

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) #Chapter 1696 - Read Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) Chapter 1696

At the last moment, Marcelo roared angrily, "Stop!"

His subordinates finally held back, but they were all staring daggers at Andrew.

Logan quietly broke out in a cold sweat and whispered to Andrew, "Andy, what you just said was way too provoking! Marcelo really isn't someone to mess with. You went too far!"

Andrew kept smiling without saying a word.

Marcelo stepped forward through the crowd and came right up to him. He stared into Andrew's eyes for a full ten seconds before slowly nodding.

"They say the next generation always surpasses the last, and each generation gets stronger than the last. I've always only half-believed that. You're talented, and I can see you have great ambitions. If it were some other old fool, they might show some restraint, or even fear you a bit. But unfortunately, I'm not one of those people!"

He pointed directly at Andrew's nose, his face grim as his voice rose. "This is Cillian's funeral, and I don't want to be disrespectful. But I'm remembering what you just said! Once we leave the Ulrich residence, we'll settle this with our fists!"

He turned toward the casket, lit three candlesticks, and said a prayer. Then, he flicked his flowing robe and strode off with his men in tow.

Ezra followed closely behind, flashing a twisted grin. "You're screwed now, kid. Whatever chairman title you have is useless now! The Ulrich residence is the only place left where you might be safe. Step outside, and you're dead."

Around them, the other guests looked at Andrew with smug satisfaction. They were not even hiding it anymore. One by one, they watched him like vultures circling fresh meat.

Marcelo was one of Blumedale's infamous underground kings, and he was known to be the most mild-tempered but also the most dangerous to cross.

Andrew's outrageous words just now were tantamount to digging his own grave.

el?

Mason feigned sorry and said, "Mr. Lloyd, it's all the Ulrich family's fault! If it weren't for my father's situation, you wouldn't have had to come here. And if you hadn't come, you wouldn't have provoked a powerful figure like Mr. Byrne!"

These words were incredibly vicious. The implication was that Andrew was nothing compared to and now that he had ca

such

trouble, he was definitely doomed!

Andrew chuckled as if he had not caught Mason's mockery and sarcasm at all.

"When's the food coming out?"

The entire room blinked in confusion.

"Food?" someone from the Ulrich side asked stiffly.

Andrew nodded. "Of course. This is a funeral, isn't it? You guys still serve a banquet afterward, right? I have brought a generous condolence gift, and I'm not leaving without filling my belly."

Immediately, the Ulrich family members and other guests all showed expressions of utter contempt.

Someone laughed, "If you're scared and don't dare leave the Ulrich residence, just say so! Why put on this act?"

"Looks like he wants to use the food as an excuse to delay time so he can call for backup!"

Another mocked, "I think he actually wants to stay at the Ulrich residence, keeping his tail between his legs and never daring to step outside again!"

The more they whispered, the bolder they became. Some were even grinning, gleefully fantasizing about Andrew's downfall like it was their personal guilty pleasure.

Logan's suppressed anger nearly boiled over as he rolled up his sleeves, ready to

go beat someone up.

Aspen's face was also filled with fury.

These bastards were being way too disrespectful.

However, Andrew remained completely calm and said to Mason, "Arrange a room

for me. I'll rest for a while, and call me when the banquet starts."

Mason replied with a half-smile, "Of course, Mr. Lloyd. This way, please."

Then, a younger member of the Ulrich family led the three of them around the corridor into a guest room.

As soon as they entered, Logan punched the decorative screen. "Mason, that ungrateful bastard. We were the ones who helped him become the new head of

the Ulrich family! Damn it, now he's turning around to bite us. I've got to find a way

to take him down!"

Andrew leaned back on the couch, comfortably crossing his legs. He beckoned to

Aspen, who blushed but obediently came over to massage his shoulders and legs.

"Don't get so worked up. I'm starting to get a clearer picture of how Cillian died,"

he replied casually while enjoying Aspen's massage.

Logan was stunned. "What do you mean? Didn't that unlucky old bastard die at

the nursing home? At his age, I figured he'd lived long enough anyway."

Andrew sneered. "Only someone as naive as you would believe Cillian died of natural causes."

Logan looked bewildered. "Wait, what are you saying? Are you telling me Cillian

was murdered?"

Andrew snorted. "Of course he was murdered, and I'm 100% certain of it!

The public opinion outside is already one-sided. Everyone suspects that I, the new chairman, did it. Since

Cillian and I did have conflicts, it's obvious that whoever's behind this

knows about our history. So, killing him and framing me for it seems

perfectly logical."

Logan nodded repeatedly. "That's actually quite possible. So, who do you think

killed Cillian?"

Aspen jumped in first. "I think it was Mason, the new head of the Ulrich family! Earlier in the wake, I could tell that he didn't look sad at all!"

Logan was puzzled. "How could you tell?"

Aspen smiled. "You guys didn't notice, but I did! Mason had a gun tucked at his back. Being so fully prepared like that means he's either expecting to meet someone important, or he's ready for a fight!"

