

RISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

Chapter 1401

White Viper could not help but think Andrew was a total coward.

Andrew scratched his head, asking, "So, who's your boss? Don't tell me it's that so-called Grand Viper?"

White Viper's name twisted in fury, growling, "Shut your mouth! Do you think a little insect like you is even worthy of speaking his name? Now hand over the rest of the treasure map like a good boy, and let me slit your artery open."

She laughed maniacally, adding, "Don't worry, I'll make sure you get to watch every last drop of your blood drain out before you croak."

Andrew shook his head. "Let me guess... You've killed so many people, you've started enjoying it, haven't you?"

White Viper froze for a second, then sneered. "You're not wrong. But too bad- you've been marked. Not just by Grand Viper, but by people who run the damn world. So, here's the deal, kid.

"You either die now, and I take the map from your corpse, or you hand it over and I give you a cleaner death. Two options-pick one."

Andrew gave a cold little laugh. "Nah... I think I'll go with a third option."

White Viper narrowed her eyes. "A third option? What the hell do you mean?"

His smile turned icy. "You'll understand when you and those poor bastards from earlier are lining up at the gates of hell."

Her face darkened. "So you really want to fight me?"

Andrew's tone dropped. "I'm not fighting you. I'm sending you off."

He crossed his arms in front of his chest, and in a blur, the Ghostwillow blade White Viper hurled toward him was destroyed in midair, sliced clean in half.

Andrew broke the steel blade with his bare hands, completely unfazed by its sharpness.

It was inhuman.

White Viper gasped, her breath hitching in disbelief. Just that one move had her terrified to her core.

She stuttered, "Y-You were never scared, were you? You were baiting me into a fight just so you could finish us both off and walk away with everything!"

Before she could finish her thought, she threw three more Ghostwillow blades at Andrew and immediately spun around to flee, bolting with everything she had. As a killer and a seasoned sadist, she had always trusted her gut, and her instincts were screaming at her now.

The man she had just challenged was not a regular target he was death itself.

White Viper was terrified to the core.

"Do you really think you can outrun me?" Andrew's cold and merciless voice suddenly rang in her ear.

She turned her head in disbelief, only to see him right there, running beside her, keeping pace like a damn phantom.

'He's so fast-'

Just as the thought appeared in White Viper's head, one of her own Ghostwillow blades pierced straight through her throat. The force sent her flying like a ragdoll, tumbling a dozen feet across the ground before coming to a dead stop.

White Viper was gone in an instant with her eyes wide open, and it was her own weapon that ended her.

'He's using my own tactics against me?' That was all she could think as her vision faded.

"How pathetic. She's so weak," Andrew muttered as the sun dipped low, casting a golden hue across the street.

He spun the Ferrari around and sped back toward the city. His three little darlings were waiting for him to come home for dinner, and

Francesca, the naughty little tease, had casually mentioned they were almost out of condoms.

She had even asked if he could pick up another box on the way home.

Andrew was annoyed as he had just bought a pack last week, and now they were already out. That was just way too fast.

Chapter 1402

In a private estate on the outskirts of the city, a thunderous roar shook the walls.

"The Wrights will pay for this with a fate worse than death!"

The voice, full of fury and murderous rage, came from a man with a bare, muscular torso. Coiled around his body was a massive snake-he was none other than Grand Viper, ranked third on the Underground Index and infamous for his brutality.

At his feet lay White Viper's corpse, already cold.

Near him, two men sat in tense silence-Rafael and Mosby, looking tense.

Meanwhile, standing beside them was a young man dressed in black from head to toe, with long, dreadlocked hair tied back. He had a black snake tattooed across his face.

This was Black Viper, Grand Viper's other most trusted enforcer. He and White Viper had been Grand Viper's fangs until now. Now, one of those fangs lay dead before him.

"Sir, please... You have to avenge White Viper and slaughter everyone connected to the Wrights-burn their whole damn legacy to the ground!" Black Viper hissed, his voice hoarse with grief as he knelt beside the corpse, cradling her body.

Mosby's eyelid twitched violently, thinking, "Is this guy seriously groping a dead woman?"

He saw it clearly-Black Viper's hands were fondling White Viper's breasts, and not subtly. He could not help but think Black Viper was a creep.

Rafael cleared his throat and spoke grimly. "Grand Viper, this situation... doesn't add up. To me, it doesn't look like the Wrights were behind White Viper's death."

Grand Viper's eyes burned as he growled, "Not them? Then why were the Wrights' security team dead at the scene?"

