

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren) 1261-1270

Applause erupted across the room, the sound echoing through the sterile halls. The patients nearby looked at Andrew with a mix of gratitude and admiration. It felt like, at long last, someone had the courage to stand up for the common folk.

Yet, what impressed them even more was Andrew's unyielding stance, his words sharp and precise, cutting through the air like a finely honed blade.

Norman found himself cornered, struggling to maintain his composure. He had thrown everything he had into this confrontation, but in the end, he had no choice but to back down.

The elderly woman wiped away her tears and looked at Andrew with pleading eyes. "Mr. Lloyd, can you help me make an appointment? I want to speak with the deputy chief."

Andrew turned sharply to Norman, his expression cold. "Norman, this lady wants to schedule a consultation. Tell me, does Blumedale Hospital still discriminate against patients based on status?"

Norman's face flushed with anger, and he barked at a nearby nurse, "Get this patient registered immediately!"

Andrew turned sharply to Norman, his expression cold. "Dr. Ellington, this lady wants to schedule a consultation. Tell me, does Blumedale Hospital still discriminate against patients based on status?"

Norman's face flushed with anger, and he barked at a nearby nurse, "Get this patient registered immediately!"

The young nurse hesitated, glancing nervously at Norman. "But, Dr. Ellington... even if I register her now, the earliest slot is still two weeks out."

Norman's scowl deepened. "Why such a long wait? Are there really that many patients ahead of her?"

The nurse stammered, "Um... those are all cases Dr. Charlton insisted on handling himself. He told me not to interfere."

Norman's face twisted in rage. "That idiot thinks he can handle all this on his own? Does he even understand the responsibility he's taking on? Arrange for this woman to see a specialist immediately."

The elderly woman's eyes filled with tears once more as she clutched Andrew's hand in gratitude. He gently patted her shoulder, offering a reassuring smile. "Go ahead, ma'am."

Let Blumedale's specialists take care of you. Don't worry-there are still good doctors with genuine compassion out there. The rotten ones are few and far between."

With that, the old woman followed the nurse down the hallway.

Norman's face twitched, the sting of Andrew's words clearly cutting deeper than he cared to admit.

Logan, watching the exchange, chuckled. "Andy, I've got to hand it to you. You could've gone in guns blazing, but instead, you chose to reason it out. I didn't know you had it in you."

Chantelle, standing nearby, managed a faint smile. If she had been in Andrew's place, she doubted she would have bothered confronting Norman at all. In a world full of shadowy deals and under-the-table power plays, it felt almost naive to push back.

Yet, as she watched Andrew at that moment, she felt a flicker of admiration. Perhaps this stubborn principled streak was what made him stand out-a rare flash of integrity in a world growing increasingly bleak. She could not help but admit this guy has got some backbone after all.

With Norman reluctantly leading the way, the small group moved through the lobby toward another hospital wing to meet Malcolm.

As they walked, Norman shot a sideways glance at Andrew, his tone dripping with thinly veiled disdain. "Mr. Lloyd, you speak like a man with medical experience. I'm curious-which hospital did you train at?"

Andrew's eyes remained steady. "Oh, I wouldn't dare mention my humble beginnings in front of someone as esteemed as you, Dr. Ellington. Just a small, unremarkable clinic. Hardly worth talking about."

Norman's lip curled, his professional pride pricked. "Really? Well, if that's the case, how confident are you in your medical skills? You do realize the Grand Medical Summit is just around the corner, right? Blumedale Hospital has been actively scouting talent. If you're as skilled as you claim, it might be your shot at the big leagues."

Andrew merely nodded. "No need to worry about me, Dr. Ellington. I'll be at the summit."

Norman's eyes narrowed, a bitter laugh slipping through his clenched teeth. "Are you serious, Mr. Lloyd?"

He had only thrown out the remark to humiliate Andrew—a petty jab at someone in the same field as him. He had never expected that Andrew would actually take

the bait and was actually planning to enter the Grand Medical Summit.

Norman doubted Andrew could even qualify.

Logan chimed in, "Dr. Ellington, looking down on others is a risky habit. Given your position as the head of the department of

Blumedale Hospital, selected fol

thousands of medical practitioners, you should know better than to

make such a petty mistake!"

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Norman scoffed as he demanded, "Mr. Keller, was there something wrong with my attitude just now? I truly admire Mr. Lloyd's talent for networking and finding powerful backers! But when it comes to real skill and medical expertise, am I, as a department head, not allowed to express doubts?"

Logan frowned as he said flatly, "Dr. Ellington, are you seriously pushing your luck? You don't deserve to question anything here! Let me make this clear- discussing medicine in front of Andy? You're not even fit to shine his shoes."

