

RISING FROM THE ASHES (ANDREW AND LAUREN)

Chapter 1851

Andrew sneered and said, "But what about you? You blame Mr. Thornton for not letting you gain any benefits. Do you really think you deserve anything? You old bastard. You're ancient, yet your appetite's still huge. Don't even try to pretend like you've got a sense of justice."

He continued, "Alex, aren't you afraid? You stuffed yourself while you were alive, but aren't you scared of what will happen to you once you're dead?"

Alex's whole body trembled, his rage boiling over. "You little bastard! Today, I will personally take your damn life!"

It baffled him that Andrew was refusing to beg for mercy and was even throwing insults as if he had a death wish.

How could someone so young be so outrageously bold?

Andrew let out a cold laugh. "What? You're pissed now? Then come on. Step forward, and let's talk this out. Was there anything that I wrongly accused you of? Or anything I made up?"

Alex's face shifted from pale to purple as he charged forward, his aura surging, ready to attack. His killing intent toward Andrew had already reached its peak.

Andrew casually took a few steps to the right, as if he did not have a care in the world, and said, "Hold up, Alex."

Alex stopped, his face dark. "What? Got some last words before I end you?"

Andrew calmly replied, "Funny. That's exactly what I was about to ask you. Any last words you want to leave behind? I bet you still don't know that I already figured out you're the one who betrayed Mr. Thornton."

Alex's eyes widened, his eyelids twitching like crazy. Then, he burst into a cruel laugh. "You little rat. Even now, you're trying to bluff me? Fine. In that case, I'm going to destroy you today!"

Andrew looked unbothered and said with ease, "If you don't believe me, go ahead. Channel your energy and check your sternum point. Back when I was treating Mr. Thornton, I lit some incense.

"Truth is, that was no ordinary incense. The poison's already seeped into your organs. Without the antidote, you've got no way out. If you don't get it soon, then by this time next year, people will be lighting candles for your death anniversary." Alex paused mid-step, suddenly unsure. He recalled how, during Jerome's treatment, Andrew had indeed burned some incense in the room.

However, that was usually done to calm the nerves. So, how could it be poisonous?

From behind, Scarlett reminded him just in time, "Alex, this guy's medical skills are strange. You'd better check your energy pathways just in case."

Alex didn't dare gamble with his life. He immediately channeled his internal energy to check his sternum. "Huh? Nothing's wrong. Everything feels normal!" He was confused.

However, in that brief moment of hesitation, two golden needles shot out from Andrew's hands in a crisscross, aimed straight at Alex's face!

Alex roared in fury. "You little piece of trash! You tricked me? I swear I'll kill you today!"

He had been played over and over again, and now he had completely lost it.

Calm and focused, Andrew did not even glance at Alex after launching the needles. Instead, he suddenly sprang into the air like lightning and charged straight toward Scarlett, who stood a few meters away.

Scarlett had been keeping a close eye on Jerome and had not paid much attention to Andrew and Alex's scuffle.

After all, Jerome was the one she truly feared. So, when Andrew suddenly lunged

at her, she was caught off guard and snapped, "You brat, you've got a death wish!"

She flung her arms out, unleashing dozens of claw-like energy trails that scattered through the air like flower petals.

Andrew did not say a word. The flurry of force ripped through his sleeves and slashed his arms, but he

kept charging. Like iron clubs, his fists smashed through her attacks without hesitation. '

"Die, old hag!"

Two loud crashes echoed.

Andrew was sent flying back, both arms torn open and covered in blood.

Some spots were so mangled, and you could even see the bone. However, he remained

unfazed, not even a twitch.

Scarlett looked down at her chest in disbelief. Then, with a loud gag, she coughed

up a thick stream of blood.

"Y-You actually broke through my protective energy shield! Fine! I'll take your head today, Andrew!"

Caught entirely off guard by Andrew's successful strike, she was filled with both regret and hatred.

Chapter 1852

Alex let out a furious roar as he and Scarlett launched a two-way assault on Andrew. At that moment, both of them hated Andrew to the core.

They cursed him for being slick, manipulative, and insufferably cunning. With just

a few smooth words, he had ruined everything.

Before the real fight even began, Alex had been humiliated, and Scarlett had gotten injured from a sneak attack. The more they thought about it, the more their fury built until they felt like they were about to explode.

However, Andrew was not afraid in the slightest. He charged straight into the fray, taking on both of them alone. At the same time, he shouted, "Mr. Thornton! I'll cover you! Run!"

Jerome blinked, stunned. He wondered how Andrew was going to cover his escape.

There were three martial saints here, so what could Andrew possibly do?

