

## The Ashes 901

### Chapter 901

In Blumedale, the Rhodes family's patriarch was pacing inside his villa, furious and restless. "Damn it! It's been a whole day already-did that bastard Phantom Eye take the money and run?"

No calls were going through, and no one could reach him.

At first, Kenny was confident in Phantom Eye. However, as time passed, that confidence turned into gnawing anxiety. Every second wasted meant Michael was one step closer to death.

"Dad, calm down," a woman said smoothly, her voice carrying an air of superiority. "Michael will be fine."

She was Sherilyn Rhodes, Kenny's eldest daughter. Her presence alone screamed wealth and power-long, deep- red nails, bold red lips, and cascading waves of glossy hair. From head to toe, she radiated the energy of a woman who knew she was above everyone else.

Kenny gritted his teeth. "How the hell am I supposed to calm down? You didn't see how bad Michael looked! He's barely holding on! And from what I heard, h- hhe might have lost his manhood. Do you understand what that means?!"

Sherilyn had just set her coffee down when she heard that. Her brow arched sharply, and her voice turned

venomous.

She snapped, "What?! Are you telling me that little bastard Andrew actually went for Michael's manhood?"

Kenny's expression darkened. "Why the hell do you think I'm so worked up? Your mother and I aren't young anymore. We can't have more kids! If Michael is ruined, then what happens to my legacy?"

"My business is booming, I'm at the peak of my life, and now I might not even have an heir to pass it on to?"

The more he spoke, the angrier he got, until he finally lost it and started shouting. Sherilyn clenched her jaw. "Dad, don't worry!"

"If Michael really lost his manhood, I swear I'll have Andrew's head on a platter for you."

Kenny sneered. "That little bastard wouldn't have dared to go this far unless he was trying to impress that damn Jameson's daughter. I'm sure she and her parents put Andrew up to this. But I won't let them get away with it!" Sherilyn's lips curled in distaste. "You're talking about Lauren, right?"

Kenny scoffed. "Who else? That wretched girl is nothing but trouble."

Sherilyn frowned. "But I thought Uncle Jameson's family was arranging a marriage with the Driscoll family? If that's true, what the hell is Lauren doing messing around with another man?"

Kenny sighed in frustration. "I don't know if they've actually done anything. Since it involves the Driscolls, we have to be careful what we say. We need to get Michael back and hear it from him before we make any moves."

Sherilyn's expression twisted into something bitter, her voice laced with jealousy.

"I don't get it—what does the Driscoll family even see in that girl?"

She huffed and added, "I'm the eldest daughter of the Rhodes family. If anyone from the Driscolls was looking for a high-status woman to marry, it should have been me."

Kenny's face hardened. "Sherilyn, watch your mouth. You're already married! You need to stop saying things like that! Besides, didn't you already land Elon? That alone is a blessing our family should be grateful for!"

Sherilyn rolled her eyes. "Sure, Elon is one of the elites from a big-name family, but compared to the Driscolls?

He's not even close."

She smirked. "Honestly, Dad, if one of the Driscoll boys wanted me, I wouldn't mind getting remarried."

Kenny's face turned red with anger. "Are you serious, Sherilyn?! You just can't change your damn ways, can you? You're already married into the Goldings-act like it! Focus on your family instead of running around chasing fantasies!"

Sherilyn laughed shamelessly. "Relax, Dadm just thinking out loud. The Driscolls are one of the three powerhouses in Gabo Creek, but let's be real-I wouldn't actually get that lucky. That's what pisses me off! How the hell does a nobody like Lauren get the Driscolls' attention?"

Kenny let out a cold laugh. "Jameson and Tiana sure think

they're playing their cards right. But getting into the Driscoll family? That's not something you can just walk into. Even if Lauren does manage to hook a Driscoll son, I won't let them get away with it."

## Chapter 902

Sherilyn's eyes gleamed with malice. "You're right. We have to find a way to sabotage this marriage!"

Kenny was about to say something when a housekeeper rushed in. "Sir, Phantom Eye's men are here to see you!"

Kenny froze for a moment before his face lit up with joy. "Bring them in! Could it be that he's already brought Michael back to Blumedale?"

Sherilyn's face broke into an exaggerated grin, deepening the folds around her mouth. "See, Dad? I told you not to stress so much! Michael's safe and sound now. Phantom Eye is a top-tier fighter on the Underworld Index. Taking down some low-level thug should've been child's play for him!"

