

The Ashes 351

Chapter 351 The Blood Phoenix Miracle once stunned the entire antiquities and gemstone world. Discovered in the northern desert of Etharla, it earned its name from its brilliant colors and a tiny red fossil inside.

This made it the most prestigious of Etharias four legendary stones before a mysterious billionaire acquired it.

Andrews Blood Phoenix Agate, with its perfectly preserved cicada inside, was essentially another Blood Phoenix Miracle manifesting itself into the world.

Though more precisely, this one would be known as the Blood Phoenix Cicada The chaos at the stone gambling venue was quickly contained when Silas, the CEO of Radiant Group, made a personal appearance.

The panel of experts and the bigwigs from the Jayrodale Antiquities Association could not contain their excitement as they rushed to authenticate Andrews extraordinary find.

Theres no doubt that this is a divine treasure just like the Blood Phoenix Miracle, one expert declared. Others chimed in, The cicada inside is even more lifelike than the fossil in the original Blood Phoenix Miracle.

This piece is truly priceless! Mr.

Lloyd is truly extraordinary, persisting in cutting through seemingly worthless material to discover this treasure, another expert praised.

This will become a legendary tale in the stone gambling world persistence leading to divine discovery ... Only true antiquities enthusiasts and collectors could truly appreciate the value and significance of Andrews Blood Phoenix Cicada.

Elsie took a long time to calm her excitement, while Francesca had become numb to the waves of shocking revelations.

This stone gambling spectacle that Andrew orchestrated had completely opened Francescas eyes. While Aspen was already considered a prodigy who consistently found better and better pieces, Andrew had managed to stay one step ahead and ultimately crushed her completely.

She could not help but think that Andrew was impressive, that there was nothing he could not do. Elsie said, As for Mr.

Lloyds Blood Phoenix Cicada, our panel and the Jayrodale Antiquities Association cannot yet determine an exact market value.

However, its undoubtedly worth over 100 million dollars at minimum, and in a global auction, it could potentially fetch up to 500 million! The crowd gasped at these figures.

While many did not understand what made the Blood Phoenix Cicada so precious, the mention of such astronomical sums sent their minds reeling. Ms.

Stevens, youve lost this round, Elsie said reluctantly, pressing her lips together.

Thats two consecutive defeats, and even though your stone gambling skills have impressed us all, youre still no match for Mr.

Lloyd.

Chapter 352 Mr.

Lloyd has shown us what true stone gambling mastery means by turning something seemingly worthless into something miraculous Elsie concluded.

The crowd erupted into an unstoppable frenzy, repeatedly chanting, Mr.

Lloyd! His reputation as a master was cemented in thousands of minds.

Countless eyes gazed at him with intense admiration, though many found it hard to comprehend that

Andrew was still just a young man.

They wondered how someone so young could build such an impressive reputation in antiquities and stone gambling, making them question if some people were truly born under lucky stars.

I lost... I lost again, Aspen laughed bitterly, her face deathly pale.

The higher her confidence had soared before, the more crushing her defeat felt now.

Typically, as the proud heiress of Bridgefields Stevens family, Aspen would never admit defeat.

However, Andrews final move with the Blood Phoenix Cicada completely shattered her pride and confidence

She no longer doubted whether Andrews success was mere luck.

Instead, Aspen deeply realized that both Orion, who had knelt before Andrew, and herself, who had lost twice, had made the same mistake they had failed to see that Andrew was a true master of antiquities who had been hiding his talents all along

Aspen growled icily, This humiliation will haunt me forever.

Andrew, you may have won today with your superior skills, but life isnt just about antiquities.

This isnt over well see what the future holds ! With those words thrown at Andrew, Aspen quickly fled the

scene.

Staying even a second longer would have insulted her pride as the Stevens familys golden girl. Aspen, are you alright? Christina asked, deeply worried about her cousins state.

Even Christinas own composure was crumbling as she watched her former flame shine brilliantly like a diamond

Dont worry, Im fine, Aspen replied grimly as she left the auction.

She pulled out her phone and dialed a number she had not used in a long time.

Aspen said with a cold laugh.

Hello, remember me? Your old classmates, Aspen Stevens.

I just attended the Jayrodale auction and lost nearly 100 million dollars.

You must understand what it means for someone of my expertise to lose that much? Her voice dripping

with venom continued, Thats right fraud and insider manipulation

I suspect two people in particular: Elsie Santana, that belle of Radiant Group whos betrayed her position

, and a fraud named Andrew Lloyd who worked with her to con me.

