

## The Ashes 821

### Chapter 821

Andrew had no idea that the Stevens family from Bridgefields had already arrived in Jayrodale, looking for trouble. At the moment, he was at a commercial shooting studio.

Lauren was there with Shiloh, discussing some final details with the photographer. When Eunice spotted Andrew approaching, she called out, Mr. Lloyd, over here!"

She wore a bright smile, and any previous complaints she had about Andrew were long gone. Now, all she felt was admiration. After all, Andrew had stood up for Lauren without hesitation, even going against Tiana. That kind of loyalty deeply moved a girl like Eunice.

Andrew walked over with a grin and said, "Ms. Brooks, thank you for your hard work!."

Eunice quickly waved her hands. "It's nothing! You're the one working hard, Mr. Lloyd!"

Andrew glanced toward the photography set and asked, "Are Lauren and Shiloh almost done?"

Eunice's expression darkened as she scoffed. "They were about to wrap up, but Mr. Rhodes barged in with his team and demanded that his product be featured in the shoot too. Now, he's in there arguing with Ms. Rhodes!"

Andrew let out a cold chuckle. Without another word, he strode straight inside.

Inside the studio, Shiloh had already changed out of her outfit and was quietly sitting to the side, scrolling through her phone.

Meanwhile, Michael was there with several executives, trying to pressure Lauren. "We spent 20 million dollars to get her on board. So why should she only shoot ads for your product while mine gets ignored?"

Michael's face was grim as he added firmly, "There's no room for negotiation. She

He snapped his fingers, and one of the executives immediately stepped forward,

has to shoot an ad for me too!"

Oding up an outfit.

Lauren's expression remained cold as she responded, "First of all, Dr. Lloyd was the one who secured her, not you, Second, yes, the company spent 20 million dollars, but Shiloh only agreed to endorse our product. She never agreed to do yours."

Michael sneered. "She took the money, so she doesn't have a choice. Andrew did

go to great lengths to get her, I'll give him that. But I played my part too."

He said smugly. "So, be a good girl and have her put on the outfit. I even picked it out myself-trust me, it's eye-catching!"

Lauren glanced at the outfit

Michael's team had brought and let out an incredulous laugh. "Are you out of your mind? Shiloh is here for a pharmaceutical ad, not an adult film. You seriously brought a set of lingerie and thought that made sense?"

Michael was unfazed and even more

enthusiastic. Come on, no one

shoots traditional ads anymore. What sells is soft-core sex appeal teasing, revealing, and pushing the boundaries. You: the latest coconut water

commercials, right? And just look at social media-everywhere you turn, it's all about sex appeal."

He continued, "If you play it safe, covering everything up and acting all proper, your brand is as good as dead!"

Lauren's tone was indifferent. "Even if you're right, I still won't let you pull that nonsense with Shiloh." Michael smirked. "Oh, you think you have a say in this? Lauren, don't forget-the board is leaning in my favor for

the next CEO. Sure, Andrew's backing helps you for now, but the higher-ups are on my side. So why fight me when, in the end, you'll still lose?"

Lauren's expression remained blank. "Let's wait until you actually win before you start running your mouth. Michael, get the hell out of here. Stop wasting our time."

Michael snapped, "You're the one who needs to get out. Bring her over and have her change-no need for anything else, just put on this."

He tossed the lacy lingerie into the hands of two female assistants.

## Chapter 822

Lauren was furious. "I'd like to see who dares!"

At that moment, Andrew walked in, his tone calm. "It's fine, Lauren. If he wants to force Shiloh, let him try." Lauren gritted her teeth. "But Dr. Lloyd, look at that disgusting lingerie in his hand! He actually wants to force a woman who's taken vows to wear that tell me that's not perverted!"

Andrew's gaze landed on Michael, his smirk ice-cold. "Didn't you get enough of a beating yesterday? I'd advise you not to push your luck."

Michael let out a sinister laugh. "Speaking of yesterday, Andrew, I haven't even settled the score with you yet. Don't get too comfortable-I promise, your days of swaggering around won't last long!"

Andrew's expression remained relaxed. "Great. Let's see which one of us goes down first."

Michael's face darkened. Instead of ordering his assistants to act, he grabbed the lingerie himself and strode right up to Shiloh. "Here. Put this on and come out so I can get a good look."

His Adam's apple bobbed as he stared at her veiled face, his eyes filled with lust. With a chuckle, he said, "I bet you've never worn anything this nice in your entire life. Go ahead and change. If you make me happy, I can turn you into Jayrodale's biggest influencer."