Black Viper raised his head, venom in his eyes. "Exactly! And White Viper had wounds all over her body-wounds left by them! We've never had beef with the Wrights in Blumedale!

"She went out to hunt down Andrew, not to start a damn war! So there's only one explanation—those Wrights bastards must've attacked first, and White Viper fought back."

He clenched his jaw, his voice thick with rage. However, his hands were still busy holding her backside.

Mosby could not take it anymore. "Black Viper, can you stop? She's dead-show some respect!"

Black Viper glanced at him, completely unfazed. "I just wanna get in one last round before she goes fully cold. If you can't handle it, look away. I didn't ask you to watch."

Mosby's temple throbbed. He gave up trying to argue, but his eyes could not help wandering back, both horrified and weirdly curious to see what kind of monstrosity this pervert would try next.

Rafael gritted his teeth. "Damn it. Not only did we fail to retrieve the map fragment, but we also lost one of our top fighters. Grand Viper, I need you to send someone else. That piece of the treasure map must be secured."

Grand Viper stroked the snake curled around his wrist, his yellow eyes gleaming with malice. "Don't worry, Mr. Driscoll. I gave you my word, and I always keep my word. I'll crush that clown Andrew like a bug. But first, the Wrights need to be taught a little lesson for White

Viper's death."

Rafael frowned. "Grand Viper, if I may speak honestly... I don't think it's wise to provoke the Wrights right now."

Grand Viper let out a vicious snort.

"You think I'm scared of the Five Apex Families? So what if they're powerful? Since they dared to kill my people I'm going to make them bleed. If I let this slide, what would

people say about me, the

third-ranked martial artist on the Underground Index? They'd think I'm a joke!"

Rafael clenched his fists, feeling a growing storm in his chest. This whole mission was supposed to be simple: take Andrew down and get the map. However, everything ended up a mess.

Not only did they lose the map, but they also ended up going to war with the Wrights. He could not help but wonder if this entire disaster was orchestrated by Andrew.

After thinking it through, he dismissed the thought. After all, Andrew was already

up to his neck in trouble. There was no way he had the brains or the pull to set all

this up.

"Black Viper, it's your move now.

You've got two missions. First, finish

what White Viper started. Bring back

the map fragment-do not screw this up Second, take that punk Andrew off the board. If White Viper's dead, he needs to die with her." '

Grand Viper's voice turned icy as he added, "And the Wrights... they don't get to walk away scott-free. That bastard Kevin actually thinks he can mess with me? I'm going to make him regret this."

Black Viper dropped to both knees and sneered with bloodlust. "Sir, leave it all to me. I'll get it done. Whatever White Viper failed to do, I'll handle it flawlessly."

Chapter 1403

Grand Viper nodded with satisfaction. "You're far stronger than White Viper ever was. That much, I'm not worried about. Go on-handle the second task first, then move on to the first!"

Black Viper did not question the order. "Yes, sir!"

As Black Viper left, Rafael could not hold back anymore. "Grand Viper, how could you send him to deal with the Wrights first? Your personal grudge can wait-what matters now is recovering the map fragment!"

Grand Viper shot him a cold glance, flashing a smile that did not reach his eyes. He asked, "Mr. Driscoll, are you saying your mission is more important than my reputation?"

Rafael froze, lips pressed tight, and let out a low scoff. He dared not argue further since this snake-wielding lunatic was a martial king with terrifying killing power. Hence, it was best not to push his luck.

Meanwhile, over at the Wrights' estate, the atmosphere was no better-pure rage gripped every corner of the house.

"Five of our men were slaughtered!" roared the captain of the Wrights' security, a cruel-looking old man named Tora. "This blood debt must be paid back tenfold!"

In the main hall, five bodies lay side by side—the fallen security team, their deaths gruesome beyond words, and no one could bear to look too long.

Quinton clenched his jaw. "This was Andrew. It had to be that treacherous bastard! He led our men to their deaths—he's the one who got them killed. Father,

we must act now! Bring him in and make him answer for this!"

Kevin, seated at the head of the table, stayed quiet, his expression dark and unreadable.

Yara, seeing this, grew anxious. "Dad, you and Andrew are sworn brothers. There's no way he would do something like this!"

Quinton sneered. "You're still defending that scumbag? After what just happened? If he didn't do it, then who did?"

Yara gritted her teeth. "Quinton, stop talking crap! If Andrew was behind it, would he have called us himself to come retrieve the bodies? He said he'd come here personally to explain everything to our family!"

