

RIISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

Chapter 1491

What made it even more satisfying was that all three women belonged to Andrew.

Andrew said, "That's right. I was just wondering if I should take you guys treasure hunting! But once the treasure is uncovered, there's bound to be conflict and danger. You probably already know why."

Lauren, ever understanding, nodded. "Andrew, we get it. Bringing us would only add to your burden, so we'll just wait at home for you to come back."

Francesca added, "I know where I stand in terms of my martial arts skills. So this time, I'm sitting out too-I don't want to drag you down."

However, Aspen looked conflicted. She stared at Andrew with big, hopeful eyes, clearly wanting to go, though she did not say a word.

Andrew took a moment to think before responding, "Lauren, Fran, you two should stay home. I won't let you put yourselves in danger.

"As for you, my little servant, I'll respect your choice. Your martial arts have already reached the senior grandmaster level. To regular folks, you're regarded as

a top expert. So if you want to go, I have no problem with it."

Aspen looked torn. "But if I go, then Lauren and Fran will have no one to keep them company."

Lauren giggled. "Aspen, don't worry. Go with Andrew! Fran and I will hold down the fort and wait for you two to come back."

Francesca nodded in agreement, not minding at all.

Aspen hesitated for a brief moment, then shook her head. "No, I'll stay behind and keep Lauren and Fran company."

Lauren was surprised. "Why, Aspen? We can all tell you really want to go with Andrew."

Andrew was also a little taken aback. He had not expected the clingy little maid, who practically stuck to him all the time, to back out on her own.

Aspen glanced at him, reluctant, but said, "It's fine. Let him take someone else. Lauren, Fran-you're like my sisters. I can't just leave you behind and run off with Andrew to have fun.

"Besides, my combat skills are stronger than yours. With Andrew gone, Serenity Villa would have no one to protect you."

Francesca stood frozen for a moment, touched by her words. "Aspen, don't say that! You're going to make me cry."

Lauren grinned. "You're so

thoughtful, Aspen. Fran and I will definitely return the favor. We'll

make Andrew give you extra special attention when he returns until you're completely satisfied

Aspen felt joy in her heart but pretended to protest. "Oh, stop it! What kind of person do you think I am? When that time comes, it'll be the three of us together!"

Andrew raised both hands in mock surrender. "So basically, I've become the bonding tool for you three ladies, huh?"

All three girls turned to him at once and said in unison, "Exactly!"

That night, Andrew received a call from Kevin. The message was simple-he wanted to meet at the Wright estate.

Apparently, Rafael and Mosby had

already suggested that everyone involved in the treasure hunt gather

there to discuss terms. The planne

was to piece together all the fragments of the map and pinpoint the true location of the treasure.

Kevin's tone was very friendly, even cheerful. However, Andrew had anticipated Kevin's backstabbing nature. His sworn brother was out for blood-just waiting for him to

reveal the map, and once he had no more value, it would be game over.

Chapter 1492

Andrew felt nothing but indifference in his heart. While Kevin wanted to take him out, he had long been planning to destroy the head of the Wrights himself.

Since Kevin chose to toss away what little was left of their so-called brotherhood, Andrew saw no need to hold back either. If the treasure hunt gave him the right opportunity, he would gladly erase Kevin from existence.

Once he returned to Blumedale, it would be time for Yara to rise to power. From that point on, the Wrights would essentially be working for him.

Of course, Andrew knew he could not let his guard down around Yara either. It was not about being overly paranoid-it was simply the reality. After all, Yara was not truly one of his people.

A woman's heart was a fickle thing, especially when she got a taste of power. Who could say for sure that if Yara managed to rise to the top, she would not turn around and stab him in the back?

The next day, Kevin called again, urging Andrew to bring the completed map fragment and head over to the Wright estate. Rafael and Mosby were already getting impatient.

Andrew agreed readily, saying he would be right there. In reality, he did not take it seriously at all and stayed at Serenity Villa to arrange necessary matters with Dylan and Natasha before departure.

"Dylan, take the team. Your job is simple-secure Serenity Villa and keep Lauren and the others safe. As for Natasha, you're coming with me."

Dylan responded, "Mr. Lloyd, don't worry. If anything happens to the three ladies, I'll offer up my own head!"

Andrew rolled his eyes. "Don't make such bold promises. Right now, you can't even beat Aspen."

Dylan flushed red with embarrassment and scratched his head awkwardly.