He continued, "Do you know Dr. Mosby Lake? Even he wouldn't dare to act so arrogantly around Andy. So, who do you think you are?"

Norman grew furious. "Mr. Keller, you—"

Logan cut him off with a cold snort. "Shut up! Let me reveal something else to you —Mr. Phelan Senior and my father were both cured by Andrew.

"Now ask yourself, what right do you have to show off your superiority complex here? What gives you the right to jump around acting like you're something special?"

Norman suddenly felt like someone had dumped a bucket of ice water over him from head to toe. Looking at Andrew, he asked uncertainly, "Is that true?"

Andrew did not even feel like acknowledging him and refused to respond, clearly finding Norman beneath his notice.

Chantelle stepped in. "Dr. Ellington, I can testify to these matters as well. It's true, absolutely true!"

"You can question Mr. Lloyd's character if you want, but you absolutely cannot doubt his medical skills," she added, simultaneously supporting Andrew while taking a subtle jab at him.

Women had complex minds, but Andrew was not in the mood to quibble with this frigid personality.

Meanwhile, Norman completely lost his composure. He only half-believed Logan's defense of Andrew, taking his words with a grain of salt. However, Chantelle was different-she represented the governor and would not stoop so low as to deceive

him.

In other words, Andrew's medical skills had truly impressed the Three Titans and Five Apex Families.

It was then that Norman realized he had indeed been showing off in front of a true expert.

His face turned beet red, and he stammered for a long time, not knowing what to say. The incident where Mosby had failed miserably at the Ketter family home-not only failing to cure George but getting beaten so badly he coughed blood-had been the talk of Blumedale's medical community.

However, the person who had successfully treated George had not become famous, so word had not spread widely.

Norman never imagined that this highly skilled person would turn out to be Andrew, whom he had looked down upon. Moreover, the guy

appeared remarkably young, el not

at

all like one of those mysterious old medical geniuses.

Could he actually be some kind of prodigy?

While Norman was lost in thought, Andrew and the others arrived at Malcolm's office in Blumedale Hospital.

Malcolm was one of Blumedale Hospital's three deputy chiefs. He was also the most renowned senior leader at Blumedale Hospital, enjoying an excellent reputation in academic circles.

Before Andrew's group could knock, two people arrived, one after the other. The first had graying hair and a naturally imposing expression.

Norman quickly smiled when he saw him and greeted respectfully, "Dr. Bozzelli, good to see you!"

Andrew raised an eyebrow, realizing this person must be one of Blumedale Hospital's directors, which meant he was a major figure in Gabo Creek's medical community.

As Andrew glanced at the second person, that individual also looked his way. The newcomer immediately let out a cold laugh and mocked, "What a coincidence. Andrew, Knever thought someone like you would have the qualifications to come to a place like this!"

Andrew smirked. "Today's really turning out to be unlucky. I just dealt with one loser, and now another one shows up!"

It was none other than Bernard Hackett from Jayrodale General Hospital.

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When Andrew called him a loser, Bernard's face instantly darkened with anger. He hissed, "Andrew, you've already left Jayrodale General Hospital. What gives you the courage to still act so disrespectfully in front of me?"

"Don't you believe that with one word from me, I could have you thrown out of here?" he threatened.

Andrew smirked dismissively. "Really? Why don't you try it?"

Bernard grew furious and was about to put on airs when Thomas Bozzelli, with his imposing presence, spoke calmly. "Bernard, as medical professionals, we should maintain composure and tranquility."

He advised, "If your mind isn't calm and your spirit isn't balanced, you won't grow; your medical skills will stagnate."

Bernard showed utmost respect in Thomas' presence. "Thank you for the guidance, Dr. Bozzelli. I understand."

Thomas gave a slight nod and turned his cold gaze toward Norman. "Norman, this is where Blumedale Hospital's leadership works and rests. Not just anyone should be brought here casually. Take him back. I need to discuss important matters with Malcolm, and I don't want any disturbances."

Norman forced an awkward laugh and explained, "Dr. Bozzelli, this Mr. Lloyd is also here to see Dr. Goddard. Plus, Mr. Lloyd is also a medical professional."

Thomas responded with a disinterested "oh", maintaining his mysterious demeanor of an expert. "Then arrange for him to wait. You can bring him in after I'm done."

Norman immediately found himself in a difficult position and could not help looking toward Andrew. "Mr. Lloyd, as you can see, we should-"

Andrew cut him off directly. "No. I arrived first, so naturally, I should see Dr. Goddard first. First come, first served-it's a principle you understand, and I believe Dr. Bozzelli should understand it too."

