

The Ashes 291

Chapter 291 Andrew frowned as he glanced at the arrogant woman before him.

Though attractive, her superiority complex was something he could not stand.

Ilan asked in I suppose this is Aspen Stevens from the Bridgefields Stevens family? surprise. Aspen smiled condescendingly and replied, Mr.

Garner, Im surprised you know who I am.

I didnt realize my reputation had spread so far into Jayrodale.

Youre indeed well known for both your business acumen and martial arts skills, Dylan said coldly.

However, this isnt Bridgefields its Jayrodale, and such a high profile attitude might not serve you well here

Aspen responded with unwavering confidence, Mr.

Garner, you should worry about yourself first.

I hear South City is about to fall into Mr.

Giordanos hands from the Northern District

She paused before adding, As it happens, I have quite a good relationship with Mr.

Giordano.

If you ask nicely, I might put in a good word for South City.

Dylan scoffed

Who do you think you are? Even with your capabilities, youre still an outsider, and Jayrodales

underground affairs dont need your interference

Aspens eyes turned cold as she mocked, No wonder youve amounted to nothing.

Instead of properly managing South City, youre here defending some kept man.

Dont you think thats beneath your position as South Citys leader? Dylan was furious that this insufferable woman dared disrespect Andrew.

Lets go handle our business

Theres no need to stoop to their level and be as petty, Andrew said calmly.

Dylan laughed, Youre right, Mr.

Lloyd, though that bite did sting

You should know, a bitches bites hurt the most.

What did you just say ? Aspens face turned ice cold.

Christinas expression changed, and she angrily said, Andrew, dont you think that was going too far? Apologize to Aspen right now, and Ill make sure she lets this go.

Apologize ? For what? Andrew replied with a wry smile.

If I recall correctly, your dear Aspen was the one who started this, not us.

Christina gritted her teeth and said, Aspen may be outspoken, but she meant no harm.

Do you think its appropriate to speak about a woman that way? Christie, dont waste your breath on such crude, low class people, Aspen interrupted with a cold laugh.

She turned to Andrew and continued, I heard you helped the Steven family by driving Harvey away from the Weller family.

On our way here, Christie couldnt stop singing your praises, and I thought you might have some potential.

She paused before adding, I was even considering that if you proved worthy, Christie getting back together with you wouldnt be such a bad thing.

But now I see youre nothing special- just a manipulative opportunist with a petty heart.

What kind of person I am isnt your concern, Andrew shrugged, And are all you Stevens this brainless? Who told you I wanted to get back together with Christina ? Aspen sneered.

Oh, dont you? If you didnt, why did you go to such lengths to get Mr.

Stevens Senior involved? When did I ever approach Mr.

Stevens Senior? Andrew asked with furrowed brows.

Still denying it? Aspen crossed her arms mockingly

Christie might be too naive to see through your schemes, but Im not so easily fooled.

Chapter 292 Aspen said, Ive just arrived in Jayrodale, but Ive already investigated everything thoroughly You helped Stevens Corporation, and then Mr.

Stevens Senior spoke up for you at the family dinner, trying to get you and Christie back together.

Tell me, is this true or false? The event happened, but I had no prior knowledge of Mr.

Stevens Seniors intentions, Andrew replied coldly.

Excuses! Aspen laughed mockingly

The truth is clear you used your favor to manipulate Mr.

Stevens Senior into speaking up for you, all to get back with Christie.

Your help to the family wasnt genuine; you had ulterior motives: Christie would be blind to choose someone like you

Andrew shook his head and clapped sarcastically.

Aspen, though this is our first meeting, I must say Im truly impressed with you.

What? Impressed that I exposed your true colors? Aspen sneered

Andrew smiled.

Yes, genuinely impressed! I never thought Id meet someone as idiotic as you.

Its truly rare I cant help but be impressed.

Aspen fumed.

Andrew, dont think Christies presence will stop me from teaching you a lesson.

You should ask around about who Aspen from Bridgefields Stevens family really is.

Andrew shrugged

Sorry, but I couldn't care less about who you are.

Though people like you.

usually end up learning their lessons the hard way.

With that, he turned and left with Dylan.

One Christina from the Stevens family was already self-righteous and brainless enough, and now there was an even worse Aspen

Andrew felt his day was ruined

Don't mind him, Aspen, Christina consoled as they watched the two men walk toward the manor's gate. He added, Andrew is actually quite decent.