Natasha clicked her tongue and grumbled, "You spend all day messing around with those three ladies and forget all about me. But when there's a dangerous mission, I'm suddenly useful again. Darling, you've changed. You've become cold and practical."

Seeing she was not just joking but actually looked a little hurt, Andrew felt a pang of guilt. "That's why I'm only taking you with me."

To be fair, Natasha was a remarkably understanding woman. These past few weeks, Andrew had been doting on Lauren, Francesca, and Aspen nonstop, completely neglecting her.

Yet, Natasha had never once complained. She kept to herself, training with Dylan in the basement, and even stayed out of the main house so she would not disturb him and the ladies.

"I'm just a servant, after all. You can use me however you want, Mr. Lloyd."

Seeing that Andrew's tone had softened, the pretty widow felt a little better. Still, her words dripped with jealousy-she clearly wanted to be part of the fun too.

She would not mind turning their trio into a foursome and testing if Andrew could level up from a 'three-time champ' to a 'four-time legend' in one night.

With everything at home handled, Andrew picked up the phone and called Tiana. "Mrs. Rhodes, it's time. The final stage is here. You and Mr. Rhodes might want to discuss whether your family's joining in."

Tiana replied coldly, "It's already discussed. I've just been waiting for you to say the word. I'll bring someone over and meet you at Serenity Villa in ten minutes."

After hanging up, Andrew gave a wry smile.

Tiana's determination to join the treasure hunt was unwavering. Then again, it made sense as she had always been the more aggressive force in the Rhodes family.

While she might agree to the Rhodes family sitting out this opportunity; she would absolutely never agree to not participating

herself Plus, she had now net

truly

the

mastered martialarts, reaching martial king realm.

Her participation seemed natural enough. After all, she did have the strength to compete for the treasure.

Ten minutes later, Tiana showed up at Serenity Villa with only Jerry by her side.

Andrew was surprised. "Mrs. Rhodes, just the two of you? What about Mr. Rhodes and the rest of your family's fighters?"

Tiana's expression was flat.

"Jameson's not cut out for combat, so I'm not letting him come. And as for the others we don't need them. We're going after treasure, not taking a vacation. There will be danger, maybe even life or death. Having a crowd doesn't help."

Andrew nodded. "You're right. Alright then, let's get in the car."

Jerry drove an SUV over and opened the door for Tiana.

However, Tiana waved him off. "I'm riding with Andrew. You're taking Madam Vostokoff's vehicle."

Natasha was just about to hop into the passenger seat with Andrew. She had already daydreamed about getting frisky on the road, maybe even some adventurous fun. However, Tiana's interruption made her face fall completely, and she looked unwilling.

Tiana scoffed and pulled open the front door, sliding into the seat beside Andrew.

"A servant should know her place."

Chapter 1493

"If you don't want to go, you don't have to," Tiana said coldly.

Natasha clenched her jaw but did not dare snap back at Tiana. Instead, she turned to Andrew with pleading eyes.

Andrew let out a helpless sigh. "Be good. Sit with Jerry. If anything unexpected happens on the road, it's better to have a backup."

Only then did Natasha head to the back, but it was obvious she felt wronged—her eyes were already brimming with tears.

Andrew felt a sudden wave of irritation. Tiana's tone could really be too domineering sometimes.

Besides, Natasha was a woman who lived a hard life, surviving on the edge. Andrew truly admired her, and yes, he liked her too.

This trip had meant a lot to Natasha. She was excited, even happy, because she had finally gotten a chance to be alone with Andrew. However, the moment Tiana gave her that command, all her hopes were crushed.

Natasha was not the kind of woman who cried easily. Her spirit had always been tough. Yet, her heart had softened because of Andrew. So with Tiana's jab, it was not surprising that she ended up on the verge of tears.

Once Andrew got in the car, Tiana gave him a smug little smirk. "What? I told a servant to sit in the back, and you already feel sorry for her?"

Andrew started the engine and replied calmly, "Mrs. Rhodes, Natasha isn't my servant."

Tiana snorted, sarcasm dripping from her voice. "Oh, how nice. If she's not your servant, what is she then? A cheap maid who got promoted to your private toy? Crawling into your bed like she's on the same level as Lauren and the other two?" Hearing this, Andrew flared with anger. However, he reminded himself that Tiana had always been sharp-tongued and bristling with thorns. So, he held back.

"Mrs. Rhodes, Natasha really isn't my servant, and I've never treated her as one. She hasn't climbed into my bed or wanted to join Lauren and the others either. But I hope you'll show her some respect."

