

# Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

## 1541-1545

### Chapter 1541

Then a tremendous force swept through, dragging Darius toward the coffin.

"Help me, Mr. Keller, help me!" he screamed in terror, breaking down into tears.

A dull thud echoed as a hunting knife flew in from the doorway. It grazed Darius' head and drove straight into the mummy's skull, nearly splitting the entire dried

head apart.

Andrew appeared at the chamber entrance with the others, his face cold as ice.

Having narrowly escaped death, Darius broke free and stammered his thanks. "Thank you! Thank you, Mr. Lloyd, for saving my life."

Andrew's expression remained stern as he ignored him completely. He stepped forward, pulled out the hunting knife, and turned to leave the chamber.

Logan had already found Lenny, the other missing team member, and walked over to deliver two sharp slaps across Darius' face.

"You damn fool, who the hell told you to go off on your own? You son of a bitch, don't you realize that your stupid stunts could get all of us killed?"

Logan's fury was far from spent, and he delivered two more slaps that left Darius dizzy and disoriented.

Covering his face, Darius whimpered submissively, "Mr. Keller, I-I won't do it again!"

Logan gritted his teeth and growled, "I should just kill you!"

Andrew suddenly barked, "Quiet! Everyone, not a single sound!"

He pushed past Tiana and the others at the doorway and stepped back into the chamber.

The rustling sound returned, like butterfly wings fluttering in the darkness.

Andrew stared at the displaced coffin and asked Darius, "Did you open this?"

Darius' face flushed red as he stammered, "I-I was just curious to take a look! Don't be angry, Mr. Lloyd... I'll go close it right now!"

Andrew waved him off and said, "Don't bother. Let's get out of here-there seem to be bugs inside."

Darius laughed nervously, "It's fine, I heard them earlier too."

He rushed to the coffin, hoping to make amends by closing the lid.

Suddenly, a palm-sized red flying insect burst out from inside the coffin. It hovered in the air, its wings buzzing loudly.

Chantelle asked curiously, "Where would flying bugs come from down here?"

Andrew stared at the insect and saw

it resembled a twisted human face.

His heart skipped a beat, and

without hesitation, he shouted, "Run! Everyone, get out! Now!"

Then, the buzzing sound grew louder. A second, third, fourth, and more bugs emerged, followed by countless more red flying bugs swarming out of the coffin.

Without exception, each insect bore a face like a miniature, twisted human face. Just one glance was enough to make anyone's skin crawl.

Andrew had already sprinted more than 30 feet, moving at incredible speed.

Chantelle and Natasha followed close behind, asking nervously, "Mr. Lloyd, what are those bugs?"

Andrew's face was grim as he replied, "Deathbugs!"

A piercing scream suddenly erupted from behind them.

Everyone was startled and slowed down, turning to look back. They saw Darius covered head to toe with red flying insects on his head, shoulders, and all over his body. Before long, more bugs continued streaming out of the chamber. Some pursued Andrew and his group, while others attached themselves to the isolated Darius.

Under the horrified gaze of Chantelle and the others, the red insects devoured Darius in seconds, leaving only his skeleton. Then, with a crash, the white bones scattered across

the ground like spilled water.

Lenny, who had fallen behind, was terrified out of his mind. "Holy shit! Holy shit! Darius is dead, just like that!"

Logan cursed loudly, "You idiot, run for your life! Don't worry about that fool!"

## **Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)**

These Deathbugs that appeared out of nowhere initially flew around chaotically in the passage. Gradually, they began to swarm together, buzzing loudly as they swept toward Andrew and his team like a dark cloud.

"Run! Run for your lives!" Andrew's voice rang out urgently. "One bite from these Deathbugs could be fatal. Once they burrow into your body, not even God can save you you'll become a zombie!"

His grave warning echoed in everyone's ears as they fled.

Bursting out of the passage, they found themselves in a massive underground cavern.

Several team members had dropped their torches during the panic, leaving only Tiana and Andrew with flickering flames to illuminate a small area around them.

Running at breakneck speed, Andrew could not afford to examine what lay ahead in detail. Still, he managed to glance around while sprinting, taking in their surroundings.