Yesterday, he had already figured it out-this woman had lived a humble, frugal life, and she was desperate to make money.

Of course, Michael had plenty of money. If he played his cards right, with a little baiting here and there, he might just get this beautiful woman into his bed.

Shiloh's expression was calm as she said softly, "Sorry, but I don't wear things like this."

Michael grinned. "No need to be shy. Just trust me-once you put it on, you'll look absolutely stunning. Besides, I'll pay you just to wear it. Isn't money exactly what you need? And if you listen to me, I'll make sure you get even more."

Shiloh shook her head. "I already have 20 million. I'm not in need of money. And besides, you're disgusting. Your money is filthy-I don't want it."

Michael's face twisted in rage. "You little bitch! You wanna act all high and mighty with me? Do you really think-

Suddenly, a loud thud echoed through the studio. No one even saw when Shiloh moved. All they saw was that she had slapped Michael across the head.

Michael's eyes rolled back, and without so much as a groan, he collapsed to the floor, completely unconscious. Lauren's jaw dropped. "One slap, and he's out cold? Shiloh, how the hell are you that strong?"

Shiloh scoffed. "Knocking him out was easy. If I really wanted to, I could crush his skull with one slap,"

Lauren was still in disbelief. She glanced at Andrew and asked, "Dr. Lloyd, you knew about this all along?"

Andrew chuckled. "Relax. Anyone can be bullied, but in Jayrodale, if there's one person who won't ever be a victim, it's Shiloh."

Shiloh

down at Michael in

Before saying casually

bet

disgust before saying casually, "He's rotten to the core. Should I just kill

and be done with it?"

Lauren's eyes widened in alarm. "Absolutely not, Shiloh! We're in public! If you kill him, it'll be a huge mess! Michael's lackeys had already rushed over, frantically trying to lift him up.

At the same time, they glared at Andrew and shouted, "Mr. Lloyd, you ordered this violent woman to attack him! Mr. Rhodes won't let this slide!"

Andrew let out a cold snort. "No need to wait for later-I'm not letting it slide either."

"M-Mr. Lloyd, what are you planning?"

The lackeys panicked when they saw the dangerous look on Andrew's face.

Andrew's lips curled into a wicked smile. "Strip Michael down, then put him in the lingerie he brought."

A deep gasp spread through the room.

"Mr. Lloyd, you can't be serious!"

"Mr. Lloyd, this... this is worse than killing him!"

## Chapter 823

Andrew's smile was cold and menacing. "Mrs. Rhodes has given me full authority, so you'd all better do exactly as I say, or would one of you rather take Michael's place and wear the lingerie yourselves?"

The lackeys turned pale, their lips trembling in fear. Andrew was currently in charge of all operations at Rhodes Corporation, and even Tiana had to tread carefully around him. If they defied him, they would not just be out of a job-they would be as good as blacklisted.

Under Andrew's increasingly icy stare, the men exchanged looks, their gazes filled with silent agreement. It was every man for himself.

Gritting their teeth, they reluctantly began stripping Michael down. They removed his jacket, his shirt, then his shoes and socks. Soon, he was left in nothing but a pair of bright red boxers.

Andrew raised an eyebrow and turned to Lauren. "Does he always have a peculiar taste in underwear?"

Lauren wrinkled her nose in disgust. "I wouldn't be surprised."

Andrew looked back at the lackeys. "Keep going. Take the boxers off too."

They swallowed hard, their faces twitching. "Mr. Lloyd, do we really have to go that far?"

Instead of answering, he just looked at them.

The stare was enough. Suppressing their horror, they silently removed Michael's last piece of dignity. Then, moving as fast as possible, they dressed him in the lace lingerie he had brought for Shiloh.

Lauren and Shiloh had already left the studio by then. Neither of them wanted to witness something that horrifying.

Andrew, on the other hand, looked on with satisfaction.

Michael, sprawled out on the floor, was now wearing the delicate, revealing lingerie-his hairy legs and chest in full display, making him look downright grotesque. After a moment of thought, Andrew pulled out a small red pill and shoved it into Michael's mouth.

Then, he called over the photographer. "I want a full photoshoot, and a short video too. Make sure it's ultra-high- definition. Capture every single one of his most... expressive moments."

The photographer glanced at the unconscious Michael before quickly averting his gaze. "Lord have mercy..."

Andrew frowned. "What? Are you supposed to be so holy that you've never seen such a scene?"

The photographer, a bearded man with long, greasy hair tied back in a ponytail, had the aura of an eccentric artist. Hearing Andrew's question, he shook his head. "No, but I'm pretty religious."

