

The Ashes 731

Chapter 731

Andrew and Lauren wasted no time. After handling everything at Glorious Pharmaceuticals, they rushed back to Rhodes Corporation.

On the drive back, Lauren could not hold back her curiosity. She asked hesitantly, "Dr. Lloyd, I know I shouldn't pry, but I still want to ask... Was it Mr. Yates who helped with the machine?"

Andrew nodded. "You could say that. I already realized that Stephen's factory, even though it's the best in Jayrodale, isn't all that impressive. To put it bluntly, they couldn't even get a single advanced piece of equipment. So, I gave Marvin a heads-up in advance and had him figure something out."

Lauren fell silent for a moment before whispering, "If Mr. Yates helped you like this, there must be a price, right? For example, maybe he wants to use you to take control of Glorious Pharmaceuticals. And from there, he could monopolize Jayrodale's entire pharmaceutical industry. It's not impossible."

Andrew glanced at her, surprised. "Lauren, how did you come up with that? Marvin has no interest in pharmaceuticals-actually, he's not even interested in making money anymore.

"Becoming Jayrodale's wealthiest man is already exhausting him. He keeps trying to trick me into taking over, saying he's done with it and wants to dump everything

on me.

"But I'm not stupid. There's no way I'd fall for that. Wealthroller Investments might not be a huge company, but there are still a lot of people depending on him. If he walked away, he'd be letting them down."

Lauren mumbled, "Oh," and said nothing more.

Still, she could not stop thinking about what Tiana had warned her about... that Andrew was nothing more than a deadly chess piece groomed by Marvin.

Through Andrew, Marvin would eventually take down all the major families and corporate giants of Jayrodale. Right now, it looked like Stephen—once the leading figure in the pharmaceutical industry—had already become Andrew's loyal supporter.

Moreover, Andrew had also gained control over the terrifying underground forces led by Dylan and Natasha.

Lauren believed in Andrew with all

her heart. However, she could not help but wonder if all of this was just an illusion and if everything would really play out the way Tiana predicted—that Andrew was just a pawn meant to lure her into the game.

Would all her hopes and dreams eventually shatter?

"Lauren, what are you thinking about?"

Andrew's voice pulled her back. She had been staring out the window, lost in thought.

Lauren smiled and shook her head. "Nothing much. I was just thinking... Dr. Lloyd, you've grown so much and become so much stronger. When I first met you at Jayrodale General Hospital, you were just this quiet figure in a white coat, standing apart from the crowd, like you didn't

belong.

"But now, everything has changed. I'm no longer the CEO of Rhodes Corporation,

and next to you, I feel like I don't quite measure up anymore."

Andrew pulled the car to a stop and turned to look at her. His expression was serious. "I haven't changed, not really. You just haven't fully gotten to know me yet. But one thing will never change—whether you're the CEO of the Rhodes Group, a rich heiress, or just yourself, I'll always like you."

Lauren took a deep breath and smiled. "We're here. Let's go up. And... thank you for helping me, Dr. Lloyd."

At that moment, she made up her mind. Even if Andrew really was just Marvin's carefully placed chess piece, it did not matter anymore.

Even if she was falling straight into a trap, she was willing to do so. She could not control herself—she had already fallen too deep for this man.

Andrew did not notice her change in mood. The two of them took the elevator up to the executive office floor. As soon as they stepped inside, they saw Marcus had already arrived with his people.

However, at that moment, Marcus' face was dark with anger. Next to him,

Lauren's assistant, Eunice, had a bright red handprint across her cheek as she sniffled quietly, trying to hold back her tears.

Chapter 732 Laurens voice was sharp with anger.

Who hit you? Eunice, tell me who did this to you? Tears welled up in Eunices eyes as she shook her head.

Miss, Im fine.

You dont have to worry about me.

Laurens fury only grew.

Im asking you who did this? Tell me, and I promise III make sure they pay for it! Eunice sobbed.

Miss, please dont ask anymore.

I dont want to cause you trouble.

Just as Lauren was about to explode, Andrew gently pulled her back and

reassured her.

Dont get upset.

Trust me -Ill make sure Ms.

Brooks gets justice.

Then, he turned to Marcus.

Mr.

Chapman, explain what happened here ? Marcus let out a sigh before responding.

Ms.

Brooks went to the Pharmaceutical Division to get the approval documents, just as you instructed.

Michaels lackeys not only refused to process it, but they also ran their mouths and insulted you, Mr.

