

## RIISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

### Chapter 1466

As soon as Lauren stepped out of bed, she let out a yelp and nearly collapsed. Her long, fair legs were trembling uncontrollably, and the insides of her thighs were so numb she could not feel a thing.

Francesca had already left for work, leaving only Aspen behind to care for her.

"Uh, Aspen... why didn't you go to the office today?" Lauren asked awkwardly, trying to change the subject.

Aspen grinned mischievously. "Andrew was worried about you, so he asked me to stay back and look after you. Here, drink some water first, and then I'll help you get something to eat. That guy has no sense of mercy for us poor, delicate women!"

Lauren blushed hard and lowered her voice. "When you two do it, is it always that intense too?"

Aspen giggled behind her hand. "Intense' is exactly the right word! When we're together, it's always like that. And believe me, he goes way harder on me than he did with you. Sometimes, he even makes me cry!"

Lauren's eyes widened. "He makes you cry? Is Andrew really that rough with you? If so, I seriously need to have a word with him!"

Aspen waved her hands quickly. "No, no-it's not like that! You've got it all wrong!"

Under Lauren's curious gaze, Aspen's face flushed, and she bit her lip. "It's actually because I like it when he's rough."

Lauren stared at her, stunned for a moment before her expression shifted into one of understanding. "Aspen, I never would've guessed. You're into that kind of thing? I mean, I know some girls are wired that way-they get turned on by it. So that's you, huh?"

Aspen looked even more embarrassed, her voice barely above a whisper. "I'm not totally sure why I feel this way... But I do like it when he's a bit forceful. Lately, I've found myself wanting it to be rougher, more intense, and more primal.

"My excitement just keeps climbing with it. But I don't dare tell Andrew. What if he thinks I'm messed up or something?"

Her voice trailed off, and her face burned as she peeked at Lauren with a mixture of guilt and shyness.

Lauren could not help laughing as she leaned in and teased, "Wow, Aspen. Who knew you were such a naughty little minx? I think you've got both me and Fran beat by a mile!"

Aspen pouted and playfully nudged

her. "Hey! That's not fair. I'm pretty sure you two aren't any more innocent than I am. Take you, for et

example. Sneaking into Andrew's room last night-you think Fran and I didn't notice?

"In fact, the moment you slipped in, we both knew. When you two started going at it, we could hear you even with you trying to keep your voice down-we were right outside the door."

Lauren's face turned bright red, and she nearly shrieked. "Wait-you two listened in last night?"

Aspen looked just as sheepish and let out an awkward laugh. "I mean... not on purpose! It's just... your moan was kind of... addictive. Fran and got all hot and bothered listening! Before we knew it, we'd listened until you begged him to stop!"

Lauren groaned and buried her face in her hands. "You two creeps! Next time either of you gets it on, I'm going to be right outside the door. Not only listen, but I'll record it!"

The two women laughed and playfully argued for a while. After eating, Lauren asked, "Where's Andrew?"

Aspen nodded. "He should have gone to the Wright estate!"

Lauren shrugged. "Poor Quinton is in for it now!"

#### Chapter 1467

At that moment, Andrew and Dylan had indeed arrived at the Wright estate.

Dylan chuckled and said, "You know, my mom's side is also Wright. So why is there such a huge gap between me and their Wrights?"

Andrew joked, "Maybe you Wrights and Quinton's Wrights were the same family 500 years ago! Why don't you try claiming some family connection?"

Dylan pulled a face. "Mr. Lloyd, even if we were family five centuries ago, that's not gonna help me now."

Andrew laughed. "Then stop daydreaming and enjoy your regular life. When you've seen more of the world, you'll realize that the Five Apex Families aren't as untouchable as they seem."

"Holtrien has tons of wealthy families. The truly top-tier elite clans and noble houses-those are the ones really worth looking up to!"

Dylan nodded seriously. "I believe it. As long as I stick with you, Mr. Lloyd, I'll see it all someday."

Soon, the two were seated in the grand hall of the Wright estate.

Kevin sat across from them, his face dark and stormy. "Andy, what disaster are you bringing to the Wrights this time?"

