

The Ashes 571

Chapter 571 Finley silently cursed his hotheaded men.

In Jayrodale, Andrew had become a powerful figure with both Dylan and Natasha at his beck and call. With thousands of underground enforcers present, anyone reckless enough to start trouble would be hacked to pieces.

He sighed deeply, recalling his younger days when he had been just as cocky.

Back then, fresh from Hidden Dragons, he thought he could take on anyone and anything. Nonetheless, after countless humiliations and close calls in Jayrodale, Finley had learned the harshness of reality. The beatdowns, betrayals, and lures of the underworld had drained his fighting spirit.

Recently, he had even sought help to a therapist.

Stay put

Today, were just here to watch, he muttered, downing his drink.

Right now, Andrew isnt someone we can handle.

But dont worry, plenty of others want him gone.

The Hidden Dragons enforcers exchanged uneasy glances.

They could not believe how much Finley had changed

He used to be a ruthless tyrant, seizing wealth and women at will.

Now, he was playing it safe, almost scared.

Meanwhile, Rodney from the Madblade Martial Academy approached Andrew, carrying a black, gold trimmed tray..

Andrew, congratulations! Rodney greeted with a warm smile.

This is a token of our academys appreciation, We wish you great success.

Please, accept it.

Rodneys demeanor was courteous, without a hint of hostility.

Behind him, the other Madblade students stood tall and composed, saluting Andrew.
Congratulations, Dr.

Lloyd! May your name as a miracle doctor echo for generations! they shouted in unison, their voices loud and clear across the entire venue

For a moment, the entire crowd froze in shock, wondering what was going on.

They were shocked that the Madblade Martial Academy had shown up to offer congratulations instead of causing trouble.

Even Lauren and Francesca blinked in disbelief.

Lauren knew well that relations between Andrew and the academy had always been tense.

Up on the VIP platform, Marvin chuckled heartily.

Cedric, Mrs.

Rhodes, it seems we worried for nothing

Come, lets have a toast! Cedric raised his glass, smiling from ear to ear.

Dr.

Lloyds influence is greater than I imagined

Even Madblade Martial Academy had to show respect.

Impressive, truly impressive

Among the younger generation in Jayrodale, Dr.

Lloyd is clearly leading the pack.

Youre too kind, Marvin replied, grinning as he basked in the praise.

Cedric nodded in admiration.

Mr.

Yates, raising such a prodigious talent must fill you with pride.

I envy you.

With Dr.

Lloyd here, both Wealthroller Investments and your legacy are in good hands.

Marvin beamed, savoring the moment.

As a loyal steward to the Lloyd royal family, Marvin had seen Andrew grow from a child to the man he was today

Though he maintained professional respect for Andrew, he saw Andrew as the closest thing he had to family.

Watching Cedric and Tiana, Marvin could not help but feel mug.

Andrew had surpassed his wildest expectations, and Marvin relished every opportunity to showcase his success

Chapter 572 Behind the scenes, Marvin maintained lils respectful demeanor.

He knew better than to take liberties when speaking privately with Andrew.

Meanwhile, Tianas expression was dark as thunderclouds, she had fully expected the Madblade Martial Academy to crash the party and humble Andrew.

Yet, to her dismay, Rodney and his crew had shown up not to fight, but to deliver an elaborate gesture of goodwill.

Tiana struggled to comprehend why the academy, known for its pride and arrogance, would humble themselves before Andrew.

Mr.

Sanford, youre quite a rare visitor

I dont recall sending an invitation to the Madblade Martial Academy, Andrew remarked with a faint, mocking smile, his tone distant.

The crowd gasped.

Many thought Andrew was pushing his luck.

The Madblade Martial Academy had come to show respect, yet here he was, giving them a cold shoulder.

It seemed reckless, even suicidal

Rodney, visibly embarrassed, chuckled awkwardly and replied, You're absolutely right, Dr. Lloyd.

We came uninvited and might have caused some disturbance.

Please forgive the intrusion.

The other Madblade Martial Academy members, including Dean, all wore sheepish expressions. For martial artists, respect was earned through strength, not words.