Lloyd.

Ms.

Brooks couldnt stand it and argued back, but in the end... Andrews expression darkened into a cold smirk.

So, in the end, Michaels goons decided to hit her, huh? Marcus sighed again.

Mr.

Lloyd, I think we should hold off for now before demanding an explanation for Ms.

Brooks.

Michaels at his peak right now, and his people are getting more arrogant by the day.

If we confront them head on, we probably wont get the outcome we want.

Andrew did not hesitate.

He pulled open the office door and strode toward the Pharmaceutical Division with a chilling tone.

That depends on how we go about it.

I refuse to believe that if I stomp his head into the ground, I still wont get justice. Marcus face paled.

Mr.

Lloyd, dont be reckless! Eunice hurried after him .

Mr.

Lloyd, dont do anything foolish! If you provoke Mrs.

Rhodes over this, well all end up worse off! Andrew let out a cold chuckle.

Relax.

You belong to Laurens team, which means you belong to me too.

If someone messes with my people and I dont hit back, then I might as well just end my life here.

Laurens voice was just as firm.

Eunice, Mr.

Chapman dont try to stop him.

Dr.

Lloyds stance is my stance.

If they dared to throw a punch, wed make sure to hit them back harder.

Without hesitation, the three of

them followed Andrews lead,

straight toward

tical Division.

Vel

At the entrance, a manager saw Andrews icy expression and immediately tensed

up.

His voice trembled.

Mr.

Lloyd ... what brings you here? Andrew did not say a word.

He shoved the man aside and strode into the department, asking him, Who hit

.

Ms.

Brooks? Step forward now Ill give you ten seconds.

His calm but chilling voice echoed through the office.

The 20 or so employees inside immediately fell silent, all eyes turning toward him

Eunice rushed in after him, panicked.

Mr.

Lloyd, please, dont make a scene! Everyone here works under Mr.

Rhodes.

If this blows up and reaches Mrs.

Rhodes, I could get fired! Andrews voice remained indifferent.

If you get fired, Ill make you a Regional Director at Wealthroller Investments.

Eunice fell silent, her mouth slightly open in shock.

At Rhodes Corporation, she was just a secretary.

However, if she really

WealthCame a regional director at

Investments, that

Investments,

would be a five rank promotion night.

A sneering laugh rang out.

Wow, what a bold statement.

Offering to make someone a regional director at Wealthroller Investments- impressive.

A man in suspenders, his slicked

back hair gleaming under the light stepped forward with an arrogant smirk.

swho

Mr.

Lloyd, this is Rhodes Corporation, where youre a board member.

But here you are, meddling in matters related to Wealthroller Investments.

Hate to break it to you, but that sounds a little too far fetched.

Andrew stared at him, his expression blank.

So it was you.

You're the one who hit Ms.

Brooks?

Chapter 733 The man in suspenders lifted his chin arrogantly.

Yeah, I hit her.

What are you gonna do about it, Mr.

Lloyd ? Andrews expression remained calm.

Why did you hit her? The man scoffed.

The Pharmaceutical Division belongs to Mr.

Rhodes.

Some lowly secretary waltzing in here demanding approval documents ? Please.

Who does she think she is? Andrews eyes narrowed.

Since when did the Pharmaceutical Division become Michaels territory? As far as

I know, the director here is still Mr.

Chapman, isn't it? The man let out a mocking laugh.

Does it even matter? Mr.

Rhodes is about to become the company's CEO.

Once that happens, the entire corporation will be his.

And me? I'm the head of sales for the entire Pharmaceutical Division.

Just so you know, that two million dollar performance boost? That was all my doing! So, Mr.

Lloyd, my advice? Stop wasting your time.

Just step aside and quit dreaming about competing with Mr.

Rhodes, or you'll end up with nothing but a mess to clean up.

Andrew glanced at the man's name badge and suddenly chuckled

Since when does a mere sales manager think he can talk to me like that? The man puffed out his chest.

Mr.

Lloyd, maybe you don't understand how this works.

Shareholders only see dividends and profits, but it's us, the core personnel, who actually generate that money.

And right now, I'm Mr.

Rhodes' right hand man.

No offense, but even though I'm just a sales manager, my value to this company far outweighs yours.

Andrew's smile faded.

So thats why you hit her? The man let out an impatient sigh.

Mr.

Lloyd, if you have something to say, say it.