Tiana let out another cold laugh. "Andrew, as a man, you're pretty much flawless. But that doesn't mean you don't have weaknesses. For instance, you're too softhearted. Too sentimental."

"You say Natasha isn't a servant. Fine. But with a woman like her-smart, ambitious-give her time, and she'll try to become yours. She'll rise from nothing to claim a seat at the table."

Andrew shook his head. "I've always known about Natasha's feelings for me. So I can be certain she only has feelings for me individually and has no intention of competing with Lauren and the others."

Tiana's gaze turned icy. "I know she's not trying to compete. And that's good because she has no right to. I just can't stand how everyone wants to climb into your bed."

"Your father had plenty of women around him back then too. But do you know how

I dealt with it? I drove away all those little sluts in the end."

She scoffed. "Men are lustful and greedy, wanting to sleep with every beauty in the world. But we women? We're just as greedy. If a man belongs to us, we don't allow anyone else to touch him."

Andrew was left speechless. To be fair, he really could not out-argue his mother-in-law. Moreover, with the reputation his father left behind, anything he said now would only

make it worse. If he pushed back too much, Tiana might just turn her wrath on him next. Contént

"Alright, alright. You win. I'll shut up and listen."

Tiana glanced sideways at him, then suddenly smiled-seductive and sharp, showing off the full charm of a mature woman who still had it.

She giggled and said, "I only did that to make Natasha back off. I've got nothing against her personally. I just wanted to make a point to you. That little widow clearly wanted some alone time with you on the road. But who says I didn't?

"Andy, I'm your mother-in-law. Since I'm going treasure hunting with you, you better protect me if anything dangerous happens. And if it comes down to CPR or mouth-to-mouth, well let's just say I'll forgive your rudeness in advance."

As soon as she said it, even Tiana realized she might have crossed a line. Her cheeks flushed slightly, and she turned away, pretending to stare out the window.

Andrew floored the gas, the SUV roaring forward as he gritted his teeth.

"Crazy woman."

He did not bother keeping his voice down.

Instead of getting offended, Tiana laughed even louder, her smile bold and wild. "Back in the day, I had your dad wrapped around my finger. And you? You little brat—I could eat you alive without even trying!"

Chapter 1494

Meanwhile, at the Wright Estate in Blumedale. Every major power in the treasure hunt had already arrived.

Rafael said, "Where the hell is that Andrew? How much longer are we supposed to wait? I say once the treasure's location is confirmed, we all drop the formalities and take that punk out first."

Mosby agreed, "I second that—1000 times over. That bastard deserves to be torn apart piece by piece. Ever since he showed up in Blumedale, he's been throwing wrenches into everything we do. And now? He's playing all sides like a damn pro. We can't let him live-not a chance."

Before Andrew had even arrived, the entire meeting hall at the Wright estate was already in an uproar.

At the head of the room, Kevin remained calm and all smiles, unaffected by the rising tension. He had already received word from Tora that Andrew was on his way, and from the look of it, he had not brought many people with him. That would make things so much easier to control.

Whether Andrew lived or died would depend solely on Kevin's mood.

Across the room, Kevin's eyes briefly met Rafael's. Rafael was brooding in the corner, his expression as dark as ever.

Kevin found it hard not to chuckle. After all, Rafael was a real menace in his own right, but Andrew had almost taken him out once.

Thanks to the treasure map, Rafael was once again being played like a fool by that same man.

Kevin had never seen someone from the Driscoll family so thoroughly humiliated. Quinton, who had already been crippled, was nowhere to be seen.

Standing beside Kevin were his third son, Ernie Wright, and the family's rising star, Yara.

As her gaze shifted toward the entrance, Yara clenched her delicate fists. She could already sense that Kevin was planning to make his move against Andrew. However, there was no hesitation in her heart.

She had already made her choice to stand firmly on Andrew's side. She had not forgotten that it was Andrew who gave her everything she had now. He was the one who helped her rise up and stand tall within the Wright family.

Suddenly, a Wright enforcer entered the hall and reported, "Mr. Wright Senior, Captain Tora and Mr. Lloyd have arrived!"

Kevin's eyes lit up as he looked toward the entrance. A broad smile spread across his face. He said cheerfully, "Andy, you sure kept us waiting."

The rest of the room fell silent instantly, each person turning with sharp, cold gazes toward the arriving guest.

Andrew walked in boldly, unfazed by the atmosphere or the murderous glares aimed at him. He strolled right into the hall and dropped into an empty chair.