Andrews previous encounter at their academy had left a deep and unforgettable impression, which explained why none of them dared to show even the slightest annoyance despite Andrews blunt demeanor, Ivan, the towering giant from the academy, who had mostly recovered from his previous injuries, forced a stiff smile as he stepped forward.

Dr.

Lloyd, your bravery and skill truly left a mark on me last time.

He bowed respectfully and continued, I'm here today not just to apologize but also to express my admiration.

You've earned my deepest respect! The crowd watched in stunned silence, unable to believe what they were witnessing the infamously proud Madblade Martial Academy was acting meek and even deferential. Lauren chuckled and spoke softly to Andrew.

Dr.

Lloyd, let Mr.

Sanford and his people take their seats.

Everyones watching, and poor Mr.

Sanford looks like hes dying of embarrassment! Francesca giggled quietly and added, Come on, Andrew, stop giving them such a hard time.

Mr.

Sanford already admitted his mistake.

Give them a break Rodney eagerly nodded.

Yes, Andrew, wed be honored if you could let it slide this time

From now on, Madblade Martial Academy and Moonlit Apothecary will have each others back.

If you ever need anything, just say the word

If I even hesitate, then Im not a real man! Andrew sighed reluctantly.

Fine, you can stay and enjoy the meal, but theres no need to bring any gifts.

Rodney immediately shook his head and spoke firmly.

Absolutely not.

Its a matter of principle

We wouldnt dream of showing up without a gift

Our academy may not be the wealthiest, but we still understand proper etiquette.

Please, accept this small token of appreciation.

Andrew opened his mouth to decline again, but Francesca quickly stepped in and snatched the tray with a playful pout

I'll take that, thank you very much! Honestly, Andrew, you have no sense of how to live frugally.

I won't let you waste good opportunities like this! Lauren covered her mouth, laughing.

See? I told you, Frans the perfect housewife material! Francesca blushed and glared at Lauren.

Without further ado, she peeled back the red cloth covering the tray.

Let's see what Mr.

Sanford has brought us

The moment the cloth was lifted, a brilliant golden light radiated outward, casting a warm glow on the crowd

Faces illuminated in golden hues, many spectators gasped astonishment, their eyes wide with disbelief.

Chapter 573 Holy! It's a whole platter of solid gold bars.

Madblade Martial Academy sure knows how to make a statement! Seriously, how much would all that gold be worth? Must be at least a few million dollars.

Are they really trying to cozy up to Moonlit Apothecary that hard? The extravagant gift had everyone buzzing

Even Francesca and Lauren were momentarily stunned.

Mr.

Sanford, this is way too much.

You're just here for a meal.

There's no need for such a grand gesture

Please, take it back, Francesca said, extending the tray toward Rochey.

While she was pleased with Andrew receiving gifts, this level of generosity was overwhelming.

Her kind-hearted nature made her feel awkward accepting so much gold.

Rodney waved it off with a smile.

Ms.

Aicker, please, just accept it for Dr.

Lloyd's sake.

It's really not that much

There was no way Rodney intended to take back the gift.

However, his grand gesture was not just about generosity -it had a deeper motive

Though Madblade Martial Academy had a reputation for arrogance in Jayrodale, that had changed after Andrews' legendary visit when he single-handedly wrecked their reputation.

Curious and humbled by the encounter, Rodney discreetly investigated Andrews' background and was stunned by what he found

Both Harvey and Michael powerful figures in Jayrodale had been defeated by Andrew.

Not only that, but Andrew now seemed to have full control of the citys underworld, with Dylan and Natasha, two feared crime lords, under his command.

Rodney knew then that Madblade Martial Academy could not afford to antagonize Andrew anymore. His grudge over the earlier incident faded in the face of cold, hard reality.

Though Rodney was brash by nature, he was not a fool.

He even informed his father, Vince, the academys founder, who was in deep seclusion.

Vinces only advice was simple it was better for them to submit than to be destroyed.

With that reassurance, Rodney wasted no time in bringing a lavish gift to Moonlit Apothecarys opening ceremony, hoping to mend ties with Andrew.

Francesca, still unsure, looked to Andrew for guidance.

I dont know what to do.