Norman felt his scalp tingle with anxiety, not expecting this bold man to cause another scene after already making a commotion at the hospital's front desk.

Now, he was even daring to disrespect Thomas. He thought this was just pure, excessive arrogance.

Thomas frowned, his consistently condescending gaze focusing on Andrew for the first time. He lectured, Young man, since you're also in the medical field, you should know to respect your elders and those with superior medical skills. Yes, you arrived first, but do you know who I am?"

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He continued proudly, "I'm a deputy chief at Blumedale Hospital and a specially subsidized national expert. The banners, certificates, and medals hanging on my office e wall represent heights you might ever achieve in your lifetime. So now, do

you see why you should step aside like a good boy?"

Bernard sneered. "Dr. Bozzelli, you probably don't know Andrew yet-he's always been arrogant. In fact, he's the one from Jayrodale General Hospital I told you about."

Thomas displayed a contemptuous smile as he looked Andrew over. "No wonder! So you're that Andrew

who's been throwing his weight net

around at Jayrodale! You probably don't know that not only amba director at Blumedale Hospital, but I'm also the largest shareholder of Jayrodale General Hospital. So technically speaking, since you were employed at my hospital, you should address me as Mr. Bozzelli."

Andrew laughed. "So you're Bernard's biggest backer! I apologize for my

oversight. But Mr. Bozzelli, I should remind you that I no longer work at Jayrodale General Hospital, which means you're nothing to me now."

Thomas's expression darkened as he adopted a lecturing tone. "Young man, even if you've left my hospital-

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Thomas said, "But I don't approve of many aspects of your conduct. I hope you return to the right path and stop behaving in such an unorthodox manner. I'm saying all this for your own good. Do you understand?"

Andrew replied calmly, "In expertise lies mastery, Dr. Bozzelli. Beyond your seniority, receding hairline, and... generous midsection, what exactly qualifies you? Honestly, whether in medical skills or other areas, I don't see anything I need to learn from your lectures or guidance."

Logan, who had grown tired of Thomas's self-importance, chuckled. "Dr. Bozzelli, you're certainly a celebrity in Gabo Creek and Blumedale Hospital's medical community. Using your achievements to pressure others isn't exactly honorable. More importantly, those achievements don't give you any overwhelming advantage over Andy. Just his Moonlit Apothecary and the two breakthrough medicines he developed are accomplishments you couldn't hope to match!"

Thomas looked startled and turned to Bernard. "He's the man behind Moonlit Apothecary and those two remarkable medicines?"

Bernard reluctantly admitted, "Well... yes, they were, Dr. Bozzelli. However, Dr. Cedric Aicker, the medical genius at Jayrodale, was behind him. I believe everything was actually Dr. Aicker's work," Bernard added defensively.

Thomas cursed. "Bullshit! Jayrodale's Cedric is certainly skilled, but the Vitality Pills and Titan Essence Pills, especially the Titan Essence Pills, are beyond Cedric's capabilities and knowledge to develop!"

He looked at Andrew again, nodding with newfound respect. "In that case, you do have the credentials to sit at the same table as me. Come, let's go see Malcolm together."

Bernard sneered. "Andrew, you should be proud to receive even half a compliment from my mentor!"

Norman nodded repeatedly in agreement. "Mr. Lloyd, Dr. Bozzelli is known for his strict academic standards! Very few people ever receive his approval."

Andrew sighed helplessly and mumbled, "Ants don't get to rate giants."

Thomas, who had already pushed open the door, faltered in his step when he heard this comment. He thought, 'This young upstart clearly needs to be taught a lesson at some point! He's too arrogant!'

Nevertheless, as a hospital director and medical authority, Thomas did not see the need to quibble with a youngster.

Meanwhile, Norman was terrified and gave Andrew a strained smile. "Mr. Lloyd, being a little humble wouldn't hurt, you know!"

Before Andrew could respond, Logan chimed in with a laugh. "I would like to be humble too, but my abilities simply won't allow it..."

Chantelle pursed her lips. "You sworn brothers are more arrogant than each other truly birds of a feather!"

In the large room filled with various experimental equipment and medical supplies, Andrew finally met the renowned Malcolm of Blumedale Hospital. He was a kind-faced old man with a slightly hunched posture who was well into his 70s.

To Andrew's delight, he was not the only person he recognized in the room. There was also the petite yet voluptuous Francesca.

"Andrew, what are you doing here?" she exclaimed.

Wearing a

even morfitting white lab coat,

ere well-endowed in the 19

seemed to have become well-endowed in

since Andrew had last

seen

her. '

Upon spotting Andrew, she put down the surgical tray she was holding and rushed toward him excitedly.

