

## RISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

### Chapter 1496

Mosby suddenly shot to his feet, veins bulging in fury. "That's right, Andrew, you little bastard! We've tolerated your crap long enough! If you so much as pull a stunt with that final fragment, you and your entire crew are dead."

Around the hall of the Wright estate, several unfamiliar faces remained seated. They had not said a word, but the way they looked at Andrew was loaded with deadly intent.

Andrew was not the least bit afraid, locking eyes with each of them. It was clear from their bulging temples and the glint of light in their gazes that these were all elite fighters, at least semi-martial kings.

Any one of them could dominate a battlefield. Yet, even so, Andrew looked at them like they were beneath him.

"Oh, so you do want to kill me? Fine. Then I'll go ahead and destroy the final map fragment. That way, none of you will ever get to the treasure. We can all go down in flames together!"

He shouted angrily and raised the parchment, ready to tear it apart. Then, to drive the threat home, he pulled out a lighter-ripping it was not enough. Burning it to ash would really do the trick.

"Wait! Wait! Damn it, put it down! You little psycho, stop!"

"Alright, fine! We'll do things your way! Just tell us what the hell do you want?"

The tension exploded. One by one, everyone jumped to their feet, shouting across the hall, trying to stop him.

One man, seated beside Rafael, unleashed the most intense presence of all. The pressure that radiated from him was enormous-pure martial king strength, easily suppressing everything within a three-step radius.

Andrew glanced at him and raised

an eyebrow. The guy looked like he had walked straight out of a famous video game series on

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assassins-long cloak, fully covered, hood drooping down to hide most of his face, only pale, thin lips visible.

'This one's dangerous. Better watch out for him,' Andrew reminded himself silently.

With that in mind, he paused, lowering the map fragment slightly.

Rafael gritted his teeth. "Andrew, we're at the final moment-what the hell do you want?"

Andrew sneered. "What do I want? Isn't it obvious? You pushed me to this. You came in here with your full squads and elite bodyguards. Me? I've got three people-barely even a threat.

"If the treasure shows up, I don't stand a chance. So why not just destroy the map? If I can't have it, none of you will!"

Mosby looked like he was about to explode. His face went crimson as he shouted, "Then tell us-what's it gonna take for you to cooperate?! If you destroy that map, Andrew, it'll be an unforgivable offense. The heavens themselves will not let you off."

Andrew gave a calm smile. "Exactly. So what can I do to protect my own interests here? I clearly can't compete for the treasure. So before it's revealed, I may as well make sure I profit as much as possible."

Kevin's face darkened. "Andy, quit it! The fact that we even allowed you to join the hunt is already more than generous."

Andrew smirked. "Oh, I see. So you're still trying to screw me over, even after all this. Fine. I'll burn the map. Let's all walk away broke!"

After saying this, ignoring everyone else's drastically changed expressions, he tore violently. With a ripping sound, the parchment in his hands split in two.

#### Chapter 1497

At that moment, it felt like the air had frozen. Rafael, Mosby, Kevin, and the mysterious man in the cloak beside Rafael all lunged forward in unison, trying to stop Andrew.

The sudden surge of chaos sent a storm of killing intent rippling through the Wright estate's grand hall.

Tiana shot to her feet, fully alert, her face filled with tension. She silently cursed, 'Damn it, this punk! Is he trying to start a full-blown war right now?'

Destroying the final fragment like this would be no different from cutting Kevin and Mosby's lifelines in half. Obviously, no one would agree with his suggestion.

"Don't move! If anyone takes a step, I'll burn it right here!" Andrew roared.

The lighter in his hand spat out a tall, vicious flame. The torn map hovered dangerously close to its edge.

Mosby's face twitched. He stomped the floor in frustration. "You little bastard! You came prepared, huh? Bringing a damn high-powered lighter with you- what is this, treasure hunting or arson?"

Around the room, the others looked just as miserable. They could tell that Andrew's lighter was not an ordinary lighter at all. The flame it shot out was over eight inches long, burning bright blue and making crackling sounds.

If the map fragment were put over it, it would turn to ash in the time it took to blow a breath. In that split second, no one was confident they could stop Andrew.

