

RISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

Chapter 1456

They did not have to wait long.

A sleek, black Maybach screeched to a stop right in front of the fast food joint. Then, out stepped a curvy woman dripping in fur, diamonds, and designer everything. She strutted toward the entrance with a cold, seductive expression, clutching a luxury handbag.

Lewis rushed out to greet her with a flattering smile. "Ma'am, you're here."

The woman was not just anyone—it was Rachel, the wealthiest businesswoman in the entire Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce.

Her holdings spanned multiple industries and neighborhoods, and nearly half of the fast food chains in Blumedale were under her name.

The store owner stiffened in alarm. He quickly barked at his staff, "Get this place cleaned up now-she's the big boss!"

His eyes fell on Christina and Leroy, covered in blood and barely staying upright. Seeing Leroy's condition, the owner frowned deeply and motioned for Christina to move Leroy to the side.

Meanwhile, Quinton adjusted his tailored suit, smirking as he rose. "Well, well. And who exactly do we have here? Which big shot from the Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce decided to make an appearance today? Let's see if that person still counts for something before me."

The glass door slammed open again, and Rachel swept in with two towering bodyguards at her side, her aura fierce and unshakable.

She shouted, "Quinton, are you fucking insane or just asking for your whole damn family to be wiped out? Who gave you the guts to cause chaos on my turf? This is a Chamber of Commerce property!"

Her fury finally boiled over. "I want you to apologize to my staff right now and pay up for their medical bills. Otherwise, you won't be able to afford the consequences."

Quinton's temper flared. "Excuse me? You want me to apologize to some third- rate wage slaves? And pay them money? Madam Gardner, have you completely lost it?

"I know you've got cash, but I'm a Wright-one of the Five Apex Families. You're way out of your league!"

When Rachel showed up, Quinton had been mildly uneasy at first. She was not just wealthy—word was she had questionable connections to a few serious underground enforcers, the kind of people even major players did not mess with lightly.

However, the moment she walked in and started shouting like she owned the place, his pride snapped in half.

Rachel's eyes turned to ice. "Quinton, I've been more than generous with you. Asking for an apology and a hospital bill was me showing respect for your father, not you.

"But you chose the worst possible time to pick a fight-our new chairman just took office, and you think you can come stomping in like some spoiled punk? If word of this gets to him, you're finished. Done."

Quinton slammed his hand down on the table beside him with a crack, reducing it to splinters. "Fine! Then do it! Bring this so-called chairman of yours out here! I'd love to see if someone from the Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce actually thinks they can scare me?

"What are they, some hidden dragon? Please. More like a paper tiger who only exists on paper."

He snorted in disdain. This 'new chairman' whoever they were-he had never even heard of them, which meant they were nobody. If a true Blumedale powerhouse had taken that position, it would have been all over the news, buzzing through every major circle and social feed.

Rachel's jaw clenched. "This is your final warning, Quinton. Cooperate, and I'll pretend this never happened. You're a Wright-I expect arrogance, and I can look the other way. But your mistake was showing up here, throwing a tantrum the same day our new chairman took power. That, Quinton, is something even I can't ignore."

Quinton's blood boiled at her words.

Chapter 1457

Rachel's aggressive tone gave Quinton a strange, unsettling feeling-like his identity as the heir of the Wrights no longer meant anything.

Before coming here, he had already suffered a massive loss at the hands of Mosby and Rafael, barely escaping with his life.

Add to that the bitterness he felt after being forced to call Andrew his godfather, that constant humiliation had been eating him alive. He felt like there was a storm cloud hanging permanently over his head.

The pressure, the frustration, and the endless bruising of his pride all boiled over, and he finally snapped.

He jabbed a finger at Rachel, eyes dark as thunder. "Madam Gardner, you filthy, desperate bitch. Do you really think I'm afraid of you? Let me make it clear-I don't give a flying damn about your so-called 'chairman'.

"And as for those two over there-they're mine now. No one's taking them from me. I don't care if they're just employees at one of your little fast food joints. Hell, even if you get in my way and push me too far, I swear I'll have you tied up and used till you're nothing but a broken mess."