Andrew raised an eyebrow. "Wow, you really are psychic. Because yeah, I am here to deliver bad news—really, really bad news."

Kevin's eyelid twitched, and he looked like he was one second away from swearing out loud. Ever since becoming sworn brothers with Andrew, the Wrights had been plagued by one disaster after another.

Grand Viper's two assassins had killed Wright family members, and then Grand Viper himself had attacked the Wright estate gates, nearly injuring Kevin.

Moreover, all of it was somehow tied to Andrew.

Kevin could not help wondering if Quinton was right—maybe Andrew was stirring the pot behind the scenes, manipulating everything to spark a war between the Wrights and Grand Viper.

Nonetheless, suspicion was one thing. He had no real evidence.

Tora, the Wright family's head of security—and a fighter nearly at the martial king level—let out a cold snort from nearby. "Alright, Mr. Lloyd. What exactly is this 'really bad' news?"

As the Wright family's top fighter, he was not particularly afraid of Grand Viper. On the contrary, he had always wanted to eliminate that old bastard to preserve the Wright family's reputation.

Andrew sighed dramatically. "It's serious. Like, very serious. But before I drop the bomb, Kevin, you and your inner circle should mentally prepare yourselves."

Seeing how solemn and theatrical Andrew was being, Kevin's heart dropped, and his face turned grim. Even Tora and the other senior members of the Wrights looked uneasy, momentarily caught off guard. *snovel*

The family had already been through a stormy season lately.

Was something even worse on the horizon?

Sure, the Wrights still had deep reserves-cards they had not revealed yet. However, even the strongest walls could not stand forever against wave after wave of bad news.

As everyone stared at him in tense silence, Andrew cleared his throat and delivered his words with deep grief. "Kevin! My godson, Quinton-your very own flesh and blood! That bastard has done something unforgivable! He's a disgrace to the heavens, guilty of the worst treachery, a monster who deserves a thousand deaths, a walking curse, universally hated by man and god alike-"

Kevin ran out of patience and waved his hand frantically. "Enough, enough! Andy, you're still young, why the hell are you talking like some ancient windbag, rambling without getting to the point? Just tell me straight-what has my son Quinton done now?"

Andrew stopped and said seriously, "Quinton has betrayed the Wrights and is conspiring with Rafael, Mosby, and Grand Viper!"

Andrew said, "Quinton has been doing this very secretly-no one on the Wright side should know about it! Originally, I thought it would be better not to let you know about this, Kevin.

"I was worried that it'd break your heart. But in the end, I decided to come forward and tell you the truth. Because if I stay silent, if we let this slide now, it might end up destroying the Wrights later."

Andrew's tone was heartfelt, and his face showed the perfect mix of pain and noble concern.

With a roar, Kevin lost it. "That little bastard really betrayed our family? He's gotten involved with our enemies? He's going to be the death of me!"

Tora quickly stepped forward. "Mr. Wright Senior, please don't act in anger! I don't believe Mr. Quinton would be foolish enough to do something like this. There's gotta be more to the story!"

Andrew sneered internally. Kevin was impulsive and simple-minded, but the Wright family had sharper tools in the shed, like Tora. He was ruthless and sharp, definitely not one to underestimate.

Nonetheless, Andrew had not twisted anything. While he had used deception before to make the Wrights fight against Grand Viper, he was not lying this time.

Quinton really was working with Rafael and the others this was what Dylan had discovered through surveillance.

Kevin took a deep breath and managed to reel in his fury, though his face was still thunderous. "Andy, are you absolutely sure? If this turns out to be false, don't blame me for treating you like an outsider. Quinton's my firstborn, and your accusation inevitably makes me suspect you have ulterior motives!"

Andrew let out a helpless laugh. "I knew it. I knew you wouldn't trust me. You'd doubt me, your sworn brother, instead. But fine. Come with me. See it with your own eyes, and you know. However, I suggest bringing your private security team... just in case. Things might get ugly."

Kevin stood up with a snarl, jaw clenched. "Fine. I'll bring the family's guards. If that brat really dared to betray the Wrights and join hands with Grand Viper and those other snakes... Then I'll carry out justice myself. Blood or not-I'll kill him."