Quinton laughed coldly. "Explain? Do you think he's got the guts to show his face here after spilling blood? There's nothing to explain—he's guilty as hell!"

"Father, give me the order. Let me lead our security team to hunt him down! He's going to kneel and apologize at their graves, and then he'll join them in hell!"

Kevin was swayed by Quinton's words. After all, five loyal guards had been butchered.

On a personal level, it was a tragedy. However, from a higher perspective, it was a slap to the Wrights' face—an open insult to their power.

If they did not retaliate, what would that say about the Wrights' status among the Five Apex Families?

"Fine, Quinton. You'll take a team and bring that little="

Before he could finish calling Andrew a 'little bastard', a voice came from outside, full of sorrow and guilt.

"Kevin, I came to offer my condolences!" Andrew said as he entered, dressed in mourning attire.

"These brave men died protecting me. They fought a murderous woman to the death... and fell under her blade. I have nothing to repay them with only some Titan Essence Pills and money."

The hall fell into stunned silence as Andrew stepped in with Aspen at his side, eyes red, heart heavy.

Even Kevin, who had been ready to erupt in fury, was suddenly at a loss.

"Andrew, what's all this?"

Andrew stepped forward, grabbed Kevin's hand, and said with deep emotion, "Kevin, I'm so sorry. I came to pay my respects to these fallen heroes and bring critical

information-something you must know."

Kevin leaned in. "What is it?"

Andrew's voice trembled with grief. "The one who killed your guards was named White Viper. She worked for Grand Viper. If not for these brave souls taking the hit, I wouldn't have survived. They gave their lives for Kevin. I owe them everything."

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Kevin's face turned pale, then

flushed with age. "What? It was Grand Viper's people who killed my men? That monster-he's been ranked third on the Underground Index for years, a mass murderer and a plague on our martial world!

"And now he has the nerve to mess with the Wrights? I swear, I'll tear him apart with my own hands!"

Kevin shot up from his seat, overcome with righteous fury. His anger surged, righteous and unstoppable.

Chapter 1404

"Bullshit!" A furious roar exploded through the hall, cutting through the tension. Quinton pointed a trembling, furious finger at Andrew, his face twisted with rage. He growled, "Andrew, even now, you're still trying to stir up lies and mislead everyone, aren't you? I see through you. You're just trying to throw the blame elsewhere and walk away clean!"

Andrew instantly put on a wounded expression. "So, even you-my own godson -don't believe me now? Quinton, how could you say that to your godfather? How could you break my heart like this?"

Quinton nearly lost it. His saliva flew as he snapped, veins bulging on his forehead. "Shut up! I said shut the hell up—did you hear me? I'm not your goddamn godson, and you sure as hell aren't my godfather. Stop trying to force that on me!"

He was older than Andrew, yet was constantly being called 'godson'.

He had had enough-the humiliation was unbearable.

Who else in this family had to suffer like this?

Off to the side, Aspen had been struggling to hold in her laughter since the start of the argument. Her delicate face twitched, on the verge of bursting into giggles. She thought Andrew was just too much, pulling stunts like these left and right.

He was just too good of an actor.

"Andrew," Quinton growled, sneering, "you killed our security team. Even if you didn't do it yourself, you're definitely tied to it!"

He stayed cold and unmoved. He knew Andrew too well-this man was cunning, ruthless, practically demonic.

Andrew let out a soft sigh and shook his head. "Since even my godson won't believe me, I suppose there's nothing more I can say."

He turned to Kevin, his voice low with sorrow. "Kevin, this is my offering as a brother-it's the least I can do to honor those brave men who gave their lives. Please, accept it."

He reached for a finely crafted box from Aspen and personally handed it to Kevin.

Kevin blinked in surprise. "Andrew, what is this?"

Andrew forced a faint smile. "You've mentioned before how much you wanted Titan Essence Pills. As your brother, I've always kept it in mind I never forgot. Go ahead and open it. I hope it brings you some comfort."

Kevin's eyes lit up as he opened the box. Nestled in velvet were four porcelain vials, each filled with fragrant, glowing pills.

"Ha! This is the good stuff!" he exclaimed, snapping the box shut with excitement. "Andrew, thank you. You really are a true brother!"

Andrew gave a weary smile. "As long

as you're happy. It's just... this
godson of mine has always been
suspicious of me. Now, he's
accusing me of murder. Kevin, I've kept my pain inside, but it doesn't mean it
doesn't hurt."

His expression of silent suffering made Quinton's blood pressure spike. He
scanned the room, itching to grab something to beat Andrew with.