He is just prideful and sometimes sharp-tongued, always going against the grain.

Aspen scoffed

He's just a nobody not worth my attention

Remember, Christie, you're a perfect gem with both beauty and talent.

Stay away from Andrew

There's nothing about him.

worthy of you.

Christina hesitated before saying, Aspen, Andrew really isn't as bad as you think.

Aspen retorted dismissively, Im never wrong about people, and I can tell that man is absolutely worthless.

Besides, with your qualities, you could have any good man.

Once we deal with that scoundrel from the Weller family, Ill introduce you to some proper gentlemen from Bridgefields or Blumedale

Christina shook her head and replied, Im not interested in relationships right now.

Maybe later.

Aspen smiled.

Thats fine, I wont pressure you

Come on, Ill introduce you to Natasha Vostokoff, the queen of West End

She invited me as soon as I arrived in Jayrodale.

This Black Widow is well informed, and it seems she wants to connect with our Bridgefields main family through me

Christina was a little uneasy.

Maybe we shouldnt, Aspen.

Madam Vostokoff is the most powerful woman in Jayrodale.

Would she even acknowledge me ? Aspen declared proudly, Dont worry, Natasha wouldnt dare refuse

me

I plan to establish connections with all major powers in Jayrodale.

With me here, the Weller family won't cause any trouble.

Chapter 293 The gala officially began at six in the evening.

Since Andrew and Dylan were not there to dance, they found a spot to sit down and sample the gourmet offerings while keeping an eye on Finley and Yvonne's movements.

The West End gala attracted Jayrodale's elite society, and the dining area showcased nothing but premium delicacies.

There are some real beauties here, like that Serena, Dylan said admiringly.

I wouldn't mind getting to know such a sultry woman.

Andrew gave him an odd look and said, You're sick you've got the Casanova Syndrome.

Mr.

Lloyd, is this Casanova Syndrome serious? Dylan asked anxiously, knowing that Andrew was a brilliant physician whose diagnoses were never to be taken lightly..

Andrew peeled a lobster tail, popped it in his mouth, and shook his head.

This condition is usually incurable

Incurable ? Dylan's face turned pale.

Mr.

Lloyd, am I going to die? You wont die, Andrew laughed, making Dylan sigh with relief.

Mr.

Lloyd, Ive never heard of this Casanova Syndrome before.

Is it real? Dylan asked curiously.

Andrew glanced at him and replied casually, This condition has existed since ancient times, just unnamed until now.

The symptoms include lusting after other mens wives and having peculiar tastes.

Thats considered a disease? Dylan was dumbfounded.

I bet 90% of men worldwide have this condition.

Andrew shook his head with a smile, I wouldnt know about that, but I dont have it.

Dylan grinned.

You dont have it now, Mr.

Lloyd, but wait until youre in your 30s or 40s! After all, other mens wives always seem more appealing than your own.

Andrew was speechless.

Over the past few days, he realized that despite Dylans rough exterior, he was quite the ladies man underneath.

It was likely that Dylan, like Atlas, had his fair share of mistresses. Nonetheless, Andrew did not care about such things

It would have been more surprising if Dylan, as a local power player, was completely pure and innocent. My apologies for keeping everyone waiting, Natasha announced as she made her grand entrance.

Please, enjoy yourselves! She was dressed elegantly in a designer evening gown that was both alluring and sophisticated

All eyes were immediately drawn to her, particularly her curves, though she maintained an air of dignified aloofness befitting the queen of West End, Madam Vostokoff, may I have the honor of your first dance? Finley approached her with a smile.

Natasha batted her eyelashes and replied with a smile, Mr.

Moore, don't you have Ms.

Puller as your partner? Wouldn't she be upset if you asked a widow like me to dance? Finley replied shamelessly, No worries, I can dance with you first, then with her

Though still smiling, Natasha declined, Although you look quite dashing tonight, Mr.

Moore, I already have another dance partner in mind.

Finley's grin turned mischievous

Who else here is worthy of dancing with you besides me? Surely you must be joking? Before Natasha could respond, several voices chimed in to flatter Finley

That's right! No one is more qualified to dance with Madam Vostokoff tonight than Mr.

Moore.

Finley is young, wealthy, and skilled in martial arts not to mention his extraordinary background.

Hes the only perfect match to be Madam Vostokoffs partner! Madam Vostokoff is a queen in her own right, and Mr.