Andrew did not flinch, but inside, his thoughts were ice cold. 'Rafael, Mosby... You dared to touch my people? It's time to settle the score.'

Tora mobilized the Wrights' elite guards, and with Kevin at the lead, they followed Andrew toward a location on the outskirts of Blumedale.

Kevin and Andrew rode together in the same car. He asked, "So, Andy, where the hell are we headed?"

Kevin was agitated throughout the journey. If Quinton really had betrayed the family, it would be a disgrace to him as well.

Andrew grinned. "We're almost there. This spot is most likely Rafael's territory. Grand Viper's working under Rafael now. And Quinton? He's hanging around with them too."

Kevin's jaw twitched. "If I see that little bastard really throwing his lot in with those scumbags and betraying his own family, then I swear, I'll peel his skin off myself! Or I'm no man!"

Half an hour later, a convoy of about eight black vehicles pulled up quietly along a secluded road at the edge of Blumedale.

Andrew had everyone get out and pointed to a lavishly decorated villa in the distance, saying to Kevin, "That's Rafael's house! My people have been

monitoring from this very spot and have seen Quinton going in and out frequently!"

## Chapter 1469

Tora let out a cold snort. "Even if Mr. Quinton has been coming here often, it doesn't automatically mean he's colluding with Grand Viper. The Wrights' real enemy is Grand Viper, not Mr. Quinton."

Andrew nodded in agreement. "I get where you're coming from, Tora. The Wrights have a clear target-Grand Viper. You don't want to provoke Quinton unnecessarily, right? But Kevin, Tora, I suggest you both prepare yourselves mentally.

"It's very possible that Rafael is actually the mastermind behind everything. Quinton and Grand Viper? They might just be pawns he's using to bring the Wrights down."

Kevin clenched his jaw. "The Wrights and the Driscolls have never had bad blood. What reason would Rafael have to mess with us? He's got nothing to gain."

Andrew gave a cryptic smile. "That's the thing-we just don't know. Everyone knows Rafael has a reputation for greed, and he's notorious across Blumedale. Who knows? Maybe he's got his eye on something valuable that belongs to the Wrights.

"Maybe he's set his sights on something valuable that the Wrights have and is making moves behind the scenes! Kevin, as the head of the family, you can't be too careful!"

After a few pointed remarks, Andrew stopped talking. Too many words would lead to mistakes, and he was just planting seeds of suspicion to make Kevin overthink.



Whether Rafael really was plotting against the Wrights did not matter to Andrew, and he did not want to know.

All he wanted was for the Wrights' entire elite guard—over 100 strong—to storm that mansion. And once inside? To wreck everything and everyone.

Suddenly, Tora called out, "Mr. Wright Senior, there's movement—I see Mr. Quinton!"

At that moment, outside the villa entrance, Quinton emerged with a cold expression. Behind him were Mosby, Rafael, and Grand Viper.

"You've really become useless, Quinton," Rafael said with a dismissive sneer. "If you still can't convince Andrew to help reveal the final fragment of the treasure map... then there's no reason to keep you alive!"

Quinton gritted his teeth angrily. "Mr. Driscoll, I've already explained! Andrew will never help us when I approach him, I just get beaten up with nothing to show for it!"

Mosby laughed. "I can see that beating wasn't pleasant! But it's every man for himself; you'll just have to bear this burden!"

Quinton felt like his insides were boiling over. These bastards did not even see him as a partner—they did not even see him as human.

However, it was too late to turn

back. He was already on the pirate ship, and getting out now was damn near impossible.

Especially with the Fallen Crimson Dynasty's treasure on the line—something he had always dreamed of getting a piece of. If he bailed now and turned on Rafael and the others, he would be giving that dream up for good.

Quinton said flatly, "I'll try one more time. But after that, I'm done. I won't lift a finger more."

Then, he turned to leave but paused after a few steps, glancing back. "Oh, by the way—Andrew's no longer just some outsider. He's now the chairman of the Gabo Creek

Chamber of Commerce. That old

bastard George passed the seat on to him."