Andrew snapped his fingers appreciatively. "Excellent observation skills and very sharp awareness! It looks like training you to be an assassin was the right choice."

Aspen smiled shyly. "It's all because you taught me so well, Mr. Lloyd!"

Logan felt disgusted. "Could you two please stop showing off your relationship? I have at least a hundred lady friends in Blumedale! If you keep throwing around this lovey-dovey stuff, I'll make one phone call and all of them crash this place right now and watch you drown in jealousy!"

Aspen giggled and rolled her eyes without saying anything.

Andrew continued, "Back to the point. I also think Mason is about to meet someone important. This person might very well be Cillian's killer."

Logan shook his head. "I don't agree with that theory. No matter how much of a scumbag Mason is, he couldn't possibly team up with someone to kill his own father."

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Logan grumbled, "Even if Mason did want Cillian dead, I think he would've done it quietly. There's no way he'd let anyone find out."

Andrew's eyes darkened. "And that is the most critical part of this whole thing. Everyone knows that after Mason took power, he was paranoid that Cillian might come back and reclaim the Ulrich family leadership. So, he shoved his own father into a nursing home to keep him out of the way."

He continued, "But if Mason killed him directly? Then, the other Dragon Kings who were close to Cillian, like Marcelo, would've stormed in here and taken his head. And look at what happened... Marcelo did show up. From his reaction, it's clear that his bond with Cillian wasn't superficial."

Aspen tilted her head. "Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Keller... do you think maybe Marcelo's appearance was just for show? Like, all that praying and mourning was staged?"

Andrew shook his head. "It doesn't add up. You both remember how I deliberately provoked Marcelo earlier, right? If he had gone off on me right then and there and attacked me, it would've proved he didn't care about Cillian's passing at all. But he didn't. He held back and stayed respectful."

He added, "That tells me everything. His grief was real, and his connection to Cillian was genuine. He refused to disturb the peace of the dead."

Logan stared in shock. "So you pissed him off on purpose... just to test him?"

Andrew raised a brow. "What'd you think? That I randomly talk trash for fun? I'm not reckless. I needed to know where he stood. And yeah, Marcelo's strong. I'll admit... calling him 'the king of escorts' might've been a bit much."

Aspen giggled and reached out to gently touch her master's face. "Mr. Lloyd, please. You expect me to believe that? You're never scared of anyone! I know you too well."

Logan groaned. "Alright, fine. So you've ruled out Marcelo as Mason's co- conspirator. But what if there's no one else? What if we're just overthinking it?"

Andrew was firm. "No. There's definitely someone else involved. This entire setup was too calculated to be Mason's solo work. Someone else planned it from the shadows

and used Mason as the dows

pawn to get tome.

"Otherwise, Mason would never dare turn on me. I'm the one who put him in charge, and he knows I could crush him with a snap of my fingers."

Logan nodded. "That makes sense. So, what's our next move?"

Andrew said calmly, "That's easy. We wait for the banquet to start. That's when the Ulrich family will

have the most people and be then et

most chaotic. Mason will go rest, which gives him time to meet with the person behind all this. And that's also when I'll make my move."

Aspen smiled. "I understand what you mean, Mr. Lloyd. Mr. Keller and I will go to the banquet to provide cover for you. You'll search the Ulrich residence for clues. We'll split up and work both angles!"

Andrew smiled back. "Smart cookie, you're truly worthy of being my precious little partner!"

Logan gagged and rushed out. "You need to stop with those ridiculous lines. I'm going to throw up!"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) #Chapter 1699 - Read Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) Chapter 1699

The Ulrich family's funeral banquet started quite late. This was mainly because many people had come to pay their respects, and they were all prominent figures in Blumedale. Therefore, delays were inevitable.

Behind the main house stood a three-story villa, isolating the location completely from the noisy front.

Mason appeared at the villa's entrance, and the security guard at the door said respectfully, "Mr. Ulrich!"

Mason grunted and pushed the door open to enter. The guard stood at the entrance with eagle eyes scanning back and forth. Surveillance cameras were also positioned all around the villa.

This invisibly demonstrated the importance of this building.

Andrew appeared silently at the corner of the villa.

The camera above his head rotated constantly. Together with two other surveillance cameras, it formed a triangular surveillance system. This highly sophisticated algorithm could completely cover the villa's perimeter, ensuring no

blind spots.

However, the so-called "no blind spots" was not truly absolute. The three cameras had a one-third-second gap that created a dead zone. In other words, during that one-third of a second, there would be a surveillance blind spot.

One-third of a second was extremely brief. However, for a master of Andrew's caliber, it was enough. He needed no tools or leverage points and simply climbed up the villa's smooth exterior wall.

If anyone had witnessed this scene, they would have exclaimed that he was defying physics.

The villa had three floors, and Andrew gracefully entered the second-floor balcony. The balcony's glass door was easily pushed open, and he slipped inside.

The interior was quite dark because all the surrounding curtains were tightly drawn. He listened carefully for a while before quickly heading toward the stairs to infiltrate the third floor.