The father and daughter reassured each other, beaming with confidence. However, the moment Phantom Eye's two men stumbled into the room, their faces were pale, and their legs wobbled like jelly.

They collapsed to their knees, gasping for breath. "Sir! Something-something terrible has happened!"

Kenny's smile froze, and his expression darkened as dread settled in his chest. His voice was hoarse as he mumbled, "I-Is Michael gone?"

The two bodyguards frantically shook their heads.

"N-No! It's not Mr. Rhodes-it's Phantom Eye! H-He..."

Sherilyn's patience snapped. "You useless morons, speak clearly! Or I'll have your tongues ripped out!"

The bodyguards flinched, their voices trembling as they stammered out the words. "It's not Mr. Rhodes! W-We never even got to see him! By the time we reached Jayrodale, it was already too late! The one who got taken down -was Phantom Eye!

"He barely stepped off the plane when he ran into a woman from his past! And she-she took him down in just a few moves! She knocked him flat on the ground, and he lost several teeth!"

Kenny and Sherilyn both sucked in a sharp breath.

Kenny asked in disbelief, "So, you're telling me that Phantom Eye was taken out the second he landed? And you two didn't even catch a glimpse of Andrew?"

The bodyguards nodded furiously. "Y-Yes! That's exactly what happened! We don't even know who she was! She was wearing a veil, but she was terrifying! Phantom Eye barely lasted three rounds before she knocked him out cold!"

Sherilyn's fury exploded, smacking each of them across the face, landing several heavy slaps.

"Are you out of your damn minds? Phantom Eye is a semi-martial king! What kind of cheap whore could possibly be a match for him? Dad, I seriously think these two are lying. Maybe Phantom Eye sent them here to scam us out of that 80 million!"

Kenny's face darkened with heavy suspicion, but he shook his head. "No... I don't think so."

Sherilyn frowned. "Why not?"

Kenny pointed at the floor between the two men's legs. Sherilyn followed his gaze and immediately spotted two spreading yellow puddles on the expensive tile.

"Get the hell out, you worthless cowards! Pissing yourselves like that-pathetic!" She pinched her nose in disgust and barked at them to leave.

Kenny ordered the housekeepers to clean up the mess.

"That damn Andrew really has the devil's luck," he muttered. "Phantom Eye couldn't even find him, and instead, he got his ass kicked by some random woman. WhaPa damn disgrace!"

He stormed back to his seat, his jaw tight with anger.

Sherilyn's expression was fierce. "Dad, we can't afford to waste any more time on Michael! Let me send Elon with you to Jayrodale. We'll bring Michael back and wipe out Andrew's entire family while at it!"

Kenny's face remained grim as he waved a hand. "Not yet. At this point, Phantom

Eye's failure has already cost us too much time."

Sherilyn refused to back down. "Then what do we do? Dad, don't tell me you're thinking of giving up on Michael!"

Kenny's face

darkened. "Hell no! I'd never abandon my own son. I never wanted to call in the Golding family, but that little bastard Andrew is leaving me no choice. But before I go that far, I'll make one phone call first. Let's see if he's really determined to dig his own grave!"

Kenny picked up the phone and dialed.

The number belonged to Michael, but the person he wanted to talk to-was

Andrew.

### Chapter 903

Night had already fallen in Jayrodale, and Andrew was just about to leave West End when Natasha smirked and said, "Darling, that old dog Kenny couldn't hold back any longer. Looks like he's trying to reach you again."

Andrew took the phone from her hand and answered the call. "Mr. Kenny, it's late at night-shouldn't you be in bed? What do you want?"

Kenny's voice was cold. "Andrew, don't get cocky. Tell me, did you take down Phantom Eye?"

Andrew chuckled. "Do you even need to ask? Of course, he was. Not gonna lie, that guy's sharing a cell with Michael right now."

Kenny let out a sharp laugh. "You sure like to talk big. Do you even know what kind of powerhouse Phantom Eye is? Who the hell do you think you are? You actually think you took him down? You must be dreaming before you've even gotten into bed."

Andrew smirked. "So, you don't believe me, huh, old dog?"

Kenny's tone turned even more sinister. "Believe you? I wouldn't believe a single word out of your mouth. I'm not here to waste time with you. Are you letting Michael go or not?"

Andrew spoke calmly. "I've already told you my conditions. As long as you swear not to threaten or make a move against the Jameson family head, I'll let him go."