Suddenly, it clicked, and he quickly caught on to the plan.

"Dr. Lloyd, you really are brilliant!" he shouted, bursting into a hearty laugh.

Powerful energy surged around him, and he struck directly at Grace, the nearest martial saint.

Grace had already lost her composure when Andrew told Jerome to escape and instinctively launched an attack.

Among elite fighters, even a brief moment of distraction could decide the victory, defeat, or death.

Grace, Edwin, and Henry had originally formed a seamless triangle, locking Jerome down.

However, with Grace moving first and Jerome refusing to run, instead turning the tables and attacking her head-on, the balance was shattered.

A loud bang erupted, and the tile shards flew everywhere.

Grace's thin frame was flung across the room, her face twisted in agony.

Henry roared and charged in, plunging into the storm of force around Jerome with his energy blazing.

"Edwin! I need backup!" he yelled.

Edwin raised his cane and tapped it in the air three times. Ripples appeared in the air, like drops of water hitting a still pond, visible to the naked eye.

Jerome had just sent Henry flying when three water droplets shot toward his face! "What an excellent technique. You're projecting energy into solid form!"

Nevertheless, those were not water droplets. They were condensed strikes from a martial saint, formed by pushing inner force out of the body and turning it into lethal matter. They could pierce steel with ease and tear through anything in their path.

Yet, as soon as they touched Jerome's hand, they dissolved into nothing.

A wild gust exploded outward.

Edwin staggered and groaned, gripping his cane to stay upright. Shocked, he gasped,

"Mr. Thornton, your strength is beyond legendary. I yield!"

Jerome roared, his eyes ice-cold. He soared like an eagle and slammed his palm down toward Edwin's head with overwhelming force.

Edwin's face twisted in horror, but thankfully, Henry and the battered Grace both rushed back just in time.

The three martial saints ganged up on Jerome. Yet, they still could not gain the upper hand and were slowly starting to lose ground.

Henry's eyes burned red with rage as he yelled, "Jerome! The poison in you isn't fully gone! You're forcing your energy, but all it'll do is drive the poison deeper through your body. Not even a miracle can save you then!"

Jerome kept laughing, carefree and wild. "You've always wanted to see just how hard my punches land! You lost back then, and I never told you that I didn't even use my full strength. Now's the perfect time. Even if I die today, I'll show you what

it means to be crushed!"

The side hall atop the main headquarters collapsed under the clash of martial saints.

Jerome's fists flew like blades. He struck Grace again, sending her flying like a rag doll. Then, he swung a brutal kick at the stone statue by the entrance.

The massive sculpture, weighing more than a ton, blasted off like a missile and crashed down right in front of Edwin.

Edwin's cane shattered into pieces with loud cracks, splitting clean into three chunks. Blood gushed out of his mouth as he fell back.

For the first time, fear crept into Henry's bloodshot eyes. He traded two heavy blows with Jerome, their feet slamming into the ground, exchanging fierce strikes rapidly.

He also coughed up blood, his face soaked in red, twisted in pain.

"He was clearly poisoned by Frostblossom... Even with his strength, there's no way he should still be standing!" Scarlett shouted from across the battlefield, shaken to the core. Her voice trembled, her fear overpowering her fury

Without hesitation, she abandoned her fight with Andrew and joined the three martial saints to surround Jerome.

Alex attacked alongside them and roared, "This is all Andrew's fault! That little bastard must've somehow neutralized the poison in Jerome's body!"

Scarlett and the others turned to Andrew, looking at him like he was their mortal enemy.

Chapter 1853

They had spent years laying the groundwork, pouring everything they had into this mission to kill Jerome.

It was only thanks to Alvaro arriving in Goldridge to challenge Jerome that they finally saw their chance to strike. However, no one expected Andrew to suddenly throw himself into the mix and blow the entire plan apart.

Jerome laughed wildly. "That's right! It was Dr. Lloyd who helped suppress the poison in me! If you want to kill me today, it's not impossible! But at the very least, two of you will be buried with me!"

His booming voice echoed across the Southern Martial Union's headquarters.

Outside on the stone steps and at the grand entrance where Jerome's subordinates were locked in bloody combat, his laughter reignited their morale and triggered a fierce counterattack.

Henry roared, "Edwin! Madam Valencia! We kill without hesitation! There's no turning back now! Even if the poison's been held back, the longer he fights, the more likely it'll act up! The odds are still on our side!"

With that, he led the charge, his punch whipping through the air as he lunged at Jerome. Grace and Edwin hesitated for only a second before gritting their teeth and launching themselves back into battle.

Andrew kicked Alex square in the face, and the latter let out a gut-wrenching scream as he flipped midair and slammed into the ground.