He added, "This scene is way too disturbing. I don't think I can bring myself to do it. Just looking at him like that makes me want to throw up."

Andrew crossed his arms. "That doesn't add up. Aren't artists and photographers who love this kind of weird, shocking stuff? As far as I know, the more bizarre and twisted something is, the more your kind loves capturing it.

The photographer sighed. "You're not wrong. But I have principles. I'm not one of those deranged 'anything-for- art' types who throw away their morals."

Andrew smirked. "Alright, then tell me

-what's it gonna take to get you to shoot this?"

The photographer held out his hand. "Pay me extra."

Andrew burst into laughter. A problem that could be solved with money was not a problem at all.

Once he stepped out of the studio, Andrew was in a great mood as he waited for the photographer's finished work.

Lauren, however, eyed him suspiciously. "Dr. Lloyd, why are you making Michael wear lingerie for a photoshoot? Are you sure you don't have some kind of weird fetish?"

Andrew's face darkened. "Of course not. My taste is perfectly normal, thank you very much."

Lauren was still confused. "So this is

just about humiliating him? You better be careful. Michael might not

be able to retaliate against you right now, but that photographer might end up suffering for it later

Andrew waved off her concern. "Relax, I've got it all covered. The photographer asked for extra cash so I gave him ten grand. Once he's done shooting Michael's drag queen portfolio, he's skipping town to chase his dream abroad."

He continued, "Michael won't even have anyone to take his anger out on. Besides, Rhodes Corporation is in the middle of a PR crisis right now, right? We talked about this before-we need a bigger scandal to overshadow the bad press.

Andrew trailed off, his smirk widening. He did not need to explain further, especially since a smart woman like Lauren would get it immediately.

And she did. Her eyes lit up, and she clapped her hands. "Damn, I'm so dumb! Why didn't I think of this sooner?"

## Chapter 824

"Michael caused this whole mess, so it's only fair that he makes up for it. Consider

it balancing out his sins," Lauren said with a laugh./



She added, "Hell, once his horrifyingly ridiculous drag performance hits the internet, it's going to break the internet! People will be so busy gawking at his lingerie fiasco that they'll completely forget about the Wellers

warehouse fire. Dr. Lloyd, you're an absolute genius!"

Andrew also felt pretty satisfied with his own creativity.

However, the usually quiet Shiloh suddenly glanced at him and said, "Mr. Lloyd, it seems to me that you're just as wicked as he is."

Andrew's mouth twitched. "Shiloh, I'm literally punishing evil. How does that make me the bad guy?"

Shiloh looked at him seriously. "There are many ways to punish someone, but coming up with something this twisted? That's rare. So, I have my doubts about whether you're really a good person."

Andrew just chuckled. "Maybe I'm not a good person, but I'm definitely not a bad one either. That makes me... someone in between. And in this world, people who aren't too good or too bad are the ones who climb the highest and go the farthest. That, my dear, is the art of balance."

A few moments later, the photographer finished his work and walked out, holding a USB drive. "Hey, this footage is insane. I've seen a lot in my career, but this? This is next-level."

The man was sweating profusely as he spoke hurriedly, "Here, take it. I need to book my ticket to Terror Town immediately. This video is guaranteed to go viral, I swear to God! But as the guy who filmed it, I really can't afford to have my name attached to it. You have to keep this under wraps for me."

Andrew laughed. "Don't worry, I'll keep your secret. Terror Town isn't too far-safe travels!"

The photographer sighed dramatically. "This might just be the most explosive masterpiece of my career. It's a shame, though. I can't even take credit for it."

Andrew patted him on the shoulder. "Go chase your dreams, man. The world is full of people like you-silent contributors. They might go unnoticed, they might never be famous, but the things they accidentally put online? Those can change the world."

With one last wistful look, the photographer left.

Lauren was practically bouncing with excitement. "Dr. Lloyd, give me that USB! I need to see this so-called masterpiece for myself!"

Andrew thought for a moment before shaking his head. "Not yet The raw footage is... well, very raw. If you really want to watch it, I need to censor some P

first."

Lauren blinked, then immediately grimace "You know what? Good

call. The last thing I need is to see Michael's ugly-ugh. It's probably tiny anyway."

Shiloh, without looking up, added, "And thin."

Andrew nearly choked. "Shiloh, when did you become so brutal?"

Shiloh's tone remained indifferent. "I'm not being brutal. I'm just stating the truth."

