

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Looking back at Andrew, Riker extended his hand and said, "I can escort your people out of the city, but you need to pay a deposit upfront!"

Andrew shook his head firmly, "I don't have a single penny on me right now. I can't pay anything. You escort them out of the city first, and I won't short you a dime afterward."

Riker crossed his arms with a cold sneer. "You've been in this game long enough. Do you really think such an obvious attempt to get something for nothing will work? Either pay the deposit, and we'll escort them out, or none of you are leaving. You can all wait to fall into Mr. Fischer's hands."

Andrew smiled and replied, "Alright, Mr. Lamar. You really do cover all your bases! I have no choice but to submit to your terms. Bring me paper and pen, and I'll write down one of the miracle drug formulas for you first!"

Riker immediately ordered, "Go get what he asked for."

The items were quickly brought over, and Andrew wrote down a prescription with just a few strokes.

When Riker looked at it, he could not help but frown. "How do I know if this formula is real or fake? And you're telling me these hundred-something words are the recipe for that miracle drug? Are you kidding me?"

Andrew scoffed. "Mr. Lamar, judging by your reaction, I'm guessing you're probably not that educated. A formula is made of words. If you want me to write a whole essay, you're talking to the wrong guy. If you don't trust it, take it to someone who knows what they're doing and verify it."

Riker looked troubled. After all, Hidden Dragons were all basically illiterate thugs. Besides fighting, drinking, and chasing women, where would he find medical experts or specialists?

"Fine, I'll trust you for now." He grabbed the paper and carefully put it away.

Then, he added coldly, "But Andrew, if I find out this is your trick, you won't live to regret it. And your women? Even if they're out of town, I'll drag them right back."

Andrew replied calmly, "Of course I won't deceive you! I wouldn't dare deceive someone of your status! Now, arrange for someone to escort them out of Goldridge!"

With a wave of Riker's hand, cars immediately pulled up downstairs.

Andrew personally accompanied Lauren and the other two women as they were escorted out of Goldridge. For insurance, Riker had his men bring weapons along. If Andrew tried to double-cross them, his people could shoot the three women immediately.

His methods were both ruthless and foolproof.

"Honey, we don't want to leave!"

As they neared the old gates of Goldridge, tears welled up in the ladies' eyes. The idea of leaving Andrew behind filled them with dread, especially knowing he would be left alone in Goldridge.

Andrew smiled reassuringly. "It's okay. I'll come find you all very soon!"

Beside them, Riker laughed mockingly, clearly implying that Andrew would not be going anywhere.

Just then, Zachary and Ruth arrived outside the gates. They spotted Andrew and immediately rushed over.

Andrew said in a serious tone, "Zachary, drive back to Gabo Creek as fast as possible, don't stop for anything."

Zachary's expression became solemn as he replied, "Captain, you can count on me! Even if it costs me my life, I won't let anything happen to Ms. Rhodes and the others!"

Andrew nodded approvingly. "Good... Remember your promise! Oh, and when you get back, tell my dear aunt Victoria that someone in Goldfidge is bullying me and ask her to come quickly!"

Zachary nodded firmly. "Absolutely!"

Riker waved his hand and announced, "Let's head back!"

With that, he brought Andrew back into the city with him.

In the car, he mocked, "Your aunt? What kind of joke is that? Do you still not understand the situation you're in? Goldridge is the headquarters of the Southern Martial Union! Besides powerhouses like Mr. Fischer, there are also other powerful families here!"

He laughed and added, "If I'm guessing right, your aunt is probably just some woman, right? Calling for a woman to come rescue you? Have you lost your mind or something?"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew replied calmly, "Victoria is a woman who could beat your brains out."

Riker let out a sinister laugh. "Is that so? Well, I'll be waiting to see that! Now let's head back and fulfill the conditions we agreed on earlier. You can't shortchange me on a single thing. Otherwise, I'll skin you alive and show you what it means to wish you were dead."

Andrew suddenly asked, "From the Goldridge city gate, my people should be able to reach the highway by now, right?"

Riker was taken aback and reluctantly replied, "You can barely protect yourself, yet you're still worried about your women. You really are quite the romantic! I might as well tell you. Yes, they

can reach the highway by now. Your people don't matter anyway. No one's chasing them. You, on the other hand, should be

worrying about yourself."

Andrew grinned and said, "Good, so they made it to the highway. That means I can stop holding back. And now I can blow your damn head off, Riker."