Moore is a dashing prince

Together, theyd be nothing short of perfection! Dylan spat out his drink and muttered, These bootlickers really have no shame or principles when it comes to sucking up to Finley.

Andrew chuckled, noting how many people were eager to curry favor with Finley.

Chapter 294 It was clear that Natasha did not want Finley touching her, but he basked in the attention, beaming as he said, Madam, youve heard everyones requests

Since they all want to see us dance, how can you refuse? Natasha frowned slightly.

Finley was annoying as a persistent pest, but she worried that refusing him outright in front of everyone might cause a scene

Just then, a female voice cut through the tension.

If Madam Vostokoff doesnt want to dance with Mr.

Moore, shouldnt a true gentleman step back rather than put her in an awkward position? Who do you think you are to meddle in my affairs? Finley turned with displeasure.

Aspen smiled, looking sharp in her tailored suit.

Mr.

Moore, you seem quite temperamental

Im Aspen from the Bridgefields Stevens family, Finley nodded thoughtfully and said, Ah, Ms. Stevens.

Dont tell me youre also vying to be Madam Vostokoffs dance partner? And why not? Aspen lifted her chin proudly.

Who says Madam Vostokoffs partner has to be male? In my eyes, we women are every bit as capable

as men.

Finley laughed.

I like a feisty woman

Anyway, if you want to dance with Madam Vostokoff, III graciously step aside.

Though such a beauty shouldnt always dress like a man perhaps we could get to know each other better sometime? Sure, III treat you to dinner someday, Aspen replied with a smile.

Finley returned to Yvones side, wrapping an arm around her waist.

Did you miss me? Couldnt wait any longer? Youre such a player! Yvonne pinched him hard as they began dancing

She purred, First, you get me hot and bothered, then you go after Madam Vostokoff.

And now that Aspen girl.

Have you set your sights on her too? Finley chuckled in her ear as they danced, Shes quite famous.

I was just doing her a favor.

But dont worry

Ill have her in my bed soon enough

as just doing hepen is from the Bridgefields Stevens family.

Aspens neither here nor there.

You sure have strange tastes, Yvonne commented disapprovingly. Finley boasted.

These tomboys are the hardest to get.

But once you have them, the conquest is incredibly satisfying.

Meanwhile, Aspen confidently approached Natasha, Madam, may I have the honor of your first dance?

They say you prefer swords to dresses.

I see its true, Natasha remarked, looking Aspen over.

I simply want to prove that women can do anything men can, Aspen declared proudly.

And often, we can do things even they cant.

Natasha chuckled and replied, Well said, but Im afraid I dont dance with women.

Aspens smile froze

But you even refused Finley, Is there actually a man here who catches.

your eye? Natashas beautiful eyes scanned the crowd before settling on Andrew.

Of course that gentleman over there is exactly who I want as my partner

Besides Finley, the men here are either too old or too weak, Aspen said, following Natashas gaze.

Wait you want Dylan as your partner ? Natasha laughed softly.

Dylan is too rough around the edges and quite ordinary looking.

Im interested in the man beside him.

Dont you think hes quite handsome and captivating? Aspens face fell as realization dawned on her. Madam, surely you dont mean Andrew ?

Chapter 295 Is there a problem? Natasha asked with a smile Madam, please hear me out, Aspen said seriously.

Andrew isnt worthy of being your dance partner.

In fact, hes not even worthy of being your servant.

Natasha shook her head and replied, Ms.

Stevens, this is my business.

Now, if youll excuse me, we can chat more after the gala.

After that, she walked straight toward Andrew, leaving Aspen stunned.

The other guests had also noticed Natashas movement, and whispers began to circulate through the crowd.

Whats so special about this guy that Madam Vostokoff would ask him to dance? someone muttered. She even turned down Finley.

Could she actually be interested in him? another wondered aloud.

Thats no ordinary guy thats Andrew Lloyd, and rumor has it that he doesnt even bow down to Finley or Atlas ! someone explained.

The crowd buzzed with gossip, especially the men who watched jealousy as Natasha smiled at Andrew like a lovesick teenager.

Finley squeezed Yvones bottom roughly as they danced, grinding his teeth in anger.

I cant believe that bitch is interested in Andrew.

What does that gold digger have that I dont ? Finley, whats wrong with you? Yvonne snapped in pain. Instead of sulking here, why dont you teach that pretty boy a lesson ? If youre so tough, go slap him around! Finley was at a loss for words.