This underground world, sealed away for countless years, stretched at least 100 feet high above them. The space around them was enormous—easily the size of two football fields combined. No one could have imagined that such a vast hollow existed beneath the earth.

Andrew quickly spotted some artificial carving marks, though they were sparse, and realized this cavern was mostly natural.

If humans had carved out this entire space, then the dynasty that built it must have had alien technology. Only extraterrestrial beings could possess such incredible engineering capabilities and resources.

The floor was paved with neatly arranged stone bricks, and after running about 50 yards, they reached a towering archway.

"The tomb chamber! It's the main tomb chamber!" Tiana exclaimed excitedly.

Andrew nodded silently, confirming his suspicions. The passage had led them directly to the burial site's main chamber, which meant the treasure they sought lay just beyond.

However, they were now faced with a massive problem. The entrance to the tomb chamber was sealed tight with bronze doors that stood 50 feet high, flanked by two enormous bronze lions standing guard.

The swarm of Deathbugs, countless in number, scattered randomly throughout the vast cavern after entering. This chaos gave Andrew's team precious time to search for a way into the tomb chamber.

Logan stepped forward and rammed his shoulder against the bronze doors with all his might. The result was predictably futile—the doors did not budge an inch, and he nearly tore the skin off his shoulder.

"Damn it! They won't budge. Everyone looked around for some kind of mechanism or switch," he said, frustration evident in his voice.

Without needing further instruction, the others were already in motion, examining the bronze lions and surrounding sculptures. They felt around every surface, searching for anything that might move or

activate. However, they found

nothing-not a single movable part

anywhere.

Meanwhile, Deathbugs had begun buzzing around the tomb chamber entrance. Their twisted miniature human faces stared down at Andrew's group, sending

chills down everyone's spine.

Chantelle trembled as she whispered, "Why do these horrible bugs have human faces?"

Andrew replied coldly, "Because they feed on human corpses, especially human brains-that's what

Deathbugs crave most. Legend says that when someone dies and gets eaten by Deathbugs, their soul, consciousness, and flesh all become part of the creatures."

Chantelle could not believe it and gasped, "How can such disgusting insects exist in this world?"

Andrew ignored her question and began feeling along the seams where the bronze doors met. He tried pushing against both massive doors with all his strength, but they remained completely immovable.

These bronze doors weighed at least several tons each. Opening them would require finding the proper mechanism, not brute force.

"Oh no! Those nasty bugs are flying toward us!" Lenny shouted in alarm.

A Deathbug suddenly landed on Andrew's shoulder. Its twisted little human face

turned toward him, emitting a menacing buzzing sound that made his skin crawl.

At such close range, Andrew noticed

veta

that although the creature had a human face, its eyes were tightly shut. He wondered if years of living in this dark underground environment had caused their eyes to be atrophied and completely useless.

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

"Andrew, watch out!" Tiana cried in alarm.

Andrew remained perfectly still, staring intently at the Deathbug on his shoulder.

The creature was not particularly large-only about half the size of his palm. However, Andrew knew that one bite from this thing could knock him unconscious instantly, even with his resistance to toxins.

"Andy, don't move. I'll swat it for you," Logan whispered.

Andrew quickly warned, "Don't! This bug's blood is hotter than molten lava and extremely poisonous. Just one drop could make my skin rot away."

Logan immediately froze, not daring to move another muscle.

"Mr. Lloyd, how can we help you?" Chantelle asked with tears in her voice.

Instead of answering, Andrew slowly brought his torch closer to the Deathbug on his shoulder. As the firelight and heat approached, the creature let out a shrill shriek and flew up frantically, beating its wings.

Seizing the opportunity, Andrew kicked it mid-air, sending it flying. The bug smashed against the bronze door with a wet splat, exploding on impact.

Everyone exhaled in relief, feeling much more relaxed.

However, Andrew frowned and hushed them. "Do you hear that? Something's not right."

Logan tilted his head in confusion. "Not right? I don't hear anything."

Natasha said uncertainly, "The buzzing from those bugs seems to have disappeared."

Tiana chimed in, "You're right... those Deathbugs that were swarming everywhere just vanished completely."