In one sharp move, Andrew smashed his elbow straight at Riker's skull.

Riker roared in rage, pulled back, and tried to slam his knee into Andrew's chest with full force.

Suddenly, an explosive aura exploded from Andrew's body, and all four tires of the moving SUV burst simultaneously. The vehicle screeched before flipping off the side of the road.

Riker's roar echoed for 30 meters. "Everyone on alert! Don't let that bastard get away!"

The other vehicles accelerated to catch up and surrounded them completely.

Inside the wrecked SUV, Andrew leaned back and crushed the chest of a Hidden Dragons thug sitting beside him. Blood gushed out from the guy's mouth as he collapsed.

Furious beyond belief, Riker launched a barrage of punches at Andrew, fists flying like a storm aimed straight at his head.

In the cramped back seat space, Andrew used his hands and legs alternately, exchanging over 100 blows with Riker in mere moments. Then, he grabbed Riker's fist with a swift motion, and the two men began wrestling for control inside the swaying vehicle.

Two muffled snaps echoed as Riker felt the bones in his hand start to splinter. He froze as disbelief washed over him.

He had trained his fists for years, conditioning them with iron sand daily. His iron punches could go head-to-head with an industrial press. Yet now, Andrew was crushing his hands like brittle twigs with bare palms.

Riker could not begin to understand the level of strength this required.

Andrew growled, his voice cold, "Riker, if I weren't worried about my people's safety, you think I'd waste a second on someone like you? You think you matter? You're just a nobody playing boss in one of Gabo Creek's so-called top three gangs! You're nothing but trash, and you think you can negotiate with me?"

A fierce glint flashed in Andrew's eyes. If not for Lauren and the other two women being involved, he would have already dealt with Henry. Riker would not even be worth mentioning.

He had nothing to lose in Goldridge, so if it came down to chaos, so be it.

"Andrew, let go of me!" Riker's face turned red as he tried to break free, only to discover he could not move at all.

Andrew suddenly kicked the front seat and used the force to launch Riker out the window. Then, he lunged forward and clamped a hand around Riker's throat mid-air.

Riker howled and hammered his fists into Andrew's abdomen, but the latter just grinned as he took two hits to his chest and stomach. Aside from some minor pain, it did not affect him at all.

However, his counterattack was far from soft. One of his hands choked Riker while the other slammed straight into his face.

Immediately, Riker's already rough features became a bloody mess. Blood seeped out from between his tightly clenched teeth.

Then, Andrew delivered two more punches to his head.

Riker's vision went black, and he nearly passed out on the spot. Andrew's fists were like sledgehammers. When swung with full force, nothing could withstand them, especially not his face.

At that moment, the SUV, stripped of its tires, finally flipped completely onto its side.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew kicked open the car door on the other side and rushed out.

Riker pursued relentlessly, actually lifting up the entire SUV and crawling out from underneath it.

Meanwhile, the 20 over Hidden Dragons elite martial artists surrounded Andrew but did not dare make a move. They were completely stunned that Riker had taken such a beating from this guy.

After all, Riker was a master of physical techniques in martial arts and a high-level martial king.

"That's enough, Mr. Lamar. Gather your people and head back," a calm voice called out from the distance.

A figure had arrived quietly, without anyone noticing.

When Andrew saw who it was, he immediately frowned. Henry had returned much faster than expected. Judging by the man's slightly pale complexion, chasing Jerome had clearly taken quite a toll on him.

Whether he had caught him or not, though, was anyone's guess.

Riker wiped the blood from his face and roared angrily, "Mr. Fischer, this bastard is asking for death! I've got to take one of his arms!"

Henry replied flatly, "You can't beat him, so don't humiliate yourself further."

Riker was left speechless. "I..."

Henry ignored him and looked at Andrew instead. "Your people have safely left Goldridge. Now you can come with me, can't you?"

Andrew responded calmly, "Why should I go with you?"

Henry sneered coldly. "Do you think you have a choice? Andrew, with your current strength, do you really believe you can win in a fight against me? Or do you think I wouldn't go after your people, hunt them down on the road, and make sure they never make it to Gabo Creek?"

Andrew exhaled slowly and said coldly, "Fine, I'll go with you. But Henry, you should know that you wouldn't be able to control me."

Henry gave a faint smile. "Well, I guess we'll find out soon enough."

Riker quickly shouted, "Wait a minute, Mr. Fischer! Andrew still owes me five billion dollars plus a drug formula!"

Henry frowned and looked at Andrew without saying anything.