If not, do us all a favor and leave.

Weve got work to do.

For crying out loud, shes just a secretary.

She got slapped big deal.

If shes that upset about it, she can quit.

Its not like the company is short on useless employees like her.

His words were sharp and ruthless.

Marcus face darkened with rage.

Howard, do you even hear yourself right now? And lets not forget Ms.

Brooks works for Ms.

Rhodes.

Since when do you get to decide what happens to her ? Howard Lambert sneered

I dont care who she works for .

She came into my department acting out of line, so I gave her a lesson.

Simple as that.

A few of Michaels other subordinates chimed in, their voices dripping with mockery.

One said, Mr.

Lambert, were just sales managers,

just mid level employees, Were nothing compared to high- and mighty directors and board members! Yeah, those big shots love aeting superior, but lets be real none of them are as valuable to the company as we are! Once Mr.

Rhodes takes over the Pharmaceutical Division, people better know their place.

If theyre smart, theyll step aside and make room.

If not, theyll get kicked out! I just dont get it.

Weve been busting our asses for Mr.

Rhodes, bringing in results even Mrs.

Rhodes approves of.

r

So why are there still dogs barking at us? They burst into laughter completely dismissing Andrew and his team.

Laurens voice turned icy.

Say that again.

I dare you.

Howard folded his arms, looking smug.

Ms.

Rhodes, dont think you can intimidate us with your status.

I said what I said.

Some dogs just dont know when to shut up- Before he could finish, Andrews

palm crashed against his face.

The impact was so hard that his words got stuck in his throat.

With a loud crash, Howard flew backward, tumbling a few meters before slamming into a row of desks

, sending computers and office supplies scattering across the floor.

Chapter 734 Michaels lackeys stood there, completely stunned.

Then, their shock turned into fury.

One shouted, Andrew, you son of a- Andrew threw another slap, knocking one of them out cold on the spot.

A low level manager talking back to his superiors who gave you the courage to bark like a dog? Without missing a beat, Andrew turned and slapped another man so hard that a tooth flew out.

You think just because Ive been quiet, Im easy to push around? Let me remind you Im a board member, not some sickly kitten.

If you cross the line, I will make you regret it.

Two more slaps rang out, sending the last two executives flying.

A bunch of nobodies daring to insult a department head, a vice CEO, and a board member.

Ill let you off this time, but if any of you try this again, Ill make sure you know exactly what it feels like to be paralyzed from the waist down.

Andrew moved fast too fast.

In a matter of seconds, Howard and his four high ranking colleagues were sprawled across the floor, groaning in pain.

Eunice was completely frozen, eyes wide in disbelief.

She had never seen anyone dare to cause such a scene inside Rhodes Corporations headquarters.

Even Marcus and Lauren were in shock.

They had expected Andrew to retaliate against Howard, but they had not thought

he would take down Michaels entire inner circle in one go.

Mr.

Lloyd, Marcus said urgently, these men are Michaels key people.

Mrs.

Rhodes values them highly.

If you go this far, you might push her over the edge ! Yet, Andrew was not listening.

His face was ice cold as he took two steps toward Howard.

Howards face was swollen and lopsided, his suspenders hanging crookedly over

his shoulders as he struggled to stand.

He let out a furious roar.

Andrew, you son of a bitch you dare hit me ? Do you even know who I am? Andrew did not answer.

He simply slapped him across the face again.

Howards mouth immediately swelled up.

You think I need to know who you Andrew asked, his tone calm

are Howard clutched his face in agony, his eyes welling up with tears as he

howled.

Youre dead! I is my

You aunt! youre as

lay a hand on me,

s good as swear,

,

! Im warning you Mrs.

Rhode dead! Marcus face turned pale.

Youre from the Lambert family? Oh, this is bad! Mr.

Lloyd, stop! You need to stop now! However, it was too late.

Andrew grabbed Howard by the hair and shoved his head straight into the nearby fish tank.

Howard thrashed wildly, his muffled screams bubbling up through the water as he choked and gasped.

Hpward thrashed wildly, his Andrew did not let go.

Through the glass, they could see Howards face turn from red to pale, then from pale to an alarming shade of blue he was suffocating

Marcus shouted in panic.

Mr.

Lloyd, let him go ! If you keep this up, youll kill him! Andrew did not budge.