Indeed, the loud buzzing that had filled the air moments before had suddenly ceased. This abrupt silence was so unexpected that the vast underground chamber fell eerily quiet, making everyone deeply uncomfortable.

Andrew glanced around at the surrounding darkness, still able to make out the passage they had emerged from. However, the hundreds or thousands of Deathbugs that had been flying around were nowhere to be seen.

It was as if they had all vanished into thin air in an instant, leaving only the one he had kicked to death against the door.

"Strange, where did all those nasty bugs go?" Lenny muttered, walking a few steps in either direction but finding nothing.

Andrew looked thoughtful and suddenly raised his head to look upward. What he saw made his heart skip a beat. Nonetheless, he quickly masked his expression and lowered his gaze.

"Mr. Lloyd, what's wrong?" Chantelle asked.

Andrew forced a smile and said, "Nothing. Come on, let's look around."

Chantelle looked puzzled. "Mr. Lloyd, why did your face suddenly turn so pale?"

Tiana also noticed and said, "Andy, you weren't bitten by a Deathbug, were you? You look really scary right now."

Andrew waved dismissively. "I'm fine, really. Let's go find a way into the tomb chamber."

Just then, Lenny wiped his face and said in confusion, "Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Keller, do you feel like it's raining?"

Logan continued feeling along the tomb chamber door and cursed, "You damn fool! Where would rain come from in this underground world? I think you've lost your mind!"

Lenny wiped his face again and protested, "I'm not making it up! Look at my face and hands-there's is

water on them. Ugh, the wat

disgusting. It's all sticky, like spit!"

More drops fell on his face as he spoke, accompanied by a long, thin tongue that dangled down like a whip.

The tongue licked Lenny's face several times. He seemed even more confused

and said, "It really is raining, Mr. Keller. I'm not lying to you."

if

Logan's voice trembled as he said, "Lenny, don't move. Stay absolutely still, even you want to..."

Tiana, Chantelle, and Natasha had already started backing away, their lips quivering as they covered their mouths with their hands. They could not help but look up, following the dangling tongue toward whatever lurked above.

"Don't look!" Andrew shouted.

However, it was too late. Chantelle had already glanced upward.

## **Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)**

A piercing scream echoed through the tomb chamber, sounding particularly bone-chilling.

Tiana's trembling voice followed immediately after. "W-What the hell is that thing?"

Andrew smiled bitterly, realizing there was no hiding it anymore. He drew his knife and slashed toward Lenny's head without even looking, but the dangling tongue moved with lightning speed, wrapping around Lenny's neck and pulling him upward.

Thankfully, his hunting knife struck faster, cutting the tongue in half with a single stroke.

A sound like a baby's roar thundered throughout the tomb chamber entrance, filled with excruciating pain.

With loud swooshing sounds, several strands of black hair descended along the tomb chamber door, writhing as if they were alive. What followed was a creature so horrifying that even Andrew felt his breath catch in his throat.

It was a woman dressed in white, her body seemingly boneless as she sprawled with limbs spread wide. Her tongue hung out grotesquely, her head twisted backward, and two black holes gaped where her eyes should have been.

The crawling thing, with hair stretching over 20 feet long and moving like the walking dead, had the appearance of a woman. However, no one would ever consider it human.

Lenny shouted, "I thought it was raining, but it was just this thing's drool! Mr. Keller, help me wipe my face! It's not going to rot off, is it?"

Logan stared fixedly at the monster, having no mind to deal with Lenny. He snapped, "Get away from me! Stay back and don't come near me!"

Andrew retreated step by step, keeping his hunting knife pointed at the creature.

"Everyone, back away slowly. Don't make any sudden movements that might disturb it."



Chantelle backed away, her voice trembling. "Mr. Lloyd, what the hell is that thing? All those Deathbugs just vanished when it showed up! You're telling me this freak's worse than the bugs?"

Andrew watched the monster's constantly rotating head and took a deep breath before explaining, "It's a Night Hag—an evil creature only mentioned in ancient texts. Legend says they were created by ancient sorcerers who force-fed corpse maggots to young women while

they were still alive.

"Nine out of ten girls would be completely devoured, and only a few could survive the process, becoming half-flesh, half-rot abominations. Down here, Night Hags feed on corpses and Deathbugs alike.