Andrew was left speechless. As a man himself, he knew that none wound a man more deeply than having their private part being called 'small' and 'thin.'

After handing the USB drive to Natasha, Andrew washed his hands of the matter.

Natasha, on the other hand,

executed his orders with absolute

precision. She prepared two versions one unedited and one with a tasteful amount of pixelation.

Then, She coordinated with pene

who had over a thousand

no

underground network members, each assigned to share the video across social media.

Within half a day, Michael's barely clothed, lace-covered, wildly suggestive dance moves had taken the internet by storm.

[Wait... isn't this Michael Rhodes? The heir of the Rhodes family? No way. No fucking way!]

[Wow, what happened? Did Michael transition or something? Look at him, prancing around in lingerie like that! Like, comment, share-this is pure gold!]

[A boy next door, turned full-on diva. Michael's got a new name now-Queen of Sass]

[Haha! Holy hell, this is beyond viral. Someone, get this man a crown!]

## Chapter 825

Andrew sprawled out on the couch, phone in hand, eagerly waiting to enjoy the show. Shiloh sat beside him and nudged his arm. "Mr. Lloyd, move over. I want to watch too!"

Andrew shifted to make space but gave her a curious look. "Shiloh, aren't nuns supposed to be above worldly distractions? Besides, this kind of video isn't good for your pure and innocent heart."

Shiloh was unfazed. "I might sin, but the teaching of the religion remains in my heart. I can watch anything without being affected. Unlike some people, who clearly have demons in their hearts."

Andrew chuckled. "Well said. My heart is as pure as freshly fallen snow!"

Before long, Eunice arrived with her phone, excitement written all over her face. Lauren grinned. "Dr. Lloyd, I need to see this too!"

Andrew thought for a moment before making a suggestion. "Everyone seems interested, so why don't we cast it on the big screen?"

Lauren burst out laughing. "Now that's a brilliant idea! Watching it on a big screen will be so much more satisfying!"

Without hesitation, Andrew connected his phone to the screen and started the video.

On TikTok, the clip was spreading like wildfire. Within minutes, it had been shared thousands of times. As Andrew scrolled, he quickly found the infamous video- Michael, dressed in nothing but lace lingerie, was going viral.

A content creator had reposted it with a dramatic title, [Is This a Distortion of Human Nature or a Complete Moral Collapse? Michael Rhodes' Scandalous Lingerie Meltdown Is Setting the Internet on Fire!]

The video itself was pure chaos. Clad in lacy black lingerie, Michael was flushed red, his entire body twitching uncontrollably.

One moment, he convulsed like he was having a seizure. The next, he let out moans of pleasure, his movements growing more suggestive by the second. He was a spectacle-half seductive, half-deranged, and completely beyond redemption.

Shiloh glanced at Andrew and asked flatly, "You slipped him some kind of aphrodisiac, didn't you? That's why he's all dazed and flailing around like that."

Andrew smirked. "Of course. With a little help from that pill, he was able to showcase his full artistic potential. Impressive, isn't it?"

Lauren's eyes gleamed with wicked amusement. You know, I'm starting to think my dear cousin has a real talent for adult films. If the opportunity arises, we should sell him off to Eastonia. He's obsessed with their adult industry, right? Let's give him a chance to be on the front lines!"

Andrew shook his head and dismissed the idea from a professional standpoint. "That wouldn't work. Eastonians adult actors need skill and stamina. I can't vouch for Michael's technique, but physically? He's absolutely not cut out for it. He'd be lucky to last a few seconds before tapping out."

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Meanwhile, at the Rhodes Corporation headquarters...

A sudden scream erupted in the office. "Oh my god! Everyone, check TikTok-Mr. Rhodes is famous!"

A nearby female employee, still opening the app, turned to her colleague with curiosity. "Sia, what did you find? Don't tell me it's another one of your foreign model crushes."

Sia's face twisted into an odd mix of

disgust and fascination as she

shook her head. "No, just open

TikTok and see for yourself. I already sent it to everyone. Trust me, it's spectacular."

Seconds later, the entire office exploded into chaos. Employees gasped, eyes wide with horror and delight.

One said, "I can't this is so disgusting... But okay, maybe just one more look. Just one!"

"Holy hell, I never realized Mr. Rhodes could be sluttier than the woman at that nightclub next door. Ladies, would you say he's sexy?"

A chorus of voices rang out. "Hell yes!"

Inside her office, Tiana furrowed her brows as the commotion outside grew louder. "What's going on?"

Jerry returned moments later, his expression unreadable.

Tiana looked up at him. "What happened?"