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

It was a classic case of "human cannonball"-all curves, no brakes. Andrew braced himself, quickly spreading his arms to catch the petite but busty Francesca.

"Fran, when did you come to Blumedale? Why didn't you tell me?" Andrew asked gently, feeling the fullness and warmth of her body against his.

Francesca replied with a pout. "I've been here for three days already! Dr. Goddard wanted me to come early to prepare for the Grand Medical Summit. He said I needed complete focus and it was too urgent to allow distractions, so he wouldn't even let me notify you!"

Andrew looked at the smiling Malcolm and began to understand the situation.

Francesca released him, her cheeks slightly flushed, and explained candidly, "Yes, Mr. Goddard has been my mentor since graduate school. He's also an old friend of Grandpa from Blumedale."

Malcolm walked to the sink, washed his hands thoroughly, and approached Andrew with a warm smile. "You must be our Fran's boyfriend, Andrew Lloyd, right? Very good, very good indeed. Not only are you handsome, but you're also exceptionally skilled in medicine-definitely worthy of this girl!"

Francesca's face turned even redder as she protested sweetly. "Dr. Goddard, you're getting just as annoying as Grandpa! Please stop saying such things!"

Malcolm chuckled and gestured welcomingly. "Thomas, Mr. Keller, Ms. Garcia, Andrew—please, everyone, find a place to sit! My office is messy, and I apologize for the poor environment."

Logan, typically critical by nature, showed unusual respect toward Malcolm. He insisted politely, "Don't worry about us, Dr. Goddard. Please, you sit first."

Even the normally cold Chantelle displayed proper etiquette in Malcolm's presence. However, she kept her attention primarily on Francesca, inwardly scoffing at Andrew's apparent promiscuity.

She thought that Andrew already had Aspen, and it seemed that he also had Malcolm's talented protégé. They were both exceptional beauties with unique qualities.

She wondered, 'How can this bastard handle so many women? Isn't he afraid of exhausting himself?'

Andrew, of course, remained oblivious to Chantelle's silent cursing. Sitting next to Francesca after nearly a month apart, their eyes met with an almost electric connection.

Francesca's innocent, chubby face conveyed both joy and subtle reproach as she occasionally glanced at Andrew. Women in love were extremely emotional by nature. If not for the presence of others in the room, Francesca would have thrown herself into Andrew's arms right then and there.

Andrew maintained a serious expression, However, his thoughts kept returning to the soft, full bosom that had pressed against him moments ago. Though he had not touched her deliberately, that brief collision during their embrace was enough to set his mind wandering.

Just as Andrew had felt from the beginning, Lauren's red lips made him want to taste them, while Francesca offered different charms-an angelic face with a devilishly tempting figure.

To put it bluntly, Andrew wanted to grab her ponytail and possess her completely. Nevertheless, he quickly stopped himself from letting his n

mind wander. Even though

Francesca had become increasingly radiant and well-endowed, he needed to control himself.

Thomas maintained a perfectly rigid expression as he glanced toward Andrew, a fleeting look of disdain crossing his lips. He thought it pathetic that someone so young was already indulging in sensual pleasures and becoming entangled in romantic affairs.

He thought that Andrew might have some talent in medicine, but he was clearly destined for mediocrity.

Clearing his throat, Thomas spoke up. "Malcolm, I believe you already know why I'm here."

Malcolm smiled. "Thomas, for this Grand Medical Summit, Blumedale Hospital is counting on you to lead our team. There's not much to discuss—you'll have full authority."

Thomas's eyes betrayed a hint of eagerness, but he forced himself to appear humble. "Although we're both directors at Blumedale Hospital, you're still my senior, Malcolm. Naturally, I must respect your opinions."

Malcolm chuckled. "Well, since you put it that way, I have a few suggestions. First, my student, Fran, will take one of the slots for the Grand Medical Summit—is that acceptable?"

Thomas nodded. "No problem at all! Blumedale Hospital is a key participant in the Grand Medical Summit and has four available positions. Giving one to Dr. Aicker is only appropriate."

Malcolm shook his head. "I'm not making this decision based on personal connections or my leadership position. Fran truly has the talent and ability to meet the medical experts at the summit and compete with them..."

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Thomas nodded, showing his approval of Francesca. After all, his majority- controlled Jayrodale General Hospital would not have offered her the director position otherwise.

However, he still felt some guidance was necessary, so he added, "Fran, you may join me at the Grand Medical Summit! But you need to intensify your medical training in the meantime."

Francesca quickly responded, "Understood, Dr. Bozzelli!"