"They don't even need to eat—just hibernating in tombs for centuries. The old nobility used them as guardians to keep tomb raiders like us out."

Chantelle cursed angrily, "Those ancient aristocrats were monsters!"

Andrew kept his eyes fixed on the Night Hag while continuing to retreat. He could not care less whether ancient nobles were

hacc

if this monster went on a killing spree, they would all end up as corpses.

monsters or not—he only knew t

Logan could not help but say, "We're all expert martial artists. Can't we fight it? It looks pretty scrawny to me. Why don't we gang up on it and kill the thing!"

Andrew replied flatly, "Don't even think about fighting this creature. It could easily bite your head clean off."

The Night Hag's eye sockets were empty holes, and it relied on constantly swaying its head to sense the group's location.

Since everyone was retreating very carefully, the Night Hag remained in place for the moment, continuously rotating its head but showing no signs of attacking.

"It seems this tomb chamber has been silent for a long time, so this creature isn't quite adapted to living intruders yet. That's good. Everyone, keep your movements small, and once we're far enough away run as far as you can!"

# Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew's voice was as quiet as he could possibly make it. He gestured for everyone to retreat while keeping their movements absolutely minimal.

This Night Hag's duty was clearly to guard the tomb chamber entrance. Once it moved beyond its patrol range, everyone should theoretically be safe.

Unfortunately, at that exact moment, a voice rang out at the worst possible time.

"Andy, bet you didn't expect me! Your sworn brother is here! Hey, what are you guys doing? Playing house or something? You're all standing there like statues!"

The voice boomed loudly without any attempt at stealth.

Andrew felt like committing murder as he slowly turned his head. Sure enough, he saw Kevin and three of his men walking confidently out of the passage they had come from, looking smug.

"Andy, look out! The Night Hag is charging at you!" Tiana screamed.

Without hesitation, Andrew spun around and ran for his life, pushing his speed to the absolute limit.

The Night Hag's entire body pressed against the ground as it slithered toward him like a massive snake. Its slender limbs crawled forward across the floor like a

ghost, while its mouth gradually split open.

In an instant, the creature's jaw stretched all the way back to its ears, revealing two rows of needle-sharp teeth.

Kevin backed away in shock, stammering, "W-What the hell is that thing?"

Two of Kevin's men stood in front of him and drew their guns to shoot. However, their timing was too slow by half a beat.

The Night Hag's long hair shot out from its head, lifting both men into the air. After two muffled sounds, the creature held two severed heads in its front claws.

Kevin's men died instantly in the most gruesome way imaginable.

Kevin roared and immediately sprinted in the direction Andrew had fled. Smart move-he had latched onto Andrew's trail like a bloodhound. That backstabbing bastard might be a traitorousshit, but he knew well that Andrew always knew how to survive.

Behind them, the Night Hag's face twisted into a grotesque smile as it gave chase, its movements unnaturally swift.

As for Andrew? The moment he saw the Night Hag kill, his suspicions were confirmed—this thing was pure, unfiltered nightmare fuel.

The plaza in front of the tomb chamber was enormous, and under the Night Hag's pursuit, everyone scattered in different directions.

Many people shared Kevin's strategy, including Chantelle, who headed straight for Andrew. She only felt safe when following him.

The Night Hag crawled on all fours while its hair spread across the ground giving it terrifying speed and maneuverability. Within moments, it had closed the distance between itself and Andrew and Kevin.

"Andrew, you're a walking disaster! Every time I run into you, nothing good happens!" Kevin cursed through gritted teeth.

Andrew sneered back, "If nothing good happens around me, then why did you follow me here?"

"Just think of a way to get rid of this damn thing!" Kevin shouted furiously. Andrew had no intention of dealing with him further and, after running nearly 300 feet, discovered that the plaza's edges were lined with passages similar to the one they had entered through.

Without hesitation, he chose a passage and plunged headfirst into it. Chantelle followed close behind, with Kevin bringing up the rear.

Logan, Tiana, and the others had fled in different directions. Andrew could not worry about the rest of the team right now, though he was grateful that he had managed to draw the Night Hag's attention.

He could only pray that there was just one Night Hag in this entire tomb chamber.