Jerry silently took out his phone, pulled up the video, and handed it to her. "Mrs.

Rhodes, you should see for yourself."

## Chapter 826

Tiana watched the video, her face first twisting in jealousy and disgust before she suddenly fell into deep thought.

Jerry hesitated before asking, "Mrs. Rhodes, this video could seriously impact the Rhodes family's reputation. Should we have someone take it down?"

Tiana immediately waved her hand. "No need! Send out a company-wide notice under my name—every single one of Rhodes Corporation's 500 employees is required to share and repost this video at least once."

Jerry looked at her in shock. "What?"

Tiana smirked. "Don't you see? This video couldn't have come at a better time. It's the perfect distraction to bury all the bad press the company was getting before. Now, this is all the public will talk about."

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Meanwhile, at Bane's mansion, Michael was undergoing treatment to detox his system.

Bane said, "Mr. Rhodes, your body is fine. You just have some lingering effects from a strong aphrodisiac, which left you overheated and exhausted. You'll be back to normal in a couple of days."

He gestured for Michael to put his pants back on.

Michael gritted his teeth. "It's not just that-I have a splitting headache too. What's causing that?"

Bane answered, "That's from a heavy blow to the head. Think-did someone beat the hell out of you recently?"

Michael's mind instantly flashed back to Shiloh's veiled face, and his expression twisted in rage. "That bitch!"

The last thing he remembered was getting slapped by Shiloh so hard he blacked out. When he woke up, he had already been moved to Bane's place. What happened in between was a complete mystery. All he knew was that he had woken up feeling feverish, unbearably restless, and with a pounding headache.

Just then, his phone buzzed with a new message. Michael glanced at it and frowned. "Why the hell is someone sending me a video? Boring."

A second message popped up from another contact-this time, with a comment.

[Michael, congrats! You're an internet sensation now. I downloaded your masterpiece and saved it for future viewing. Gonna enjoy it every now and then!]

Michael's annoyance spiked. The message was from a guy in his social circle- one notorious for his disturbing, degenerate taste in videos.

Michael always found his content repulsive. He mumbled, "My masterpiece? What the hell is he talking about?"

Confused, Michael clicked on the video, determined to see what kind of trash he had been sent. The screen lit up, and instantly, a horrifying scene unfolded before his eyes.

A hairy-chested, hairy-legged man was on screen, dressed in nothing but a skimpy lace lingerie set. He was caressing himself, moaning in exaggerated pleasure, his body twisting and convulsing in ways that were both suggestive and absolutely disgusting.

"Fuck! I knew it! What a goddamn pervert, a freak! Whoever the hell this is, if I

ever find him, I'll beat him to death!"

Michael exploded in fury, his

stomach twisting in revulsion. The

sight of a man acting so

shamelessly made him sick to his core worse than if he had been force-fed garbage.

Bane, hearing the commotion, casually glanced at the screen. Then, his whole body stiffened.

He paled as he slowly turned back to Michael. "Uh... Mr. Rhodes... that guy in the video... isn't that you? Why the hell are you cussing yourself out?"

Michael's blood ran cold, and his pulse pounded in his ears. A creeping, horrifying realization clawed its way into his brain.

He thought there was something familiar about the man in the video. He had dismissed it at first, thinking he had seen this freak somewhere

before but could poor

where. As he took another look, pure terror crashed down on him like a tidal wave.

Michael let out a bloodcurdling scream and hurled his phone across the room.



"No! That's not me! It can't be me! Who did this? Who the fuck did this to me? I can't remember anything! How did this happen?! Why's this happening?"

His cries were so gut-wrenching, so full of sheer devastation, echoing throughout Bane's mansion.

## Chapter 827

Andrew was having the time of his life, scrolling through the internet to see just how many people were tearing into Michael. At first, he tried counting the insults, but after a while, he gave up.

There was no point because the entire comment section was a flood of mockery- so many that it was downright impossible to keep track. Turning his head, he caught a glimpse of Shiloh quietly sharing Michael's viral video.

She even added a caption. [Everyone, please do me a favor and mock him!]

Shiloh had a million followers online. With just that one post, Michael's humiliation skyrocketed to another level.

Andrew could already picture it—Michael would not dare step outside without covering his head with a hoodie, or better yet, wrapping his whole face in a scarf.

Well, if he ever did, there were bound to be people who would not just stop at verbal insults. Some might even beat the crap out of him on sight.

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Meanwhile, at the Stevens mansion.