Andrew shrugged, "I was just talking nonsense. There are always fools who'll believe it. Let's go. I don't want to see this brute anymore!"

Riker's eyes blazed with fury. "Andrew... you son of a bitch! You went back on your word! You think I won't hunt down your people right now?"

Andrew snorted. "Riker, you're still too green to play mind games with me. Go ahead, send your guys. Let's see how far they get. By now, my people should've already crossed into Gabo Creek.

"You probably don't know this, but I have a decent relationship with Governor McCormick. Send someone if you dare, but he might just put a bullet in their skulls."

Riker's eyes filled with bitter hatred. "So, that's what this was. You planned the whole damn thing!"

He pulled out the formula sheet and glared at it. "Then tell me this... Was this real, or was it crap?"

Andrew chuckled. "Feel free to ask Henry for a second opinion."

Henry frowned and glanced at it, then read aloud, "Hydrogen, helium, lithium, beryllium, boron, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, fluorine, neon, sodium, magnesium, aluminum, silicon, phosphorus..."

He stopped reading. He turned to Riker and said, "You've been played for a fool... Let it go!"

Without waiting for a response, he turned and left with Andrew.

Riker stood frozen, staring at Andrew's back, burning with rage. He had been made a fool of!

He had spent his life in the underworld, staring at Andrew's retreating figure with murderous intent. He had been played for a complete fool!

Everything came down to the disadvantage of being illiterate.

Riker had started running the streets early and never went to school. Finally, fate had struck him down with the curse of illiteracy.

"Andrew, you've gone too far!" Riker roared. He felt his intelligence had been insulted and secretly vowed that if he ever got the chance, he would make sure Andrew died horribly.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Henry brought Andrew to a private villa nestled on Mount Zircon in Goldridge. It was a luxury estate perched in one of the city's most exclusive areas.

"Nice place!" Andrew commented with genuine appreciation.

His eyes swept the area and spotted the creepy Eric. The guy was dressed in flowing teal robes with wide sleeves, and his long hair covered half of his feminine features. Anyone who did not know better would think he was in the middle of a costume play shoot.

"Have a seat!" Henry's expression remained neutral as he politely gestured for Andrew to sit down.

Andrew took a seat and said bluntly, "Mr. Fischer, after all this chaos, you might as well just tell me what exactly you are after."

Henry walked over to the wine cabinet and poured two glasses of red wine. He offered one of the glasses to Andrew, but the latter shook his head, indicating he was afraid it might be poisoned and refused to drink.

Henry did not seem bothered and simply handed the glass to Eric instead.

Eric took it and gave Andrew a cold look before tilting his head back and downing the entire glass in one gulp.

Andrew raised an eyebrow, surprised that Eric had such a strong tolerance for alcohol. While red wine was not as strong as hard liquor, chugging it down like water was still pretty unusual.

Henry's tall frame stood by the floor-to-ceiling window like a statue. He seemed to enjoy holding conversations near windows.

He said, "Andrew, I won't beat around the bush. I really admire you! So, I want you to work for me. Don't be quick to refuse. Since you've fallen into my hands, refusing isn't an option."

Andrew nodded slightly. Henry had already proven he was one of the most dangerous martial saints in the region, and his earlier battle with Jerome had shown it clearly. While he did not have Jerome's raw power, his ruthlessness burned even hotter.

So, when he spoke with such domineering authority that brooked no refusal, it was completely reasonable.

Andrew had already concluded that Henry was brutal, aggressive, and absolutely relentless.

Henry turned around to face him, his eyes gleaming as he smiled. "Jerome escaped. He managed to survive thanks to your interference. I used to think something like that was impossible, but now it's actually happened, I honestly think it's quite the miracle."

Andrew smirked. "Mr. Thornton may have been severely injured and stabbed by his ungrateful son, but let's be real, the guy is ranked eighth on the Titan List, one of the elite among martial saints. The fact that you couldn't kill him is perfectly normal."

Henry snorted. "It's not normal at all! Do you have any idea how much effort I put into planning this coordinated attack? Goldridge is the headquarters of the Southern Martial Union and isn't within our Gabo Creek territory!

"For this reason, I've been stationed in Goldridge representing the Fischer family for years! During that time, I challenged Jerome once and lost narrowly."

Andrew corrected him, "Sorry, but from what I remember, you didn't just lose. You were crushed, demolished, completely destroyed!"