The entire room went dead silent, and everyone stared in shock. They could not believe Quinton had said those words out loud.

Meanwhile, Rachel did not flare up. Instead, she smiled coldly and pulled out her phone.

"Quinton, you just signed your own death certificate."

She dialed with ease. "Mr. Lloyd? Hi, it's Rachel. There's been a situation at one

of my stores. I was wondering if you could come by for a moment?"

Andrew replied flatly, "With your level of influence, I doubt you'd need me to handle something this small."

Rachel gave a soft, flattering

chuckle. "A helpless woman like me? Of course, I need your help, Mr. Lloyd. Besides, the one causing trouble isn't just anyone-it's Blumedale's Wright family's heir. He's in here talking about rape and murder like it's casual lunch conversation."

Andrew's voice dropped a few degrees colder. "The Wrights' heir? Quinton? Alright. Keep him there. I'll be right over to have a little chat with my dear godson."

Rachel purred into the phone, "Perfect. I'll be waiting for you."

Once she hung up, she turned to Christina and Leroy. "You don't have to worry. As long as you work under the Gabo Creek Chamber of

Commerce, you'll be protect no

You never be mistreated-not on our watch."

Christina nodded quickly, almost trembling. "T-Thank you, ma'am."

She had once stood tall as a CEO, but even at her peak, she had never commanded the presence that Rachel did now.

And the man she answered to? The chairman?

Christina could not even begin to imagine someone more powerful than Rachel_ and soon, he would be walking through that door.

Quinton scoffed, clearly unimpressed. "Madam Gardner, listen to you simping for your new chairman. What is he, some pretty boy toy?"

He laughed crudely. "Honestly, instead of throwing yourself at him, why don't you give me a try? I could be your new backer. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. Everyone wins."

Rachel gave him a look of pure

disgust. "Quinton, if I hadn't met our chairman, you might've fooled me Back then, with your suits and your swagger, you almost looked like a real man. But now? Compared to him, you're just a shallow show dog. You're not even fit to shine his shoes."

Quinton's face darkened instantly, rage flashing through his eyes. "Is that so? When I stomp your beloved chairman into the ground, let's see if you're still wagging your tail for him."

Quinton was absolutely fuming. Christina's family, whom he used to completely look down on, had the nerve to fight back, even going so far as to lay hands on him.

Moreover, that crappy fast-food joint they worked at actually dared to disrespect him.

The fact that he had fallen so low made Quinton seriously consider making an example out of someone-maybe even killing-to re-establish his dominance.

Rachel was considered a prized catch in Blumedale's elite social circles. However, because of her sensitive status as a widow, no one ever dared touch her-only salivated from a distance.

She was also a member of the Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce and had George as her backer. That alone had kept her safe all these years.

However, Quinton had overheard something that instantly lifted his mood-the Chamber of Commerce had just appointed a new chairman.

George was someone even Quinton would not dare cross, not even in his wildest dreams. But this new guy? Please. He had to be easy prey.

Quinton smirked coldly, already plotting.

As soon as the new chairman of the Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce arrived, Quinton planned to march straight up and slap him a few times without saying a word. Once he left the guy bloodied and dazed, he would reveal his identity and really teach him who he was dealing with.

And that was only the beginning.

After that, he was going to take Christina away. As for Rachel-that curvy, single widow-he had already made up his mind.

He was already seething with pent-up rage, and if the opportunity came, he was going to break her down until she became his personal plaything.

Lewis, trying to be polite, smiled and asked, "Madam, may I ask how old our new chairman is? What kind of bigshot are we dealing with?"

Rachel replied, "If it's not your business, don't go poking around. But you'll see him very soon. Even Duncan, the head of the Irvings almost lost his life going up against this man-do you think just any so-called bigshot qualifies to be chairman?"

Lewis felt his eyelids twitch. Duncan ran a luxury car empire and was part of Blumedale's elite class. If even someone like him got put in his place, this new chairman had to be something else.

Just thinking about it made Lewis instinctively stand straighter.

Quinton, meanwhile, still wore a look of disdain. But his brows furrowed slightly

when he accidentally caught that part of the conversation.

