doesn't automatically grant you the final victory! You and I both passed the tenth round! So at best... we tie for first place! If you think you're walking away with the crown alone-think again!"

As his furious roar rang across the summit grounds, Derek, George, Tiana, and Andrew's closest companions instantly felt a jolt of dread rise in their hearts. They had a feeling that something bad was going to happen.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Preston and Clifford finally came to their senses and burst out laughing.

"That's right, Andrew. According to the Grand Medical Summit's rules, only passing the final round determines the outcome. Thomas ranked last in round ten, so naturally, he's eliminated. But you and Dr. Lake both cleared the round, which means rankings don't matter anymore.

"In other words, the two of you are officially tied for first place! You don't get to take the full victory for yourself."

A glimmer of hope returned to Mosby's face, and the Advanced Medical Institute crowd also perked up, regaining their confidence.

Derek stepped forward, furious. "What a load of crap! I declare that Andrew is the true winner of the Grand Medical Summit!"

Mosby sneered. "Governor McCormick, this is the medical world's law. If you try to override it with authority, I'm sorry, but I won't recognize it."

Preston and Clifford quickly jumped in. "Governor McCormick, it's true. These are the official rules of the summit-we're not making this up. Besides, tied champions have happened in the past, and Andrew should already consider it a tremendous honor to be called co-winner."

Derek's face darkened with disgust. Mosby and the Advanced Medical Institute were blatantly twisting the rules, which was truly shameless. Still, as much as it stung, they were not wrong-by the current standards, it was a tie.

Everyone with a clear mind knew that the Grand Medical Summit was meant to crown one Grand Physician-the undisputed top healer, and that person was clearly Andrew.

Mosby had already lost. Yet, thanks to a loophole in the rules, he had found a way to cling to the title, and no one could do anything about it.

George's voice turned ice-cold. "Dr. Lake, Preston, Clifford... it's crazy how shameless you three are."

Mosby, completely unbothered, turned his head away and replied stiffly, "Sorry, Mr. Keller Senior. I'm only claiming what I've earned."

Tiana scoffed coldly. "How disgraceful."

Worried that the tension might turn into open conflict, Malcolm sighed. "Fine. Let it be a tie then. At least our Blumedale Hospital still walks away with its dignity intact."

Rafael grinned with false politeness. "Andrew, you're still young-learn to be respectful. Tying with Dr. Lake is already a grand slam win for you. You should be grateful and humble!"

For the first time, Andrew finally let out a smile seem to recall that before the competition even started, I asked what would happen in the event of a tie. And if I remember correctly, those two old fossits from the Advanced Medical

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Institute-acting as judges-agreed

on what would be done."

Preston and Clifford's faces twitched as unease rippled through them.

"Agreed to what, exactly? Andrew, don't make things up-we never agreed to anything!"

Andrew suddenly shouted, "You two old fools, don't you dare deny it! It was stated clearly: in the event of a tie, there would be a bonus round, an extra match until one true champion is decided, until there's only one who takes the crown!"

Preston and Clifford froze, eyes wide. "You mean... you still want to compete? The 11th round?"

Andrew did not answer right away. Instead, he swept his gaze across

the arena, then declared word by word, "That's right. I do want a round 11! I want to take every single reward and every bit of honor that this Grand Medical Summit has to offer! I refuse to share a title with someone like Mosby!

"I'm going to leave him in the dust-so far behind he won't even see my taillights! And if 11 rounds aren't enough, we'll go to the 12th! If 12 rounds aren't enough, we'll go to the 13th! I'll keep going... until every single one of you sees the truth!" Content

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew declared, "The Grand Medical Summit only has one champion-me!"

Each word slammed down like thunder, echoing in every corner of the arena. His voice did not just speak-it struck, like a bolt from the heavens that blasted straight into everyone's ears.

Rafael ground his teeth. "This kid's got sky-high ambition. Mosby's in serious trouble."

For a moment, even Derek and George looked stunned, caught in a rare daze. They, too, had once been young, full of fire and pride. Yet, they had to admit that Andrew's presence now far surpassed anything they had ever radiated in their prime.

George shouted, "Now that's a real man! My family stands behind you, Andy. Even if it takes an eternity, we'll back you until Mosby's buried under your boots!"

His beard and hair whipped around wildly as he let out a booming laugh, pledging full support.

Derek clapped his hands together, laughing heartily. "Now this is what I wanted from the Grand Medical Summit! This is what true medical pursuit looks like! Chasing truth-right to the ends of the world!"

Chantelle's eyes shimmered with emotion. She stared at Andrew's tall, unwavering figure. Every sentence he spoke was like a declaration of war, and every word lit something in her heart.

She had to admit at this moment, Andrew was not just the most powerful man in the arena-he was the only real man.

Her heart skipped a beat, caught between awe and admiration.

Lauren, Aspen, and Francesca were practically trembling with joy and excitement. None of them exchanged a single word, but they were all thinking the same thing: No matter how this summit ended, they'd be leaving the doors wide open tonight and make sure this dangerously seductive man never got a moment's rest.

It was the only way their love-struck hearts knew how to show devotion.

Another explosive crash rang out-this time, from Mosby. He slammed his palm onto the wooden table before him, shattering it with sheer force.

He roared Very well, Andrew! If you want to keep going-if you want to crush me and claim it all! Then, I'll fight you to the end of time itself! Let's see if you've got the strength to back that mouth!"

The fury in his eyes was enough to make the crowd's skin crawl. He looked like a beast pushed into a corner, fighting for its life.

It was obvious that Mosby's confidence had taken a serious hit. His arrogance, his ego, and his pride were all starting to crack.

Someone shouted, "Goddamn, this Andrew guy is insane!"

"I swear, this guy is definitely the most badass and awesome person I've ever seen in my life!"

Another swooned. "I swear, this dude's straight out of a novel. Like... actual main character energy!"

In the stands, expressions ranged

from speechless to deliriously

excited. Andrew had stunned not

them

all, left them reeling, amazed and scrambling for words.

Preston and Clifford were fired up now, their tempers flaring.

"Fine! You want this settled? Then we'll see who's truly number one-the one and only champion!"

"Let's start the next round immediately-Round Eleven! Everyone, clear out!

Leave this space to Mosby and that arrogant little shit Andrew!"

They thought, Goddammit! After 50-odd years in medicine-even graduating from the prestigious Advanced Medical Institute-here am with one foot in the grave, only to encounter this outrageous humiliation!"

Preston and Clifford both feared and loathed Andrew. If they had the chance, they would string Andrew up by his guts and toast with bourbon as he bled out.

The arena was swiftly cleared, and all spectators returned to their seats. With that, the final bloodbath commenced.