Only when Howards struggling grew weak him out of the tank.

his limbs going limp, did Andrew finally yank Howard gasped desperately for air, his chest heaving as he inhaled in ragged

gulps. vel

The moment Andrew let go, he collapsed onto the floor, soaking wet, clutching

his head and sobbing like a broken man.

Andrew looked down at him, his voice cold.

Now tell me does being from the Lambert family really make that impressive ? you

Chapter 735

Howard was completely terrified, looking at Andrew as if he were some kind of demon. His voice trembled as he stammered, "No... I'm not that impressive. Mr. Lloyd, I was wrong-please, I beg you, let me go!"

Tears and snot ran down his face, making him look utterly pathetic.

Andrew's tone was ice-cold as he spat, "If begging for mercy worked, then what if I just kill you right now and beg Mrs. Rhodes for forgiveness afterward? Would that make it okay?"

Howard's entire body shuddered, and he immediately burst into loud sobs. "No, no, no—Mr. Lloyd, I swear, I was wrong! Please don't kill me; I don't want to die!"

The feeling of suffocation just moments ago had taught him a brutal lesson- Andrew was not bluffing. He was the kind of man who would actually do it.

Howard had always felt untouchable because of his connection to Tiana. That name alone gave him the confidence to be arrogant, to throw his weight around even as a lowly sales manager.

However, none of that mattered when facing someone like Andrew-someone who did not care who you were and would crush you just the same.

Now, he was terrified. His last name might be Lambert, but what was the point of that if he ended up dead?

"If you really know you were wrong, then apologize to Ms. Brooks," Andrew ordered, shaking off the water from his hands.

Howard did not dare hesitate. He rushed over to Eunice and sincerely apologized, "Ms. Brooks, I'm sorry! I shouldn't have hit you!"

Eunice stood frozen, her mind completely blank. "N-No... you don't have to apologize to me."

Howard was from the Lambert family, and Tiana was the most powerful person at Rhodes Corporation. Deep down, Eunice had always feared people like them. Accepting an apology from someone like Howard felt unthinkable.

However, Andrew's cold voice cut through the air again. "Just a mere 'sorry'? You slapped her across the face-don't you think you should do something more?"

Without hesitation, Howard turned and started slapping himself. Each slap landed with a loud crack, his face growing red and swollen as he repeatedly gasped out apologies.

Michael's other lackeys watched in horror, their stomachs twisting with fear. They had heard the rumors-that Andrew was not afraid to lay hands on even the company's top executives.

At first, they thought it was just talk, some exaggerated showmanship. Yet, after feeling the weight of Andrew's slap firsthand, they finally understood-this was not an act. This was real.

"Andrew, you've got some nerve," a furious voice thundered.

line

Michael had arrived with his men. The moment he stepped inside, his glare locked onto Andrew. "Attacking key executives of the company without cause? Do you think you can get away with this? I hope you're ready for prison!"

Tiana was right behind him, her face icy as she strode toward Howard. Her tone was razor-sharp. "What happened?"

Howard clutched his swollen face,

tears still streaming down his cheeks. "Aunt Tiana, I didn't even do anything. The moment he walked in, he just started beating me up! He even attacked the other executives! Aunt Tiana, you have to stand up for me!"

Tiana gave him a disgusted glance. "Shut up. A grown man crying? The Lambert family has no place for useless cowards."

Howard immediately clamped his mouth shut. Then, as he turned toward Andrew, his eyes burned with hatred.

Now that his aunt was here, he thought smugly, 'Let's see how long Andrew can keep acting tough!'

Michael's jaw tightened with fury. "Aunt Tiana, Andrew may be a board member, but this? This is unacceptable. Attacking the staff is just like turning against the company—it's disgraceful! He needs to be held criminally responsible for this!"

Lauren immediately snapped back, "If we're talking about responsibility, then let's not forget about Howard. He was the one who hit my secretary first!"

Michael scoffed. "Oh, please. What's a little slap? Was she even injured? Show me the wound. But look at Howard and the others. They're covered in blood! Howard nearly got killed! Andrew is nothing short of a menace!"

Lauren started to argue again, but Tiana simply raised a hand, silencing her on the spot.

She turned to Andrew, her voice as frigid as ice. "Give me one good reason to forgive you. Otherwise, as of this moment, not even Marvin will be able to save

you."

Chapter 736

Andrew let out a dry chuckle. "Forgiveness? Mrs. Rhodes, I think you're mistaken.

I didn't do anything wrong, so why would I need your forgiveness?"