"In ancient Holtrien, there's a saying: 'Where tempers cool, gold pools'. My friend, please put down the lighter. Name your price. Whatever it is—we'll make it happen."

What surprised Andrew the most was that the first to cave was not Kevin or Rafael. It was the cloaked man whose face was mostly hidden, speaking in awkward Etharic.

Andrew narrowed his eyes. "And who the hell are you?"

The man smirked. "You may call me... Stanley O'Higgins."

Andrew smirked. "Foreigners are in on this too now, huh? Mr. Driscoll, you've got quite the network."

Rafael let out a disdainful grunt. "Stanley was speaking in my stead. If you want to secure your profit in advance, fine. Say it-what the hell do you want?"

Andrew shrugged. "It's simple. Every party involved in this treasure hunt needs to wire me one billion each. Call it... compensation. That way, even if don't walk away with the treasure, I don't walk away with empty hands either."

Mosby erupted. "A billion? Andrew, why don't you just rob someone?"

Andrew beamed. "Dr. Lake, that's exactly what I'm doing. Don't worry-you're included too."

Mosby was about to lose it, trembling with rage, his eyes bloodshot like Andrew had just murdered his whole family.

Kevin's voice turned to ice. "Andrew, we're sworn brothers. But a billion is no small amount. You're going too far."

Andrew looked unbothered. "Too

far? You all know the value of what we're dealing with. The treasure map left behind was divided into fragments, scattered across families to guard for generations.

"What does that tell you? It means this treasure is earth-shattering. Whatever's inside must be priceless. You think asking for a billion each is outrageous? Honestly, that's me playing nice.

"Once you get your hands on even one percent of what's in that vault, it'll easily be worth more than ten billion. So really, I'm the one being short-changed here. You're the ones walking away with the bargain."

With just a few sentences, Andrew had every major player in the room stunned

into silence.

## Chapter 1498

Everyone discovered that Andrew's words were irrefutable. Yes, if they got their hands on the treasure left by the Fallen Crimson Dynasty, one billion would be nothing.

Rafael was the first to agree. "Fine, I'll give you one billion! But after the treasure hunt ends, whether you'll be alive to spend this billion is another matter!"

Stanley, speaking with his foreign accent, also nodded. "Mr. Lloyd, your asking price is quite reasonable."

Andrew immediately provided his account information, and two deposits of two billion each showed up as received. On the other hand, Mosby and Kevin had not responded yet.

When Andrew's gaze looked over with a smirk, Mosby roared viciously and obediently transferred the money. He was willing to swallow his pride and bleed his wallet for the treasure.

However, the moment this hunt ended, Mosby vowed to drag Andrew straight to hell.

Kevin gave a forced laugh. "Andy, come on. We're sworn brothers, aren't we? Talking about money is just bad taste."

Andrew smiled. "Exactly. It'd be awkward to talk money between us, so don't bother transferring me anything. Just give me your position as head of the Wrights."

Kevin was stunned momentarily and then flew into a rage. "Andrew, don't push your luck!"

What the hell was this? Forget the billion. Andrew had actually escalated and set his sights on the position of the family head.

How could the position of head of one of the Five Apex Families be compared to one billion? That position was worth far more than a mere billion.

Kevin could not believe how audacious Andrew was being.

Seeing Kevin still playing dumb, Andrew was about to burn the map fragment in his hands. "Well, since you won't send the money, I guess I'll just burn the map. No point in keeping something that everyone's drooling over, right?"

As he raised the lighter again, Kevin's face twisted in horror. "Wait! Fine! I'll transfer it! But Andrew, since you're talking money, our brotherhood ends here!"

His jaw clenched so tightly it looked like it might shatter.

Andrew sneered. "Talking about money tends to ruin relationships. But Kevin, be honest-did you ever see me as a brother? If I don't talk about money with you, then what should I talk about? The weather? Romance? Should we pretend the world is full of sunshine and love?"

His words dripped with mockery, and Kevin's face instantly darkened. Finally, the Wrights' one billion came through.

In total, Andrew had just raked in four billion dollars without lifting a finger.

Tiana could not help but glance

sideways at him. Her precious son-in-law really was something else. The way he fearlessly conned Rafael and the others right to their faces was bold and brilliant truly worthy of being the Dragon Prince.