Sure, the Irvings were not quite on the same level as the Wrights, but they were not that far behind either. Duncan was a true leader; even someone like Quinton had to

respectfully call him "Mr. Irving

Senior" when they met.

If even a man like that got smacked down, could this new Chamber of Commerce chairman really be the real deal?

Quinton snorted. No matter how impressive the guy might be, he was still the eldest son of the Wrights-his name was not just for show.

Unless the guy was someone from one of the Three Titans the only families more powerful than the Five Apex Families-there was no way Quinton could not slap him around and walk away unscathed.

"Madam Gardner, is your chairman here yet? I'm getting really tired of waiting. Or maybe he found out I'm here and got so scared he pissed himself and ran off?"

Quinton taunted, his voice cocky and full of mockery.

Rachel's face darkened, thinking that

this bastard Quinton was really

asking for death. She had seen

Andrew's power with her own eyes. To him someone like Quinton was nothing more than a slightly larger cockroach.

Just then, Lewis burst out excitedly, "Madam, look! Outside! That red Ferrari-do

you think the guy who just stepped out is our new chairman?"

Rachel took one glance and immediately lit up with a glowing smile. Her hips swayed seductively as she strutted toward the door to greet him.

"Mr. Lloyd, you're finally here!"

Chapter 1459

Lauren had arrived alongside Andrew, and when she saw what was going on, her expression turned a little strange.

Andrew offered a casual explanation. "Rachel's one of our Chamber members."

Lauren smiled warmly and greeted her. "Nice to meet you, ma'am."

Rachel hesitated. "And you are..."

Lauren chuckled. "Name's Lauren Rhodes. I'm Andrew's first wife."

Rachel's face froze for a moment, cursing inwardly, 'That little vixen actually managed to land Mr. Lloyd?'

If that was true, then her own chances of moving up were even slimmer now.

Wait a minute. First wife?

Did that mean Andrew had a second? Maybe even a third?

Rachel suddenly felt her stomach drop.

Meanwhile, Andrew paid her no mind. He simply got out of the car, took Lauren's hand, and walked straight into the fast-food joint.

The moment he stepped through the door, he saw Quinton with his back turned to him, hands stuffed in the pockets of a tailored suit, striking a dramatic pose.

"You must be the new chairman of the Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce. My name's Quinton, the eldest son of the Wrights in Blumedale. I wonder, have you ever heard of me?"

He even threw in some outdated formal speech, trying way too hard to sound refined.

Andrew stepped forward, fully intending to smack the smug right off him. However, before he could move, his eyes landed on two trembling figures nearby a man and a woman.

It was Christina and her younger brother, Leroy.

Christina's face was swollen, a complete mess. As Andrew's gaze swept over her, she flinched like she had been burned, quickly turning her face away and trying desperately to avoid his eyes.

Leroy stared in shock, mouth slightly agape, blood still crusted at the corner of his lips.

When Andrew's icy stare moved to him, he clenched his jaw, mirrored his sister, and averted his gaze in shame. His cheeks burned red-hot.

Just then, Rachel walked in after them. "Quinton, our chairman's here. Didn't you say he was trash? That you'd crush him under your boot? Well, go on then. Crush him."

Quinton snorted and turned around slowly, clearly not taking it seriously.

Meanwhile, Christina and Leroy were completely stunned, their eyes wide in disbelief, when they realized Andrew was the new chairman of the Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce.

That made him their superior's superior's superior's superior-four ranks above!

Leroy nearly fainted just trying to comprehend the difference in status between them.

Finally turning around, Quinton wore a smug look-until he saw Andrew. The arrogance on his face instantly morphed into sheer panic. Andrew? What the hell... It's you?"

As he shouted, he instinctively stepped backward. Too bad his instincts were not fast enough.

Andrew struck without hesitation-two brutal slaps landed squarely on Quinton's face.

Quinton felt like a sledgehammer had just slammed into his skull. His ears rang, and both sides of his face went completely numb.

"You dare hit me, Andrew? I swear I'll-"

Before he could even finish his threat, Andrew closed the distance and launched a savage kick straight into Quinton's chest.