Henry's smile turned menacing, "That mouth of yours can be really annoying sometimes. So, unless you absolutely have to speak, you'd better stay quiet. Otherwise, I don't mind beating you senseless first to teach you about watching your tone when talking to your superior."

Andrew looked completely indifferent. He was confident he could go toe-to-toe with Henry if it came to a one-on-one fight.

After all, since his first seal had been released, he had killed Stanley, the fake martial saint, in the tomb of the Fallen Crimson Dynasty emperor.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

The reason Andrew called Stanley a fake martial saint was because the man had not officially reached the martial saint tier. However, his combat power was more than enough to be one.

The real problem now, though, was Eric. That freak's Phantom Mirage technique was a serious threat. Every move he made carried an eerie allure that could throw any martial artist off their game.

Seeing Andrew remain silent, Henry assumed he had successfully intimidated him. With a smile, he said, "Getting back to our earlier topic... Do you realize what kind of trouble you've caused me by helping Jerome escape? I can tell you about the other two martial saints who participated in the attack.

"One was the head butler of the elite McCormick family, Edwin Pennyworth. The second was Grace Valencia, a renowned figure in the Southern Martial Union and ranked eleventh on the Unbroken Ranking."

Andrew frowned. "McCormick family? The elite Goldridge McCormick family?"

Henry nodded. "That's right. The famous McCormick family. You should understand what elite families represent! You know the hierarchy of the powerful families in Holtrien is extremely strict.

"Above the wealthy elites stand the noble houses; above the noble houses, the royal bloodlines reign supreme! Even I have to watch my words carefully when dealing with an elite family like the McCormicks!"

Andrew looked completely bored. "All this talk is just to say that you saved my life from the wrath of the McCormick family and that Madam Valencia, right?"

Henry sneered coldly, "Isn't that exactly what happened? Do you think if I hadn't insisted and mediated repeatedly, you could have survived after letting Jerome escape?"

Andrew shrugged. "Different paths, different goals. We can't work together. I had my own reasons for letting Mr. Thornton go. Besides, who could've known you guys were planning a rebellion? Come to think of it, I'm a victim here too!"

Henry laughed in frustration. "Save it. I'm done wasting my breath on you. Now, get on your knees and swear your allegiance to me. Help me suppress the rebellion inside the Southern Martial Union, take care of Jerome's remaining loyalists, and I'll set you free."

Andrew raised a brow. "Get down on my knees and swear allegiance? What do you think you are, the Emperor? Beyond God and my parents, no one else deserves that honor."

Henry put down his wine glass. "Don't push me."

Andrew met his gaze coldly. "Then let's see who breaks first."

Henry's long-suppressed rage finally erupted, "You really are stubborn! Originally, killing you outright would have been the easiest solution, but unfortunately for you,

I have more professional methods to deal with you!"

Andrew's brow furrowed as he saw Eric flash forward and suddenly appear sitting in front of him. The man's soft and delicate hands gently rested on Andrew's shoulders.

In Eric's eyes, his pupils seemed to have dissolved, leaving only circles of swirling patterns.

Andrew's mind buzzed as everything in front of him began to blur. He silently cursed, 'Damn it!'

With Eric using his full power to activate this technique, even Andrew could not avoid falling victim to it. As his consciousness gradually faded, he tried to force himself to stay alert, but it had little effect.

Soon, Andrew's eyes became vacant, and he sat there like a statue, completely motionless.

A contemptuous smile appeared at the corner of Eric's mouth. "Mr. Fischer, he's been hypnotized! This annoying pest isn't as tough as he talks after all!"

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Henry looked at Andrew's unfocused eyes and smiled. He said, "Phantom Mirage really is incredible! No wonder Jerome treated it like a top-tier technique and kept it locked away."

Eric responded flatly, "As long as he's alive, you won't be able to take full control of Goldridge's headquarters."

Henry shook his head. "Now that he's escaped, there's no point talking about it, but the injuries he sustained are fatal. Combined with the Frostblossom poison, he'd be crippled even if he survives. A crippled leader means nothing to me!"

Eric warned, "You know what kind of martial arts prodigy Dad is. I advise you not to get too overconfident. Besides, there's another secret technique in his residence. Mr. Fischer, haven't you always coveted that Inferno Strike technique? Did you find it?"

Henry's brow furrowed tightly. "I didn't find it. We turned that entire side hall upside down and found nothing at all. Right now, my people are searching for the rest of the headquarters, hoping to locate it somewhere else."