The entire Stevens family's forces had arrived in Jayrodale in full battle mode. Aspen's face drained of color the moment she saw Zephyr step into the hall. "D- Dad, you're here."

Then, when she looked past him, her stomach dropped. It was not just Zephyr; two of the family's senior grandmasters had also arrived.

Not to mention dozens of elite fighters, all armed to the teeth.

This was not just an ordinary retaliation-Bridgefields' Stevens family had sent everything they had.

Zephyr sat in the grand hall, his face dark and brooding. He did not say a word for a long time, his silence suffocating the room.

Aspen felt like she was suffocating too. She was not stupid and figured that Zephyr must have discovered something major. Otherwise, he would not have assembled the entire family's combat force and stormed into Jayrodale without a word.

However, the terrifying part was that she had sent no messages back to Bridgefields. So, how had Zephyr figured it out?

After a long silence, one of the Stevens family's top enforcers stepped forward and bowed. "Sir, we've already issued a formal demand in your name. That bastard Andrew has two choices-he either comes here, kneels before you, and accepts his fate..."

He continued, "Or, if he refuses, you will personally hunt him down and make him pay with his life!"

Zephyr's ice-cold expression finally relaxed a little after hearing this. He asked, "Are you certain about his location?"

The enforcer grinned. "Rest assured, sir. I arrived in Jayrodale ahead of time and already tracked him down. Right now, he's at Rhodes Corporation."

Zephyr waved a hand dismissively and said in a chilling tone, "Good. Then I'll wait right here for him to come and face his death. If he doesn't show up within the given

time or tries to run-then I'll show him what true despair means!"

Aspen finally realized the full picture-Zephyr was not here for some random business matter. He had come to Jayrodale specifically to kill Andrew.

She immediately panicked and exclaimed, "Dad, no! You cannot go against Andrew here in Jayrodale. If you do—"

Before she could finish, Zephyr's furious roar shook the entire hall. "Shut up, you disgraceful fool! How much longer were you planning to keep me in the dark? Huh?"

He snapped, "You dared to tell me that everything was under control in Jayrodale? And yet, you were beaten to the ground like a worthless dog and nearly defiled?! Do you even realize how much shame you have brought upon the Stevens family?"

Aspen felt her mind go blank as his words crashed down on her like a sledgehammer. She realized that it was all over for her.

The main branch of the Stevens family in Bridgefields knew everything—her failure in Jayrodale, the humiliating defeat she had desperately tried to cover up. Her once-untouchable reputation—her lifelong honor—was utterly ruined.

Zephyr sneered. "What? No excuses? Hmph. I won't deal with your incompetence right now. Once I rip Andrew apart, then I'll come back and settle things with you!"

Aspen shuddered violently, her voice trembling with desperation. "Dad, no! You cannot go after Andrew! Our family might not be able to beat him. If you insist on this fight, it could destroy us!"

Zephyr let out a cold, humorless laugh. "Aspen, you were raised by me. You were supposed to be the pride of the Stevens family. You've never disappointed me before, not once!"

## Chapter 828

Zephyr said, "Aspen, you've barely been in Jayrodale for any time at all, and you've already become this cowardly? So scared to take action? You've truly disappointed me. And worse, you've disgraced the entire Stevens family!"

Tears streamed down Aspen's face. Her father's words cut her deeply, filling her with shame and despair. As someone who had always been proud and arrogant, her greatest fear was disappointing her family.

Yet, more than that, she was terrified-terrified that Zephyr, blinded by anger and unaware of Jayrodale's true power dynamics, would lead the entire Stevens family to ruin.

If that happened, she would not just be a failure. She would be the greatest disgrace in the family's history.

"Dad, please, you have to listen to me!" Aspen pleaded, her voice breaking. "Andrew is the underground king of Jayrodale now. If we fight him head-on, we will lose!"

She gazed at Zephyr through her tear-filled eyes, desperate to make him understand. She had finally let go of her past grudges, no longer wanting revenge against Andrew or going against him.

After all, failure after failure had made one thing painfully clear-she and Andrew were leagues apart, and the gap between them was an abyss.

However, Zephyr refused to listen. He sneered. "Underground king? What a load of bullshit. He's nothing more than a nobody. Before coming here, I had him thoroughly investigated."

He added, "And what did I find? A worthless mongrel who dares to challenge the Stevens family! If I don't wipe him out, how will I ever hold my head high in Bridgefields?"

Aspen's blood ran cold. She dropped to her knees, crawling forward and grasping his leg. "Dad, I beg you, please listen! Please be careful! Jayrodale is not Bridgefields! Andrew isn't just the underground king—he even killed Mr. Woods! He's not someone our family can go up against!"

