

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

#Chapter 1816 - Read Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) Chapter 1816

Getting from Blumedale to Goldridge only required crossing a state border. It took just about three hours by car, so it was not exactly a long haul.

The next day, Andrew and Zachary chose to drive directly to Goldridge, and they left at dawn.

Lauren, Francesca, and Aspen had all dressed up beautifully, looking absolutely stunning and eye-catching. Meanwhile, Andrew had left Dylan and Natasha behind at Serenity Villa to keep an eye on Shiloh. If anything unexpected happened, they would have to alert Andrew right away.

Zachary drove an SUV and brought along Ruth. Catching Andrew's glance, he explained, "I'm not just bringing her for pleasure. Ruth came from a rough background and is great at taking care of others."

He added, "Ms. Rhodes and the other two are delicate. If they need anything inconvenient handled, we can just have Ruth do it since they're used to the finer things in life."

Andrew nodded. "That's thoughtful of you. Let's head out then. You lead, and I'll follow."

Zachary smiled. "Sure thing. I've been to Goldridge several times and know the roads well, so I'll guide the way."

Winter had already arrived, and it was freezing cold outside. Although they were taking the highway and the roads were not iced over, the scenery was not particularly beautiful.

Andrew focused on driving with Lauren in the passenger seat, while Francesca and Aspen sat in the back. All three women were in high spirits, chatting nonstop throughout the journey.

Andrew had filled them in on some details about Hannah's situation.

Francesca hissed, "Hank's an absolute scumbag! To think he's supposed to be a Special Ops agent! What a trashy person!"

Aspen said coldly, "I despise men who hit women more than anything. Of course, that doesn't apply to you, honey."

Lauren turned around from the passenger seat with a curious expression. "Wait, Aspen, are you saying he's hit you before?"

She giggled and teased, "Was it one of those take-you-down kind of nights? That's not abuse, that's passion."

Aspen rolled her eyes and pouted. "If it were gentle love, I'd be begging for more. But you don't understand. I really did get my ass kicked back in Jayrodale!"

Francesca looked sympathetic. "Aspen, you were pretty bratty back then. Don't get mad at me for saying that, but it's amazing how you got beat down, and somehow, that turned into love. Weird how life

works, huh?"

Aspen's face turned red with embarrassment. "Yes, it was very strange. I used to really hate him and even wanted to kill him. But in the end... It ended up..."

Francesca chuckled mischievously. "In the end, he got you into bed and had his way with you, right?"

Aspen snorted softly. "You're no different! What makes you any better than me? Besides, Fran, I've noticed your appetite is the biggest among us three."

Lauren nodded in agreement. "That's right! I think so too. Fran, even I can't compete with how loud you get!"

Francesca was mortified and glared at both of them with fiery eyes. "You two aren't any different, so don't you dare talk about me! You're just pot calling the kettle black! We're all the same!"

Andrew really could not take it anymore and coughed to interrupt. "Can we please not talk about these things? When we get to Goldridge, Zachary and I need to visit the Southern Martial Union

headquarters first. You three can go

shopping by yourselves, okay?"

All three women readily agreed. Goldridge was an international metropolis, and

they could have plenty of fun even without Andrew.

"Getting back to the point, honey, the Keller family can't just ignore what happened to Hannah, right?" Lauren asked seriously.

Andrew kept his eyes on the road and replied, "Of course, they won't ignore it. Hank didn't just sleep with Hannah and steal her money. Worse yet, he beat her up, which is

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straight-up abuse. Mr. Keller Senior
may be getting on in years, but he's
never been a pushover. Even I've had enough."

Francesca frowned. "But Hank already left Blumedale. How are you supposed to take him to justice?"

Andrew replied calmly, "He might be out of Blumedale, but he's still in Gabo Creek province. Right now, he's with Ms. Garcia. So no, this isn't over yet."

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Aspen asked, "Should we give Ms. Garcia a heads up about this?"

Andrew shook his head. "She has government agents protecting her, and she's not some naive young woman like Hannah, so she'll be fine. We don't need to tell her right now, in case it tips Hank off."

Just then, fog started rolling in ahead of them, making visibility on the road much worse.