Stanley barked, "Mr. Lloyd, you've gotten what you wanted! Now put down the lighter. The map was split, but can still be pieced back together."

Andrew shook his head. "No need."

And with that, he dropped the torn parchment straight into the flame and burned it to ash.

Kevin screamed, a sound like thunder. "Andrew, you're dead!"

Just as he was about to strike, he discovered Andrew reaching into his pocket and pulling out another piece of parchment.

Andrew opened it with a bright grin. "Oops. Sorry, guys. That one was fake. This right here this is the real one."

Every jaw in the room dropped, and there was total silence. Immediately after, the hall erupted with furious shouting.

"You little bastard, you've got no shame!"

"Andrew, I swear-you're insane! Suicidal!"

"Disgusting! Shameless, greedy, vile you're not even human, Andrew!"

## Chapter 1499

Even Tiana had not expected Andrew to pull off a bluff that bold. She did not know whether to be mad or impressed. In the end, she could not help but laugh.

To think he had Rafael, Kevin, and the rest dancing in circles like fools-only her treasured son-in-law could pull that off.

Her heart fluttered with a quiet thrill. With this man backing the Rhodes family, they were bound to walk away from this treasure hunt with serious gains.

Rafael's eyes burned as he stared at the map in Andrew's hand. "Since the real fragment is out, let's piece them all together-quickly! That way, we can finally locate the actual treasure site!"

Stanley stood silent beside him, but Andrew noticed something was off. Out of everyone in the hall, Stanley looked the most shaken, his limbs slightly trembling from excitement.

It was normal for people to be hyped over treasure. That was not unique to Holtrien natives or foreigners.

However, Stanley was supposed to be Rafael's hired backup. So, he should not have had such a deep emotional reaction, especially not toward a local legend he supposedly knew little about.

With the real treasure location about to appear, Andrew could understand Stanley being happy. But being excited to the point of losing composure and showing even bigger reactions than Rafael made, Andrew smelled something unusual.



More than that, he remembered something. When Andrew demanded a billion from everyone earlier, Rafael and Stanley had been the first to agree.

Stanley, a foreigner, was so agreeable and even friendly toward him, handing over one billion without hesitation. That could only mean one thing: Stanley was not just a hired expert. He probably already knew about the Fallen Crimson Dynasty's treasure.

In fact, Stanley might know more than anyone else in the room.

The bold thought made Andrew's heart skip.

This treasure hunt was crawling with hidden snakes and monsters, and everyone here had their own agenda.

Andrew said, "Alright then, Mr. Driscoll. Hand over all your map fragments and let me piece them all together."

Rafael instinctively hesitated, but Stanley stepped in with a calm smile. "Mr. Driscoll, I suggest we let Mr. Lloyd handle it. It doesn't matter who completes the map, as long as the treasure site is revealed."

Only then did Rafael finally hand over several map pieces.

Andrew took them and laid them out across the table. Immediately, the Wrights' elite guards, Mosby, and Stanley all stepped forward, craning their necks to watch. Their excitement was barely restrained.

Still, none of them dropped their guard. Each group remained just far enough apart to avoid a sneak attack.

Andrew ignored their paranoia and focused on assembling the map. Like a kid building a puzzle, he quickly fit the pieces together without much effort.

Finally, he pulled out the Rhodes family's final fragment.

And just like that, a complete treasure map appeared on the table.

There was a moment of silence in the hall. Then, came the gasps and uproarious laughter.

"It's here! This is amazing! I know exactly where that is!"

"Call the family fighters-we're heading out now. Hurry, hurry, move!"

"The Fallen Crimson Dynasty's treasure... 'The Underworld Kingdom of the Dead, the bliss of the fallen, the hell of the living'-what the hell does that mean?"

"Who cares what it means? The location's clear, and that's all that matters! Everyone, get moving!"

Now that the map had spoken, no one wanted to waste another second.

Excited cheers and hurried

commands filled the hall like

wildfire. Rafael, Stanley, and Mosby were the first to leave, departing very swiftly. They did not even care about the map fragments and headed straight for the treasure location. Content

Kevin continuously urged Tora. "Let's depart immediately and proceed according to the original plan."

Yara stepped forward and asked, "Dad, are you also going to take risks? I believe it would be wiser to send representatives. As head of the family, your role is too important to risk."