"You little brat, you..."

He was stunned. He never imagined Andrew was this strong.

Andrew grinned viciously. "Your life's mine!"

Yet, the situation still was not in their favor. If the fighting kept up, Jerome would eventually fall.

The poison from the Frostblossom was not something to mess with. Suppressing it did not mean it was gone, and if Jerome kept burning through his strength, it would explode sooner or later. When that happened, no matter how powerful he was, he would still die on the spot.

For now, Henry and the others were being held back. That bought them some time, and all Andrew needed was to finish off Alex.

He did not hesitate and turned to charge at Scarlett. While he could not directly help Jerome take on three martial saints, he could at least take down someone like Scarlett, who was only at the peak of martial king level.

She would not leave this place alive.

At this point, Andrew had completely stopped holding back. The truth was clear that if he did not kill them, they would kill him.

"Dad! I'm coming!"

Suddenly, a cold, sharp voice rang out. Eric, dressed in blue and drenched in blood, rushed up from the lower steps. He jumped straight into the fight, taking the left flank beside Jerome.

That side was exactly where Henry was charging like a mad beast, teeth gritted and fists pounding forward.

Jerome barely had time to shout, "Eric, no! It's too dangerous! Get back!"

Then, he collided with Grace and Edwin mid-air. The massive blast of force flung them back in different directions.

Grace and Edwin both flushed red, as if they had just walked out of a sauna. However, Jerome did not flinch. Despite the enemy's energy raging inside him and tearing through his meridians, he charged upward again, soaring three feet off the ground to save his adopted son.

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However, he was still a step too late. Henry had already landed a brutal kick on Eric's chest, sending him flying backward, with blood gushing out from his mouth.

"Eric!" Jerome roared and caught him midair, falling toward the ground together.

Before they even landed, a deafening scream tore from Jerome's mouth as he shoved Eric away.

Eric fell to the floor, hair wild, blood dripping from the corner of his lips. Yet, he let out a twisted, eerie laugh.

The moment happened so fast and suddenly that even Andrew froze for a second. When the next second passed, his heart dropped. There, stabbed deep into Jerome's lower abdomen, was a bloody dagger.

The entire blade had been driven straight into his body.

"Y-You actually tried to kill me?" Jerome clutched his stomach, his hand soaked in blood.

His eyes were filled with disbelief

and a trace of confusion as he

back two steps before

stumbled ba

collapsing to the ground. He did not say another word, but his eyes never left Eric, filled with heartbreak and devastation.

Andrew had just knocked Alex aside when he caught Jerome and rushed to his side. The moment he

supported him, Andrew could feel that Jerome was nearly gone. His entire body was shaking uncontrollably.

The poison that had been held back was now raging like a storm inside him, sweeping through every inch of his system.

"Eric, you're worse than an animal!"

At that moment, fury exploded inside Andrew's chest like a volcano. He spun around and glared at Eric, and before he realized it, his eyes had already turned blood-red.

Chapter 1854

Henry, Grace, Edwin, and Scarlett surrounded Jerome and Andrew completely.

Henry laughed loudly. "Mr. Thornton, even with all your incredible power, you won't be leaving alive today!"

As he laughed louder, his arrogance filled the air like thunder.

Scarlett clenched her fists, her voice trembling with emotion. "So, our last resort came in handy! We've finally taken down Jerome and toppled him! From now on, this Southern Martial Union won't be under his rule any longer!"

Jerome pushed away Andrew's supporting arm, his body trembling and blood dripping as he forced himself to stand. He said firmly, "Dr. Lloyd, don't worry about me. If this is how my fate ends, then so be it."

Andrew's eyes darkened with emotion. "Sir, you..."

Jerome raised a hand and cut him off. "Dr. Lloyd, you've already done more than enough. You stood by me in the worst moments and risked your life to help me. This is my burden to bear. I can't let you suffer any further because of me."

Scarlett sneered. "Neither of you is walking away from this alive!"

Jerome's gaze turned sharp as steel. "Yes, I've fallen from the top today. But Dr. Lloyd has nothing to do with this. He stepped in out of justice, nothing more. And even now, when I'm half-dead, if you think you can touch him, go ahead. I dare you."

Scarlett's face twitched, and the dark mole near her lip trembled visibly. Though she wanted nothing more than to skin Andrew alive, she did not dare move.

Edwin spoke coldly. "Mr. Thornton, we joined forces for our own reasons. Even if we weren't on the same side, I respected you as a leader."

Grace nodded beside him. "That's right. No one denied your strength and reputation, but your path was never our path. So today, Mr. Thornton, you'll have to die."