Seeing Zachary's car slow down, Andrew reduced his speed as well.

Aspen warned him, "Winter roads are slippery, and the fog makes it worse. These are the kind of stretches where accidents happen. Please be careful, honey!"

Andrew said calmly, "Don't worry."

No sooner had he spoken than Zachary's car screeched to a halt up ahead. Thankfully, he was prepared and braked smoothly to a stop as well.

Rolling down his window, he could see Zachary getting out of his car ahead, swearing up a storm.

Andrew frowned. "You three stay in the car. I'll go check it out. It looks like there's been an accident."

The dozen or so cars behind them also slowed down and stopped. Soon, the entire highway was completely blocked.

When Andrew reached the front, he thought Zachary had hit someone or another car. Instead, there was a crash scene ahead of Zachary's vehicle with about eight cars scattered throughout the thick fog at odd angles.

The fog had been so dense that even Andrew had not seen it clearly before. Now, up close, he could hear car alarms blaring and hazard lights flashing chaotically.

Zachary and Ruth were already helping rescue people. Andrew stepped forward and helped pry open the door of an overturned luxury car, and a balding, overweight man with cuts on his face crawled out awkwardly, cursing profusely. Andrew took a look and was surprised to find that it was Calvin, the head of the Peck family.

Calvin, who had just crawled from under the car, spotted Andrew and immediately froze. He scoffed. "It's you! Move. Get out of my way!"

Even after Andrew had helped save him, Calvin showed no gratitude.

He shoved past Andrew with a snort.

Andrew did not take it personally and asked calmly, "Mr. Peck Senior, what exactly happened here?"

With one of his aides supporting him, Calvin wiped the blood from his forehead and snapped, "What do you think happened? Are you blind? My family's convoy got into a wreck. What more do you need to know? Damn it!"

Zachary walked over, his face cold. "Mr. Peck Senior, maybe tone it down a bit. Your convoy's crashing had nothing to do with us. In fact Andrew and I were helping rescue your people, and this is the thanks we get?"

Calvin snarled, then retorted, "And what kind of thanks do you expect, huh? Zachary, quit acting like a damn saint in front of me! I never asked you to save us, did I? That was your choice, not mine!"

Zachary's face darkened. "Mr. Peck Senior, you..."

Andrew raised a hand to stop him and said flatly, "Forget it. Let's just get back in the car and move on."

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He looked at Calvin and gave him one last reminder. "Mr. Peck Senior, you should consider getting your convoy moving, too. We're on a highway, and this fog makes it dangerous. Another crash could happen at any moment."

Calvin looked impatient. "I don't need your fake concern! My ride is totaled, so of course, I need the Peck family to send another car over. Do you expect me to ride in an ordinary car to Goldridge? Don't I have any dignity or reputation to maintain?"

Zachary let out a snort. "What an idiot. Andrew, let's go. Guy flips his car and still wants to show off. His brain must be damaged!"

Andrew had reached the end of his patience. He had shown Calvin kindness only out of respect for Victoria, but this man clearly had no sense of gratitude.

That being the case, Andrew had no reason to bother anymore. He had done his part and fulfilled his duty to her. Hence, the rest was Calvin's problem.

Once back in the car, they saw that the wreckage up ahead had been cleared enough to reopen the road.

Andrew hit the gas and continued the drive toward Goldridge.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) #Chapter 1818 - Read Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) Chapter 1818

After driving through nearly another hour of foggy roads, their vision finally cleared up. The fog lifted, and Andrew's group had driven out of Gabo Creek province's territory, officially entering the Goldridge area.

"We're less than two hours from Goldridge now!" Lauren said happily.

Aspen asked curiously, "Lauren, have you been to Goldridge before?"

Lauren smiled. "Once, but that was back in high school. It feels like forever ago!"

Suddenly, a heavy slam struck the back of Andrew's car. His expression turned ice-cold as he jerked the steering wheel and switched to another lane. The Land Cruiser behind them aggressively followed, then accelerated hard to ram them again.

Francesca's face darkened. "What's this guy trying to do?"