Youre the owner of Moonlit Apothecary.

Should we accept it or not? Andrew spoke decisively.

Of course were accepting it! This much gold is no joke.

Francesca raised a brow, amused.

Thats funny you didnt seem so eager to accept it before.

Lauren chimed in, her curiosity piqued.

Yeah, Dr.

Lloyd, you changed your mind pretty fast.

Andrew, unfazed, replied smoothly, Earlier, I didnt want to take it because I didnt want to owe Mr.

Sanford any favors

But now that Ive seen how tempting this mountain of gold looks, well... I cant just let it go.

He smirked and added, As they say, turning down money is a fools game.

Right, Mr.

Sanford ? Rodneys face twitched as he forced out a strained response R right.

Exactly! What a shameless guy! Rodney thought bitterly.

He couldve just said he wanted the gold outright instead of pretending to be all noble Francesca burst into laughter, covering her mouth as she shook her head at Andrew.

She should have known he was a gold digger.

Lauren also giggled at how Andrew had his greedy moment and was not always the perfect gentleman.

It was clear to both women now when it came to profits, Andrew did not hesitate to claim his share.

Chapter 574 Andrew could not help but chuckle to himself he definitely was not going to refuse that entire tray of gold, Rodney had brought it straight to him, so why not take advantage of it? He carefully handed the gold off to Francesca, who grinned brightly as her dimples deepened.

Mr.

Sanford, you and your team should sit down before all the foods gone! Francesca said warmly. Rodney waved his hand, polite as ever.

No need to worry about us, Ms.

Aicker.

Well just grab a spot anywhere.

After that, he quickly led the Madblade Martial Academy members to an empty table, keeping things humble despite their earlier fanfare

Dean subtly nudged Rodney and whispered, Mr.

Sanford, look over at the VIP section.

Rodney followed his gaze and immediately tensed up.

His heart skipped a beat when he realized sitting at the head table were Jayrodales top power players; Marvin, the wealthiest man in Jayrodale; Tiana, the matriarch of the Rhodes family; Cedric, the famous doctor, and Mark, the mayor himself.

Good thing we came to offer respect instead of trouble.

Otherwise, wed be leaving on stretchers today, muttered, quietly instructing his people to stay low key and focus on enjoying the meal, Rodney Meanwhile, Andrew, Lauren, and Francesca found themselves in an awkward predicament.

All the tables were full, leaving no seats for them.

Should we just crash a table somewhere ? Lauren suggested.

Francesca shook her head.

You two go ahead

Im not that hungry.

III head to the back to tally up the gifts.

Lauren grinned mischievously.

Fran, you little money lover! You must be thrilled with todays haul.

You have no idea! Francesca laughed.

Ive handled millions before, but theres just something magical about receiving gifts its a whole different level of joy! Lauren clapped her hands in agreement.

Exactly! Regular money doesnt hit the same because its either work-related or tied up in business.

But receiving gifts other peoples money being handed over willingly oh, its just pure bliss! Andrew shook his head, exasperated.

You two were just teasing me for wanting to keep Rodneys gold, yet youre both acting like treasure hunters now! Lauren giggled.

Oh, we wanted it too! We just have to keep up appearances.

Girls like us have to pretend to be polite.

But you, Dr.

Lloyd, as the host, its perfectly proper for you to accept it! Andrew sighed.

Of course, he had been roped into it.

He had accepted the gifts, but he knew exactly where they would end up safely under Francesca and Laurens watch, far out of his reach Francesca glanced toward the VIP section.

Marvin, Tiana, and Mark were enjoying themselves, laughing and chatting over wine..

So, when are those three going to cough up their gifts ? she wondered aloud, her eyes sparkling with expectation.

Lauren leaned in, equally hopeful.

Oh, if those heavyweights contribute, todays total could double in no time! Andrew opted to stay out of their gift greedy fantasies.

However, his gaze landed on Finley in the corner, drinking heavily and wolfing down food with his crew. A sly idea began to form in Andrews mind.

Lauren, Fran, Andrew said with a grin, you two want mere gifts, right? Well, theres a VIP guest over there who hasnt paid his dues.