Jerome let out a bitter laugh, his body swaying like a candle in the wind. "From the moment I took over the Union 20 years ago, I knew this position came with disaster, far more than glory or power. And now, that day has finally arrived just never imagined the one to deal the killing blow would be my own child."

He turned his eyes toward Eric, filled with sorrow.

Eric wiped the blood from his mouth. His face had gone ghostly pale. "Dag... I've failed you. All these years, you poured everything into raising me: your time, your heart, everything. But my spirit died a long time ago."

He took a slow step forward, voice hollow and bleak. However, his tone was brimming with deep resentment.

Jerome's smile grew even more bitter. "You still haven't let go of Hunter's death, have you?"

Eric suddenly shouted, "No! I never

could! Back then, when Hunter was

trapped on the brink of death, you didn't care! You gave up your position and ran north to Ch

all for some ridiculous friendship! And Hunter ended up dying horribly in Basoria, with no one to save him!

"We were helpless, the two of us. I watched as the men from the Assassin's Guild turned him into a pincushion with arrows! At that very moment, I swore on my life that you would pay for it!"

Eric's soft features twisted violently, his expression contorting into something monstrous and rabid.

No one dared interrupt the final confrontation between father and son.

Jerome tilted his head back and closed his eyes in silence. After a long pause, he opened them again, this time with a soft, broken smile.

"Yes... Hunter's death was my fault. I take full responsibility. But Eric, for all these years... my heart has been in more pain than you can imagine."

Chapter 1855

"After all, Hunter was my only son... he was my child," Jerome said, voice trembling.

Eric screamed, completely unhinged. "Shut up, you bastard! You don't deserve to call yourself Hunter's father! Otherwise, back then, you wouldn't have abandoned your own son just to save someone else's!

"The Lloyds were all the way up in Chetvine. What could you even do when you got there? You've been like this your whole life, throwing yourself into everyone else's battles. For your so-called friends, for your so-called principles... You'd even give your life without hesitation.

"But when it came to your own family, to the people closest to you, you were harsh, cold, and never gave us even a shred of warmth! Hunter died, and I became what I am today, all because of you!"

Tears streamed down Eric's face as he spoke, his voice raw with pain.

At that moment, something clicked in Andrew's mind.

Ten years ago, Jerome's son, Hunter, had fallen into the deadly hands of the Assassin's Guild in Basoria, his life hanging by a thread. At the same time, Jerome received a desperate letter from Reginald.

Without a second thought, Jerome chose to head north to Chetvine instead of west. In the end, Hunter died tragically.

All this time, that choice had been a thorn in Eric's heart, festering in silence. That was why he chose betrayal today, stabbing Jerome just as they gained the upper hand. He was using pain to repay pain.

Eric was both pitiful and tragic.

Andrew had been ready to kill him moments ago, but now his emotions twisted into something much more complicated. He realized he owed a debt to too many people.

Women like Tiana and Victoria had treated him like their own, giving him nothing but genuine love. And now, Jerome, a famed master, a martial icon, had once risked everything by going to Chetvine to help Andrew and Reginald escape.

He had lost his own son because of it.

Whether they knew Andrew's true identity or not, these people had helped him, directly or indirectly.

Andrew took a deep breath and made a decision. No matter what happened today, he would help Jerome escape. At the very least, he would not let Jerome die right in front of him.

Jerome said quietly, "Eric... I don't blame you. If your hatred for me runs that deep, then go ahead-do it yourself."

Without even flinching, he yanked the dagger out of his stomach and held it out.

Henry and the others stayed silent.

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They remained alert, but they did not

interrupt. After all, in the south of

Holtrien, Jerome was a legendary figure of they pushed him too.

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and showed no mercy, the backlash afterward would still be substantial.

Grace let out a soft sigh. "Let's all step back. Mr. Thornton has already lost the strength to fight."

Edwin nodded. "Right. Mr. Thornton's family matters should be handled by them."

Henry frowned and gave Eric a long look. In the end, he said nothing and took two steps back.

Eric snatched the dagger from Jerome's hand and pressed it toward his chest, eyes blazing with fury. "You really think I don't have the guts to kill you, huh?"

Jerome closed his eyes, ready to die. "Go on them know you want to avenge Hunter. When you were just a baby, I took you in. And that year... that was also the year Hunter was born raised you both as my sons, with no difference between you two. But I never imagined this would be how it ends."

Eric's hand clenched the dagger so tightly that the veins bulged along his wrist, sharp and blue like twisted roots. "Shut up! Just shut up! You think this matters now? I don't want to hear another word. I'm going to kill you!"

His eyes went cold, and the blade moved.