Aspen's voice was sharp. "They rammed us the moment we crossed the border. This is deliberate."

Andrew glanced into the rearview mirror and saw another SUV, a BMW X5, roaring up fast. It was clear that they wanted to box him in.

"Everyone, hold tight and buckle up!" Andrew warned as he slammed the accelerator to the floor.

He was driving the brand-new Porsche Cayenne that Duncan had just delivered, perfect for this kind of highway showdown.

The sudden burst of speed caught the BMW X5 racing up from behind off guard.

Andrew kept the pedal down, pushing their speed up to 115 mph. However, the Land Cruiser and BMW X5 behind them gave relentless chase, refusing to let up.

Lauren checked the passenger side mirror and said quickly, "Honey, I can't see who they are clearly. The license plates aren't from our Gabo Creek province either; they're from the Goldridge area."

Andrew said calmly, "I don't care where their plates are from. If they want to play with their lives, then let's play!"

His car had already pulled even with Zachary's.

Zachary gritted his teeth and hit the gas hard, but his speed had already maxed out as the two cars behind closed in on him.

Francesca muttered, "This is bad. Zachary's driving a junkbox."

Aspen blinked. "Why do you call his car a junkbox?"

Francesca facepalmed. "Come on! That thing's slower than a shopping cart downhill! "

Aspen argued, "You're exaggerating there!"

"Doesn't matter! His car just can't outrun a Land Cruiser or an X5!"

Aspen looked confused.

Lauren suddenly screamed, "Oh no! Zachary's car is surrounded!"

Andrew was already far ahead, but when he checked his rearview mirror, sure enough, Zachary was trapped between the two pursuing cars on his left and right. He had tried several maneuvers but could not escape their encirclement.

At their current speed, things were extremely dangerous. If any vehicle lost control, it would definitely flip over or even face complete destruction.

Without hesitation, Andrew started braking hard to slow down. His rear end got smashed solidly by the X5 behind him, but during the X5's moment of hesitation, Zachary yanked his steering wheel left and escaped.

Andrew fell in behind him immediately, covering him from the rear. The Land Cruiser roared in fury, swerving aggressively across two lanes to go straight at Andrew.

Lauren's face went pale. "Honey, they're coming right at us!"

Francesca and Aspen, in the back, also turned white with fear.

Andrew did not flinch. His hands gripped the wheel steadily, his eyes calm and solid as ice. Then, he slammed on the brakes hard, and the Cayenne's tires screeched against the road with an ear-piercing sound. The car kept skidding and was on the verge of flipping over and losing control, but he managed to save it every time.

Andrew's hands worked the steering wheel constantly, moving so fast it was dizzying to watch. The charging X5 ultimately missed its target, failing to hit his car and overshooting by half a car length.

Andrew sneered coldly and floored the gas pedal. The Cayenne roared and lunged forward, slamming straight into the X5's driver-side door.

The driver inside groaned as he was instantly crushed and bloodied by the door.

The Land Cruiser behind rushed over to help at that moment.

Andrew did not care and kept the gas pedal pinned down.

A loud bang echoed, and the BMW X5 was instantly flipped upside down.

Andrew's expression was stone-cold as he hit the gas and sped away. The flipped driver crawled out from under the car, absolutely furious, yanked open the door of the approaching Land Cruiser, and accelerated hard to chase after them again.

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This time it was much simpler. Andrew slowed down slightly to let the Land Cruiser catch up, and the two cars drove side by side.

The other driver rolled down his window, revealing a scarred, pockmarked face, and snarled viciously, "You bastard, I'm going to kill you!"

Andrew calmly called out, "Aspen, you're up!"

Aspen rolled down her window, and somehow a sheathed dagger had appeared in her hand. The two men in the Land Cruiser were still cursing and threatening, trying to ram their car.

Aspen flicked her wrist with perfect aim. The dagger went straight into the driver's forehead, and his hands on the steering wheel instantly went

rigid. The passenger sudden went

panicked and grabbed for the steering wheel, trying to save the vehicle, but it was too late.

Andrew floored the gas, and the Cayenne accelerated away. Behind them, the

Land Cruiser first veered left toward the mountain wall and then jerked hard to the right.