Thomas smiled briefly before unexpectedly continuing, "Also, regarding your relationship with Mr. Lloyd here, you should exercise some restraint. In my opinion, you two aren't well-suited for each other. Of course, this is merely my personal view."

He added, "You're Malcolm's star pupil, destined to make a name for yourself in the medical field! Mr. Lloyd has already left our medical community and is no longer one of our colleagues.

"Therefore, my suggestion is that you should cut ties completely. This isn't just beneficial for your career path, but for your life planning. To be frank, it would help your future marriage prospects and the family you'll eventually build..."

Francesca was surprised that Thomas would intrude into her personal life. A moment later, she calmly but firmly stated her position. "Thank you for your guidance, Dr. Bozzelli, but I don't believe Andrew will hinder my career.

"On the contrary, much of my medical knowledge comes from what he's taught me! And most importantly, I love him and want to be with him!"

Thomas shook his head with a regretful expression, sighing. "I'm only offering advice from the perspective of an elder! Fran, you refuse to listen now, but you'll likely regret it someday."

Malcolm smoothed things over with a smile. "Thomas, we older folks can't understand the affairs of the younger generation-it's best to let them be! Let's get back to business.

"Besides

you leading the team, I assume your outstanding student, Jared Bridges, will also participate?"

At the mention of his prized pupil, the normally strict Thomas' face lit up with pride. "Yes, Jared will take one slot, and this position was publicly announced by the chief director, Kurtis Pearce, and approved during Blumedale Hospital's leadership council!"

Malcolm smiled. "Jared is indeed a role model for young doctors at Blumedale Hospital. Thomas, you've secured your successor!"

Thomas cast a playful glance at Andrew, his face beaming. "I did nothing special-that boy achieved everything through his own effort and perseverance. Of course, his freakish medical talent also helped him reach where he is today."

Thomas declared, "The boy is truly blessed in medicine. I believe his future achievements will at least match Mosby's level, possibly even approaching the elders at the Advanced Medical Institute!"

Chantelle shot Andrew a gleeful look. Her expression seemed to say, "Mr. Lloyd, are you just going to sit there while he makes a monkey out of you?"

Francesca's small face showed traces of displeasure. Thomas' words had an obvious purpose they were clearly meant for Andrew's ears. His student's excellence and abilities were his own business, but bringing it up now was plainly meant to show off and belittle her boyfriend.

However, Jared remained completely unfazed, as if he had not heard a thing.

His medical skills were for healing and saving lives, not for showing off or comparing with others.

Malcolm continued as if he did not

notice the tension, saying cheerfully,

"Jared is indeed promising. But today, Thomas, I'd like to

recommend another person who I

believe is equally talented in

medicine!"

Thomas raised an eyebrow. "Oh? Who might earn such a recommendation from you, Malcolm?"

Malcolm smiled mysteriously, glancing around the room before finally pointing toward Andrew. "It's Andrew Lloyd here. I'd like to give him our final spot on Blumedale Hospital's team."

This announcement left Bernard and Norman, who had been standing and listening, completely stunned.

Chantelle could not help but raise her eyebrows in surprise. Andrew certainly had a way of making people like him. Malcolm showed such high regard for him at their very first meeting.

'Did this guy naturally possess some kind of protagonist aura?' she wondered.

Francesca exclaimed happily, "Dr. Bozzelli, I agree! Having Andrew represent Blumedale Hospital will surely lead to victory!"

Thomas' hand slammed hard on the coffee table beside him as he angrily responded, "No, absolutely not!"

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Thomas' outburst frightened Francesca and Norman, causing them to quickly compose themselves.

However, remained perfectly calm. "Not acceptable? Thomas, what exactly do you find unacceptable?"

Thomas spoke harshly. "This man is arrogant and shows no respect for his elders! We haven't even properly assessed his medical foundation! Giving him one of Blumedale Hospital's spots would be a complete waste!"

He added, "Furthermore, the Grand Medical Summit concerns Blumedale Hospital's standing in Gabo Creek province and throughout the entire Southern Holtrien medical community! So, every participant must be the elite of the elite, the genius among geniuses! I apologize, Malcolm, but I firmly reject your suggestion!"

Logan raised his hand. "I support the suggestion!"

Thomas frowned. "Logan, you're not part of Blumedale Hospital, nor are you our colleague. Besides, you're still junior to us, so please don't interfere."

Logan backed down reluctantly, knowing that Thomas had the same equal social standing as his father, George. He did not feel comfortable challenging him directly at the moment.

Francesca quickly interjected, "But Dr. Bozzelli, I know Andrew's medical skills, and he can definitely-"

Thomas cut her off abruptly. "Francesca, your words carry no credibility whatsoever! "Besides, I'm the one in charge of Blumedale Hospital's representation at the Grand Medical Summit, not you!"