He wanted to deal with Andrew, but this was Natashas territory, and with Dylan present, he did not dare make a move alone.

Aspen returned to Christinas side with an icy expression.

Christina noticed her foul mood and asked, Aspen, whats wrong ? Aspen laughed coldly, Did you see that, Christie ? Madam Vostokoff actually invited that gold- digger Andrew to dance.

He must have some tricks up his sleeve to even seduce the Black Widow.

What? Madam Vostokoff invited Andrew to dance with her? Thats impossible ! Christina exclaimed in disbelief.

Andrews friendship with Lauren and Francesca had already surprised her, but the idea of him catching the eye of Natasha, the queen of West End, seemed unthinkable.

Aspen took a drink of water to calm her irritation Go see for yourself theyre out on the lawn, wrapped up in each other.

I was hoping to discuss important matters with Natasha, but Andrew ruined everything.

Christina hurried out to the lawn and saw Natasha and Andrew slow dancing together.

Natasha was giggling like a schoolgirl in Andrews arms.

Is he really that appealing to women? Christina mumbled, feeling an uncomfortable twinge in her heart.

Chapter 296 Christina could not understand how Andrew had such an effect on these exceptional women

First Lauren, then Francesca, and now someone even more remarkable Natasha, the powerful widow who ruled West End

Returning to the lounge, she said to Aspen, Aspen, lets just head home.

Aspen shook her head.

Not yet, Christie.

You need to learn to handle these situations, even if you dont like them.

I dont want to breathe the same air as Andrew, Christina replied coldly

Whats wrong? Does it bother you that this worthless gold digger is suddenly so successful? Aspen asked with a knowing smile

Christina responded stiffly, If he can climb the social ladder through women, thats his talent.

It doesnt bother me.

Aspen said seriously.

No, Christie, you're wrong.

He's not moving up his status; he simply doesn't know his place.

Once powerful women like Madam Vostokoff get bored with this nobody, they'll kick him off the curb. I've seen it happen countless times.

Out on the lawn, Andrew found the woman before him increasingly troublesome.

Whenever he tried to leave, Natasha threatened, "If you leave, you can forget about that rare medicine I promised to get you."

"Madam Vostokoff, surely you're not really wasting your time on me?" Andrew asked wearily.

"This isn't a waste of time."

"I'm genuinely interested in you," Natasha snapped.

"If you work for me in West End, I'll give you not just the medicine, but myself as well."

"How's that? I'm not interested."

Andrew shook his head.

Natasha laughed angrily, "Aren't you afraid of making me angry by constantly rejecting me? Even if you're angry, I can't help that."

"I can't help that."

Andrew remained unmoved.

"Antonio told me yesterday that you were playing hard to get," Natasha said with a bitter laugh.

She huffed and added, But now I see you genuinely aren't interested in me.

You're such an arrogant man! Do you know how many men are lined up just to get into my bed? Well, I'm definitely not one of them, Andrew said with a smirk.

Natasha gritted her teeth and said, Okay, you are stubborn, but I'm not a person without a temper.

The more I can't get something, the more I want to get it.

She added, Anyway, you should finish this dance with me.

Meanwhile, Dylan and the others can record more of Finley and Yvonne's intimate actions. Andrew nodded.

If that's the reason, sure.

The gala continued until 10 p.m.

before finally ending

Natasha remained furious throughout, unable to believe Andrew had rejected her.

She vowed to teach this ungrateful bastard a lesson later.

Nonetheless, their plan proved to be a success, as they managed to capture plenty of intimate photos of Finley and Yvonne.

Dylan laughed, saying, I wonder what Atlas will think when he sees these photos on his desk tomorrow. That perverted Finley is even lusting after his friend's woman.

How disgusting, Natasha remarked disdainfully as she flipped through the photos.

Andrew frowned suddenly and said, These photos alone might not be enough to turn Atlas against Finley

Mr.

Lloyd, isnt this enough? Dylan asked in surprise.

Weve got photos of them touching, kissing, and even nibbling each other!

Chapter 297 Andrew shook his head, Im not sure

Although these photos alone might anger Atlas, given his calculated nature, hell likely choose to stay calm.

Prue, Natasha agreed.

Atlas is too shrewd

When he sees these photos, his first instinct will be to control his anger toward Finley.

We need to push further, make Atlas so furious hell turn against Finley completely.

Dylan shrugged.