Finally losing its balance completely, it flipped onto the road surface, and the momentum sent the vehicle tumbling straight down the mountainside. There was no doubt it would be a scene of complete carnage.

Lauren, Francesca, and Aspen were all still shaken, having broken out in cold sweats.

"Who were those people exactly? They were clearly trying to kill us!"

It was not until they entered downtown Goldridge that the three women finally felt safe.

After finding their hotel, Andrew handed his car over to the hotel staff to get it repaired. He then went to find Zachary, whose face looked grim.

"Those cars were obviously using fake plates. I don't have any enemies here in Goldridge, so whoever did this was probably from Gabo Creek province."

Andrew's expression remained completely calm. "As long as it doesn't affect your selection test, that's all that matters. Let's go. We're heading to the Southern Martial Union headquarters."

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) #Chapter 1819 - Read Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) Chapter 1819

The two men took a cab and arrived at the Southern Martial Union headquarters established in Goldridge. As the holy land in the hearts of all martial artists throughout southern Holtrien, this headquarters was built to be truly magnificent and spectacular.

Goldridge was a historic cultural city and one of Holtrien's top-tier metropolises, which was exceptionally prosperous. The fact that they could occupy such a large complex of buildings in this bustling city showed just how significant the Southern Martial Union headquarters was.

Zachary explained, "The three major factions from Gabo Creek, the Crimson Alliance, Hidden Dragons, and Onyx Serpents, basically all have their headquarters here."

Andrew's heart stirred. "Is the leader of Hidden Dragons named Riker Lamar?"

Zachary nodded with surprise. "Yes. I heard he's already at the peak of martial king level, close to breaking through to martial saint. He's quite famous. Captain, do you know him?"

Andrew smiled. "I wouldn't say I know him, but I do have some grudges with his Hidden Dragons."

Zachary looked thoughtful but did not ask further questions. Plenty of people had grudges with Andrew, and he knew that much. After all, he was the type who could make enemies of the entire world, and Zachary had long gotten used to it.

"Stop right there and show us your invitation!" Two martial artists with prominently bulging temples at the entrance raised their hands to block them, their expressions unfriendly.

Zachary pulled out the invitation he had received earlier and asked with a smile, "Has something happened at the headquarters recently? It feels even more heavily guarded than when I was here last time."

After examining the invitation and finding no problems, the two guards' attitudes softened somewhat.

One said, "So you're here for the inner disciple examination. Zachary, congratulations in advance on your breakthrough!"

The other looked annoyed as he explained, "Don't even get me started. Mr. Thornton recently had a sparring match with some masters from Eastonia and won decisively, but at the victory banquet that night, those shameless Eastonians couldn't handle losing and actually poisoned Mr. Thornton and tried to assassinate him."

He added, "Although he managed to fight his way out with his incredible combat skills, it's got everyone in the headquarters on edge. Both of us were on vacation, but we got called back to duty."

Seeing their extremely displeased expressions, Zachary sympathized and laughed heartily. "Alright then, I'll head in first to see how Mr. Thornton is doing! If I can successfully become his inner disciple, I'll definitely come back and buy you both drinks!"

The two guards laughed loudly. "Go on in! It's quite lively today. Not only have people from all three major

groups in our Gabo Creek region

show up, but several powerful families and wealthy clans have also sent representatives to observe the ceremony. To sum it up in one word: grand!"

Andrew smiled. "By the way, do you know if people from the Driscoll, Fischer, and

Peck families from Blumedale in Gabo Creek State have arrived?"

The guard on the left nodded very straightforwardly. "They're here! All the ones you mentioned have arrived!"

Andrew nodded. "Thanks!"

He walked through the main gate with Zachary and entered the compound. As they walked, Zachary asked curiously, "Captain, is something wrong?"

Andrew shook his head and said quietly, "Nothing's wrong. I'm just confirming something. The Driscoll and Fischer families aren't from Goldridge, but they both came anyway. I've been puzzled about this point."

Zachary said, "I'm not too clear on why the Driscoll family came, but the Fischer family definitely had to be here."

Andrew looked curious. "Why do you say that?"