Kenny gritted his teeth. "All this for that little whore Lauren? Have you ever thought about what you're doing? You're playing with fire, and you're gonna burn yourself alive!"

Andrew's expression darkened. "This isn't just about Lauren. First of all, I have no intention of letting that scumbag Michael walk free. And second, Lauren is my woman. If she's in trouble, of course, I'll step in."

Kenny sneered. "Alright, you asked for this. You little bastard, I'll be heading to Jayrodale tomorrow morning with my son-in-law. By then, your own family will be preparing a funeral feast for you!"

Andrew scoffed. "Even if you bring in the Golding family, they mean nothing to me. But if you push too far, then I'll make sure you take Michael's corpse home with you."

Kenny nearly choked on his own rage, the anger lodging in his chest like a boulder. "Fine! Don't do anything stupid. I'll be in Jayrodale tomorrow to negotiate in person."

"As long as Michael is still breathing, we can talk about anything. But you better remember—if he's dead, I'll make sure you regret it for the rest of your life!"

For once, Kenny did not waste another word. He simply hung up the call, firm and decisive.

Andrew let out a mocking laugh and tossed the phone back to Natasha. "Get Dylan ready. Tomorrow, the Golding family will finally make their move."

Natasha nearly fumbled the phone in her hands and let out a bitter chuckle. "One Phantom Eye was already terrifying enough."

"Darling, you're not actually planning to go head-to-head with Kenny and the Golding family, are you?"

Andrew scoffed. "Head-to-head? They're not even worth my time."

Since Marvin wanted him to stir up chaos, he would act exactly how he pleased, without holding back. After all, he was the prodigious heir of the Lloyds. He had never been the type to bow his head to anyone.

Now that the first layer of his martial seal had been unlocked, he had even less reason to hesitate. Back in

Chetvine, he had already proven that he could dominate.

A mere provincial capital like Gabo Creek? Nothing but child's play.

"Stay the night, will you? Tomorrow, we might have to face off against the Golding family. I'm a little scared... I want you to stay with me."

The West End headquarters had fallen into complete silence. Only a few dim

lights remained on, casting soft glows in the dark.

Natasha had slipped into her most seductive and figure-hugging dress. She wrapped her arms around Andrew's back, pressing her full, heavy curves against his strong muscles as she whispered her plea.

Andrew's body tensed, and he let out a dry chuckle. "You say you're scared, but I think you just have other things in mind."

Natasha's delicate fingers began to wander, sliding downward without restraint. She purred, "Of course I do. Or should I say... I want you to do things to me?"

## Chapter 904

Natasha, the sultry, shameless widow, was practically on fire, clinging to Andrew like an octopus. She leaned in close, blowing warm breaths against his ear in a voice so sweet and seductive it could take a man's life.

Andrew spun around and caught her wandering hand, smirking. "I can't let you take control of a man's most vulnerable spot!"

Natasha's cheeks flushed as she tilted her chin up, teasing, "I won't use my hands. How about my mouth?"



Andrew nearly choked on his own breath-he had not expected her to be this bold. He quickly surrendered. "Alright, tonight's not a good time. I gave you my word, and won't go back on it, but another day, okay?"

Natasha's eyes sparkled mischievously, a hint of playful desperation in them. "Sure! Another day! I pick today!"

Andrew stared at her, speechless. Clearly, her reading comprehension skills were top-tier. "When I say another day, I mean another time."

Natasha insisted, "That won't do! There's no time like the present-let's make it today!"

"Natasha, are you in heat or something?"

"Nope, I just miss you. I don't care what you say-you must make me your woman. Darling, do you have any idea how lonely a widow is when she sleeps alone every night?"

After an exhausting round of coaxing, Andrew finally managed to pacify the lust-driven widow. Without wasting another second, he hit the gas and sped away from the West End headquarters.

Instead of returning to Moonlit Sanctuary, he drove straight to the Rhodes residence.

The moment Tiana saw him at the door, her face turned ice cold. "It's late. What the hell are you doing here?"

Andrew grinned. "Mrs. Rhodes, good evening. I came to see Lauren."

Tiana scoffed. "Oh, so now you know how to be polite when it comes to my daughter? Kenny's made his move against you, hasn't he?"

Andrew did not hide the truth. "That old dog hired a guy called Phantom Eye to take me out."

"Phantom

Eyex Tiana's brows furrowed as a flash of suspicion crossed her face. "You don't mean the Phantom Eye from Blumedale's martiabunderground, do you? That man ranks 35th on the Underworld Index and is a semi- martial king-he's on my level!"