We cant let him leave without contributing !

Chapter 575 Lauren raised an eyebrow in confusion

Who else? Youre not seriously going to ask Mr.

Thatcher for money, are you, Dr.

Lloyd ? Andrew grinned and gestured toward the corner where Finley sat sulking.

Not Mr.

Thatcher.

Its our good friend, Mr.

Moore

His uncles the leader of Hidden Dragons, so hes got deep pockets

The mention of Finley made Lauren and Francescas eyes sparkle with anticipation.

If anyone was perfect for fleecing, it was that unlucky fool

With playful determination, the two women followed Andrew, their heels clicking with purpose as they headed straight for Finley

Finley was busy drowning his sorrows in liquor when he noticed someone standing beside him.

He frowned in irritation.

What now? Cant a guy drink in peace ? Beat it! Andrew chuckled softly.

Drink all you want, Mr.

Moore, but how about paying your tab first? Finley froze for a moment before his face twisted in disbelief

He looked up and saw Andrew standing there, smiling casually.

His eyes widened in shock.

Andrew ? How the hell did you sneak up on me? The men at Finleys table tensed, their expressions wary as they watched Andrew closely.

Andrew did not bother to acknowledge them.

He kept his focus on Finley and continued in a friendly tone Mr.

Moore, youve been enjoying yourself- drinking, eating, even leaving bones all over the table.

But you see, all of this costs money

So how about contributing to the occasion ? Finleys face darkened immediately.

He slammed his glass down in frustration.

Are you serious, Andrew ? I had a couple of drinks and some food, and now youre shaking me down like

I owe you something? He could not believe it.

Never in his life had he seen a host openly ask a guest for money like this

It was humiliating, and in his eyes, completely beneath someone of Andrews status.

Andrew kept his smile intact.

Small business, Mr.

Moore.

You know how it is.

Surely, you wouldnt want to come across as stingy, right? And with your Hidden Dragons connections, Im sure youre not strapped for cash.

The jab hit its mark, and Finley bristled.

Are you calling me cheap ? he snapped, clenching his jaw.

He reached into his pocket and yanked out a wad of cash.

Slapping it down on the table, he sneered, There! Thats 1500 bucks.

Take it and get out of my face! Andrew calmly picked up the cash and handed it to Francesca, who beamed as she counted it.

Hmm, 15 bills.

Exactly 1500 dollars, she confirmed cheerfully.

Finley scoffed, crossing his arms.

Thats more than enough for this cheap spread

Outside, this wouldnt cost more than 600 dollars.

Consider that extra 900 a favor.

Andrew shook his head, feigning disappointment.

Still not enough, Mr.

Moore, Honestly, its pretty embarrassing Finleys eye twitched as he crossed his arms.

Excuse me? 1500 dollars isnt enough? Of course not, Andrew replied, his expression serious. Given your standing, thats pocket change

Its not about the food its about your reputation.

Imagine word getting back to your uncle that you showed up to a celebration and barely contributed.

Do you really want to embarrass him like that? Finleys face turned red with fury.

He laughed bitterly and leaned forward.

Wow.

Youve got no shame, Andrew.

Youll pull any trick just to squeeze a few more bucks out of people, huh?

Chapter 576 Finley sneered, his voice laced with sarcasm

You think using some reversé psychology is going to make me play the sucker and hand over more money? Andrew shook his head with a serious expression.

You misunderstand, Mr.

Moore

Im not trying to provoke you.

This isnt about greed for money

He gestured around them and added, This is Moonlit Apothecary Jayrodales most upscale medical center

Were hosting some of the top figures in the city today.

When guests give gifts here, were talking hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions in cash or more. Andrew glanced pointedly at the cash Finley had handed over earlier.

And yet, you come here and offer a measly 1500 bucks.

I mean, really, Mr.

Moore, how can someone of your standing think thats enough? Finley clenched his jaw.

Thats on them if they wanna throw money around like idiots! I wasnt even invited here, Andrew.

You cant expect me to be held to the same standard ! Andrew chuckled softly.

Oh, if thats the issue, then allow me to formally invite you now.

Finley laughed angrily, his fists tightening on the table.