Going further means catching them in the act.

But where are we going to get that kind of evidence? Where are Finley and Yvonne now? Andrew asked

They went to the lounge after the gala, but we dont have cameras there, Dylan replied

Natasha sighed, We obviously cant install surveillance in the lounges that would offend too many important people

Just then, Antonio came in with news, Madam, Mr.

Garner, Mr.

Lloyd Yvonne has already left the estate.

So this operation wasn't perfect, Natasha said, rubbing her temples.

Without concrete evidence between Yvonne and Finley, we don't have enough leverage to drive a wedge between, Finley and Atlas.

Finley's got some self control, Dylan remarked.

I thought he'd take Yvonne to a hotel.

right after the gala, but he let her leave alone

Antonio spoke with obvious disdain, Since this was Mr.

Lloyd's plan, perhaps he has some other brilliant ideas? You don't think my plan was good enough? Andrew asked, eyeing him.

Not just inadequate.

It was completely useless, Antonio scoffed

If Finley and Atlas were this easy to take down, West End wouldn't be walking on eggshells around them. Antonio, leave us, Natasha ordered with a frown.

Before leaving, Antonio sneered at Andrew.

If Mr.

Lloyd wants to show off in front of Madam Vostokoff, he should bring something substantial.

These amateur tricks just show your inexperience

Natasha, your subordinate seems to have a death wish, Dylan said grimly.

Who does this old fool think he is to disrespect Mr.

Lloyd ? Mr.

Lloyd, I apologize for my subordinates behavior, Natasha said sincerely.

Lets check Finleys lounge, Andrew suggested, waving off the apology.

Natasha hesitated for a moment.

Theyre already gone.

Whats the point of looking now? Before long, the three of them arrived at one of the villas guest lounges

Andrew pushed the door open, revealing a staff member inside, tidying up the room.

Dylan glanced around and commented, This is the room where Finley and Yvonne were staying earlier.

If we had set up a camera here beforehand, we mightve captured something ... spicy. Andrew shook his head.

Thats unrealistic

In a space this small, with Finley's level of awareness, he would've noticed any surveillance equipment immediately.

Natasha stepped forward and stated, Mr.

Garner Mr.

Lloyd, there's really nothing left to see here.

We should go

Even if those photos don't damage Finley and Atlas' alliance, sending them to Atlas would still annoy him enough to be worth it

Suddenly, Andrew said, Wait.

Both Dylan and Natasha gave him puzzled looks as he walked toward the staff member.

Is something wrong, sir? the staff member asked politely.

Andrew did not respond to her but instead focused on the tray she was holding.

On it were two wine glasses, each containing remnants of a deep red liquid.

Natasha chuckled lightly.

Mr.

Lloyd, if you're interested in wine, there's a cellar here with hundreds of premium selections.

You can taste them to your heart's content.

Andrew remained silent.

Then, he picked up the two glasses and held them up to his nose

He sniffed them carefully, his expression growing serious as he exclaimed, Cantharides ! Natashas smile froze

Cantharides ? Isnt that a potent aphrodisiac ? Dylans face turned pale.

Mr.

Lloyd, are you saying... this wine had cantharides in it?

Chaptér 298 Andrew set down the glasses and nodded to them both.

Both glasses contain traces of the drug.

Since Finley and Yvonne used this lounge, s safe to assume they both consumed it.

So, Finley drugged Yvonne, Natasha blurted out.

Which means he wanted to... He wanted to sleep with her, Dylan cut in eagerly.

Everything before was just an act.

He secretly drugged Yvonne, and they might be in the middle of it right now! Natashas face lit up with excitement.

Thats got to be it! That sly bastard Finley really knows how to play dirty.

Quick, we need to find out where Finley and Yvonne went, Andrew urged. The drug acts fast.

Based on when they left, it should be taking effect right about now.

Natasha smirked coldly.

Leave it to my people to handle this.

We'll track them down and catch them in the act.

She turned to Andrew with an amused smile.

Impressive.

Even in this mess, you still managed to uncover a lead, darling

Without Andrews sharp observation and notice of the drugged wine, Natasha and Dylan would have given up the chase entirely.

That would have meant missing out on a golden opportunity to enrage Atlas.

It did not take long before Natasha received a call from one of her subordinates.

Madam Vostokoff, we've got a location.

Someone spotted Finley and Yvonne entering one of the hotels owned by the Rhodes Corporation. Natasha hung up and grinned.