The so-called heir of the Wrights flew back like a rag doll, crashing into the kitchen with a loud bang, groaning in agony.

Andrew let out a cold snort and stormed after him like a beast on the hunt.

Quinton barely managed to block two of Andrew's blows before a punch to the gut folded him in half. He vomited violently on the spot, spewing out everything he had eaten the night before.

Yet, Andrew was not done. He grabbed Quinton by the hair and yanked his head

up.

Chapter 1460

Andrew growled, "These two slaps are from me as your godfather, teaching my dumbass godson a lesson!"

He slapped Quinton twice again, hissing, "These next two are on behalf of Kevin, your father. You little bastard, how dare you go around stirring up trouble under his name!"

Two slaps echoed again. "These are for giving you a wake-up call. You had the audacity to cause a scene on Chamber turf and ignore your own godfather-me, the chairman. Clearly, your thick skin's been itching for some discipline!"

"And these last three? That's just me being annoyed by your stupid face. Let that sink in-don't you dare try this again!"

Andrew finally withdrew his hand, expression flat and emotionless.

Quinton's face had puffed up like a grotesque balloon, so swollen and disfigured that he was unrecognizable.

"Andrew, you son of a... You piece of..." he cried out.

Quinton lifted a trembling hand to point at Andrew, clearly wanting to bark out some kind of threat. However, he had been beaten so thoroughly that he could not even muster the energy to finish.

The once-proud heir of the Wrights was reduced to sobbing and howling like a kid who had just been spanked.

A full-grown man, a supposed elite. Yet, Andrew's slaps had literally made him cry. Even Christina and Leroy looked too stunned to believe it.

Rachel, Andrew, and Lauren were equally speechless.

"Quinton, what's wrong? Are you crying because you're moved that Mr. Lloyd finally taught you some manners?"

Rachel sneered coldly. She was not about to let a moment like this slip-there was nothing quite like kicking someone when they were already drowning in shame.

Quinton roared, "Andrew! One day, I will kill you!"

With teary eyes, he turned to storm out the door.

Andrew said coldly, "You're welcome to leave. But since you trashed this place, you're covering all the damages. Also, I hear you assaulted our employees Medical bills, emotional distress none of that comes cheap."

Quinton was seething, but he did not dare say a word. He pulled out his wallet and left a fat stack of cash behind.

Andrew gave him a cold glance. "You really think that's enough? Rachel, bring him the payment code. 20 million-not a cent less. If he shortchanges us, I'll take one of his legs."

Rachel's jaw dropped a little, impressed at how Andrew really knew how to name his price. "Of course-20 million it is. Quinton, time to pay up."

She grabbed the shop's bank account details and held them out to him with a mocking grin.

Quinton's eyes blazed. "20 million? Andrew, why don't you just go out and rob someone?"

Andrew sneered. "Isn't that exactly what I'm doing? You pay, and you get to walk. You don't, and I'll beat you half to death and drag your ass back to the Wrights myself. Then,

coffect from your daddyen, I'll

Quinton was so humiliated that he wanted to explode. He had thought he was fighting a man, but it had felt more like being mauled by a full-grown lion.

It was the first time he had gone head-to-head with Andrew, utterly breaking his spirit. He knew now, even in martial arts, he was not in the same league as Andrew.

"Fine! You want it, take it—I'll pay every damn cent! But this isn't over, Andrew! The humiliation you've given me I'll return it one day!"

In the end Quinton made the full transfer of 20 million and bolted from the place like his life depended on it. But for the first time, along with the hatred he held for Andrew, there was also a new emotion-fear.

Lauren walked over to Christina and gently helped her up. "Ms. Stevens, your injuries are pretty serious. And your brother... he needs a trip to the hospital immediately."

Leroy had already slipped into unconsciousness. Seeing him like that, Christina burst into tears, panic and despair written all over her face.

"Ms. Rhodes, I-I don't have a car, and I don't... I don't even have money for the hospital. Leroy-he... please, I'm begging you, please help me!"

Tears streamed down her swollen face as she dropped to her knees, clutching at Lauren's hand and looking up desperately.

Lauren let out a quiet sigh and turned to glance at Andrew. However, his face remained cold and unreadable.