Too late for that.

Even with your little invitation, Im not about to kiss your ass and hand you more cash! Dont forget, we still have a few scores to settle

Andrew was unfazed by the hostility, flashing a smile.

Alright, fair enough.

But whether you were invited or not, the fact is you came here, ate our food, and drank our wine, the same as the other guests

That makes you obligated to contribute to the occasion, doesnt it? Finleys eye twitched in frustration, wondering if Andrew was serious

He wanted to punch Andrew, but the bastards logic actually made sense.

Finley muttered curses under his breath, realizing he had trapped himself.

He had eaten here.

If word got out that he stiffed the host after dining like a king, his reputation would take a hit.

After checking his pockets and realizing he was out of cash.

Finley sighed and turned to his men.

Empty your wallets

Were giving him what he wants.

The Hidden Dragons men scowled but grudgingly complied

After all, they thought the food was nothing grand, and the 1500 dollars were more than enough.

Collectively, they managed to scrape together another 5000 dollars, which Finley slammed on the table in front of Andrew

Here 5000 dollars! Thats more than enough now! Andrew calmly handed the cash to Lauren.

Lauren, count it, please.

We wouldnt want to be shortehanged

Of course! Lauren giggled, clearly enjoying the situation as she began counting the bills.

Finleys face twitched in pure rage as he thought, Seriously? He doesnt even trust me to hand over the

full amount? He could not believe how greedy Andrew was.

After a few moments, Lauren smiled and announced, 5328 dollars, Dr.

Lloyd ! Andrew nodded in satisfaction before turning his gaze back to Finley.

His eyes twinkled mischievously as he leaned closer.

You know, Mr.

Moore, all totaled, your contribution is just a little over 6000 dollars.

Its almost....

insulting.

Youre not trying to short change me, are you? Finleys face turned a deep shade of red as he glared daggers at Andrew.

He finally understood Andrew was not going to let him off without squeezing every last dime.

Chapter 577 Finley crossed his arms, sneering.

Sorry, Andrew, but if you want more, tough luck! Were out of cash.

If youre that desperate, go rob a bank.

He was not broke, but he had limits.

He would not be bullied into emptying his wallet just for this.

Andrew raised an eyebrow and replied calmly, Mr.

Moore, dont push me.

Finley snapped, Push you? Youre the one pushing me! He was in disbelief at how shameless Andrew

was

Andrew simply smiled.

No worries.

You can pay by card, or maybe Venmo or PayPal? Finleys temper exploded.

Andrew, dont test me! Youve got some nerve

Ignoring his outburst, Andrew continued casually, And if youre low on funds, no problem! You can always take out a quick loan.

Ill wait.

Finleys hands trembled in fury, his eyes blazing red with barely restrained rage.

He had never been so publicly humiliated

Meanwhile, his Hidden Dragons crew watched in stunned disbelief.

Damn... Mr.

Moore wasnt exaggerating, one muttered.

This Andrew guy really is something else.

Hes practically a debt collecting demon.

Lauren and Francesca were barely holding in their laughter Andrew was relentless, stripping Finley and his gang of every cent.

Now, he was even joking about them taking out loans to pay him.

It was absurd enough to make headlines.

Finley gritted his teeth and growled, This is your last warning, Andrew.

Youre pushing me too far.

The other Hidden Dragons members chimed in angrily.

Andrew, youre crossing the line! Youve insulted Mr.

Moore enough already.

Yeah, man

Do you think you can just shake us down like this? Try that again, and well stop holding back! If youre

so strapped for cash, why not ask one of the VIPs on that platform? They can probably cough up a hundred grand without blinking

Andrew calmly stretched out his hand, his eyes gleaming with determination.

Whatever.

You ate at Moonlit Apothecary, you pay.

Everyone else, including the VIPs, has done it, You think I'd let them eat for free? Finley slammed his

fist on the table and shouted, You're asking for it, Andrew ! He was at his breaking point.

Normally, he would have gone berserk by now, but circumstances had changed.

His previous power base was in shambles after Atlas downfall leaving him in a vulnerable position. Andrew leaned in slightly, his tone cold.