The money isnt the issue, but I wont let the Bridgefields Stevens family name be tarnished.

So, the choice to help is yours.

A mans angry voice thundered through the phone, Dont worry, Aspen.

I wont let them get away with your money or their crimes

Just wait III dispatch officers immediately and get justice for you.

Well see who dares to mess with you!

Chapter 353 Thank you, then, Aspen said with a smile as she hung up the phone.

Like I said, life isnt just about stone gambling and these trivial antiquities.

Power and connections are my ultimate weapons to crush you, Andrew ! Christina asked hesitantly, Aspen, who did you call for help? From what we saw during the stone gambling, Ms.

Santana and Andrew werent cheating or manipulating anything.

Aspen waved her off.

Stay out of this, Christie.

That Andrew must have set me up.

Why else would I lose so badly? Remember how he insisted on raising the stakes before we even started

? That should have been my first red flag, but I foolishly missed it.

Christina nodded uncertainly, not wanting to interfere further.

Though Aspen treated her like a close friend, there was still a social gap between them since Aspen came from the main branch of the Bridgefields Stevens family.

Aspen, Elsie works for Silas Vaughn at Radiant Group, and Andrew now knows many Jayrodale socialites, Christina reminded her

Will investigating them even work? Aspen laughed coldly.

Just because Im not from Jayrodale doesnt mean I dont have connections here.

The person I just called is the Chief Commissioner of the Jayrodale Police Department.

Christina was shocked.

The Chief Commissioner ? Mr.

Donald Warren? Hes one of Jayrodales highest ranking officials! Thats right, Aspen replied smugly, crossing her arms.

Donald and I were classmates at Blumedale.

He was one of my admirers I never gave him the time of day, but I kept him interested just in case. Looks like that finally paid off.

Christina was at a loss for words

She had always seen Aspen as a capable and strong willed businesswoman, but as their friendship deepened, she noticed how Aspens pride could make her ruthless when backed into a corner. Christina was not a fan of this

Nonetheless, since Aspen had made her decision, she decided not to interfere with anything.

After all, Aspen had lost so miserably that day, and it was only natural to let the police investigate if there was any possible unknown inside information.

Meanwhile, at the auction venue, the excitement continued.

Andrew, Francesca, and Cedric followed Elsie through the staff entrance to Radiant Groups backstage lounge.

Francesca panted

We got out just in time.

Otherwise, those antiquity enthusiasts would have torn Andrew apart! Elsie chuckled and said, Mr.

Lloyds stone gambling skills are truly beyond imagination.

I bet nine out of ten people out there want to become his apprentice, hoping hell teach them how to get rich quickly.

Cedric scoffed, Thats the despicable side of human nature.

Instead of working hard, theyre chasing unrealistic dreams.

Chapter 354 Little do they know that mediocrity is common in this world.

Do they really think everyone can become a natural genius like Dr.

Lloyd ? Cedric remarked

Grandpa, stop acting high and mighty, Francesca retorted

If it werent for Andrew, you wouldnt have gotten such great benefits from this auction either. Cedric immediately brightened up with a smile.

Well, Dr.

Lloyd certainly helped this old man catch a lucky break today

While everyone else was excited, Andrew remained remarkably calm.

Lets tally up all the gains and have Ms.

Santana process them, Andrew said casually.

Elsie perked up with surprise, Mr.

Lloyd, youre not taking everything you won today? Ill take the Blood Phoenix Cicada and the Royal Violet Crystal, Andrew replied

For the rest, Ill trouble you to convert them to cash.

Though slightly disappointed, Elsie quickly became energized again.

While Andrew took the two best pieces, the remaining items were still valuable and would bring significant profits under Radiant Groups management.

Francesca and Elsie began calculating Andrews spoils, with the breathtaking Blood Phoenix Cicada being the crown jewel that captivated both women

The Royal Violet Crystal won from Aspen came second a true treasure in its own right, though now belonging to Andrew as part of his victory.

Mr.

Lloyd, here are your total gains from todays auction, Elsie summarized after two minutes.

Three premium gems, plus your Blood Phoenix Cicada, the total value is at least 200 million. Thats fine.

Process them as we discussed.

Andrew smiled.

Cedric could not contain his envy, Making 200 million in one auction Dr

Lloyd, youre literally a money printing machine! Andrew wanted to say he had already achieved financial freedom years ago, and the salary he made as a doctor was insignificant.