Kevin's face was full of ambition as he waved impatiently. "Spoken like a cautious woman. But with treasure like this, must be the one to claim it. Yara after I depart, you'll temporarily be in charge of the Wrights."

Yara replied, "Understood, Dad."

She secretly glanced at Andrew, a playful, knowing gleam dancing in her eyes.

Andrew knew she was just putting

on an act. Her warning had not been a concern it was a performance. She probably could not wait for Kevin to go treasure hunting, hoping he would rush into danger and never come back.

### Chapter 1500

Tiana urgently said to Andrew, "Andrew, we need to depart too. Rafael and Mosby have already taken action first!"

Andrew appeared calm and unhurried, shaking his head. "No rush."

Tiana was about to urge him again when Kevin burst out laughing. "Andy, at least you know your place! Well, since the treasure location has appeared, your usefulness has ended! If you follow us, I definitely won't be holding back!"

Andrew's eyes flashed with cold light, but his voice stayed flat. "Then let me wish you all the best, Kevin. Hope you return with billions in treasure."

Kevin opened his mouth to shoot back-but just then, a helicopter appeared, hovering directly over the Wrights' private lawn.

One by one, Mosby, Rafael, and Stanley boarded the aircraft.

Rafael shouted, "Mr. Wright Senior, first come, first served! We'll be taking the lead! Andrew! Once I bring the treasure back, it'll be your funeral!"

"Thanks for your hard work helping us strike gold, kid!"

Amid a flurry of smug, grating laughter, the helicopter lifted off and quickly disappeared into Blumedale's sky.

Kevin cursed furiously. "Follow them! That bastard Rafael actually had a chopper ready? Our family can't fall behind!"

Moments later, a convoy of heavily armored off-road vehicles, fully loaded with gear and fighters, roared out of the Wright estate with Kevin in the lead, headed straight for the treasure site.

Tiana grew more anxious. "Andrew, what are you waiting for? We need to catch up! If we're late, there won't be anything left for us!"

Andrew remained composed. "Mrs. Rhodes, sure, the location's revealed, but don't you think something's off about it?"

Tiana blinked. "Something's off? What do you mean?"

Andrew pointed at the fully assembled map. "The map shows the final location is here. But didn't you notice? This place doesn't even exist anymore in modern records."

Tiana looked and instinctively nodded. "You're right, but over 100 years have passed. It's normal for the place where the Fallen Crimson Dynasty hid treasure to have changed over time.

"We just need to get to this place called Gallow's End, then ask around locally. We'll definitely discover the final treasure location."

Andrew shook his head. "It's not that simple. The creator of this treasure was definitely a calculating expert. Perhaps even a master craftsman from the Fallen Crimson Dynasty era.

"In ancient times, these types of architectural engineers were terrifyingly meticulous in their thinking. The fact that he could devise splitting the treasure map into six parts for six families to guard shows how thoroughly he arranged the treasure's secrecy.

"Now, times have completely changed. Nobody knows what this place called Gallow's End looks like today. Rafael and the others are rushing over like headless chickens... I'm willing to bet they'll find nothing. They'll run around for nothing and come back empty-handed."

Tiana, seeing how confident Andrew was, calmed down almost instantly. "So you're saying the location on the map is fake?"

Andrew rubbed his chin, thoughtful.

"Not fake, exactly. After all, six ancient families guarded this secret. If the map were a lie, there'd be no point. But I do think the entrance to the treasure will be extremely well-hidden. Maybe even completely undetectable.

"With 100 years of erosion, the entrance could have collapsed or been sealed off.

Getting to the real treasure won't be easy, not by a long shot."

Tiana groaned impatiently. "Then just say it—are we going or not?"

Andrew replied firmly, "Of course we're going. We have to. But first, we wait for the other two groups I called in."

Tiana looked surprised. "You invited more people?"

Andrew just gave a subtle smile and remained silent.

Later, after they left the Wright estate and reached the edge of Blumedale at a highway junction, two teams were already waiting, fully geared and ready.

Tiana took one look and frowned hard. "You brought the Keller family in? Fine. I have no problem with that. But why are there official agents here too? And Andrew -Chantelle represents the government. Won't that complicate things for us?"