

RISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

Chapter 1396

Chapter 1396 Malcolm made a few more attempts to persuade Andrew to take on an honorary role at Blumedale Hospital. However, the latter remained firmly disinterested, so all he could do was force a bitter smile and let it go. After leaving Blumedale Hospital, Andrew planned to make a stop at the Wright estate. The whole sworn brotherhood thing with Kevin had always felt a bit theatrical, but it was not a total loss-after all, the Wrights were eager to build ties with him.

Andrew did not mind playing along a little either, since both sides understood perfectly that it was all for show; when real trouble came knocking, no one was going to risk their neck for the other. Just as Andrew was about to get in his Ferrari, a military vehicle screeched to a halt beside it. Leaning against the door was a female officer with a bob cut, looking ---- down at him from above.

"Are you Andrew Lloyd, the one who just won the Grand Medical Summit?" she asked coldly.

Andrew answered calmly, "And what if I am?" The officer flashed her badge- she was a major-and ordered him like a superior, "Nothing serious. I just need you to come with me." Andrew replied flatly, "Not interested." Her face darkened, and her voice turned frosty. "Andrew, don't be ungrateful. This isn't coming from me- it's from Ms. Phelan!" Andrew raised a brow, unmoved. "Ms. Phelan? You mean Luna?" The officer, Leslie Terrell, snapped, "Watch your mouth, rookie!

You don't get to call her by name. You will address her as Ms. Phelan!" Andrew nodded politely. "Sure thing, Luna." Leslie nearly lost it. "Do you really think winning the ---- Grand Medical Summit means you're untouchable now, huh? Let me be blunt-being summoned by Ms. Phelan is the greatest honor you'll ever receive in your miserable life! "Do you think someone like you is worthy of a personal invitation from a military major general? Ms.

Phelan isn't just any general-she's the youngest and most decorated war hero in all of Holtrien!" When Leslie spoke about Luna's accomplishments, her pride was overflowing. In contrast, her gaze toward Andrew was nothing but disdain and contempt. Andrew chuckled. "Whatever she's achieved has nothing to do with me.

I don't care if she's a major general or the commander of an entire war zone-I wouldn't even glance in her direction. He finished speaking and did not bother wasting another second, getting in his car and preparing to leave. Holtrien's youngest general? Andrew almost laughed. If he remembered correctly, he was the one who held that record. Leslie shouted, "Andrew, do you really think Ms. Phelan wants to meet you because she needs something from you? She's trying to protect you!

Don't you realize your life is hanging by a thread right now?" She shouted, "Mr. Rafael Driscoll has hired the number three assassin from the Underground Index- Grand Viper! If Grand Viper has locked onto you, and Ms. Phelan doesn't intervene, you're as good as dead!" Andrew's response was the roar of his Ferrari's engine as he floored the gas and sped off into the distance. Leslie was furious.

She cursed and jumped back in her vehicle, ready to give chase-only to realize her car did not stand a chance against his Ferrari. "You bastard! If you want to die that badly, don't blame Ms. Phelan for letting it happen!" In frustration, she slammed her fist against the steering wheel, then made a sharp U-turn and headed toward the Phelan estate. ---- About 20 minutes later, Andrew's car pulled up to the gates of the Wright estate.

The guard at the booth recognized the car and immediately raised the gate while radioing the estate. "Mre Wright, Dr. Lloyd is at our gate." Hearing this, Kevin rushed outside in excitement. Yara and Quinton were home as well, and Kevin called them to join him in greeting Andrew. "My man! I knew someone important was visiting-my eyelid's been twitching all day!" Kevin said cheerfully as he opened the car door himself. "Didn't expect it to be you, though!" Andrew stepped out with a smirk.

"Kevin, isn't an eyelid twitch usually a bad omen? If you say it means an honored guest is coming, are you hinting that I'm the Wrights' bad luck charm" Kevin froze in panic and almost slapped himself across the face. "Hell no! You're hilarious, Andy! Please, come in!" ---- He turned to his kids. "Quinton, go make some tea for Uncle Andrew! Yara, hurry and prep some snacks to go with his drink!" Quinton said nothing, his face was still bruised and swollen.

Quinton glared at Andrew with seething hatred burning in his eyes.

However, Andrew laughed out loud and teased, "Quinton, my precious godson! Is that how you greet your godfather-like I'm not welcome?"

Just as Kevin's expression started to darken, Quinton forced down his humiliation and muttered, "Uncle Andrew... hello. I'll go make your tea right away."

The first time he had called Andrew 'Uncle' had been pure agony. However, this was the second time, and strangely enough, it was starting to roll off the tongue a little too easily.