Eric shook his head directly. "If it's not in the side hall, then there's no point searching anywhere else. Dad is a straightforward man, and he wouldn't hide a martial art like Inferno Strike in some hidden vault. He either destroyed it... or took it with him."

Henry gritted his teeth slightly. "If that's really the case, then the Inferno Strike just isn't meant for me!"

Eric withdrew his hands and glanced at Andrew with contempt. "He's now completely trapped in the stupor I've created! Right now, if you tell him to die, he'll die. Whatever you want him to do, he'll do it!"

Henry was extremely pleased and laughed heartily. "A pawn this useful? I'm not about to waste him. I need a capable right-hand man in Goldridge, and Andrew will help me wipe out what's left of the resistance."

Eric explained, "To completely control his mind, I'll need to do this several more times. Activating Phantom Mirage takes a great toll on my energy reserves. If you want total control over him and turn him into a puppet, I'll need at least another two weeks."

Henry pondered for a moment. "Two weeks is too long... I'll give you ten days at most!"

Eric nodded, "Since you're in such a hurry, then ten days it is!"

At that moment, Andrew felt his head was extremely heavy. It seemed like people were talking nearby, but he could not make out what they were saying clearly. He could not help but feel anxious. If he could not break through Eric's enchantment, he would be in serious trouble.

However, it was like his whole body was soaked in warm water. It was comfortable and gentle, yet slowly dragging him deeper, like a slow creep of disaster, luring him into the abyss.

This was Andrew's first encounter with a martial artist like Eric, who practiced such strange techniques. Hence, he was at a loss for how to respond. Suddenly, he felt a certain part of his body burning hot, and his foggy consciousness cleared up slightly.

Then that burning sensation came again. This time it was not just heat, but like a searing iron had pressed into his skin. The pain jolted through him like a lightning bolt.

All at once, Andrew's thoughts snapped back. His foggy eyes cleared, but he did not move a muscle. He was delighted to discover that what had worked was actually the token Jerome had left in his pocket.

That thing had heated up so intensely that it burned him awake.

What a treasure! He absolutely had to find a chance to study it properly.

Maybe this token could help him deal with Eric's Phantom Mirage.

While his mind had cleared, he remained perfectly still just like before so that neither Eric nor Henry noticed anything unusual.

Andrew slowly moved his eyes, glancing toward the source of the voices. Then, he caught sight of two naked men going at it on the couch nearby.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Andrew silently gasped. Even though he had seen his fair share of bloodshed and supernatural horrors, he could not help but suck in a sharp breath and nearly jump up at this sight.

Eric was actually having sex with Henry!

Not only were the two men completely naked, but their figures were twisted into all kinds of absurd poses. Coupled with their strange moaning sounds and heavy breathing, it was an indescribable scene.

Henry's build was tall and massive, sculpted like a warrior. Every muscle bulged with masculine power, and his entire presence screamed dominance.

Meanwhile, Eric had his lower half wrapped in a bedsheet, his long hair cascading over his shoulders like a woman's. His collarbones were clearly defined, and his skin was paler than most women's. Even his arms and legs were slender and smooth.

If it were not for his Adam's apple bobbing in his throat, Andrew would have suspected this guy was actually a woman.

"Mr. Fischer, a little harder!"

"It's big... just give me a second!"

The two of them were deep in the moment, lost in their passion.

Andrew was confident that if he wanted to break through the window and escape, he could absolutely make it. However, he did not do so because if he did, there would truly be no one to deal with Eric.

Andrew could tell that Jerome had poured everything into raising his adopted son, and he wanted to bring Eric back to him. At the very least, he wanted to give that father and son a chance to reconcile.

It would also help repay the debt from when Jerome had traveled north to rescue Andrew and Reginald years ago.

Andrew silently consoled himself, 'Hold it together. You've got to hold it together! Don't act. Just observe. As disgusting as this freakshow is, give him a chance. Tolerate it, just for now.'

After steadying his nerves, he glanced back at the couch.

Henry and Eric were in the thick of it now.

Henry's face was flushed red with veins bulging as he laughed in a low voice. "Eric, even though you're not a woman, you're better than any woman! In my entire life, besides martial arts, I've never had any interest in women. Until I met you, I never knew what the ultimate pleasure in life could be!"

Eric tilted his head back, panting. "A man as powerful as you is exactly the kind I like!"

Henry chuckled, clearly pleased with himself. "I never thought I could tame you like this back then. Otherwise, without your inside help, dealing with Jerome would have required much more effort."