There was no way that devil of a man could be hurting. He was a wolf in
sheep's clothing, never up to anything good.

Aspen almost lost it again. She had to bite her lip so hard it hurt just to keep
from laughing out loud.

Kevin, meanwhile, was beaming, the
pills in hand clearly winning him over. He waved a hand dismissively. "Don't
worry, Andrew. I don't blame you! If Grand Viper was the one behind this, then
the Wrights would settle the score with him, not with you. You brought us the
truth, and you brought us gifts-how could I not be touched by that?"

His words came straight from the heart. At first, he had suspected Quinton
was right-maybe Andrew was involved. However, the man had come here
openly, in mourning, carrying offerings and the truth. He even looked sincere,
and the way his eyes were red felt genuine.

At that moment, Kevin could not find a single flaw to pick at. Surprisingly, he
even

felt his fondness for Andrew grow a little deeper.

Kevin genuinely felt that Andrew was treating him like a true older brother. Maybe he had been too calculating in life-going forward, he owed it to Andrew to show a little sincerity.

A flicker of guilt passed through Kevin's heart as he made that silent vow.

Meanwhile, Tora had been quietly observing Andrew from the shadows the whole time. He finally stepped forward and spoke in a calm, steady tone.

"Mr. Wright, the wounds on our fallen guards were inflicted by a Ghostwillow blade. And among Grand Viper's top two enforcers, White Viper's weapon of choice was exactly that Ghostwillow. Which confirms that Dr. Lloyd was telling the truth."

The moment those words landed, Kevin's trust in Andrew grew even stronger. He said, "Andrew, I can't thank you enough. If not for you, we wouldn't have known that bastard Grand Viper was plotting against the Wrights! Honestly... I'm ashamed to admit I nearly misunderstood you earlier."

Tora nodded in agreement. "Indeed. Dr. Lloyd has proven himself to be a man of rare courage. To bring us this warning under Grand Viper's shadow shows he truly holds the Wrights in his heart."

At that point, even Andrew started to feel a little embarrassed. All he did was put on a dramatic act to incite a war between the Wrights and Grand Viper. Truth be told, he did not give a damn about the Wrights.

If anything, he treated the Wrights like a fart—just let them out and moved on.

"You all seriously believe him?" Quinton muttered, his face pale with disbelief. "You're really going to take him at his word?"

He gave a bitter, despairing laugh. "Father, please can you snap out of it for once? Andrew is up to no good. Grand Viper has always had a neutral

relationship with our family. He's not some lunatic. Why would he randomly slaughter our men?"

Kevin's brow furrowed. He had to admit Quinton had a point, and something about this incident did not sit right. After all, Grand Viper was a respected martial master, and he had no reason to suddenly declare war on the Wrights.

Seeing the growing doubt on Kevin's face, Andrew silently cursed. Yara had warned him that Kevin was cold-blooded and rarely trusted anyone too much. If Quinton kept fanning the flames, Kevin might really start suspecting him again.

No. He had to do something-fast.

However, before Andrew could come up with a plan to stir the pot further, a blood- curdling scream rang out from outside the estate.

Then another, and another.

The night air grew thick with tension, and somewhere in the darkness, something red had begun to stain the shadows.

Tora's face changed instantly as he barked toward the door. "What's happening out there?"

A guard from the Wrights' elite unit came running in, shaking and practically wetting himself. "Mr. Wright! The patrol team... All three men were wiped out!"

The entire main hall of the Wrights exploded into chaos. Then, in the blink of an eye, that panic turned into roaring fury.

Kevin was the first to charge out, his face twisted with rage. "Who the hell is attacking us on our own turf

Dcare who they are-I'll wipe out their entire bloodline!"

His furious shout echoed across the entire estate, rattling the very walls.

Eventually, they found the three patrolmen's bodies near the outer perimeter. The corpses were horrifying-brutally dismembered as if torn apart.

Tora suddenly shouted, "Mr. Wright-over here!"

Andrew and Aspen rushed to look. Scrawled across the outer wall in fresh, dripping blood were two lines. [The killer. Black Viper! This is just a little warning. If Mr. Wright doesn't get on his knees and apologize, the Wrights will fall.]

Andrew almost laughed out loud the perfect timing. Just when needed a way to calm Kevin's

suspensions, Grand Viper's he

showed up

and handed him a flawless excuse.

this better myself.'

'Thanks for the assist, dumbass,' Andrew thought, grinning. 'Couldn't have done