Zachary grinned. "Captain, my last name is also Fischer. To be honest with you, I'm from a branch family of the Fischer family in Gabo Creek province. Our family is also one of the Three Titans, but we're different from the Phelan family and Driscoll family."

He continued. The other two major powers dominate Gabo Creek through massive economic resources and connections. The net

Fischer family is different. We Rule Gabo Creek purely through martial strength, and you could say the

Southern Martial Union of Holtrien is

basically the Fischer family's

stronghold.

"Mr. Thornton accepting inner disciples is a major event in the martial world. If the Fischer family didn't show up, we wouldn't be worthy of being called a family built on martial arts!"

Andrew finally understood. "Makes sense now."

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Andrew raised an eyebrow and chuckled. "So, you've got ties to that Fischer family, too? I might've underestimated you."

Zachary grinned. "I mean, sure, we share the same last name, but bloodlines matter. There's close, and there's distant. I'm barely connected to the main Fischer family in Blumedale anymore. My branch of the Fischers is to the Blumedale dynasty what a dirt farmer was to back then."

Andrew found this amusing and teased, "So, you're admitting you're just a dirt farmer?"

Zachary replied with slight pride, "There's nothing I'm ashamed to admit about that. I've gotten to where I am today through my own efforts and the training you gave us back in the day. It has nothing to do with the Fischer family powerhouse in Blumedale."

Andrew hummed in acknowledgment and asked, "Mr. Thornton is a top-ranked figure on the Titan List. His combat power is genuinely martial saint level, capable of controlling an entire region. How could some Eastonian masters manage to poison and attack him? Do you know what happened?"

Zachary smiled bitterly and shook his head. "I don't know! Even though I've been accepted under his tutelage, I'm just an outer disciple. To know about what happens around this master, you'd need to be at least an inner disciple to qualify. But I think with his strength, whatever tricks those Eastonian bastards try won't work!"

Andrew nodded in agreement. When martial arts cultivation reached the martial king level, practitioners could already be considered superhuman, at least beyond the scope of ordinary people.

Some martial kings could already project their internal energy outward to kill invisibly, and martial saints above the martial king level had truly entered the extraordinary realm. They could kill or wound with petals and leaves, cut hair with a breath, catch blades barehanded, and hold off ten thousand enemies single-handedly without breaking a sweat.

That was not all. They could circulate their internal energy independently, holding their breath underwater for half an hour or even a full hour.

To put it simply, martial saints were that small group of extraordinary individuals hidden among ordinary people. They might not stand out and could look just like any pedestrian on the street, but the next second, you might see an old man in rough clothing punch through a truck with his bare fist.

Or like Captain Meurica in the movies, tear apart a helicopter with his bare hands. There was an even more creative description that had been popular online: the level-five fan challenge.

Everyone knew if you turned a household fan to speed five, the blades could slice a finger clean off. So the joke was, if a martial saint was willing to put aside his dignity and didn't care about honor or reputation, he could start a livestream and do nothing but the level-five fan challenge.

Every stream would guarantee more than 100 thousand viewers online, with gifts

and donations flowing non-stop, making each session incredibly profitable.

Fan manufacturers would wake up laughing in the middle of the night because they might sell hundreds of thousands of fans daily to that one martial saint.

After all, a martial saint could easily destroy a fan in minutes without even trying.

After climbing the long stone steps, Andrew saw a great hall appear before them. The hall was built in a traditional architectural style, using modern techniques to deliberately recreate ancient designs.

This was where Jerome, the top figure of the Southern Martial Union, resided daily.

The great hall was already filled with

quite a few people. Most of them,

like Zachary, were martial artists

who had come to participate in the inner disciple selection test, while a smaller portion were there to observe the ceremony.

Andrew immediately spotted Scarlett and Calvin.

Scarlett had a cold expression, and the black mole at the corner of her mouth made her look harsh and unapproachable.

Calvin, on the other hand, was wrapped in bandages with gauze around his head, looking sickly and pathetic. Both Andrew and Zachary were surprised, wondering how Calvin had ended up in such a miserable state.

This clearly looked like he had just gotten his head cracked open.