Zephyr froze, staring at her in silence. Hope flickered in Aspen's heart, and she wondered if he was finally listening to her and was convinced by her words.

However, the next second, Zephyr's expression twisted into a snarl. With a sharp crack, his hand struck across her face.

Aspen hit the floor hard, tasting blood in her mouth. She clutched her cheek, staring up at him in disbelief.

Zephyr's face was stormy as he

jabbed a finger at her. "Listen to

me-if I hear one more word of this

nonsense, I will beat you to death myself! Hmph! The Stevens family has sent out everything! Even if we had to face the Wellers or the Rhodes, why should we fear them?"

He continued, "Let alone some insignificant loser like Andrew! And you're telling me that Gordon died at his hands? You must be out of your mind! You've failed in Jayrodale, so now you're spewing nonsense to cover up your incompetence!"

His fury was terrifying, his presence suffocating.

Aspen trembled, barely holding back her sobs. "Dad, I swear every word I've said is true! I'm not lying to you. You can't go after Andrew! If you do, our entire family-our decades of

legacy-could be des

Zephyr's patience snapped. He roared, "Guards! Take her away and lock her up!

If she dares to keep spouting cowardly nonsense, beat her to death!"

Two enforcers stepped forward immediately, grabbing Aspen by the arms. She struggled, but it was useless.

Terror clawed at her throat.

It was over. Zephyr would not listen to her, and if Andrew retaliated, the Stevens family would never leave Jayrodale alive.

That realization sent a wave of dizziness crashing over her, and for a moment, she almost fainted in sheer panic.

## Chapter 829

Minute by minute, time continued to pass. Zephyr sat alone in the grand hall of the Stevens Mansion, his impatience growing by the second.

He could not understand how the once-proud daughter he had raised had become so spineless. Aspen, who had always been confident and strong-willed, now sat there crying like a weak, helpless fool. It was humiliating.

The Stevens family's entire force was now in Jayrodale-a military presence strong enough to flatten anyone in their way. Taking down some nobody named Andrew should be an easy task.

Zephyr had already made up his mind. Not only would he crush Andrew, but now that he was in Jayrodale, he would also challenge the Rhodes, the Wellers, and anyone else who dared stand in his way.

Aspen had been sent to Jayrodale with a mission. Since she had failed, it was time for him, the head of the Stevens family, to take matters into his own hands.

Just then, Irene and Leroy arrived with Christina, all wearing polite smiles.

"Mr. Zephyr, welcome!" Irene greeted him warmly.

Zephyr barely glanced at her and Leroy before his sharp gaze landed on Christina.

"Christie, I should be thanking you. If it weren't for your warning, I wouldn't have known that Aspen had been so thoroughly humiliated here in Jayrodale."

His voice carried pure rage.

Christina lowered her head humbly. "You flatter me, Mr. Zephyr. I just couldn't bear to see Aspen suffering any longer, so I had no choice but to inform you."

Zephyr let out a chilling snort. "You did well. At the very least, you made me aware of this Andrew-this arrogant little rat who dared to cross the Stevens family. I won't rest until I skin him alive."

Christina remained calm as she replied, "Mr. Zephyr, Aspen wasn't wrong. Andrew has grown into a formidable force. You should proceed with caution."

Zephyr waved a dismissive hand, his face full of disdain. "Underground king? What a joke. I'll see for myself how 'powerful' he really is."

"In Jayrodale, I've heard of Tony Madden, Atlas Giordano, the Wellers, and the Rhodes family-but Andrew Lloyd? Never heard of him!"

His words dripped with scorn.

Leroy's eyes flickered with amusement. "Mr. Zephyr, so it's safe to say that Andrew is as good as dead?"

Zephyr's lips curled into a sinister grin. "Of course. I won't just kill him—I'll make sure he suffers first."

Irene chimed in, adding fuel to the fire. "Mr. Zephyr, you should have come to Jayrodale long ago to get rid of that menace! Aspen has suffered so many humiliations under his hands. There was even a time when Andrew nearly had her assaulted by the Madblade Martial Academy!"

She let out a heavy sigh, shaking her head. "We tried to help, but unfortunately, our family wasn't strong enough. Otherwise, we would have avenged Aspen ourselves!"

Zephyr's expression grew even darker, his fury radiating off him in waves. His fingers clenched into a tight fist, the bones cracking audibly.

Behind him, the Stevens family enforcers exchanged murderous glances, their eyes gleaming with battle lust.