Andrew nodded. "Yeah, that's the one. But right now, he's half-dead."

Tiana's eyes widened in shock, then she scoffed. You're full of crap. Andrew, you've been getting more and more arrogant lately. Phantom Eye's Strength is on par with mine, yet you expect me to believe he's half-dead? You really think I'd buy that?"

Andrew remained indifferent. "You and Kenny are the same-you don't believe me.

But honestly, whether you believe it or not, I couldn't care less."

Tiana clenched her jaw, frustrated. She let out a sharp huff. 'So, you're really not going to run? You're seriously going to go head-to-head with Kenny?"

Andrew chuckled. "It's not like I pissed off the president of Meurico or a head of a religion. There's no need for me to run."

Tiana let out a dry laugh, her anger mixing with amusement. "Smartass. Fine, I'll just wait and watch how you and Marvin dig your own graves. Anyway, Lauren's already asleep. If you want to see her, come back tomorrow."

With that, she moved to shut the door.

Andrew frowned. "Mrs. Rhodes, Lauren and I are both young adults. You come from a prestigious family- shouldn't you know better than to meddle in young people's relationships?"

Tiana let out a disdainful chuckle. "Love doesn't put food on the table. Can it guarantee my daughter a happy future? Can it ensure she never suffers a single hardship and that she lives a carefree life as someone above all others?

"Andrew, you're bright and full of potential. If Lauren hadn't met

someone like Joe, a true once-in-a-generation talent, maybe I would have considered letting you two be together. But sorry, compared to you, my daughter has a better option.

"And like any mother, I will stand firm and do whatever it takes to secure my daughter's future!"

## Chapter 905

Andrew let out a cold chuckle. "So, Mrs. Rhodes, you really think I'm not as good as this Joe guy you admire so much?"

Tiana smirked. "Do I even need to spell it out?"

Andrew shook his head. "You're Lauren's mother, and as her elder, I don't want to be disrespectful. I understand that you're looking out for her, so there's no point in arguing with you.

"But Mrs. Rhodes, I'll tell you this-I can take care of the power struggles within the Rhodes family and stop Kenny from pressuring Mr. Jameson. But on one condition you have to let Lauren go."

Tiana's face darkened, and her voice turned sharp. "Andrew don't tell me you actually think you have the right to meddle in the Rhodes family's internal affairs?"

Andrew scoffed. "Your family's little power struggles are nothing but child's play to me. I couldn't care less. But for Lauren's sake, I got dragged into this mess and am willing to step in."

Tiana let out an angry laugh. "Fine. If you can really resolve the situation with the family head and force Kenny to back off if you can actually stabilize our position- then maybe, just maybe, we'd consider your relationship with Lauren."

Andrew caught the dismissive look in her eyes and corrected her. "I don't need you or Mr. Jameson to consider anything. You need to get that straight. I came here simply to inform you.

"Whether you approve or not, whether you support it or not, it makes no difference to me. As long as Lauren wants to be with me, there's nothing the Rhodes family- or anyone else-can do about it."

The moment he finished speaking, a cold and untamed sharpness flickered in his gaze.

Tiana's expression twisted with rage. "What did you just say?"

Andrew did not answer. He had already turned back to his car, reversed on the spot, and sped off into the night.

Tiana stood there fuming, her anger having nowhere to go. She secretly cursed at Andrew for being arrogant and speaking to her in such an audacious tone.

Did he seriously just claim that the entire Rhodes family could not do anything to him? Even Joe would not dare speak to her like that.

Seething, she stormed back into the house.

Lauren, standing in the dimly lit hallway, had an unreadable expression. "That was Dr. Lloyd, wasn't it?"

Tiana's voice was ice-cold. "So what if it was? That arrogant fool is already doomed."

Lauren's lips curled into a mocking smile. "Haven't you said that same thing so many times now? Every time, Dr. Lloyd was supposed to be doomed. And yet, every single time, the only ones running away with their tails between their legs were the idiots who came looking for trouble."

Tiana's suppressed rage finally exploded. She growled, "Lauren, do you seriously think this is just another minor scuffle? The Golding family is making their move against Andrew. It'll be nothing short of a miracle if he manages to survive this, No-forget a miracle even if the sky itself fell, it wouldn't be enough to save him this time!"

Lauren's delicate features tensed, her expression shifting. The Golding family? The most powerful clan in the province? Are they seriously that shameless? Do they really think they can just strut into Jayrodale and throw their weight around?"