Tiana's eyes burned with fury as she pointed at Howard's battered face. "You didn't do anything wrong? Look at him! Do you see what you did? Andrew, don't think that just because Marvin backs you, you can run wild on Rhodes Corporation's turf!"

Andrew frowned. "So what you're saying, Mrs. Rhodes, is that I wasn't allowed to hit Howard? Why? Because he's your nephew? Because the Lambert family is untouchable?"

Lauren felt a pang of anxiety-Andrew was being far too aggressive with Tiana. Howard was not just another employee; he was part of the Lambert family. At a time like this, it would be better to give Tiana some leeway to de-escalate things.

She whispered, "Dr. Lloyd, that's enough."

Andrew simply scoffed and glanced at the other lackeys he had beaten down. His voice was laced with disdain. "Listen up-all of you. If you screw up, you pay for it. If you get hit, you stand up straight and take it like a man. This time, I only slapped you to teach you a lesson. But if I ever catch you throwing your weight around again, you'll regret ever being born."

Michael's temper snapped. "Andrew, you're still not admitting fault? You don't feel even a little remorse? And now, you're even making threats?"

Andrew shot him a cold look. "Why would I admit fault when I've done nothing wrong?"

Michael's face twisted with rage. "You beat them up! How is that not wrong?" Andrew let out a low chuckle. "Did you ever bother to ask why I beat them up?" Michael's voice was dripping with arrogance. "I don't care what your reason is. You hit someone-that's wrong. And to make it worse, you didn't just hit anyone; you hit Aunt Tiana's nephew-you hit my people. So I have every reason to believe you were just taking personal revenge!"

Andrew's tone remained indifferent. "If I wanted to vent my anger, I wouldn't have wasted my time on these clowns."

His gaze landed on Michael, and his lips curled into a smirk. "I would've gone straight for the biggest idiot in the room-you."

Those words angered Michael. His teeth clenched so hard it looked like he was ready to breathe fire, his glare filled with pure hatred.

Tiana's eyes narrowed dangerously, a chilling glint flashing in them. "Andrew, do you really think I won't take action against you?"

Andrew simply shrugged. "Mrs. Rhodes, if you want to come after me, I wouldn't stand a chance. But what I don't understand is this-just because Howard is your nephew, does that mean he gets a free pass? Because he's a Lambert, does that mean he can do whatever he wants?"

Tiana's expression stiffened. "You"

Andrew completely ignored the fury rising in her face. His voice was sharp. "Before you try to punish me, Mrs. Rhodes, maybe you should ask Mr. Chapman and the others what these idiots actually said.

"I just don't get it. These guys are just middle managers, making what-20,

maybe 30 grand a month? And yet, they think they're untouchable? They have the nerve to look down on me, a board member?"

Andrew turned to Howard, casually

fixing his crooked suspenders

before giving his cheek a light pat. "Funny, isn't it? We live in a capitalist world. Since when did corporate employees start looking down on the ones actually funding their paychecks? Tell me, isn't the very thing you people fear the most precisely men like me?"

Howard flinched, his entire body trembling, but he kept his mouth shut.

Michael had finally reached his breaking point. "Mrs. Rhodes, look at him! Do you see how arrogant he's become? He acts like throwing five billion into this company makes him some kind of god!"

Andrew smirked and let out a slow, mocking laugh. "Sorry to break it to you, but having money really does mean I can do whatever the hell I want."

Chapter 737

Tiana's voice boomed with authority. "Howard, do you admit to what Mr. Lloyd just said? Did you speak to him disrespectfully?"

Howard's eyes darted around as he scrambled for a lie. However, before he could speak, Andrew let out a cold chuckle. "I'd think twice before digging your own grave. Everything you said and did—there are surveillance cameras all over the Pharmaceutical Division."

Howard's face turned pale, and he immediately swallowed his words. He quickly changed his tone. "I-I did say some things I shouldn't have, but I—"

Before he could finish, Tiana slapped him across the face hard. The impact was so fierce that Howard saw stars, nearly blacking out.

Michael stood there, dumbfounded. He could not believe that Tiana was hitting her own family.

Even Lauren and Marcus were caught off guard. After all, Tiana had come in looking ready to tear into Andrew, but now she was disciplining her own nephew instead.

With blood trickling from his lips, Howard whimpered, "Aunt Tiana, w-why did you hit me? What did I do wrong?"