Two minutes later, Andrew was seated in the Wrights' guest lounge. He did not waste time and cut straight to the point. "Kevin, I'm here today because I've got nowhere else to go."

Kevin looked skeptical. "Andy, you're the man of the hour at Blumedale, the Grand Physician of the Grand Medical Summit, backed by the Keller family and Governor McCormick himself! Who the hell would dare corner you into a dead end?"

Andrew sighed heavily and said, "Let's not talk about past glory. It's just painful now."

He picked up the tea Quinton had prepared, took a sip, and looked genuinely downcast.

Kevin was confused his sworn brother was practically untouchable now, so what trouble could possibly have him this rattled?

Trying to feel him out, Kevin asked, "Andy, what happened exactly? Tell me, maybe I can help."

Andrew gave a long sigh and said, "What's the point of talking about it? I've already hit a wall. You were my last hope, but clearly, you don't see me as real family."

Kevin flinched at that jab, his guilt showing through. Truth be told, he had never seen Andrew as a true brother, just some scrappy nobody who got lucky.

However, Andrew's current fame and influence made Kevin too jealous and unable to ignore them, so he kept up the friendly act.

He laughed and replied, "Come on now-just say the word. No matter what's going on, as your big brother, I'll do everything I can to help!"

Andrew lit up. "You really mean that?"

Kevin slapped his chest and

declared, "Of course, I do! You're

family, aren't you? I swore during our oath-we ride together, we die together! Anyone who lays a finger on you is messing with me! And when that happens, the Wrights don't hold back."

Andrew looked deeply moved and even pretended to wipe away a tear. "Let me thank you in advance for saving my life, Kevin. The truth is, ever since I won the Grand Medical Summit, I've had a target on my back. Some people clearly aren't happy with me standing out.

"From the looks of it, someone's planning to assassinate me. So Kevin, I really need your help I can't survive this on my own."

Kevin scoffed. "Who the hell would be that bold? Tell me, the Wrights will keep you safe!"

Andrew put on his most pitiful look. "I don't even know who they are! All I know is they've already sent people to tail me, and I could be attacked any time now."

A flicker of disdain passed through Kevin's eyes. He thought Andrew was only good at sucking up to powerful figures like Derek and George—but beyond that, he seemed like a weakling.

Especially now, trembling in fear of death like some spineless coward.

Of course, he

he would not say his

thoughts aloud. On the outside, he smiled and assured, "Come on,

that's it? You had me worried for et

nothing. Relax, I'll assign the

ver

Wrights' personal security detail to protect you around the clock."

Andrew acted touched. "Thank you, Kevin. Once I'm out of this mess, I'll make sure you're heavily rewarded."

Kevin waved it off modestly. "We're brothers, no need for all that. But if you insist on showing your appreciation, how about hooking me up with some of your Titan Essence Pills?"

Andrew silently scoffed. 'Knew it. This guy's always been after something. So much for brotherhood. All this guy wants is to bleed me dry.

After hanging around the Wrights for another half hour, Andrew finally got up to leave.

However, unlike when he arrived alone, this time he drove off with a car tailing him —inside were five elite bodyguards from the Wrights' security team.

Andrew smirked. 'Luna's annoying officer warned that someone named Grand Viper was coming for my head. Perfect-let them come.'

He had dragged the Wrights into this mess, and there was no way Rafael could outplay him at this game.

Chapter 1398

Inside the Wrights' guest lounge, tension simmered. Quinton growled through clenched teeth, "Father, you've lost your mind. Sending our elite security team to protect that worthless piece of trash? Andrew doesn't deserve a damn thing!"

Kevin's grin from earlier was nowhere to be seen now. With a sneer, he replied, "You're absolutely right—he doesn't deserve it. But it's all for show and won't cost us anything."

He added, "You heard him-once he's safe, he'll hand over some Titan Essence Pills. You tried every trick in the book to get one and failed. Look at me with just one move, it's practically handed to me."

Quinton was left speechless. When it came to scheming, he was truly his father's son-neither of them ever missed a beat.

Yara finally could not hold it in anymore. She chimed in, "Dad, I think this relationship with Andrew shouldn't be about gain. You already swore brotherhood. Our family should treat him as one of our own, not as a stepping stone to his resources."

Kevin let out a mocking laugh. "Yara, since when did you become so naive? Or maybe the better question is when did you start thinking I was naive?"