Tiana let out a scornful laugh. "Oh, now you're starting to panic? Kenny has the Golding family backing him. Of course, he's feeling untouchable."

"And let's be real-these elite families have always preyed on the weak. Do you think they care about honor? That's a privilege reserved for people who actually have a conscience."

Lauren's face filled with urgency. "No-I can't just sit back. I have to help Dr. Lloyd. He's doing all of this for me. I love him. I won't let him fight for me alone."

## Chapter 906

Tiana sneered. "You need to understand something. You're still young, and the love you speak of is small, insignificant, and ultimately meaningless. When you're faced with overwhelming power and forces beyond your control, you'll realize that Andrew is nothing more than a speck of dust in the vast tide of the world.

"Your future isn't meant to revolve around him-it's the stage the Driscoll family has built for you. Your place is in Blumedale and eventually, all of southern Holtrien."

Lauren lifted her delicate face, her long hair partially covering her stubborn, defiant eyes. "So, in your world, miracles don't exist anymore, and genuine love means nothing, right?

"Just like when you were young, forced to marry Dad and join the Rhodes family against your will. You never really loved him, did you? There was someone else in your heart. But because of your family pressure, you had no choice.

"And now, you want to repeat the same tragedy with your own daughter. Is that it, Tiana?"

The overwhelming anger and heartbreak pushed Lauren past her breaking point. She could not hold back anymore, calling Tiana by her name for the first time.

Tears welled in her eyes, rolling down her cheeks. It was the kind of tears that came from deep, unwavering love- and bone-deep hatred.

Tiana's face twisted in disbelief as her jaw clenched. "What did you just say? Say that again!"

She raised her hand, ready to slap Lauren across the face. However, Lauren did not flinch. Instead, she stepped forward, offering her cheek to Tiana's palm.

"Go ahead. Hit me as much as you want. After all, you already slapped me once for Michael. Our mother-daughter bond was broken that day. If you want to hit me again, then do it-I won't stop you."

Tiana's heart clenched violently as she took in the sight of her daughter's fierce yet tear-streaked face. "Y-You actually hate me this much because of Andrew? Is he really worth it? Enough for you to love him so deeply? Enough for you to resent your own mother?"

Tiana's hand remained frozen in the air, unable to come down. She stumbled back a step, her breath unsteady as she stared at her daughter, pain tightening in her chest.

Lauren let out a bitter laugh. "I used to love my mother more than I loved myself. But now, I don't have a mother anymore-because the one I knew has become a stranger, someone I can't even recognize."

Tiana took a deep breath, letting out

a cold, mirthless chuckle of her own. "Fine. You hate me? Then I might as well tell you the truth. You should know exactly what kind of situation

your father and I are facing right now."

Just then, a deep, urgent voice came from outside. "Tiana, don't!"

Lauren and Tiana turned their heads at the same time.

"Dad? What are you doing here?"

A refined-looking middle-aged man walked inside, his face showing clear signs of exhaustion. Despite the weariness in his expression, there was no mistaking his

charm-he was still a strikingly

handsome man.

He was the kind of man who could still make women swoon, even if he was already reaching his 50s. This man was none other than Jameson, the current head of the Rhodes family.

"I came to check on you and your mother," Jameson said, letting out a deep sigh as he pulled Lauren into an embrace. "Lauren, don't resent your mother. She has her reasons for everything she's done."

Lauren let out a quiet sob. "Dad, why can't I decide my own fate? All I want is to

be with Dr. Lloyd. Why is that too much to ask?"

## Chapter 907

A faint trace of bitterness flickered across Jameson's face, but he still smiled. "Lauren, I came all the way to Jayrodale just to tell you this-go after your happiness. Your mother and I will handle the family matters, so you don't need to worry about us."

Lauren's eyes lit up with surprise. "Really?"

Jameson's smile grew warmer. "Of course. You are my daughter, and I love you and your sister more than anything."

Tears of joy welled in Lauren's eyes. "Then, Dad, can you help Dr. Lloyd handle the trouble with the Golding family?"

Jameson's smile wavered slightly, and the bitterness in his expression deepened. But he still forced himself to nod. "Don't worry. At the very least, I can make sure you and Andrew get to be together. Now, go to bed. Your mother and I need to talk."

Lauren obediently went to her room.

The moment she was gone, Jameson's smile vanished. His face was left with nothing but exhaustion and helplessness.