Mosby froze in place. "Andrew? Chairman of that Chamber of Commerce?"

Rafael's face darkened instantly. "Well, that complicates things. That little upstart keeps climbing. Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce is the highest seat of power in the region's business world."

"With that title, he could easily move trillions in capital. If he decides to use that power... who the hell would dare go against him?"

Mosby gritted his teeth. "We should've taken him out long ago. Now we've raised

a tiger in our backyard, and it's growing more dangerous every day."

Grand Viper scoffed. "You two need to calm down. That little punk has just gotten rich, but in the eyes of a powerhouse like me, he's nothing more than a gold-plated bug! No matter how much money he has, I can still crush him underfoot!"

## Chapter 1470

While the four men were still locked in conversation, they suddenly became aware of the rising commotion outside. Grand Viper's hawk-like eyes immediately

sharpened as he turned to look into the distance, his tone dropping to a deadly chill.

"Mr. Driscoll... we've got company, and they're not here for tea."

Quinton and Mosby reacted a beat faster than Rafael, thanks to their higher combat instincts.

"What the hell..." Mosby muttered, eyes narrowing in suspicion.

Quinton stared for another second before his face turned ashen. "N-No way. Why is our family's elite guard here?! And Andrew? Damn that conniving snake—he actually brought my people with him?"

Rafael's expression darkened. "Mr. Wright Senior, what's the meaning of this show of force?"

By then, Kevin, Tora, and over 100 members of the Wrights' elite guard had already surrounded the villa in full formation. As the head of one of the Five Apex Families, Kevin's presence radiated authority.

He stepped forward, voice cold and commanding. "Mr. Driscoll, sorry for the intrusion—our family's settling a blood feud."

He then turned his glare toward Grand Viper. "And you, old bastard... You won't see another birthday. Mark my words, this time next year, you'll be rotting in the ground."

Grand Viper grinned wickedly, the massive snake coiled around his neck, flicking its tongue in agitation. "I wasn't looking for you, but you actually came to me on your own! Since that's the case, let's settle all of our grudges. After I kill you, Kevin, I'll just flee to the northern martial arts world and never come south again!" Kevin roared angrily, "Grand Viper, all the enmity between us stems from your two assassins! They killed my family's guard members without provocation, leading to today's hatred. So all of this is your own doing—you provoked my family first!"

Grand Viper flew into a rage, screaming, "Kevin, stop making excuses! My two assassins were clearly harmed by your Wright people first, which led to our current situation!"

"You're supposedly the head of a distinguished family, yet you won't own up to your actions. What a coward!"

Kevin was already blazing with fury and roared, "Attack! Eliminate that snake-handling old bastard! And break the arms and legs of that Wright family traitor Quinton-bring him back to the Wright estate for judgment!"

Quinton's heart was instantly flooded with panic. He stepped forward and frantically shouted, "Father, I'm not a traitor! I'm not! I was forced to do all this! Please, just listen to me! I had no choice!"

However, Kevin was beyond

reasoning now. He shouted back furiously, "Shut your damn mouth, you little bastard! Do you think I care what excuses you have? You knew we were mortal enemies with Grand Viper, and you still chose to stand with him?"

He growled, "Quinton, you ungrateful punk! If I have to kill you today and start over with new sons-so be it!"

Quinton nearly collapsed. He could see it in his father's eyes-Kevin had murder in his heart.

When his gaze darted toward Andrew, he saw that smirking face, the one filled with mockery and amusement, and something inside him snapped.

"Wait! Father Just let me say one last thing! This whole mess was all Andrew's doing! That treacherous devil played both sides, fanning the flames on both sides, making our family clash with Grand Viper! This bastard has evil intentions and deserves to die horribly!"

Quinton jabbed his trembling finger at Andrew, rage boiling over. If he could, he would have torn Andrew apart right there. All his wealth, legacy and pride as the eldest Wright son had all gone up in smoke because of him.

There were nights Quinton would sit straight up in bed in the middle of the night, screaming to the heavens, "Why?! Why did the universe choose me to destroy like this?"