Francesca was furious but did not dare say more. Instead, she turned to her mentor, Malcolm, for support.

Malcolm's ruddy face maintained its gentle smile. "Thomas, if it's not acceptable, then it's not acceptable-no need to get so worked up about it! You're right- you're in charge, and your decision carries the most weight. However, I also have a position to express."

Thomas' eyebrow twitched. "Malcolm, you—"

The smile on Malcolm's face gradually disappeared as the authority of a veteran hospital director began to emerge. "I have just one request-Blumedale Hospital should try to recruit Andrew! I believe in him even more than I believe in my student-Fran."

He admitted, "I don't know this young man well, and this is our first meeting. But I've always adhered to one principle in dealing with people-to judge them by their actions.

"He could hold his own against Mosby and earned the Phelan family's approval. Thomas, do you think an ordinary medical practitioner could accomplish these feats?"

Thomas' brow furrowed deeply as he remained silent.

Malcolm continued, "Moreover, my old friend Cedric from Jayrodale holds Andrew

in the highest regard! And you might not know this yet, but Andrew is now an honored guest of Governor McCormick!"

"Isn't Ms. Garcia here? You can ask

her yourself believe the Phelan

family, the Keller family, and

Governor McCormick aren't

blind-they wouldn't place their trust and admiration in someone mediocre!" he concluded decisively.

These statements added significant weight to Andrew's abilities and medical expertise. Although Thomas, as deputy chief, still disliked Andrew, he found himself unable to formulate a rebuttal. His expression gradually turned sour.

"We'll discuss this matter later I need to give it more thought," Thomas finally

said reluctantly. He stood up with a gloomy face and left the room.

Bernard followed closely behind him like an obsequious lapdog.

Francesca pleaded, "Dr. Goddard, please save this competition opportunity for Andrew. I'd gladly give up my spot for him!"

Malcolm chuckled warmly. "Don't worry, Fran understand Thomas well! When he says he'll think about

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it more, he's actually indirectly agreeing. He just can't bring himself to lose face in front of you youngsters!"

Francesca immediately brightened up. "Thank you, Dr. Goddard!"

She gave Andrew a playful wink, her face full of pride and satisfaction.

Chantelle spoke up. "Dr. Goddard, allow me to ask a somewhat intrusive question!"

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Chantelle asked, "Is this Grand Medical Summit really worth all this trouble for Blumedale Hospital? If I remember correctly, Blumedale Hospital has always been a regular champion at the Grand Medical Summit."

Malcolm's expression grew slightly serious. "Ms. Garcia, you've earned my trust, so I won't hold anything back. In previous Grand Medical Summits, Blumedale Hospital naturally had an overwhelming advantage. After all, we are the largest hospital and most authoritative medical institution in Gabo Creek province!"

He continued, "But times have changed. Mosby is extremely ambitious and has always wanted to use his medical skills to challenge institutions like ours or even dominate them. His greatest ambition is to collaborate with the Advanced Medical Institute to monopolize the entire medical market in Gabo Creek province and reap enormous profits!

"For this Grand Medical Summit, Mosby is undoubtedly determined to win. Because if he becomes the final victor of the Grand Medical Summit, or if someone from the Advanced Medical Institute takes the championship, then his reputation as a miracle doctor will be unprecedented!"

"And the title of 'Medical Master of Gabo Creek and Blumedale Hospital' will fall into his hands!" Malcolm concluded with concern.

Logan snorted derisively. "Medical Master? Mosby is dreaming!"

Malcolm shook his head. "Mosby's medical skills follow an unorthodox path—it's truly hard to predict! Although Thomas is the one in our hospital with the most potential and the greatest chance of defeating him, nothing is certain. That's why I insisted on including Andrew in our hospital's roster despite his objections."

Logan laughed heartily. "If my buddy Andy participates, it'll be a sure win!"

At that moment, Andrew, who had remained silent all this time, slowly shook his head. "I will participate in this Grand Medical Summit, but I'm sorry, I won't be representing Blumedale Hospital."

Chantelle stared in disbelief. "Andrew, have you lost your mind? Do you know how prestigious the title of Medical Master would be if you won? It would earn you universal respect from the entire medical community in Gabo Creek's Blumedale Hospital, and even a formal reception with the governor and other high-ranking officials!"

Andrew replied indifferently, "That's why I said I would participate, but I don't want to represent Blumedale Hospital."

Malcolm glared at him. "Young man, you really are as crafty as Thomas said! So after all my efforts to advocate for you, you refuse to give me face?"