Tiana let out a mocking laugh. "What a great display of fatherly love. Do you really think saying pretty words like that will change anything?"

Jameson sighed and gestured toward the hall. "This isn't the place to talk. Let's not bother the kids-come to our room."

Once inside, Tiana slammed the door shut. "Jameson, let me make this clear-if you really allow Lauren to be with Andrew, the only thing you'll get in return is the destruction of the Rhodes family!"

Jameson let out a cold chuckle. "Tiana, you've never been happy since marrying me, have you? I know-you regretted it the moment you said yes. Your heart has always belonged to someone else."

He continued, "But let me remind you, we are no longer young and free. We are not the same reckless kids we once were, without responsibilities or burdens. Lauren is our daughter. She loves Andrew, and he loves her back. As her father, I refuse to crush their happiness with my own hands."

Tiana scoffed. "Oh? And then what? You spare their love, and in return, you let the entire Rhodes family get buried with them? You know exactly how Joe feels about Lauren. The Driscoll family has already sent over their engagement gifts.

"What now? Are you seriously thinking of rejecting them? Do you actually have the guts to challenge the Driscoll family?"

"And what about Kenny? If you don't rely on the Driscolls for support, do you really think your position as head of the family will last? You think the Golding family won't devour you whole?"

Her sharp, unrelenting words cut through the air, leaving Jameson silent.

After a long pause, he finally spoke, his voice calm but firm "If the family is struggling, if we're being

suppressed, then that is my own net

failure as its leader. But if use that as an excuse to sacrifice Lagen's happiness, then I would be unworthy of everything I've learned in this lifetime."



Tiana let out a bitter laugh. "No wonder your daughters adore you. Look at you-

the great, selfless father. You'd sacrifice everything, even your own life, and the entire family, just to protect their happiness.

"And me? I'm the cold-hearted mother, the one who actually understands what's at stake. Jameson, is this what you wanted?"

Jameson's face darkened, and he spoke in a low voice. "Tiana, that's enough! Lauren and Cece both still love you. You are their mother, and nothing will change that."

Tiana laughed at herself, the sound hollow and tired. "All ever wanted was for Lauren to walk a different path than I did. If she marries into the Driscoll family, she will soar.

"She will live a life of absolute

freedom, free from the struggles and

limitations of being born into a

smaller family. She will never have to experience the helplessness and humiliation that comes with trying to break through those barriers.

"But in the end, all I got in return was Lauren's hatred. The irony-my love for her has turned me into the villain." Jameson furrowed his brows. "The Driscoll family may offer her a powerful future, but Andrew... Even though I've never met him, I've heard enough about him from both you and Lauren."

## Chapter 908

Jameson explained, "The reason I support Lauren being with Andrew, even though I've never met him, is because I believe he has potential,"

Tiana let out a sharp, mocking laugh. "Potential? Are you serious? Do you know how many powerful, well-bred men from Blumedale have lined up to court our daughter? Every single one of them comes from a prestigious family with an outstanding background.

"I'll admit, Andrew has repeatedly surprised me, forcing me to reevaluate him. But no matter how capable he is, wise one should always achieve more. The truth is, Andrew's ceiling is still just this tiny town of Jayrodale.

"The Rhodes family has already secured its foothold in Blumedale. At the very least, Lauren's future should be there too. So tell me, how can Andrew possibly compare to the heirs of Blumedale's elite families? How could he ever compete with someone like Joe, a true once-in-a-generation prodigy?"

Jameson's face darkened slightly. "What's wrong with coming from a small place? Have you forgotten-I came from a small town too."

Tiana's smile turned ice-cold. "And look where that got you. You're surrounded by enemies, struggling to hold onto your position while your own brother tries to steal the family headship.

"You're barely keeping the family together in Blumedale, forced to exhaust yourself just to maintain some level of influence."

Jameson's expression grew colder. "Tiana, you were born into the Lambert family. You're nearly at the level of a martial king and were once hailed as an elite of the upper class.

"I know you've always looked down on me. And frankly, I won't beg for your approval anymore. If the Rhodes family truly falls, then we'll get a divorce. You can chase the happiness you regretted letting go of all those years ago."

Tiana's face twisted in fury. "Jameson, you and that brat Lauren are just trying to make my life miserable, aren't you? I won't raise a hand against our daughter, but don't think for a second that I won't slap the hell out of you!"

Jameson let out a sharp laugh. "Go ahead and try! I've put up with your bullying for years-I've had more than enough!"