Just then, Elsie brought two security cases, carefully placing the Royal Violet Crystal and Blood Phoenix Cicada in them before solemnly handing them to Andrew.

Without hesitation, Andrew pushed the Royal Violet Crystal case toward Francesca.

Why are you giving this to me? she asked in surprise.

Andrew simply replied, Its a gift

Francescas face turned bright red.

Though she desperately wanted it, she felt too embarrassed to accept it.

Andrew, I... I cant accept something so valuable she stammered

Andrew smiled and asked directly, Fran, dont you like it? The direct question made Francesca shy, and she lowered her head with a sweet feeling in her heart.

Of course I like it.

What girl wouldnt love such a beautiful crystal ? But its yours, and its so precious... I told you earlier wed make money, Andrew said

You worked hard throughout this whole thing, so this crystal is your reward.

While Francesca was still hesitating, Cedric could no longer contain himself.

Since Dr.

Lloyd is being so generous, I accept it on Frans behalf.

Thank you, Dr.

Lloyd! Then, he snatched the case and hugged it to his chest with a look of pure satisfaction.

Chapter 355 Grandpa, youre so embarrassing... Francesca groaned. Andrew smiled gently and said, Lets head home the event is wrapping up anyway

Elsie watched enviously from the side, thinking how a man who could casually give away such a valuable crystal must be irresistible to women.

Suddenly, Andrew turned to her with a smile and said, Ms.

Santana, youve been a great help today

After you process those crystals, please take a ten million commission for yourself.

Really, Mr.

Lloyd ? Elsie asked, both surprised and delighted.

Andrew nodded.

Of course.

If you hadnt invited me to this auction, I wouldnt have had the chance to make such a fortune.

Even though Elsie was well to do herself and mingled with upper society, Andrews generosity certainly taught her off guard.

Seeing Elsies admiring gaze toward Andrew, Francesca felt uneasy and urged, Andrew, Grandpa, lets get going.

Thank you for everything, Ms.

Santana.

Mr.

Lloyd, you should take the VIP exit to avoid unwanted attention, Elsie suggested

Andrew agreed, knowing he was carrying priceless treasures, and Radiant Group needed to protect their valuable clients from potential targeting

Just as they left through the private exit, several police cars screeched to a halt in front of them.

Officers jumped out and moved to make arrests without explanation.

What do you think youre doing? Cedric demanded angrily.

A heavysset man in sunglasses slowly emerged from one of the cars.

He removed his sunglasses and said, Dr.

Aicker, though youre Jayrodales miracle doctor, Ill have to arrest you if you obstruct justice.

Mr.

Warren, I dont understand how were obstructing justice, Cedric replied.

Donald smirked and pointed at Andrew and Elsie I received reports that these two colluded to defraud clients at the auction.

Its a serious offense

Elsie replied coldly, Mr.

Warren, Radiant Group conducts business with utmost integrity.

Do you have any evidence for such accusations? Donald snorted and pointed at Andrews security case. Isn't this evidence enough? Take them and the stolen goods into custody, he ordered.

Mr.

Warren, if you go too far, I'll have to involve Mr.

Vaughn, Elsie warned

However, Donald remained unfazed.

Don't try to pressure me with Silas.

I'm enforcing the law. I'd arrest them even if Silas himself were here.

As Elsie tried to protest further, Andrew stopped her calmly.

It's fine.

Let him arrest us if he wants.

Donald stepped forward, looking down at Andrew menacingly.

You might have gotten the money, but who says you'll live to spend it?

Chapter 356 Once you're in my custody, I'll teach you how to behave, Donald threatened as he snatched the security case from Andrew.

Mr.

Warren, you'd better not lay your dirty hands on Andrew, Francesca warned angrily.

Donald laughed harshly.

He's just a nobody who got greedy.

Not only will I touch him, but I'll also make sure he learns what prison feels like.

Fran, Dr.

Aicker, you should head home.

I'll handle this myself, Andrew said calmly.

Francesca protested furiously, Andrew, you did nothing wrong.

Aspen must have set you up! Andrew shrugged.

It's fine

I'm always ready to play whatever game someone wants to start.

Since he wants to throw me in jail without cause, I'll cooperate and submit to his judgment.

Well, well, Donald mocked, moving closer to Andrew's face

Most people wet themselves at the thought of jail, but you're all smiles.

What, you think I can't touch you? He continued with a cold smile, I've seen plenty of punks like you who

think they're untouchable because they know a few important people.