Andrew smiled apologetically. "It's not that I don't respect you, Dr. Goddard, just because you're Fran's mentor alone, I would certainly honor you! But if I represent Blumedale Hospital, all the glory would go to the hospital while I get nothing—that's hardly a fair deal!"

His words left everyone torn between laughter and exasperation.

Malcolm laughed while scolding him. "You rascal, tell me then, what do you want out of this?"

Andrew smiled. "Nothing much. I just heard that you have several rare medicinal herbs. They're just sitting there losing potency, so why not give them to me?"

Malcolm was taken aback for a

moment before bursting into

laughter. "So you came to Blumedale

Hospital taking for me because of

ve

these rare herbs! After all this roundabout conversation, that's what you're after!"

Andrew pressed, "So, Dr. Goddard, will you give them to me or not?"

Malcolm chuckled. "Of course, I'll give them to you! If I didn't, Fran here would drive me crazy, constantly calling me a stingy old man!"

Francesca looked slightly

embarrassed but firmly stood by her man. "Dr. Goddard, then on Andrew's behalf, I thank you in advance

Where are your rare herbs kept? I'll

go get them for Andrew right away!"

Her impatience made Malcolm twirl his mustache and widen his eyes in disbelief. Meanwhile, Chantelle secretly felt somewhat resentful, noting how good Andrew's women were to him.

'Did this guy really have such incredible charm?' she wondered to herself.

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In the end, Andrew successfully obtained three rare medicinal herbs from Malcolm. Getting three at once was quite a haul, and he left feeling extremely satisfied.

In exchange, he had to agree to represent Blumedale Hospital at the Grand Medical Summit. He had initially wanted to hold his ground, especially since Thomas' attitude had really irritated him.

However, Malcolm's generous offering was too substantial to refuse. When combined with Francesca's persistent persuasion, Andrew had no choice but to agree.

After all, he had been aiming for the Grand Medical Summit's rewards all along. He did not care about titles like "Medical Master"—he was targeting high-quality, rare medicinal herbs and various other prizes.

"Mr. Lloyd, let me escort you out," Norman offered as they were leaving, his attitude now incredibly warm and attentive.

Logan sneered. "Dr. Ellington, you sure change your tune quickly."

Norman's face reddened as he forced a laugh. "Even Dr. Goddard now values Mr. Lloyd highly. I'm just a department head—I wouldn't dare be disrespectful anymore!"

Andrew responded indifferently. "Dr. Ellington, there's no serious grudge between us. I was once a doctor myself, and though I've left the hospital, I still believe that for a

medical professional, ethics come before skill. Without moral character, even the greatest medical skill is meaningless."

Norman nodded repeatedly and, through gritted teeth, declared, "Rest assured, Mr. Lloyd, I will handle that unethical bastard Daniel fairly and appropriately!"

After exiting Blumedale Hospital, Logan tilted his head and smiled. "Ms. Garcia, I think we should give them some privacy, don't you agree?"

Chantelle glanced at Francesca, her mouth twitching slightly before she stiffly replied, "Fine."

The two walked away, leaving only Francesca and Andrew behind. Francesca nervously twirled her hair and said, "Andrew, I can't go with you."

Andrew was surprised. "Fran, why not? Don't you want to see me?"

Francesca quickly responded, "Of course not! I've been thinking about you constantly! But as you heard, the Grand Medical Summit is coming up soon, and I need to prepare."

Andrew smiled. "It's okay, I won't keep you long-just one night."

Francesca blushed, both embarrassed and annoyed. "You're just the same as before, you old pervert!"

"No, I'm not giving in to you," she protested.

Andrew gave her a meaningful look. "Are you sure about that?"

Francesca conceded defeat and bit her lip. "Fine, I do want to go with you. But how do I explain it to Dr. Goddard? If I go with you, I won't want to come back."

Andrew nodded understandingly. "Alright then, stay and study with Dr. Goddard. I'll come for you on the day of the summit."

Francesca murmured in agreement and, after glancing around cautiously, leaned forward to plant a quick kiss on Andrew's lips before running back inside.

Andrew watched her graceful figure and enticing silhouette disappear, clicking his tongue in disappointment.

He thought it was such a shame because he had been looking forward to spending the night with her. It seemed he would have to continue his ascetic lifestyle a bit longer.

...

Logan and Chantelle returned from their brief departure.

"Andy, missing Ms. Aicker already?" Logan teased.

"That's easy to fix-just take her to a hotel for a few hours. It won't take up too much time!" he suggested with a grin.

Andrew shook his head. "I prefer long, passionate nights-quick encounters aren't my style. Besides, I usually need at least three hours. A short hotel stay wouldn't be enough."