Tiana's anger exploded as she lunged at him, unable to hold back any longer. Jameson might have been the head of the Rhodes family, but he was no match for Tiana when it came to martial prowess.

Within moments, she had him pinned down on the bed, smacking him around while he let out muffled groans. However, just as quickly, the situation flipped.

Somehow, the ever-dashing Jameson pulled a fast move and turned the tables, pinning Tiana beneath him instead.

With a soft click, the lights in the room dimmed.

All that remained was the sound of Tiana's breathy protests "Damn it-take it easy! Why are you being so rough...

Jameson let out a dark chuckle. "You've been staying in Jayrodale while I've been suffering alone in Blumede, starved and desperate. Now that I've made the trip here myself, don't think for a second you're getting out of this without punishment."

Tiana had a naturally fiery temper and never backed down from a challenge. She bit back, "Oh yeah? Let's see who comes out on top your so-called 'punishment' or my boundless endurance!"

Jameson panted heavily, his voice rough. "Once we're done I need a damn good night's sleep. Tomorrow, I'm Jameson panted heavily, his

voice@ough. "Once we're do going to take a look at this Andrew kid myself.

"Let's hope he's at least half as handsome as I am. As for his abilities, if he's even

two-thirds of what I am, I might consider him worthy."

Tiana let out a bitter scoff. "Even if I

let you have your way tonight, I will never approve of Lauren and Andrew being together. If you let this happen, how will you deal with the Driscoll family's wrath? You are my husband-I refuse to let you throw your life away."

Jameson smirked. "You should worry about surviving my wrath first..."

## Chapter 909

The next morning, Andrew woke up at his usual time, feeling well-rested. Turning his head, he was surprised to find that the curvy little troublemaker beside him had already gotten up. Only a faint trace of her perfume lingered on the sheets. "You're finally up! Come have breakfast-I already made everything!" Francesca's sweet, round face peeked through the doorway, her smile bright and cheerful.

Andrew got dressed, tidied up the bed, and made his way to the dining room. "Fran, why are you up so early today? If you're tired, you should sleep in a little longer."

He sat down and started eating, flashing her a teasing smile.

Francesca sat across from him, her damp hair still dripping slightly from a fresh shower. Her delicate, round face was smooth and flawless, her long lashes fluttering as she gave him a bashful look.

She said, "I'm not tired! You've been handling so much lately, and today, you still have to deal with Kenny and the Golding family. So I figured I'd let you rest while I took care of breakfast!"

Andrew chuckled. "Fran, you're so thoughtful. If only you could be my wife."

Francesca's cheeks turned crimson in an instant, and she rolled her eyes. "I'm not going to be your wife. Lauren's your wife-I'd just be... at best, your girlfriend." Andrew could not help but admire her beauty. Her fair skin practically glowed, soft and radiant. When she smiled, dimples appeared on both cheeks, making her look impossibly sweet.

Beneath the innocent face, her petite body was wrapped in a silk robe that barely contained her curves-full in all the right places, with a figure so dangerously stunning it was almost sinful.

She was the perfect mix of an angelic face and a devilish body.

Noticing Andrew's heated gaze, Francesca bit into her toast and shot him a playful glare. "Eat your food. Where the hell are you looking? Andrew, you're getting more and more shameless!"

Andrew smirked, ignoring her protests. "You used to sleep in after I wore you out all night. But today, you're up before me. That's weird... unless my skills are slipping?"

Francesca nearly choked on her food, her face burning. "Of course not, you jerk! You still exhausted me last night, okay? But..."

Seeing her biting her lip with that adorable, flustered look, Andrew laughed. "But, after a week of intense training, you've finally built up some endurance?"

Francesca's face turned even redder. She bared her teeth like a feisty kitten, muttering, "You damn pervert! No matter how many rounds we go, you're never satisfied! I swear, if you don't take it easier on me, I'll stop coming over!"

Andrew met her eyes, his smile deepening. "Are you sure you don't like it?"

Francesca was practically fuming. "No!"

"You sure about that?"

"Fine... maybe I've gotten used to it, and it's not that bad. But, Andrew, you have way too much energy!

Every time, you leave my legs set

weak that I can barely get through work the next day-do you know how embarrassing

that is?"

Andrew lowered his head, chewing his food as he tried to stifle a laugh. "Alright,

I'll try to take it easy."