Tiana grabbed him by the collar, her tone icy. "If you ever pull something like this again, I'll send you straight back to the Lambert family. I brought you here to gain experience, to learn, and to make a name for yourself—not to get tangled up in pointless feuds."

He added, "Do you even know your own weight? Some fights are way out of your league. If it weren't for the fact that your father is my brother, I would've beaten you half to death already."

Howard did not dare say another word. He simply stood there, silently wiping away his tears.

Tiana's gaze swept across the room. "What are you all standing around for? Do none of you have jobs? Get back to work-now!"

The employees who had been watching quickly scattered, scurrying back to their desks with pale faces.

At Rhodes Corporation, employees feared Tiana more than they feared the so- called "gentle and refined" head of the family himself.

"Howard, come with me," she ordered before turning to leave. She had no intention of pursuing the matter further.

Michael clenched his jaw, his fists trembling. He silently cursed, 'Damn it! Andrew got away with it again!'

Andrew turned toward Marcus, Lauren, and Eunice and said casually, "Let's head back."

As they walked out, he called out to

one of the supervisors he had

slapped earlier. "Once you've

not

finished cleaning up, send me the approval documents for the Pharmaceutical Division's product launch. Got it?"

The supervisor, still nursing his swollen face, nodded frantically. "Got it! Absolutely! Mr. Lloyd. I'll have them delivered right away!"

Andrew smirked, thinking, 'Looks like a well-placed slap really is the best way to deal with spineless cowards.'

Back in Lauren's office, Marcus shook his head in disbelief. "I still can't believe it. Mrs. Rhodes actually let you off the hook."

Andrew leaned back in his chair, a smirk playing on his lips. "She didn't let me off-she knew she was in the wrong."

"In the wrong?" Lauren looked at him in surprise.

She had known her mother her whole life, and not once had she ever seen Tiana admit she was wrong.

Andrew's expression turned thoughtful. "Take a guess who do you think put Howard up to this?"

Marcus furrowed his brows. "Well, he's been working under Michael, so it must've been him. But if we're talking about manipulation, Howard isn't stupid. He wouldn't just let Michael use him so easily."

Andrew shook his head. "On the contrary-he was used. That's exactly why he acted out today."

Lauren frowned. "Howard is just a sales manager. Under normal circumstances, he wouldn't have the guts to be this bold."

Andrew let out a low scoff. "That's

exactly the issue. He's just a manager, yet he threw himself into this mess without hesitation. And why? Because he wasn't just acting as a manager-he was acting as a Lambert."

He continued, "With the Lambert family name backing him up, Michael saw an opportunity. He used Howard as a pawn, hoping it would cause real trouble for us. But what Michael didn't count on was that don't give a damn about the Lambert family. He thought I'd hesitate, but I confronted them outright instead."

Chapter 738

Lauren chuckled. "So tell me, how did you figure out that Mom felt guilty?"

Andrew smirked. "It's simple-she was furious that Howard let himself get used by Michael. Think about it. Someone as high up as Mrs. Rhodes-would she ever tolerate someone messing with her people? That's a slap to her face."

He added, "But she held herself back because someone of her status-someone who practically runs Rhodes Corporation-wouldn't lower herself to go after Michael directly. On top of that, Michael has her trust, at least on the surface.

"So, with no other option, she had to swallow her pride. She knew she was in the wrong, so she let me go without another word and just took Howard with her." Marcus nodded thoughtfully. "That actually makes a lot of sense, Mr. Lloyd. If that's the case, then Mrs. Rhodes must be seriously displeased with Michael." Andrew leaned back in his chair, speaking at a leisurely pace. "It's more than just 'displeased'. Think about it-Michael's incompetence is obvious. If even we can see it, do you really think someone as calculating as Mrs. Rhodes hasn't noticed?" He explained, "There's only one explanation-Mrs. Rhodes appears to be supporting Michael, even favoring him, but in reality, she's just keeping him on a leash. The moment he outlives his usefulness, she'll kick him to the curb."

Lauren and Marcus exchanged glances, both a little shaken by the thought.

Marcus gulped nervously. "T-That can't be right. If you're saying the truth, then Mrs. Rhodes is..."

Andrew chuckled. "Let me guess-you were about to say 'terrifying'. right?"

Lauren let out a cold laugh. "Now that Dr. Lloyd has pointed it out, I wouldn't be surprised if that's exactly what's happening. After all, my dear mother has a reputation. People call her the Iron Lady for a reason-whether it's her own family or complete strangers, she's ruthless either way."

