

## RISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

### Chapter 1506

Axel said, "Legend says that the Demon Queen of the Fallen Crimson Dynasty once built a mountain palace here. There are also rumors that a massive treasure from the Fallen Crimson Dynasty is hidden in our area. But honestly, it's all completely made up—just stories passed down and exaggerated over time."

Tiana could not help but interrupt. "How do you know it's made up? I think you're not being honest and don't want to tell the truth."

Axel looked like an honest, straightforward man, and Tiana's sharp words clearly flustered him. His face grew awkward as he replied, "Beautiful lady, I haven't lied to you. You can go outside and see for yourself—if we really had treasure here, would our ancient village still be this poor and backward?"

"You must have seen on your way here that our Gallow's End village is hundreds of miles from the nearest county seat. The entire route is nothing but cliffs and steep terrain. The only concrete mountain road was just completed this year.

"Five years ago, no one had ever heard of this godforsaken place. Do you really think there could be treasure in such a remote, impoverished area?"

His words left the entire group speechless.

Axel smiled bitterly. "You're the second group to come asking about treasure. The previous group wandered around our village for half the day and found

nothing. They caused quite a commotion before heading up into the mountains."

Tiana immediately said, "It must be the Wrights or Rafael's people. Andy, we need to catch up with them right away. Whatever the situation is, we can find out by asking them."

Andrew asked Axel, "Chief Flintspire, can you take us to find that previous group?"

Axel shook his head without hesitation, fear evident on his face. "It's getting dark, and the mountains will be covered in black fog with wild beasts and monsters roaming around."

"Once night falls, our village people never risk going into the mountains. Most people who enter the mountains end up having accidents."

Chantelle frowned. "Chief Flintspire, this is the age of science-there are no such things as monsters. Can't you arrange for someone to guide us into the mountains? Money isn't an issue."

Axel shook his head vigorously. "Miss, I can't. I really can't. Even our village's most skilled hunters won't take this kind of job. Money may be important, but compared to life, it's nothing."

Tiana grew impatient. "I'm ordering you to take us into the mountains immediately. We'll handle any danger ourselves. But if you refuse to cooperate, don't blame us for getting rough!"

Axel's expression darkened. "You'd raise a hand in Patoajo Village? Madam, I suggest you think twice."

Tiana sneered. "I have thought twice. Now I'd like to see just how much fight you really have in you."

She was already stepping forward to act when Andrew quickly moved in to stop her. "Mrs. Rhodes, the Patoajo people are proud warriors, and many still keep real weapons hidden away. Starting a fight here could cause more trouble than it's worth."

Suddenly, the sound of cocking triggers echoed outside. A dozen

Patoajo youths, armed with rifles, rushed in and quickly formed two rows at the base of the building, blocking the exits.

Chantelle's voice was cold. "Chief Flintspire, care to explain what this is?"

Axel shook his head, his expression grave. "Please don't misunderstand. These men are our village guardians. They are not here to hurt anyone. Their presence simply means something serious just happened."

He stepped outside and called, "Buzz, what's going on?"

A burly man with a broad frame and a sharp gaze answered grimly. "Chief, it's bad."

With a wave of his hand, two stretchers were immediately brought forward. Lying across them were two men, covered in blood, their condition unclear.

Logan's face stiffened. "They're from the Wrights!"

Andrew gave a subtle signal, and Natasha stepped forward without hesitation to check their pulses.

"They're dead!" She turned back to Andrew, her voice trembling as she spoke.

Andrew, Tiana, and the others immediately felt their hearts sink. They had not expected casualties to occur so quickly.