Ignoring Yara's glare, Kevin continued coldly, "If Andrew weren't useful, do you think I'd ever bother swearing brotherhood with some street rat? It's only

because he's made something of himself that I've lowered myself to play nice and give him face. Otherwise, when he crippled Winston back then, I'd have destroyed him myself!"

Yara stared at him in disbelief. "So you're telling me... the brotherhood was never real?"

Kevin scoffed. "Real? My ass. This world runs on profit, nothing more. I called him 'brother' because he's worth something right now. And honestly, if a beggar under a bridge had that kind of value, I'd do the same!"

He continued, "Yara, Quinton, you're both my blood. Remember this if we want our family to thrive, we need to be flexible. Anyone can be used, as long as it benefits you. And the moment someone stops being useful, cut them loose- family or not."

Quinton grinned. "Father, you're absolutely right. Andrew's being hunted, right? We'll sit back and watch, and if he goes down, I'll personally make sure he's shattered to pieces."

Kevin frowned. "Don't be hasty. Like it or not, Andrew is your godfather. I don't want people saying you killed your own family, got it?"

Quinton suddenly snapped. "No! I want to be the one who kills him! Who the hell is that piece of garbage, thinking he's worthy of being my godfather? This whole thing is the biggest humiliation of my life!"

Kevin patted his son's shoulder,

trying to calm him. "Quinton, I get it. I understand how humiliating this must feel. But listen-real men know when to bend and when to rise. Sometimes, you've got to play along and bide your time. Swallow your pride now, win the war later."

Quinton shouted, "Easy for you to say! Why didn't you have Yara as Andrew's

goddaughter then? Why is it always me who takes the hit?"

The memories came flooding back, and his eyes welled up with fury.

Kevin's temper flared, and he slapped Quinton hard across the face. "You idiot! Do you seriously think I'd let Yara be his

Vol

goddaughter? Have you lost your damn mind? Don't you know that half of these 'godfather' titles are just sugar-daddy cover-ups?

"You think Andrew wouldn't take advantage of that? Next thing you know, he'd have her in his penthouse, 'receiving life advice' at 2:00 am.! And afterward, people would say I pimped out my own daughter! Dammit, you think I'd let myself fall that low? You think I could live with that shame?"

Kevin's voice thundered with rage as he stood there, furious and unrepentant.

Stunned by the outburst, Quinton went silent for a moment, trying to process what he had just heard. Before this, he did not know that these 'godfather' titles were just sugar-daddy cover-ups.

Chapter 1399

Quinton suddenly realized something disturbing his old man understood these dirty power games even better than he did.

Yara, standing nearby, felt sick just watching the two of them. Kevin might be her father, but she had long known he was nothing more than a predator in a suit.

As for Quinton? A total disgrace. What shocked her most was learning that Kevin's so-called brotherhood with Andrew was purely for exploitation. She made up her mind to warn Andrew about all of this.

Right now, she did not trust anyone-not her family, not their lies. Ironically, the one person she believed in completely was Andrew, an outsider. Especially after he grabbed her chest, not out of lust but concern, only to tell her she needed to get a health check.

He had not used it to threaten her or press for more, nor did he try to take advantage of her vulnerability.

To Yara, that made him a true gentleman-and that was all she needed to know.

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Meanwhile, Andrew had already taken the Wrights' elite security team on a long, roundabout route toward the outskirts of Blumedale.

Roger Day, the leader, a half-step martial king, was clearly losing patience. He snapped disrespectfully, "Mr. Lloyd, where exactly are you dragging us to? Sure, Mr. Wright told us to protect you, but we've had enough of this wild goose chase."

He looked at Andrew like he could not believe this coward was the Grand Medical Summit champion. Behind him, the rest of the squad did not bother hiding their contempt either.

The Wrights came from one of the Five Apex Families, and they were used to looking down on everyone. They thought Andrew was nowhere near the standard they expected.

"Please! You can't leave me like this!" Andrew cried, his face pale as a sheet. "If you go now, I'm done for! I'll be dead meat!"

Roger burst into laughter and nudged his men. "Check this out. This is the guy Mr. Wright swore brotherhood with? What a joke. He's nothing but a pathetic coward. Guy's tall and broad-shouldered, but inside? He's mush."

The others laughed along. One stepped forward and stretched out a greedy hand toward Andrew.

"Hey kid, you're the Grand Physician, right? That makes you tight with Mr. Wright. You must be carrying something valuable, yeah?"

The hunger in his eyes was unmistakable, and Andrew's gaze briefly flickered with killing intent. However, on the surface, he stayed meek. Valuable stuff? I left in &

rush. Didn't really bring an ane worth much."

