

## RISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

### Chapter 1481

Kevin clenched his fists and laughed. "The legendary treasure left behind by the Fallen Crimson Dynasty... all of Holtrien's centuries of feudal wealth, concentrated in this doomsday empire. Think about it-it must be mountains of gold, oceans of jewels... and maybe even ancient relics long lost to time.

"Like the Elixir of Immortality that Admiral Frost brought back from his voyage to the East, and the Moon Pearl that the Demon Queen supposedly held in her mouth when she was buried. Any one of these alone could overturn everything our family has worked for, across generations."

Quinton's eyes gleamed with wonder. "It might not even stop there. What if there are artifacts from Admiral Locke's journeys through uncharted seas? And all the wealth those old dynasty officials squeezed from the people-enough to fill trucks and still take days to haul away.

"If it's really all true, then we've hit the jackpot. Screw the Three Titans-they'll all have to step aside for us!"

The father and son were so lost in their fantasy that they actually burst into laughter, standing there like kids daydreaming about becoming kings.

Just then, Andrew returned, his voice laced with amusement. "Kevin, there's one more thing I forgot to remind you about."

Kevin frowned. "What now?"

Andrew looked straight at Quinton, his grin widening. "Oh, just your ungrateful son who tried to kill you. Kevin, you're not seriously planning to let him off the hook, are you? Even if you really do get the treasure, one day he'll stab you in the back and take it all for himself. All your riches and power-gone, just like that."

With that, Andrew turned and walked away again.

Quinton panicked and shouted after him, "Andrew, you bastard!"

The man had already left, only to come back and throw him under the bus again.

He could not help but wonder what kind of grudge this guy held against him. Sure enough, Kevin's face darkened, his earlier grin vanishing. "Quinton, I'll ask you one last time-did you try to kill me and take my place?"

Quinton did not even think before blurting out, "No! Never! Father, why would I want to hurt you? You're the backbone of our entire family! I hope you live another 50 years, even centuries more!"

Kevin burst out laughing. "That's my boy. That smooth-talking mouth of yours is almost as good as mine!"

Then, without warning, he kicked Quinton.

There was a sickening crack, and Quinton's spine snapped clean. He fell backward, his eyes wide with disbelief and terror, his body crumpling to the floor,

and his limbs twitching uncontrollably.

Kevin's smile turned cold. "Now that

your martial skills are gone, I can

finally rest easy. No matter what, blood is thick

than water, so  
won't kill you. But from now on,  
you're staying in that wheelchair,  
playing the part of my obedient little boy."

Quinton gasped for air like a fish out of water, his face twisted in agony. "Just kill me, you old bastard! If you've got the guts, finish me off. You'll regret this! One day, I swear, I'll make you pay! I spent my whole life training in martial arts!"

The Wright family guards looked at each other, completely speechless.

Kevin gave the order calmly. "Send Quinton back home. Also, get the matchmakers working. Find me a decent bride from a small

line

family. I'm taking a fifth wife. Since the main heir is ruined, I'll just raise another. It's not a big deal.

#### Chapter 1482

Mosby walked over, clearly impressed. "Mr. Wright Senior, you're really a man of bold decisions. You raised such a powerful son with so much effort, and now you've crippled him just like that... Even I feel it's a shame!"

Kevin scoffed. "Save the sympathy, Dr. Lake. You're not fooling anyone. Now, get in touch with Mr. Driscoll. I didn't care about the treasure before, but now that I know it exists, I'm taking my cut. And if anyone dares to leave the Wrights out of it, don't blame me for being ruthless."

Mosby's expression darkened, his eyes wary. "Understood. But if the Wrights want in, you've got to pull your weight. We've gone through hell collecting the

scattered fragments of this map, and now that the full treasure map is nearly complete, the Wrights just show up to claim a share?"

He added, "You barely did anything-there needs to be some compensation!"

Kevin sneered. "Your compensation is staying alive, Mosby. If I felt like it, I'd kill you right now. Do you really think the Wrights won't make that move?"

Mosby fell silent. After all, Kevin had hidden his strength for years, but he had now revealed himself to be a full-fledged martial king. Mosby stood no chance against him.