Andrew shrugged. "Whatever Mrs. Rhodes has planned, it's none of our business. Mr. Chapman, gather your team. We've got a few busy days ahead of us."

Marcus straightened up, energized. "A little hard work is nothing if we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. With you leading us, Mr. Lloyd, we're not afraid of anything."

Glorious Pharmaceuticals was set to ship its first batch of products in just two days, and Andrew needed to make sure everything was ready.

This was where Lauren truly shined. Everything Andrew thought of-she had already planned ahead.

Moreover, everything he had not considered-she had covered those details too, down to the smallest thing.

Meanwhile, in another office, Tiana sat in her chair, staring coldly at Howard as he asked, "Do you realize what you did wrong?"

Howard hesitated. "Aunt Tiana, I-I know I messed up, but—"

Tiana's sharp gaze cut through him. "How many times have I told you? This is a corporation. You address me as Mrs. Rhodes, not Aunt Tiana. Or do you think being my nephew makes you superior to ever

else?" .

Howard shuddered. "No! I'd never think that. You brought me here to learn and prove myself, not to take shortcuts!"

Tiana's expression softened slightly, but her tone remained icy. "I don't want to see something like today happen again. Remember this if you screw up again, I won't protect you."

Howard hesitated before blurting out, "Mrs. Rhodes, but Andrew is completely out of control! He doesn't even respect you! Are you really going to let him get away with this?"

Tiana let out a sharp, mocking

laugh. "You idiot. What made you

think I fear him? I'll tell you right now-I don't fear Andrew. I'm just backed into a corner. And I'm only in this situation because of you!"

BUMS

Howard's eyes widened. "Mrs. Rhodes, you control the entire corporation! How could someone like Andrew possibly leave you with no options? You could get rid of him with a single order!"

Chapter 739

Tiana let out a cold scoff. "What do you know? Andrew's strength is far beyond what you and the rest of your generation can even comprehend! If I hadn't stepped in today, he wouldn't have beaten you half to death."

Howard clenched his teeth. "Fine, maybe I can't beat him-but our Lambert family isn't afraid of him."

Tiana sneered. "Still clinging to your family name for protection? Pathetic. Let me ask you this-when Andrew made his move, who was backing him? Did he have anyone supporting him? He walked in alone, and yet he crushed you—and that useless fool Michael-without breaking a sweat."

She shook her head with disappointment. "Watching you weaklings struggle is honestly embarrassing for the Lambert family. But Marvin managed to cultivate someone this powerful. That's something I can't afford to ignore."

For once, there was a rare trace of exhaustion in Tiana's voice, as if the weight of the situation was finally getting to her. Howard was too stunned to even be upset at her insults.

He had never seen Tiana wary of anyone before. Yet, Andrew actually made her hesitate.

That was completely beyond his comprehension. To him, dealing with Andrew should have been as simple as snapping her fingers.

Tiana shot him a sharp look. "Listen carefully. From now on, do not listen to anything Michael tells you. You're a member of the Lambert family, and I refuse to let you become cannon fodder in the Rhodes family's internal power struggles."

Howard hesitated before muttering, "But I thought Michael was the one you were supporting. Helping him means helping you, doesn't it?"

Tiana let out a mocking laugh. "That idiot? Do you actually think he's worthy of my support? If it weren't for the situation with the family's business in Blumedale, I would've made sure Michael disappeared from Jayrodale without a trace long ago."

Howard fell completely silent, too afraid to say another word. For the first time, he realized he had no idea which side Tiana was actually on.

Tiana studied him for a moment, then said coolly, "Go home. And forget everything you just heard. One more thing-stay far away from Andrew. Don't provoke him, don't cross him, and don't think for a second that you can challenge him.

"I used to think he was just another pawn-one that was being manipulated. But I severely underestimated him. A pawn with a mind of its own... one that knows how to fight back can be dangerous."

Howard hesitated. "Mrs. Rhodes, are you saying that even you can't suppress him?"

Tiana's lips curled into a smirk. "Suppressing him would be nothing more than a flick of my wrist. But I'm not after him. The real battle is against the one behind him-Marvin."

Evening came, marking the end of the workday. Marcus had already taken his team out to handle the logistics for the upcoming product launch.