"You're not waiting on me. You're waiting on the piece of the map I have, aren't you?"

Tiana sat gracefully beside him, icy and striking as ever.

Outside the room, Natasha and Jerry remained waiting by the car.

Rafael was the first to speak, clearly irritated. "Andrew, it's one thing for you to show up, but did you really have to bring extra people?"

Andrew answered casually, "You all brought your own muscle for backup, but I'm not allowed to bring anyone?"

Rafael scoffed. "Sure, you can bring

whoever you like-but bringing her? What for? Is she keeping you entertained on the ride? A little

stress relief, in and out along the way?"

The crass comment made the martial artists behind him burst into shameless laughter, all wearing the same filthy grin.

Tiana shot Rafael a cold, razor-sharp look. "Mr. Driscoll, the Rhodes family may be a smaller one, but if you Wesson in combat, I would be happy to oblige."

Rafael sneered. "Forget it. I don't waste time on feisty widows. And besides, my nephew, Joe, has got a thing for Lauren-love at first sight, apparently. But you? You're out here clinging to Andrew like a stray dog.

"If Joe finds out, I don't think the Rhodes family-or you will be in a very good place."

Tiana's expression did not flinch. "If that's what you really believe, then by all means go tell Joe."

Chapter 1495

Rafael scoffed and said nothing more, though a trace of frustration lingered in his heart. It was becoming clear that Tiana and the entire Rhodes family no longer seemed to take Joe seriously.

Especially that seductive woman herself. She had been growing closer and closer to Andrew.

Was she really banking on Andrew to be her shield?

Rafael found it laughable. After all, Joe was the pride of the Driscoll family, a once-in-a-generation prodigy. If he stepped onto the scene, Andrew would not last a second.

Granted, Tiana used to be cautious when it came to the Driscolls. But now that her own strength was nearing the level of a martial king, she had enough power to command respect on her own.

And Andrew? He was not just some small-time punk from Jayrodale as everyone assumed. He was the Dragon Prince of the Lloyds the son of the man who once drove Tiana absolutely mad with desire.

As they said, like father, like son.

With Lauren now linked to such a monstrous talent, Tiana could not care less what the Driscoll family thought. Even if she had to pick sides right now, she would choose Andrew without a second of doubt.

It was not just because he could stand toe-to-toe with Joe, the Driscoll family's golden boy. It was also personal-because in Tiana's mind, Andrew had already become one of her own.

If not, why would she always find herself drawn to him, teasing and lingering around her own son-in-law?

Of course, Tiana's kindness toward Andrew also contained some twisted emotions she couldn't voice. Those complex feelings were not worth sharing with outsiders.

Just then, Mosby, already out of patience, slammed his palm on the table.

"Andrew, did you bring the Rhodes family's map fragment or not?"

Andrew remained vague. "Does it matter whether I brought it or not?"

Mosby's face darkened. "What the hell do you think? Of course it matters, and you damn well know it!"

Kevin frowned. "Andy, stop joking around. If you didn't bring the map fragment, then our gathering here today would be meaningless."

Andrew snorted coldly. "I've been running around everywhere, getting the last map fragment to reveal itself. Meanwhile, you all sat back comfortably, gathered your men, and prepared to swoop in and steal the reward. Do you take me for an idiot? I do all the heavy lifting, and you show up at the finish line to grab the treasure?"

With these words, everyone looked at each other.

Someone scoffed and said, "Look at you, acting like you're the victim now? Treasure's up for grabs. May the strongest win. You could've brought your own army too!"

"We told you from day one-there's no place for you in Blumedale. You insisted on going against us. Now you're out of cards? Serves you right!"

A chorus of ridicule filled the hall, their words sharp and full of venom.

Even Kevin nodded silently to himself. From the looks of it, among all the forces here, Andrew's side

was basically irrelevant now. Compared to Rafael and Mosby, who had come fully prepared Andrew had brought only two subordinates and Tiana.

It was obvious to them that Andrew had zero leverage.

Rafael urged, "Andrew, stop playing games. Since you brought people and came here, no one would believe the Rhodes family map fragment hasn't revealed its true form."

Andrew did not waste words and slowly took out the last map fragment. "The map fragment has naturally revealed its original form. But why should I share it with you?"

This single sentence thoroughly enraged everyone. Even Kevin said coldly, "Andy, don't go too far. We agreed beforehand that this last map fragment

would be left to you to figure out. If you dare play tricks today, don't blame me for turning my back on you."