Let me tell you now once youre in custody, even God himself wont be able to save you.

H Andrew stared directly at the heavyset man and smiled casually.

Donald, right? Thats exactly what I was going to tell you.

Since you want to take this all the way, not even God himself will be able to save you.

Take them away, Donald ordered.

Lets see if you keep that annoying smile once youre inside.

Though I bet youll be begging for mercy.

As Andrew and Elsie were handcuffed and led to the police car, Elsie anxiously tried to reach for her phone to call Silas

Donald grabbed it away, stating coldly, From now on, you criminals have no right to use phones. Dont worry, Mr.

Lloyd, Elsie tried to reassure him.

Mr.

Vaughn will hear about this soon, and Radiant Group will protect you

No need to bother this fat pig cant touch us, Andrew replied with a smile.

Donald erupted in anger.

What did you say, punk? Andrew smiled sweetly.

I said youre a fat pig, and soon youll be a dead pig.

Donald sneered viciously.

Tough talk.

Once were at the station, Ill personally show.

real torture means

you what He had been Commissioner of Jayrodale for some time but had never seen someone so fearless

Elsie felt her scalp tingle with fear.

She could not believe Andrew was taunting the Police Commissioner of Jayrodale himself.

She worried he was only making things worse, not realizing that the one truly in danger was not Andrew but the supposedly untouchable Police Commiseler himself.

Chapter 357 Aspen, how did you know theyd leave through the back door? Christina asked as she and Aspen appeared at the VIP exit after Andrew and Elsie were taken away

With such precious items in hand, Radiant Group would obviously arrange a secret exit, Aspen replied with a cold laugh

Too bad Elsie Isnt clever enough to outsmart me.

After a moment of silence, Christina spoke up

Aspen, once you get your things back, could you maybe ask them to go easy on Andrew ? Aspen was shocked.

Christie, you cant be soft hearted about this

Donald is in charge of Jayrodale Police whatever punishment he decides is out of my hands.

Christina hesitated before asking, But once they recover your items, that should be the end of it, right? Aspen replied mockingly.

That depends on Donalds mood.

Though I didnt tell him exactly what to do, hes one of my most devoted admirers.

When he learned how Andrew connèd me, he was furious.

Andrew wont be released until hes learned his lesson.

Christina fell silent once more and said calmly, This is the lesson he brought on himself.

Ill stay out of it.

Aspen chuckled.

Christie, your energy shouldnt be wasted on someone like Andrew.

Once I help you deal with Harveys mess, Stevens Corporation can expand into Bridgefields and Blumedale

With the support from the major families there, your business will grow stronger.

Christina nodded

Thank you, Aspen.

Stevens Corporation does need to move beyond Jayrodale and into Blumedale.

Aspen smiled approvingly.

I knew it ! Christie, your talent and ambition were never meant for small town limits.

And, with your beauty that even I envy, once youre in places like Blumedale or Bridgefields, only heirs

of powerful families or wealthy CEOs will be worthy of you.

Christina replied softly, For now, Im not planning to date anyone.

Aspen shook her head, her tone turning serious.

Christie, remember this youth is a treasure for women.

Once its gone, it doesnt come back.

For women like us, near perfection, its crucial to shine our brightest during these prime years.

The world deserves to see it.

She continued, I know youre naturally reserved and dislike making the first move, but dont worry. Once the Harvey situation is handled, Ill introduce you to some top tier bachelors.

Compared to them, Andrew is nothing! Christina forced a smile.

Well see.

As soon as Cedric and Francesca returned to the Aicker residence, Cedric gathered everyone and declared, All apprentices under my guidance, prepare to leave immediately. Were heading to the Jayrodale Police Department to rescue Dr.

Lloyd ! Simon asked, What happened? Why such a drastic measure? Cedric gritted his teeth.

That arrogant fool Donald dared to disrespect me by arresting Dr.

Lloyd

Simon, get the others ready.

We'll make Donald release him

However, Simon hesitated and tried to reason with Cedric .

I don't think this is as simple as it seems

Andrew was reckless enough to provoke someone like Donald that's his misfortune, and I don't think we should get involved.

Do you realize what you're saying? Cedric exploded in anger.

Dr.

Lloyd has done great things for the Aickers and is close to Fran.

I can't stand by and do nothing! Simon was surprised by Cedric's intense reaction Sir, do you realize how many enemies Andrew has made in Jayrodale? He listed them off rapidly, The Weller family, Finley Atlas the Northern District boss, plus his unclear relationship with Lauren that'll get him eliminated by the Rhodes family sooner or later

Now, this troublemaker's been arrested by Mr.