Kevin clasped his hands behind his back and smirked coldly. "But don't worry, Dr. Lake. We old families don't like to burn bridges too easily, especially with someone as useful as you."

Mosby's eyes narrowed. "Mr. Wright Senior, are you suggesting we team up to take Andrew down when we search for the treasure?"

Kevin's expression turned cold as he nodded slowly. "Exactly. To me, taking out my so-called brother is more important than the treasure itself. You saw what happened today.

"Andrew is like a blade-sharp,

unpredictable, and impossible to control. I won't let that kind of danger hang over my head. His cunning, charm, and intellect are damn near inhuman.

Forget just you or Driscoll being wary of him-even I've been on guard around him the whole time.

"Thankfully, his martial skills haven't reached that unbeatable level... not yet. So far I've still got the upper hand. But if he keeps going at this monstrous pace, that won't last long. That's why we need to seize this chance and eliminate him completely. It's the only safe path forward."

Mosby nodded quickly, now sounding grimmer, more aligned in hatred. "You're absolutely right, Mr. Wright Senior. Andrew has become a real threat. Ever since he showed up in Blumedale, he's either offended every major faction or made them part of his personal circle.

"If we keep letting him rise unchecked, the current power balance-Mr. McCormick, the Three Titans, even the Five Apex Families-it's all going to collapse. He could easily become the Fourth Titan himself at this rate."

Kevin clenched and unclenched his fists, over and over. "Then, when the time comes, we put aside our differences and strike together."

Mosby gave a grunt of agreement. "It's settled. I'll talk to Mr. Driscoll right away."

Once Kevin was left alone, he

muttered, "Andrew, don't blame me for being a cruel brother. Blame yourself for being too damn dangerous. If you were just a brilliant young man, maybe we'd still be real friends. But you're not. You're a freak of nature, and I hate what I can't control."

Meanwhile, Andrew had returned safely to Serenity Villa with Dylan in tow.

Dylan was drenched in cold sweat from head to toe.

#### Chapter 1483

Dylan asked, "Mr. Lloyd, in that situation with two martial kings present, how did you have the nerve?"

Just remembering it made his throat dry and his palms sweat.

Andrew scoffed and shrugged. "So what? If it really came to a fight, they'd be the ones dying, not me."

Dylan's face twisted into an expression of pure disbelief. "But Mr. Lloyd, did you even consider my feelings? You might be able to handle being ganged up on, but I would've been meeting my maker right then and there!"

Andrew blinked, then laughed. "Fair point. I would've been fine, no doubt about that. But you? Yeah, Grand Viper would've probably snapped you in half with a single strike. But hey, Dylan, you lucked out. You made it back in one piece."

Dylan's mouth twitched as the realization hit him that Andrew had not even considered whether he would live or die back there. If a real fight had broken out with all those people ganging up on them, would he have actually survived?

Seeing the pale look on Dylan's face and the way he trembled slightly, Andrew waved a hand, annoyed. "Relax, I was just messing with you. Even if a brawl did break out, I would've made sure you got out safely."

That finally calmed Dylan down, but he secretly decided to be more careful in the future about getting dragged into Andrew's dangerous schemes. In his mind, Dylan quietly labeled Andrew as a walking danger magnet.

"Andrew, you're back!" Aspen called out, springing up from the couch the moment she saw them enter.

Andrew raised an eyebrow, flashing a teasing smile. "Well, well... What's with the outfit? Where are you headed?"

Aspen flushed, but she also seemed a bit proud as she wiggled her curvy hips playfully. "I'm going to yoga class tonight! I haven't been in ages because of all the recent chaos."

She wore skin-tight yoga pants that hugged every curve and a fitted pink top. Long hair loose, bangs perfectly trimmed-she looked like an innocent college sweetheart.

Nothing about her said she was the same girl who bounced on Andrew every night.

"What made you suddenly feel like going back to yoga?" he asked, casually picking up her glass of water and taking a sip.

They were long past the stage of awkward boundaries.

Aspen beamed. "I just want to work on my figure some more, and yoga helps improve your overall presence too."