At this moment, Mason was sitting in the third-floor living room, looking exhausted. He had already removed his suit jacket and gun, placing them on the glass coffee table in front of him.

Besides him, there was no one else around. Through the overhead ventilation duct, Andrew watched him with an expressionless face.

If he wanted to, he could simply jump down and snap Mason's neck immediately. Nonetheless, he did not

biant to. He was waiting for the

fish behind Mason.

"Who's there? Come out!" Suddenly, Mason shouted in alarm and grabbed the gun in front of him.

Andrew's heart tensed as his body stiffened, instinctively ready to strike. But the next second, he forcibly held back.

Mason's gun was not pointing in his direction but toward the balcony outside the living room.

After a brief silence, the balcony curtains were pulled aside, and a figure walked in.

It was Marcelo!

This was completely unexpected for Andrew.

Mason's face also showed great surprise. "Mr. Byrne, what are you doing here?"

Marcelo ignored the gun and simply sat beside the coffee table. "Why can't I be here? Were you expecting someone else?"

Mason quickly explained, "No, that's not it. I was just surprised. I didn't expect you to suddenly appear here!"

A hint of disdain appeared at the corner of Marcelo's mouth. "You should put that gun away. You know that thing in your hand can't hurt me."

Mason hesitated for a moment, then put the gun away. Given Marcelo's strength, it would not matter if he had a pistol or even a rocketo launcher on his shoulder.

After all, Marcelo could take his life in an instant.

"Showing up uninvited isn't my usual style, but snuck in here because have something very important to discuss," Marcelo said with a grim expression.

justice to his name!"

For a moment, Marcelo's eyes burned with fury. "You have my word. For Cillian's

sake, I'll destroy Andrew with my own hands."

With that, he walked to the edge of the balcony and leaped off.

Down below, the guards never noticed a thing. They did not even hear a single

sound.

Mason walked over and peeked outside. After confirming Marcelo had vanished, he burst into hysterical laughter and dropped onto the couch, finally letting his shoulders relax.

It was obvious now that everything he had just said to Marcelo had been an act. However, Mason was unaware that Andrew had witnessed everything from the ceiling vent.

This new Ulrich family head really had a death wish.

Suddenly, a slow, mocking applause echoed from the doorway.

"Mr. Ulrich, that little stunt-throwing suspicion around and playing both sides? It's

truly beautifully executed."

As the voice faded, a masked man in all black strolled confidently into the room.

Marcelo got straight to the point and asked, "Did you kill Cillian, your own father?"

Mason froze, stunned. "Mr. Byrne, I don't understand what you're saying! My father passed away in a nursing home. I'm his son, so how could I ever do something so monstrous?"

Marcelo did not answer. He simply stared at Mason with eyes like steel.

Mason held the gaze, lifting his chin slightly as if to prove his conscience was clear.

Finally, Marcelo gave a slight nod. "Fine. Let's say I believe you... for now. In that

case, why don't you tell me how your father died?"

Mason hesitated, stumbling over his words. "Well... Mr. Byrne, you've got me there. Ever since he was forced to step down, he had been... emotionally unstable. He kept rambling about Mr. Lloyd wanting him dead. Eventually, the doctors at the care center said he developed some form of schizophrenia."

He continued, "Not long after, we received word that he had passed. Honestly, all

of this is my fault. I wasn't a good enough son."

Marcelo scoffed. "Of course it's your fault, but the one who really deserves to die

is Andrew. That man is ruthless. Cillian gave up everything and even moved into a

care home, yet he still hunted him down."

Mason shivered and said nervously, "Mr. Byrne, we can't say that out loud. You

know the situation. Right now, I serve under Mr. Lloyd. If he ever finds out I spoke

ill of him behind his back, I'm screwed."

Marcelo's tone turned ice-cold. "He won't be riding high much longer. When the

tide turns, it turns fast. He's been parading around Blumedale like a king for long

enough. If the heavens won't take him, then I will."

Mason's eyes lit up with subtle delight, though he masked it well. He fanned the

flames, saying, "Right now, Mr. Lloyd's power is immense. I'll be honest, Mr.

Byrne... It's almost laughable, but even we, the Ulrich family, with our long-standing place in the Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce, have grown afraid of

him."

He continued, "And we're not the only ones. Many others in the chamber are terrified that Andrew plans to dominate us all and crush the competition one by

one."

Marcelo responded flatly, "Internal chamber politics are your problem. They have nothing to do with me. That's enough. I've said my piece. Be smart, Mason." He turned to leave, but Mason suddenly dropped to his knees, sobbing hard. "Mr. Byrne, you and my father were like family. I know there was something suspicious about his death. But the Ulrich family isn't what it used to be. We didn't dare investigate too deeply. So I'm begging you, please... bring justice to his name!"

For a moment, Marcelo's eyes burned with fury. "You have my word. For Cillian's sake, I'll destroy Andrew with my own hands."

With that, he walked to the edge of the balcony and leaped off.

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