Roger smirked. "Maybe you left the good stuff behind, but you've got cards, right? Cash? Come on, toss us a few million. That's pocket change for a big shot like you, isn't it?"

A sly smile crept across Andrew's face. "Starting at a few million, huh? You mutts sure have a massive appetite."

Roger's face instantly darkened. "You son of a bitch. What did you just say? Are you mocking the Wrights' elite? Do you have a death wish?"

Furious, he lunged forward to grab Andrew by the throat.

However, a sharp whoosh cut through the air, and a blade's cold gleam sliced through the air. One of the squad members suddenly clutched his throat, blood gushing between his fingers.

Roger's eyes widened in disbelief as he turned, only to see a woman in white striding toward them in heels, her face adorned with a white serpent tattoo.

She gave a twisted smile and yanked the blade out, snapping his neck while she was at it.

Roger shouted, "You just killed one of the Wrights' men, bitch. You have effectively signed your death warrant!"

Her sudden attack sent the rest of the team into a frenzy. Roger drew his blade and charged at her without hesitation. The other three roared and joined in, surrounding her from all sides.

Andrew stood off to the side, calm as ever, watching the chaos unfold. This was exactly what he wanted-letting the dogs eat each other.

Still, something did not sit right. The woman in white seemed too weak for someone who should be Grand Viper, the third-ranked assassin on the Underground Index.

Andrew started to doubt that she was the Grand Viper.

Chapter 1400

The woman in white was terrifying-every step she took was a death sentence. Her Ghostwillow blade was as thin as a whisper, and every slash drew blood, each strike hitting a vital spot.

Within seconds, aside from Roger, the remaining members of the Wrights' elite guard were dead on the spot.

"Who the hell are you?" Roger yelled, drenched in cold sweat. "Why are you going this far? Why the hell are you killing everyone?"

The woman came to a stop. After that brutal bout of violence, her face looked almost possessed. She ran her blood-slick tongue across the edge of her blade and giggled darkly.

"Who am I? I'm White Viper. Today, you're all going to die. Especially that handsome little guy standing behind you-he's going to die the most miserably."

Roger spun around and glared furiously at Andrew. "This is your fault, you walking disaster! You brought this psycho down on us! Call Mr. Wright-get backup! I'll hold her off, but you need to move, now!"

Barking that order, Roger charged at White Viper without hesitation, and the two locked into combat again.

As a member of the Wrights' personal guard and a top-tier fighter from one of the Five Apex Families, Roger was not just for show.

White Viper's vicious strikes only grazed him, while his saber sliced deep into her shoulder. Blood gushed, but rather than retreat, it seemed to make her even more ferocious.

With a suicide-style attack, she ignored the knife that was stabbing at her again and launched her own attack. The Ghostwillow blade whistled through the air, and Roger's severed hand hit the ground with a thud.

Clutching the spurting stump where his hand used to be, Roger screamed in agony. His fear overtook his pride, and he turned and bolted.

White Viper let out a sharp, animalistic laugh and launched a throwing blade into his back, dead center.

Roger coughed up a mouthful of blood as he hit the ground, barely clinging to life. Through his fading vision, he caught a blurry glimpse of Andrew, who was still just standing there. He was not running or calling for help. In fact, he was just smiling.

Roger croaked, "Y-You idiot! Call for help, damn it! You're literally killing us here!"

He could barely contain his fury. What kind of moron just stood there, frozen, while everyone around him was getting slaughtered?

He wondered if Andrew was so scared that he could not even dial a damn number.

Andrew casually stepped forward and smiled warmly. "Call for help? Why would I do that? The whole point was to get rid of you people. If I called for backup, that would ruin everything, wouldn't it?"

Roger's face twisted in disbelief, ignoring even the pain. "W-What did you just say?"

Andrew scoffed and stepped aside. He had no interest in explaining things to someone whose death was already inevitable.

White Viper strolled up and stomped down, crushing Roger's skull with one brutal kick. His lifeless eyes stared blankly in horror, unable to comprehend what had just happened, not even in death.

In the end, he could not figure out what kind of insane move this lunatic Andrew had pulled. After all if they all died, no one was left to protect him. He would just be torn

in

apart next by this path t

white.

"You really are a goddamn idiot-just like that dead mutt said. My boss warned me to be extra cautious

lovelon

around you before I came. But now that I've seen you for myself? Please. You're nothing but a

trembling little bunny," White Viper

mocked.

She twirled her bloodstained blade and grinned at Andrew, full of taunting amusement.

Andrew did not run or call for help. Instead, he just stood there like a clueless lamb waiting to be slaughtered.

Roger had not understood it, nor had she.