She stretched gracefully. "Besides, I don't have much else to do, and work's been pretty slow lately, so it's perfect timing to improve myself!"

Andrew stroked his chin thoughtfully and nodded. That's fine-if you want to exercise, I have no objections. Later tonight, when. Laure and Fran get back, I want all three of you to come find me together."

Aspen's heart skipped, a mix of nerves and excitement flashing across her face. She played with her hair, looking coy and uncertain. "If you're trying to stir up another one of those nights, then I'm out."

Andrew coughed, then promptly knocked her on the head with a light flick.

"What are you imagining? Do you think I'm made of steel or something? I'm calling the the net

of

you together for serious matters, not for that. Anyway, I'm heading upstairs. Don't overthinkit."

"Okay..." Aspen mumbled, but her mind spun in circles.

What else could it be, if not that? She could not figure it out.

Ever since she and Andrew got closer, Aspen had changed a lot. She became

more like a happy, innocent young girl, and her former coldness and competitive nature had completely disappeared.

Her thoughts were consumed entirely by Andrew these days.

While she claimed the yoga was for improving her grace and body shape, the real reason was much more intimate. She wanted to become absolutely irresistible Andrew in bed, so she had done

extensive online research about it.

Yoga, they said, was a secret weapon for women. Once mastered, the flexibility and elasticity of a trained body could drive any man insane, leaving him utterly addicted and helpless in her grasp.

#### Chapter 1484

Stepping outside, Aspen felt cheerful as she grabbed her purse and headed toward the Ferrari. Her flawless fair skin, jet-black hair, sculpted figure, and stunning face turned heads without effort. And with a luxury car as extravagant as that Ferrari, she was now the picture-perfect heiress.

"Ms. Stevens, heading out?"

A sleek black Audi A6 pulled up and came to a stop, the door clicking open. Out stepped Chantelle, dressed in a sharp, no-nonsense outfit.

Aspen blinked in surprise. "Ms. Garcia, hey there! What brings you here?"

Chantelle nodded with a pleasant smile. "I'm here to see Mr. Lloyd."

Aspen shrugged lightly. "Alright, go on up. He should be in the study on the third floor."

However, as Aspen bent slightly to slide into the low seat of her Ferrari, Chantelle suddenly called out, "Ms. Stevens, wait a second."



Aspen paused mid-movement and looked back at her.

Chantelle walked up beside her, tapping on the gleaming car. "Mr. Lloyd sure spoils his little assistant, huh? This ride isn't exactly cheap!"

Aspen instantly caught the undertone and scoffed. "Ms. Garcia, if you've got something to say, just say it."

Chantelle chuckled, leaning in to whisper near Aspen's ear. "Ms. Stevens, look at your beautiful skin—I just wanna squish those cheeks. And that bombshell body of yours? Seriously, top tier.

"If I were your boss, I'd be calling you into bed every night too-keep you moaning till sunrise, no question."

The boldness in her words made Aspen's heart skip. Her face flushed with heat as she snapped, "Ms. Garcia, are you insane?"

Chantelle smirked, her eyes glinting with amusement. "No offense, Ms. Stevens. I'm just saying... your

condition is clearly getting worsen et

domination to actively emet

You've gone from craving

tempting, and begging for attention in every way you can.

"Relax-it's not necessarily a bad thing. But getting high off that kind of twisted pleasure can mess with your mind. And if Mr. Lloyd keeps playing along, keeps giving you what you're starving for...

"Well then, you'll become... how should I put it? The world's most insatiable little minx. You'll get fidgety the moment he doesn't touch you. The deeper he ravishes you, the more alive you feel.

"Honestly, Ms. Stevens, you're hopelessly hooked. In all my years studying psychology, your case is the most extreme I've ever seen."

With her face burning and her heart pounding, Aspen dove into the Ferrari, slamming the door and hitting the gas like she was fleeing a crime scene. She thought Chantelle was nuts, completely unhinged.

She was already Andrew's woman and believed there was nothing wrong with pleasing him.

Far from just pleasing him, Aspen sometimes even wanted to merge her body completely with Andrew. However, that nagging sense of shame still lingered deep inside.