Lauren stayed behind at Rhodes Corporation, managing the

company's internal operations. She said, "Dr. Lloyd, you should head

home first. I'll be here late-I'll

probably be working past midnight!"

Whenever she worked, Lauren's focus was unwavering. She flashed Andrew a quick smile before immediately turning her attention back to her computer.

Andrew chuckled. "Alright, do what you need to. But don't stay too late. I'm

heading over to Moonlit Apothecary to check on things."

Lauren beamed. "Okay! Just don't stay out too long either-get some rest when you're done. Love you!"

Andrew smirked before heading out, driving straight to Moonlit

Apothecary: When he arrived, he was surprised to see that even though it was already past 7 p.m., the waiting area was still packed with patients.

Cedric was running around, completely swamped. Yet, despite the chaos, his face was full of joy. Francesca had even come by after her shift to help out, and Moonlit Apothecary's appointment list was completely booked up.

"Doctor, thank you so much! My back pain is so much better!"

"Dr. Aicker, you're such a kind person. You work all day, and then you still come here in the evenings to help us seniors. You must be an angel sent from above!"

Chapter 740

The elderly patients continued showering Cedric and Francesca with gratitude. In Jayrodale, the Aicker family had long earned a stellar reputation in the medical field.

When Nyla spotted Andrew walking in, her eyes lit up with excitement. "Dr. Lloyd -no, Andrew, you're here!"

Under Andrew's firm insistence, she had finally stopped addressing him so formally.

Andrew smiled. "Yeah, I'm here. How's your health? Are you feeling better?"

Nyla grinned. "Way better! I don't feel any pain at all anymore. The supplements you prescribed worked like a miracle!"

Andrew nodded. "Go grab me a chair. I'll take over for Mr. Aicker so he can rest for a bit."

Nyla waved her hands frantically. "No way! Andrew, you've already been working all day. You should be the one resting. I'll tell Mr. Aicker to take a break instead!"

Andrew shook his head. "I'm fine. Just make sure Mr. Aicker gets some rest—I'll handle the remaining patients so we can close up soon."

Seeing that Andrew would not take no for an answer, Nyla reluctantly agreed. "Alright then!"

She quickly brought over a chair and let Andrew sit down.

Andrew glanced at the 20 or so patients still waiting and smiled. "Alright, everyone, gather around. I'm Dr. Andrew Lloyd, the head of Moonlit Apothecary."

A wave of surprise spread through the crowd. They had not expected to meet the owner of Moonlit Apothecary in person. However, as soon as they saw how young Andrew was, their expressions turned hesitant. Some even exchanged doubtful glances, wondering if he was actually skilled enough to treat them.

Andrew could easily read their concerns. It was common knowledge that older doctors, with their years of experience, were naturally more trusted. Meanwhile, young doctors were often seen as inexperienced, still needing time to refine their skills.

In contrast, seasoned physicians-especially those who were bald or had an aged, scholarly air-were automatically perceived as being more knowledgeable and capable.

To some extent, this assumption was not entirely wrong. Older doctors had sharper instincts and more experience, which made them highly efficient at diagnosing and treating patients.

Nonetheless, Andrew was not just any young doctor. Anyone who underestimated him would only end up embarrassing themselves.

Once the first patient stepped forward, the others quickly followed. Before long, Andrew had already treated four or five people, prescribing medicine as needed.

For those who did not need medication, he avoided it altogether. After all, medicine meant spending money.

These days, many patients developed an instinctive distrust toward prescriptions. They were tired of getting handed long lists of expensive medications-hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars worth-only to end up with a bag full of pills to take for weeks on end.

Most of the time, their wallets were emptied, yet their conditions barely improved.

Meanwhile, Andrew relied on acupuncture, therapeutic massage, and other

holistic treatments to relieve joint pain, reduce inflammation, and ease common ailments among the elderly.

His methods were so effective that

his patients quickly went from

skeptical to astonished. Soon, every

gaze directed at Andrew was filled

with gratitude and admiration

instead of doubt.

An hour later, Andrew had seen all 20 remaining patients and provided them with tailored treatment plans.

His speed and accuracy left Cedric and Francesca completely speechless.

An elderly woman, leaning on her cane, left Moonlit Apothecary with a big smile. Before stepping out, she turned back and praised Andrew enthusiastically, "Dr. Lloyd, thank you so much. Your medical center truly lives up to its reputation!"

Francesca, on the other hand, pouted. "Andrew, you totally stole Grandpa's spotlight!"