Francesca glared at him. "Not

'try'-you have to promise! Honestly, I don't know when Lauren's coming back, but she needs to hurry. She should be the one dealing with this! I can't handle being your only outlet-I'll end up completely wrecked!"

Andrew smirked. "That's funny. I remember someone enjoying it quite a bit- making plenty of noise, too."

Francesca instantly turned red as a tomato and shot him a murderous glare. "Shut

up! Say another word, and I'm not coming over tonight!"

Andrew raised his hands in surrender, laughing. "Alright, alright, I won't say anything."

Finally satisfied, Francesca huffed

and crossed her arms. "That's better! Andrew, don't forget-you were my first." Andrew raised a brow. The way you say that... makes it sound like you're planning on more than one."

Francesca shook her head. "No way. I only want to be with you. Honestly, I'm not that young anymore, but no other man has ever interested me."

Andrew nodded approvingly. "That just means you have excellent taste. The average guy is simply beneath you, Fran."

Francesca let out a small giggle, rolling her eyes. "Ugh, you smug bastard! You know, when I first met you, I actually really hated you!"

## Chapter 910

Andrew chuckled and said, "The beginning doesn't matter-what matters is the outcome. And look at you, Fran, every night, you end up sleeping in my big, comfy bed, sound asleep!"

Francesca pouted, reluctant to admit it, but still mumbled, "Well, that's actually true. I've been sleeping pretty well these days."

Andrew smirked to himself. Of course, she was sleeping well-every night, she fell asleep completely satisfied, both in body and mind!

Unlike him, who, despite being in top shape, still felt sore every now and then after their long and intense nights together.

After breakfast, Francesca left for work as usual at Jayrodale General Hospital.

Now that she was living in Andrew's hilltop estate, she had also brought her BMW sports car up. Since Andrew was not always available to drive her, it was more convenient for her to take her own car.

"Drive safe." Andrew pinched her soft, round cheek as he reminded her.

Francesca leaned out of the car window and huffed, "Jerk, we're out of condoms at home!"

Her face immediately turned bright red, and before he could respond, she slammed her foot on the gas and sped off.

Andrew chuckled. So, the little troublemaker had been thinking about that, huh?

Nonetheless, he had no time to buy any. Kenny and that mysterious Golding family were supposed to arrive in Jayrodale today. It was time to settle the conflict once and for all.

As Francesca drove down the hill, her thoughts started running wild. Lately, Andrew had been wearing her out every single night. By the time she got to work, her legs were trembling, and she felt like she had no strength left at all.

More than once, she had sworn to herself that she would not go to him again that night-that she would not let that beast have his way with her.

However, the moment she got back to her own place, her heart would start racing, and her whole body would itch with anticipation.

She could not resist it. She would always end up running back to his estate, climbing into that massive bed, and letting him claim her all over again.

Yes, Francesca had completely fallen for that intoxicating pleasure. At first, she had been shy and flustered, but now, she had come to accept it.

Even though she kept complaining that she was exhausted and her legs were jelly, she was shocked to realize that, after a whole week, her thighs were no longer weak.

Instead, it was something else entirely-something even more thrilling. Even in the middle of their most intense moments, what she felt was not pain or exhaustion-it was pure, overwhelming ecstasy.

"That bastard is probably busy today... Should I just buy the condoms myself?" she muttered to herself.

Yet, the thought of walking into a store to buy them made her face burn with embarrassment. She

pulled into the parking garage at net

Jayrodale General Hospital but did not get out right away. Instead, she sat in her car, frowning in frustration.

"But if I don't get them, and we run out tonight, wouldn't that kill the mood?"

Then, a lightbulb went off in her head.

"Wait, I don't even have to buy them! The hospital gives them out for free, and they're the best-quality ones too! As the hospital director, taking a few dozen home shouldn't be a big deal, right? Maybe just four or five No need to overdo it."

But as soon as she made up her mind, she changed it again. "Actually, screw it—

I'll take 50. 50 isn't too much, right?"



Feeling triumphant, Francesca finally stepped out of her car, and her mood instantly lifted.

Just as she was lost in thought, a deep chuckle suddenly came behind her. "Dr. Aicker, you seem to be in an exceptionally good mood this morning. Something good happened?"

Francesca stiffened and snapped her head around. A few large black SUVs were parked in the shadows of the underground garage as if they had been waiting for her all along.

A stocky man in a crisp white suit stood in front of them, smiling at her. She did not recognize him, but the man standing beside him-the

one with a grim, menacing

face was someone she had seen before.

Kenny Michael's father.