Warren.

Clearly, someones pulling strings behind the scenes, Simon concluded, hoping to make Cedric reconsider his rash decision.

Chapter 358 In truth, Simon felt deeply satisfied, hoping Andrew would get what he deserved from Donald.

That way, no one would be left to compete with him for Francesca.

However, Cedric was not swayed by Simons words and instead gave the latter a grim look.

He demanded, What exactly are you trying to say? Sir, Im just reminding you that Andrews made too many enemies and cant be saved now, Simon said stubbornly.

He added, Even if all the Aickers tried to help, wed be powerless we cant risk conflicting with the police and destroying everything weve built.

Francesca rushed over with tears in her eyes before Cedric could strike his ungrateful apprentice. Grandpa, we dont need his help.

Ive already called Lauren lets go save Andrew now! Dont cry, sweetheart.

Dr.

Lloyd will be fine, Cedric quickly consoled her.

Francesca wiped her tears anxiously and said, Donald is notorious for using torture and crippling people.

Im worried well be too late! Simons face darkened as he watched them ignore him.

Sir, you think too highly of that nobody.

Hes probably already being tortured by Mr.

Warren, crippled and wishing he were dead! Simon grew angrier the more he thought about it, and finally, he could not stop himself from saying something vile.

Suddenly, a sharp sound rang out as a red handprint appeared on his face.

Francesca had struck him, her expression seething with fury.

Simon clutched his face, disbelief written all over him.

Fran, you hit me ? Over an outsider? Ive cared for you and protected you since we were kids, but now, for Andrew, of all people, youre raising your hand against me? Francescas voice was cold and unyielding.

Simon, Andrew is not an outsider to me.

And as for you, you know very well what your real intentions are

That night, if Andrew hadnt been there to protect me, Im sure I wouldve already fallen victim to you, wouldnt I? Simon felt his entire body flush with anger and embarrassment but forced himself to stay calm

Fran, I dont know what youre talking about.

That night, when Andrew brought you back, I was actually suspicious of him and his motives! He continued, Im sure he made up all kinds of lies about me to turn you against me.

But you ... you trust him over me? How wonderful! Francesca smirked.

Still trying to twist the story? Fine, let me make it clear my drunkenness that night? It was an act.

I was fully aware when you snuck into my room, Simon.

I saw everything

simon froze, his anger replaced by a chill that spread through his entire body.

Fran, 1... He opened his mouth to defend himself, but the words stuck in his throat.

Francescas eyes bore into him, filled with disgust and contempt, leaving him utterly speechless.
Grandpa, lets go to the station and get Andrew Francesca said flatly

She turned and left the room with Cedric and the other Aickers apprentices, heading straight for the police station.

Simon was left alone in the Aickers hall, his jealousy and resentment growing like an uncontrollable wildfire.

Fran, he muttered bitterly, his voice laced with venom.

So, youve figured it all out.

Fine.

No more hiding, then.

You are mine.

You belong to me and no one else.

But youre giving your heart, your loyalty, maybe even your body, to that loser Andrew.

I wont allow it.

And I won't be kind anymore.

I'll have you, Fran

Whatever it takes, by any means necessary.

Simon's face twisted with rage as his thoughts spiraled

With an enraged roar, he slammed his fist into a nearby ceramic jar, shattering it into pieces.

Chapter 359 At the Rhodes residence, Lauren immediately prepared to leave after her phone call with Francesca.

She would not let anyone who hurt Andrew get away so easily.

Miss, you can't leave without Mrs.

Rhodes' permission, Jerry blocked her way at the main gate.

Lauren's face remained expressionless as she said, Move aside.

This is urgent.

Miss, I must follow Mrs.

Rhodes' orders, Jerry insisted firmly.

Please return inside

Any urgent matters need Mrs.

Rhodes' approval

What if I insist on leaving? Lauren asked coldly.

Are you going to use force against me, Jerry? As Jerry frowned in hesitation, a sharp voice cut through the air.

How dare you! As a daughter of the Rhodes family, youre becoming increasingly disrespectful and out of line! Laurens mother, Tiana Lambert, the matriarch of the Rhodes family, approached with an icy expression

Jerry immediately greeted her, Mrs.

Rhodes, youre here.

Tiana simply dismissed Jerry, who immediately left.

After all, Tiana was no ordinary woman; even with his martial strength, he would have to listen to her.