Andrew cursed under his breath. So, Henry had used this method to get Eric under his control.

Eric wanted revenge for Hunter, who had grown up with him since childhood. Ultimately, he surrendered to Henry's masculine dominance.

Andrew could not help thinking about Aspen and Chantelle. Both of them were starting to show signs of falling under his own dominance. Nonetheless, compared to Eric, they were practically saints.

If Aspen and Chantelle were slightly troubled, then Eric had probably reached the point of complete obsession.

"Alright, that's enough. No need to overdo it. This kind of thing burns energy, and it'll mess with my martial training if I go too far," Henry said suddenly, pulling away.

He stood, wrapping a towel around his waist, and walked into the bathroom.

Meanwhile, Eric collapsed back onto the couch, bruises blooming across his neck and arms. He trembled as he stroked his pale skin and murmured to himself, "Hunter... if you were still alive, you'd probably hate me. My body was supposed to belong to only you.

"But now that you're gone, all I can think about is revenge. And since you're not here, this body has no meaning anymore. So I'll ruin it, defile it... Only then can I numb this pain that keeps me up every single night."

Andrew felt a wave of emotions rise in his chest. Eric was clearly someone so broken by love that he was completely twisted.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

After their little "session", Henry left the villa.

Eric got dressed and wandered into the kitchen to brew himself a cup of coffee. He took his time, dragging out every movement before finally returning to Andrew.

"You're pretty good-looking... It's just too bad that you're such a blockhead!" Eric said with a smirk as he stared at Andrew's blank face.

'You're the blockhead, you freak! You twisted, fake-ass, genderless mess...' Andrew cursed inwardly.

He wanted to slap Eric so badly, but he held back. He kept his calm while his mind raced, trying to figure out how to get Eric to leave with him willingly.

However, using force would trigger Henry. Once they teamed up again, Andrew could be thrown right back under hypnosis. So for now, he had no choice but to sit still and wait for the right moment.

After sipping his coffee, Eric began another round of hypnosis. He sat directly in front of Andrew, and once again, those hypnotic spirals flickered in his eyes.

A strange sensation immediately wormed into Andrew's mind. Drowsiness swept over him like a wave, and his consciousness began to blur. Thankfully, just like before, the token in his pocket flared up with intense heat.

The searing pain jolted his brain awake. On the surface, he appeared dazed, but inside, he felt a surge of clarity. Now, he was sure the token Jerome left behind was not just luck. It was the exact counter to Eric's Phantom Mirage.

The first time might have been a fluke, but this second time sealed it. That realization filled Andrew with energy. If he could fully figure out how to use this thing, he would never have to fear Eric's hypnosis again. When the time came, he could turn against Henry and fight his way out of Goldridge.

Andrew was not the forgiving type. Now that the conflict was this deep, if he had a shot to kill Henry, he would take it without hesitation. After all, they were enemies now. It was kill or be killed.

Besides, Henry was only the seventh son of the Fischer family. There were still plenty of other powerful figures hidden in that family.

Taking one out would be a great start.

As soon as he got the chance, Andrew would also eliminate Scarlett without hesitation.

Half an hour later, Eric's face was pale, and even his lips had lost all color. He stopped hypnotizing Andrew and smiled slightly. "A few more sessions should be enough to control you completely!"

Seeing how he was sweating heavily and clearly exhausted, Andrew almost laughed on the spot.

He thought, 'What a waste of effort! If he knows the truth, he'll surely be enraged!'

Eric stood and walked out of the room. The moment his footsteps faded, Andrew shot up. He quickly scanned the space, and once he was sure there were no surveillance cameras, he pulled out his phone.

He powered it on and immediately called Lauren.

"Honey! We just made it to the state capital in Gabo Creek. Are you okay?" Lauren's voice trembled, thick with worry.

Andrew said gently. "I'm fine. Don't worry. Not a scratch on me. How are Fran and Aspen?"

Francesca and Aspen's voices chimed in from the background. "Honey, we're okay too! Please come back soon! Don't stay in Goldridge!"

Andrew promised them and hung up. He knew Victoria had already gotten word that he was trapped in Goldridge, and she was on her way now. However, he did not want her barging in and confronting Henry directly.

He needed Victoria to wait until he fought his way out of Goldridge before making her move. When that happened, Henry would be intercepted by Victoria, and Andrew could forcibly take Eric away.

With his plan finally clear in his mind, Andrew sat cross-legged on the couch.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out the black token Jerome had left him.