Mr.

Moore, I'm sure you wouldn't want word to get out that you -mooched off a meal without paying, would you?

Chapter 578 Finley's eyelid twitched violently.

What do you mean by that? I'm warning you don't go spreading rumors ! Andrew chuckled. Oh, it seems Mr.

Moore values his reputation quite a bit.

But here's the thing this is my Moonlit Apothecary.

You've eaten and drunk here without paying, and that's just unacceptable.

He leaned in a little and added with a smirk, All it takes is one loud announcement from me, and soon, everyone in Jayrodale will know you're nothing more than a broke freeloader

Think about your uncle's reputation ! Finley's expression darkened further as Andrew casually said, So,

Mr.

Moore, why not save face and swipe that card? Or perhaps consider applying for a loan? At the mention

of Hidden Dragons reputation, the faces of the other gang members grew serious.

They could tolerate embarrassment, but their leaders reputation? That was sacred.

Mr.

Moore, just pay something.

Its not worth the fallout.

Yeah, if word gets out that Hidden Dragons cant even cover a meal, well never hear the end of it.

You know how these stories spread like wildfire

Itll be bad for everyone if this guy makes a scene.

Their words only fueled Finleys frustration.

His face flushed red, and for a moment, he thought his head might explode from the sheer humiliation.

Lauren and Francesca were already doubled over, their sides aching from laughter.

Andrew had cornered him perfectly, and Finley knew it.

The thought of being publicly shamed like this was unbearable.

Fine, you win, Finley growled through clenched teeth.

How much do you want? Andrew smiled cheerfully, rubbing his hands together.

Mr.

Moore, youve asked the million dollar question.

The more, the better, of course.

Finleys face contorted in rage

More ? Give me a damn number! I swear, if you push me further, were going to have a problem !
Andrew paused as if deep in thought before saying, Alright then.

Since youre being so reasonable, how about a modest 50 million? The air seemed to freeze.

50 million ? Finley practically choked on his own breath.

The other Hidden Dragons crew gaped at Andrew, their fury barely restrained.

If looks could kill, Andrew would have been a pile of ash.

Meanwhile, Lauren and Francesca grasped audibly.

50 million ? Andrew, are you out of your damn mind ?! Finley roared, his face twisted with fury

You think Im made of money? Youre asking for death, you greedy bastard! The tension skyrocketed. Finley was not bluffing anymore he was one bad word away from flipping the table and going all out. He was not poor, but Hidden Dragons was not his personal bank, and there was no way he would casually fork over that kind of cash, Moreover, 50 million was not a small amount money did not grow on trees, after all.

Chapter 579 Andrew sighed dramatically.

I cant believe it

You have a Hidden Dragons boss as your uncle, yet you cant even manage 50 million.

Fine, Ill lower it to 30 million

30 million ? Forget it! If youre going to keep pushing, then do it.

Id rather risk my life! Finley snapped.

Andrew chuckled

Alright, alright, you look like youre about to pass out.

Lets settle on five million.

Honestly, youre the poorest and stingiest of all the guests today, Mr.

Moore.

In the end, after some intense back and forth, Finley begrudgingly transferred five million to Andrew.

He stared at his phone screen, watching his balance drop, and felt his heart bleed.

Five million gone over a single simple banquet it was a humiliation he could not swallow.

The moment the transfer came through, Francesca promptly confiscated it.

This isnt some secret fund, Andrew.

Its part of the collection, so III keep it for proper accounting, Francesca said with a playful grin.

Youre not getting it back! 1 Lauren clapped her hands in delight.

Fran, lets tally up the gifts right now.

With suckers like Mr.

Moore here, we mustve cleaned up big time! Hearing this, Finley nearly toppled over in fury. Andrew patted his shoulder cheerfully as he teased, Dont be shy, Mr.

Moore

Eat and drink as much as you like

If you want more, just let me know, and III have someone bring out the best dishes for you. Finleys eyes darkened

You got me today, Andrew.

But mark my words, I wont let this slide

He added with mock sympathy, Five million is generous, but its still leagues behind Mr.

Sanfords golden offering.