Logan looked at him with dubious amazement. "Are you really that... impressive?"

Chantelle shot them a look of disgust. "Is filthy garbage all you men have in your heads?"

Andrew glanced at her and smiled. "Ms. Garcia, since you're not the passionate type, I won't say much But I do suggest you find yourself a boyfriend. You've reached the peak of both your career and your beauty. Honestly, not experiencing love with a partner seems like such a waste."

Chantelle smirked coldly. "That's none of your concern, Mr. Lloyd! All men are pigs!"

Andrew and Logan spoke almost in perfect unison, exclaiming at the same time, "Except me!"

Logan burst into laughter. "Andy, great minds think alike! Well, I've got to go now."  
Andrew nodded. "Sure, let's grab drinks another day."

## Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Logan left with the Keller family's people, having perfectly played the role of Andrew's enforcer. However, Chantelle remained standing in place with no intention of leaving.

Andrew raised an eyebrow. "Ms. Garcia, are you waiting for someone?"

Chantelle's face remained expressionless. "Andrew, I want to ask you a personal question."

He replied, "Go ahead."

"Francesca is your romantic interest, but what about Aspen? They're both wonderful women-how will you choose?" she asked pointedly.

Andrew thought for a moment and smiled. "Good question. I must admit, you've stumped me."

Chantelle smirked coldly as she watched Andrew, eager to see how this dog of a man would answer.

She knew that whatever his response, it would be wrong and would inevitably hurt either Francesca or Aspen.

Seeing Andrew make a mistake would bring her satisfaction. But the next moment, she heard Andrew calmly say, "Fortunately, I know the perfect answer."

He continued smoothly, "Only a fool would make a choice. As for me, I'll take both and make everyone happy. Wouldn't that be wonderful?"

Chantelle stared in disbelief as Andrew walked away. She called after him incredulously, "Both of them? Have you no shame? You jerk! Aren't you afraid your health will give out?"

Not choosing one or the other, but claiming both was ridiculous. Honestly, Andrew's answer completely exceeded her expectations.

Inside Blumedale Hospital, Norman returned to his office. Daniel had been waiting there, grinding his teeth in anger. "Is that bastard Andrew gone? Damn him for picking on me I'll skin him alive!"

Norman had barely sat down before immediately standing up again, delivering two quick slaps across Daniel's face.

Daniel was stunned, his face a picture of misery. "Uncle Norman, why are you hitting me? Shouldn't Andrew be the one getting slapped?"

Norman growled, "Shut up, you animal. This is a hospital-don't call me uncle. I don't have a nephew like you! And starting now, listen carefully: your position is terminated. Pack your things and leave Blumedale Hospital immediately!"

Daniel looked at him in disbelief. "Dr. Ellington, what are you saying?"

Norman said grimly, "I'm saying get out of Blumedale Hospital right now-you're fired!"

Daniel staggered backward, nearly falling. "Uncle Norman, what's wrong with you? I'm your nephew-we're family! How can you do this to me?"

Norman grabbed him by the collar, his expression fierce. "Listen up, you little runt. It's precisely because I'm your uncle that I'm letting you off easily! Andrew has his eye on you now. If you don't leave and this reaches the director's level.

"Then losing your job will be the least of your problems. With Malcolm's temperament, you could be blacklisted from the entire industry!"

Daniel's face drained of color as he struggled to accept this. "W-Why are you so afraid of him? What power does he have? You're a department head-a

Blumedale Hospital department head!"

Looking at the collapsing Daniel,

who had broken into sobs, Norman shook his head, his face

expressionless. "You don't need know the details. All you need to understand is that neither you nor I can afford to cross Andrew. By the way, he's about to represent our Blumedale Hospital at the Grand Medical Summit!

"I think you should realize what a tremendous honor that is, and don't blame anyone but yourself. What you did, just as Andrew pointed out, violated medical ethics! If someone else had exposed you, I might have been able to cover for you and protect you.

"However, Andrew isn't an ordinary person. If I indulge you and show favoritism, then I'd likely be kicked out of my position as department head too!"

Daniel's face turned ashen, his mind buzzing when he heard Andrew representing Blumedale Hospital at the Grand Medical Summit.

This was something he could not even dare to imagine. After all, such an honor was reserved only for those few doctors selected from among the thousands at Blumedale Hospital-the absolute best of the best.

He had originally thought he would escape trouble and was just waiting until he secured a minor leadership position before dealing with Andrew.

But now, all his plans had collapsed like a house of cards, and even his own uncle, the department head, was terrified.

As a mere doctor, he stood no chance.