Christina remained silent, not adding to the conversation, but she was actually seething with bitterness.

She thought, 'Andrew, don't blame me for this. Blame yourself for not knowing when to give in, and blame yourself for being too heartless. I gave you a chance, but instead of taking it, you humiliated me. Now, you'll see just how ruthless a woman's revenge can be

...

As time passed, news spread like wildfire across Jayrodale. The entire Stevens family-their main branch, their top enforcers, and their strongest warriors-had all stormed into the city.

Both the underground and corporate worlds were in an uproar. No one knew what could have possibly happened to make Zephyr personally lead an army into Jayrodale.

However, those with inside knowledge already knew Zephyr had come to Jayrodale for one reason, and that reason was Andrew.

#### Chapter 830

Before long, it became the talk of the town.

Someone said, "Andrew Lloyd? Haha, that kid really knows how to stir the pot. He's pissed off so many people that his enemies are now storming out of Bridgefields just to hunt him down."

"No doubt about it-he's a dead man walking. Zephyr brought the entire Stevens family with him, and I heard he even has two senior grandmasters by his side. Andrew has no way out this time!"

"I wouldn't be so sure. Andrew's been making big moves in Jayrodale lately. He has deep ties with Rhodes Corporation; rumor has it he's Natasha's little plaything. If Zephyr tries to use brute force, he might end up provoking both powerhouses!"

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At that moment, Andrew had just received news that Zephyr, had arrived in Jayrodale, fully armed and ready to settle scores. He muttered, "Interesting... So,

I beat up the daughter, and now the father shows up for revenge?"

He clicked his tongue, feeling nothing but boredom. His first instinct was to march straight into the Stevens mansion, crush Zephyr underfoot, and demand an explanation.

However, after a brief pause, he changed his mind and turned to Dylan and Natasha.



"You two handle it. Go to Stevens Mansion and deal with Zephyr. This is the perfect chance to see how much stronger you've gotten after taking the Cleansing Pills."

Dylan and Natasha accepted the order without hesitation, immediately gathering their forces and heading for the Stevens mansion.

If Zephyr ever found out that Andrew did not even consider him worth dealing with personally-treating him instead as a training exercise for his subordinates-he just might drop dead from sheer rage.

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Tiana found Andrew shortly after, a knowing smirk on her face. "Mr. Lloyd, need some help?"

Andrew's tone was indifferent. "Mrs. Rhodes, if you're referring to the Stevens family causing trouble, then no, I've got it handled."

Tiana let out a cold chuckle.

"Andrew, don't act tough if you can't back it up if you just ask me for help, I wouldn't mind doing you a favor. After all, you have done a lot for Rhodes Corporation lately And I'm not someone who forgets

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favours."

Andrew shook his head. "I appreciate the offer, Mrs. Rhodes, But this is just the Stevens family we're talking about. I don't even need to lift a finger-so why would I trouble you?"

Tiana scoffed. "Fine, be stubborn. But don't come crawling to me when Zephyr beats you half to death."

Andrew lazily stretched. "Relax, Mrs. Rhodes. When it comes to people begging, it's usually them begging me-like you. And as far as I remember, I don't beg anyone, ever."

Tiana's expression darkened, and with a flick of her sleeve, she stormed off.

"This arrogant little bastard! Whatever. Let Zephyr teach him a lesson and knock some sense into him. It'll be a good way to put him in his place!" she muttered under her breath.

Jerry, standing nearby, shook his head. "I wouldn't be so sure of that. Zephyr came in all high and mighty making a big spectacle out of this, but I wouldn't be surprised if he ends up running back to Bridgefields with his tail between his legs."

Tiana glanced at him and sneered. "Do you really think that's possible? The Stevens family is a powerful family. Lately, you've been way too impressed with Andrew, Jerry."

Jerry wisely kept his mouth shut, but inwardly, he sighed. Tiana was blinded by her grudge against Andrew, too focused on her personal dislike for him to see the bigger picture.

Andrew was not someone Zephyr or the Stevens family could handle. They came to Jayrodale with a full parade, beating their drums like they owned the place. However, they might just end up leaving playing a funeral march for themselves.

Meanwhile, Zephyr sat in the Stevens mansion's grand hall, growing increasingly impatient. Suddenly, loud shouts echoed outside.

"Jayrodale's Dylan Garner, Natasha Vostokoff, Madblade Martial Academy,

Moonlit Apothecary, Glorious Pharmaceuticals, Radiant Group, and Wealthroller

Investments are here to pay their respects to Mr. Zephyr Stevens!"