She felt slightly uneasy as she wondered if Chantelle was right about her condition getting worse.

If it were true, should she seek treatment or not? Aspen did not want treatment because she felt

nothing was wrong with her. Ortet

put it another way, even if she really were terminally ill with this nov

obsession, she would embrace it willingly.

She loved this feeling of being utterly devoted to the point of madness.

Aspen's snow-white hands, so pale you could see the veins beneath, gripped the Ferrari's steering wheel tightly. Then, her lips curled as a soft pink tongue flicked across them.

She laughed out loud, reckless and wild, her mind no doubt replaying a heated memory of being ravished until she begged for mercy.

Back at Serenity Villa, Chantelle smoothed her outfit and walked calmly inside.

## Chapter 1485

Chantelle had an impressive figure, and even though she wore oversized custom business attire, it could not hide her alluring silhouette, the kind that sparked all kinds of thoughts in a man's mind.

However, her facial expression left much to be desired-she constantly wore that frigid, emotionally detached look.

Just as she entered Serenity Villa, Chantelle stepped back out and looked to the side. "You're Tora, the Wrights' security captain, aren't you?"

Her tone was professional but slightly curious.

Tora grinned broadly. "Nice to see you, Ms. Garcia!"

Chantelle nodded curtly. "Why aren't you going inside? You're here to see Andrew too, right?"

Tora looked frustrated and dejected. "He won't let me in-told me to wait outside!"

Chantelle frowned. "That's a bit much, even for him. But it's better if you wait out here. He's no small fry anymore. Someone of his level is worth the wait."

On the third floor, Chantelle did not bother knocking-she just pushed the study door open and walked in.

Andrew was leaning over his desk, working on something, and did not even look up. "Ms. Garcia, your manners are getting worse."

Chantelle's face was unreadable. "You, Mr. Lloyd, talking about manners? That's rich coming from someone who has none."

Andrew replied evenly, "I don't bother with manners because I've earned that privilege. You, on the other hand, are a bit short on that."

Chantelle gritted her teeth but agreed with him. "True enough. You change every single day now, even becoming the head of the Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce. I'm just a government representative, so I'm definitely inferior."

Andrew finally looked up and laughed. "Hey now, I was just teasing. No need to get all serious. Come on, have a seat. I'll have someone bring tea. You government folks outrank us small business types any day."

Chantelle scoffed, not believing a word of it. Sure, other wealthy businessmen might suck up to her. However, Andrew

s obviously just

paying lip service with his

politeness. Sometimes, she even suspected his respect for Derek was all surface-level.

The man was infuriating, no doubt, but the way he carried himself so composed and mysterious made her wonder what kind of background he had before all this.

To this day, even Derek has not been able to dig up Andrew's past. And that, in itself, was a serious problem.

"Mr. Lloyd, I came to talk business-specifically, about launching a new phase of cooperation between Blumedale and you. You now control Gabo Creek's largest Chamber of Commerce, and the resources at your fingertips could genuinely shift the province's entire economy."

She paused for a second, her tone becoming more cautious. "Governor McCormick hopes you'll play a bigger role in the province's development. And... if you're open to it, the governor wants to invite you into politics."

Politics?

That caught Andrew off guard. This was not just a polite gesture anymore-it was a serious offer.

Chantelle sighed. "Andrew, your rise has been ridiculous. Blumedale has never been short on gifted elites. People with connections, power, money-you name it, we've got it.

"But someone who's risen like a rocket the way you have-there's only ever been one person I've seen do it like that, and that's you. Honestly, I'm not jealous, but I'd be lying if I said it didn't shake me."

"In your brilliance, people like me seem to be working in vain, no matter how hard we try-it feels like I'll never catch up. You've made me start doubting my entire life path."

Andrew chuckled. "Ms. Garcia, it's

really not as dramatic as you're making it sound. I've just been lucky. A few coincidences, that's all. As for politics... It's not really my thing. Actually, I used to be part of the system. Getting out of it was hard enough-I'm not looking to dive back

in."

Chantelle's eyes sharpened. "You used to be part of the system? What kind of position? Where were you stationed? Who was your superior?"