Tiana asked Lauren, Give me one reason why you need to leave.

Lauren retorted, Im a daughter of the Rhodes family, not a slave.

Do I need to report my every move to you? Tiana laughed coldly.

Youre going to see that Andrew, arent you? When Lauren defiantly confirmed it, Tiana shook her head

and continued, As the Rhodes family heiress, youre free to do as you please.

Your father and I would do anything for you- but seeing Andrew is absolutely forbidden.

Im leaving today no matter what, Lauren declared firmly

Tiana barked, Lauren, how long will you continue this foolishness? Look at what youve become

because of that Andrew ! Joe is your proper match

Youll only regret throwing yourself away like this! Lauren remained unmoved.

Even if I regret it, Im not afraid to take that chance for Andrews sake, she stated, striding purposefully toward the gate.

Either imprison me or accept that no one can stop me from leaving.

Tiana trembled with rage but didnt order anyone to stop her daughter.

To be so stubborn over a nobody, she muttered.

Since you wont sten to reason, Ill have to deal with that.

Andrew myself

No commoner will ever taint a daughter of the Rhodes family! Meanwhile, at the Jayrodale Police Station

, Andrew and Elsie were led through iron gates in handcuffs.

Once youre behind these doors, you wont be able to get out, no matter what, Donald sneered at Andrew before eagerly leaving with the security case.

That thief just wants your Blood Phoenix Cicada, Elsie growled.

Andrew remained calm.

Let him take it III teach him a lesson soon.

Puzzled by his continued composure even in this situation, Elsie could not help but ask, Mr.

Lloyd, have you already contacted someone?

Chapter 360 Contact someone? Cant do that they took my phone, Andrew said with a smile

Then how can you remain so calm, Mr.

Lloyd ? Elsie sighed helplessly.

Andrew simply replied, Dont worry, someone will come get us out soon.

Elsie shook her head doubtfully

Donald was the Police Commissioner of Jayrodale with considerable power and influence, and she was

not even sure if Silas could help, given Donalds earlier dismissive attitude.

In his office, Donald immediately called Aspen.

Aspen, its all taken care of.

I have the security case right here

When would you like to collect it? No rush, Aspen replied.

First, tell me how youll handle this fraud case.

Donald laughed darkly.

As you mentioned, the case involves over 100 million dollars and priceless antiquities.

Once we hand him over to the judicial system, he wont see daylight for at least 20 years.

Aspen chuckled and said, In that case, I'll let you send him off for his free lunch as soon as possible. Donald laughed slyly .

Aspen, I'm a straightforward guy, so let me cut to the chase.

I've been running around helping you with all this

When are we going to reconnect as classmates and have a private dinner together? Aspen laughed sweetly, her tone laced with teasing.

I knew you wouldn't miss the chance, but before dinner, I want to see Andrew in prison stripes, sewing away in a workshop.

And don't even think about touching anything in that locked case it needs to return to me exactly as it is. Donald grinned.

No problem.

With the evidence in hand, getting rid of that guy is just a matter of a few words for someone like me. After hanging up, Donald rubbed his hands together, his chubby face alight with a lecherous grin.

When he invited Aspen for dinner, he had not meant a regular meal his real plan was to book a suite and make it a private dinner

At their level, they need not say these things outright it would come off as too vulgar and undignified. Nonetheless, Donald trusted Aspen to understand his true intentions.

People like them did not need explicit words.

They were on the same wavelength.

As his gaze shifted to Andrews locked case, Donalds curiosity grew.

Aspen seemed particularly interested in it, which meant it had to be something valuable.

Scratching his chin, greed began to take over.

Without hesitation, he reached for the case and tried to open it himself.

After several failed attempts at guessing the code he scowled and called in one of his subordinates

Bring me some tools and get this case open.

The officer hesitated.

Mr.

Warren, technically, this is evidence.

Were not supposed to tamper with it.

Donald slapped him across the head and barked, Dont give me that crap.

Im the one in charge here, and theres nothing I cant touch! Reluctantly, the subordinate obeyed, but even after working on it for a while, the case remained sealed

The lockbox, designed by Radiant Group for securing valuables, was nearly indestructible ordinary tools , and even explosives, would not do a thing.

Frustrated, Donald grabbed the case and stomped into the holding area where Andrew was being kept. Listen up, kid, he sneered, holding the case in front of Andrew.

Be a good boy and open this up, and maybe III make your stay here a little less miserable.