Mr.

Lloyd, Mr.

Garner, it's our turn to make a move

The three of them quickly piled into the car and headed toward the hotel.

However, as they reached the gates of the villa, Aspen and Christina stepped in front of Natashas car, blocking the way.

Ms.

Vostokoff, wed like to have another word with you, Aspen said with a calm, confident smile.

The Stevens family of Bridgefields is seeking a high level partner in Jayrodale.

I imagine thats something youd be interested in Aspen carried herself with the poise of someone born to command attention

As the pride of the Stevens family, she considered herself a woman destined to achieve greater things than most men ever could.

To her, men like Andrew were hardly worth a second glance.

However, Natashas patience was already wearing thin.

Ms.

Stevens, I have urgent matters to attend to.

Lets talk another time

Completely oblivious to Natashas annoyance, Aspen continued to block the road with an air of superiority

She continued, What could be more important than partnering with the Stevens family? Lets handle this

now

Of course, Ill need you to dismiss a certain... unnecessary individual

Por instance, that pretty boy beside you who seems to be good for nothing more than entertaining Women

As she spoke, Aspen cast a dismissive glance at Andrew, tilting her chin high.

Her expression seemed to say, You may have your moment of favor, but in the presence of someone like me, youre still a nobody.

However, Natashas expression turned icy as she snapped, Aspen, cant you read the room? I told you I have something to do, and here you are, still standing in the middle of the road like an idiot.

She mocked, Looks like the Stevens familys golden girl has more than a few screws loose.

Aspens smug smile froze, and even Christina, who stood beside her, looked utterly humiliated. Natashas voice dropped to a cutting tone.

And one more thing, Aspen listen carefully

Andrew is my chosen man, and if you dare insult him or look down on him again, Ill slap your smug face so hard youll be crying all the way back to Bridgefields.

Now get out of my way! The car roared to life and sped off, leaving a trail of exhaust fumes.

The cloud of smoke hit Aspen square in the face, her once pristine complexion turning shades of red and white from sheer frustration.

For a moment, Aspens mind went blank.

Natasha, the formidable woman of West End, had just publicly berated her for Andrew, of all people. Moreover, it was not just any scolding Natasha had chosen him over her, Aspen Stevens, the pride of the Bridgefields Stevens family!

Chapter 299 I can't believe a powerful woman like Madam Vostokoff would lose her head over a worthless

man

How disappointing, Aspen muttered, finally suppressing her humiliation and anger.

Come on, Christie

If she doesn't recognize our value, we'll go to Mr.

Giordano in the Northern District, she declared.

Aspen, there are many ways to expand our family's business into Jayrodale, Christina said worriedly.

I don't think you need to deal with underground figures like them.

Their methods are often questionable, and I'm concerned

Aspen interrupted with a dismissive laugh, I know what you're worried about, Christie.

You're afraid I'm too naïve and might get played by them, right? Don't underestimate me.

Just watch soon, the two of us will make such a name for ourselves in Jayrodale that no one will dare look down on us.

Christina frowned slightly, her instincts telling her that her cousin from the main family was being too hasty

Nonetheless, given Aspens headstrong nature, which was even more assertive than most men, she decided to keep her thoughts to herself.

Christie, you saw how your ex has won Natashas favor, Aspen remarked with a mocking smile. Christinas voice turned cold.

Hes made his choices.

It has nothing to do with me.

Aspen said in a playful tone, The underground forces in Jayrodale are shifting.

Mr.

Giordano from the Northern District and Mr.

Moore from Hidden Dragons will emerge victorious

Madam Vostokoff will regret rejecting our alliance, and when she falls, Andrew will suffer the consequences.

Christina hesitated for a moment before advising Aspen, I really think you should avoid getting involved with people like Mr.

Giordano

Aspen waved her hand confidently.

Relax, Christie.

Before I even set foot in Jayrodale, I studied everything about its power dynamics.

Mr.

Giordano and the Northern District are poised to dominate, becoming the kings of the city's underground.

If we align with him now, our family will have a foothold here in no time.

Meanwhile, in the car, Natasha let out a scoff.

Aspens got some reputation and influence.

Too bad she overrates herself

I can't stand those arrogant women who think they're better than everyone else

Andrew glanced at her and said, Aspen represents the Bridgefields Stevens family.