Better luck next time, huh? Finley drowned his anger in drink, too afraid Andrew might actually press him for more money.

His gang members scowled.

Mr.

Moore, lets get out of here.

No point sticking around

Yeah, well make sure that bastard Andrew pays for this! However, Finley slapped him hard across the face.

You moron ! Weve already paid five million.

Were staying and eating every damn cents worth! The man froze, stunned, then nodded in agreement. Youre right, Mr.

Moore

Lets eat until this cheapskate goes broke.

They promptly launched an assault on the banquet, shoveling food like it was their last meal.

Andrew chuckled at the sight.

The banquet costs were laughably low barely a thousand per table

Even if they ate until they burst open, they would never eat through five million.

The event was winding down, with some guests finishing their meals and heading out.

Tiana, clearly unimpressed, signaled for Jerry to get ready to leave

Suddenly, another group entered before she could take her leave, drawing everyones attention the Stevens family.

Leading the group were Aspen and Christina, followed closely by Irene and Leroy

Trailing behind them were Aspens lackeys, Bruce and Jackie, along with a hunched, frail looking man named Gordon Woods.

Bruce and Jackie seemed particularly wary of Gordon, keeping a cautious distance from him as they walked.

Well, well

Looks like the partys just getting started, Aspen remarked with a sly grin.

Chapter 580 Aspen strode confidently to the center of the banquet, her expression cold and unforgiving

She swept a glance over the gathered crowd and sneered.

Looks like todays a good day.

Jayrodales most prominent figures are all here

Perfect timing III make sure everyone knows that the Stevens family from Bridgefields always collects their debts

However, Christina and her family looked increasingly nervous.

Christina whispered urgently, Aspen, you might want to reconsider.

Even Jayrodales wealthiest man is here today.

Youre playing with fire ! Irene glanced around nervously.

How on earth did that loser Andrew manage to gather such a crowd? These people arent ones to mess with ! Leroy clutched Irenes arm, his legs shaking.

Mom, I feel like fainting

Oh my God, look! Even Natasha and Dylan are here those two are killers, legends in the underground world of Jayrodale! Their initial confidence quickly evaporated

They had arrived intending to support Aspen and demand revenge, but faced with the overwhelming presence of powerful figures, they felt like helpless prey.

One wrong move and any one of these people could crush their family.

1 Aspen ignored their warnings.

She had no intention of backing down.

With Gordon, the Stevens familys hidden ace, by her side, she was fearless.

Gordon was a legendary figure in Bridgefields, a master of combat whose reputation could have spread across the entire Gabo Creek if he had not kept a low profile.

With him here, she felt untouchable

Aspen approached the VIP platform, her voice sharp and commanding.

Apologies for disturbing your meal, everyone.

Im here to settle a personal score today something thats long overdue.

Her eyes gleamed dangerously as she continued, So unless you want to get caught in the crossfire, I suggest you leave now.

Because today, Im tearing down the Moonlit Apothecarys name, once and for all! The words tearing down echoed with chilling finality, sending ripples of shock throughout the crowd.

Murmurs broke out like wildfire

Is she crazy? That woman from Bridgefields, right? She's got guts to come all the way to Jayrodale and

stir up trouble! Shh ! That's Aspen Stevens one of Bridgefields elite.

They say she's brilliant at both strategy and combat.

Looks like she's got a serious grudge against this place.

Yeah, I remember now! She lost big to Dr.

Lloyd at that auction a while back practically walked out in her underwear.

And didn't she pour a fortune into Northern District, only to watch it all go up in smoke? She's bold to

threaten to destroy the Moonlit Apothecary, but is she really strong enough to pull this off? In the corner, Finley's dark mood lightened at the sight of Aspen's arrival.

A wicked grin spread across his face.

Well, well, Andrew.

Looks like karma finally caught up with you.

Aspen's here to settle her score same as me.

Finley's eyes flicked to the hunched figure trailing behind Aspen.

That old guy... He must be the trump card she's relying on.

But who is he? A cold shiver ran down Finleys spine.

The old man exuded a menacing aura, one that hinted at a dangerous and unpredictable power.

Yet, Finley was almost giddy with anticipation.