Turning her down is one thing, but outright insulting her West End just lost a potentially valuable client. Natasha snorted

West End isn't going to crumble over some girl from Bridgefields.

Besides, she had the nerve to badmouth my darling.

I had to teach her a lesson

Andrew's expression turned serious.

Natasha, I'm not your darling

You're a widow, and comments like that could damage my reputation. Natasha raised an eyebrow and smirked mischievously

Oh, I want everyone to know you're involved with me.

You've been rejecting me over and over, but once the rumors spread, let's see how you handle it.

10 Andrews' face darkened slightly, but he chose not to argue with her.

After all, while Natasha could be overbearing, she had never truly crossed the line with him.

He wanted to her place but could not find a good enough reason to make a move.

put her in Before long, the car came to a stop, and Andrew stepped out, looking at an upscale hotel before him.

Chapter 300 Members of West End were already negotiating with the hotel's security staff at the entrance

However, the hotel's security guards were clearly unfazed by West End's reputation and blocked the entrance without hesitation

Dylan's face darkened, and he stepped forward, ready to force their way in

Andrew quickly stopped him, saying, Don't make a scene! Dylan argued, Mr.

Lloyd, if we don't get in now, Finley might be slipping away soon! Andrew shook his head.

Relax, the effects of cantharides last at least half a day

Natasha chimed in, This hotel belongs to the Rhodes family, and West End has a decent relationship with them.

Let me try.

She approached the entrance with a cold expression.

Move aside

Im Natasha Vostokoff from West End

The guards exchanged uneasy glances, clearly intimidated by her commanding presence.

One of them finally mustered the courage to say, Madam Vostokoff, the hotel has been reserved for the night.

Mr.

Rhodes has ordered that no one is allowed to enter or disturb our special guests.

Natasha raised an eyebrow, a sly smile playing on her lips.

Oh? Who has the kind of pull to book out an entire hotel? Id love to meet them.

The guard firmly replied, Im sorry, Madam Vostokoff, but their identity is confidential. We cant disclose that information.

Natashas smile vanished as her tone turned icy

And what if I decide to go in anyway? Are you going to stop me? The guards stiffened and took a collective step back but remained firm, blocking the entrance.

Madam Vostokoff, please, theres no need to get angry.

A smooth voice broke the tension as Michael strode out of the hotel with a calm, confident air.

My apologies, but the hotel really is unavailable tonight

We have special guests, and it wouldnt be appropriate to disturb them.

Natasha narrowed her eyes.

Mr.

Rhodes, are you telling me that even you won't give me the respect I deserve? Michael's smile did not falter.

Madam Vostokoff, you have my respect, of course.

But as I said, this hotel is off limits tonight.

If you'd like, I'll personally cover your stay at any other hotel in Jayrodale.

Pick whichever one you want.

Natasha's voice turned stern

And what if I insist on staying here tonight? Michael's demeanor cooled as he replied, Then I'm afraid I'll have to send you away by force.

Natasha's patience snapped.

Everyone, let's break in! Michael clapped his hands twice, and within seconds, dozens of men poured out of the hotel, forming a line of enforcers.

Natasha was unfazed.

She smirked and prepared to charge.

Mr.

Rhodes, do you really think this bunch of nobodies can stop me? Before things escalated, Andrew stepped forward, gently pulling Natasha back.

He flashed a knowing smile at Michael.

Mr.

Rhodes, I didnt realize youd taken up such a prestigious job as a... concierge.

L Michaels expression darkened.

Andrew, watch your mouth.

When did I ever become a concierge ? Andrew chuckled

Well, when youre standing guard for a couple sneaking around, its hard to call it anything else.

If youre not a concierge, then what are you? Michaels face twisted in anger.

He had not expected Andrew to know about Finleys antics i his hotel.

Still, he kept his composure, sneering

I have no idea what youre talking about.

This is my familys hotel, and I suggest you leave before you cause more trouble.

Andrews smirk did not waver.

Come on! Dont play dumb.

Everyone knows Finleys here with Mr.

Giordanos sidepiece, doing things they probably dont want us to know about.

Michael exploded

Andrew, get out of here right now! Or else dont blame me if my men dont hold back.

Natasha stepped forward, her voice like ice.

If your men even think about laying a hand on Andrew, theyll regret it.

Michael was seething with rage.

Even Natasha, a figure he had always respected, was defending Andrew.

He could not help but wonder what kind of spell this freeloader cast to make these powerful women
so

fiercely loyal to him