

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

---- Chapter 2031 Barnaby chuckled. "Of course. No matter how brazen I am, I wouldn't go digging my own grave. But with all due respect, Captain, times have changed. If you don't reclaim what once belonged to you, you'll have a hard time walking out of Chetvine." Andrew shrugged casually. "What belonged to me in the past is nothing but smoke and mirrors now. It's like sand slipping through your fingers; the tighter you hold, the faster it runs out. What's the point of taking it back? I'd rather treasure what I have now." The corner of Barnaby's mouth curled with a faint sneer.

Clearly, he did not buy Andrew's words. He lowered his head in mock courtesy, then turned with his men and walked away without hesitation. Once in the car, he didn't waste a moment. "Straight out of Gabo Creek!" Dante stared in shock. "But sir, aren't we going to hold the Keller family accountable for their actions? And what about Derek? We came all this way, shouldn't we at least mess with him a bit before we leave?" Barnaby snorted coldly. "Idiot, with that man here, anything I do would be pointless. Let's go. Where he stands, there's nothing ---- worth taking.

We'll just wait until he heads back to Chetvine, then sit back and watch the show." Dante scoffed. "Is he really that powerful? Sir, with your rank and the people backing you, what's there to fear? Sure, the Lloyd royal family is untouchable, but he's not one of them anymore. A fallen phoenix isn't a phoenix... It's just a sparrow that can't fly. Anyone who wants to crush him can do it on a whim." Barnaby replied calmly, "Dante, you're still new. There's a lot you don't know. Stop whining, and don't parade your ignorance in front of me. A broken-winged phoenix can fall to a sparrow, yes .. Original content can be found at Find★Novel.net

But a phoenix can also rise again from the ashes. "With your tiny brain, you've never seen that, have you? This was. a man who once nearly turned Chetvine upside down. I'd rather believe he's even more dangerous now than believe he's nothing. Dante grinned. "Whatever the case, I'll follow your lead. But sir, when it comes to ruthless cunning and sheer brutality, there aren't many in this world who can match you. Still, I can't swallow the thought of that former golden boy of Chetvine. If I get the chance, I'll drag his head across the ground." Barnaby shrugged.

"Then you'd better pray that the one getting his face ground into the dirt isn't you." ---- The Driscoll family was no more. Everything had finally come to an end. Maurice had fallen in battle, and Franklin, once the most feared fighter in Gabo Creek, soon followed him to the grave. Worse still, nearly all of the Driscoll high command had been wiped out. In a storm of fury, Andrew had personally slaughtered the family's three elders, and even among their vassal clans, more than half of their eight martial kings were dead. The loss was staggering enough to make anyone's heart bleed.

The Three Titans families had never been on the level of the Goldridge McCormicks. Once gutted like this, the Driscolls were essentially finished, doomed to collapse completely or slide into obscurity as a second-rate clan. If Andrew had been willing, they might still have clung to life, though barely, and without worth. However, he was not interested, and his allies like George and Eric had no intention of showing mercy either. George had old scores with the Driscolls, so his stance was simple: kill those who deserved it, and drive out the rest.

To him, the Driscolls had to be erased and divided up. Eric leaned fully into the ruthless ways of the underworld, preaching the creed of blood and fire. In his world, fortunes were built on the edge of a blade, and power was forged by wiping ---- out families without leaving a single body intact

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---- Chapter 2032 It was not about hatred or ruthless cruelty; this was simply the natural order of things. The big fish ate the small fish, and the strong devoured the weak. Every powerful clan or family had risen by stepping over corpses; anyone could see that truth if they looked. Andrew had no interest in the aftermath. He took Victoria, Tiana, and Lauren and left first. Meanwhile, George stayed behind to handle the remains of the Driscoll family. At his age, he never thought he would still have the chance to achieve something this monumental.

On its own, the Keller family's foundation could never have shaken the Driscolls, but the impossible had now happened before his eyes. George ordered coldly, "Take everything that can be taken. As for the Driscolls' vassal families, try to bring them under control. If they refuse, pressure them first and deal with them accordingly, but those who surrender should be treated generously." With the Chamber of Commerce and the surrendered Driscolls' vassal families, Andrew suddenly had a massive force at his ---- disposal.

It was a power strong enough to challenge both the Phelan family and the Fischer family. Meanwhile, Aaron and Ronald were busier than ever. The fall of the Driscolls finally gave them the chance to rebuild without worrying about suppression or retaliation. Following Andrew against the Driscolls had turned their despair into opportunity. "I still think letting Joe live was a mistake," Eric muttered, unwilling to let go of his desire to kill him. Logan shook his head. "From our point of view, you're right. However, from Andy's perspective, he has to weigh more than just revenge.

Killing Joe might have gone too far." Eric sneered. "That's weak thinking. In our world, mercy doesn't exist. No loose ends: that's the real way to survive." Logan sighed. "Still, Joe's situation is pretty tragic. His real father died before they could even reconcile, and the man he thought was his father turned out not to be his blood at all." Eric scoffed. "Come on, he looked down on his real father anyway. The guy was a penniless monk with nothing. Maurice wasn't his real father, but he controlled the Driscolls. He had power, wealth, status, everything.

If I were him, of course, I wouldn't throw away riches for trash." Logan shook his head, "That's not for us to judge. So, what's ---- your plan now, Eric?" Eric's face darkened. "What plan? Without Andrew's orders, I've got nowhere to go." What he did not say was that he truly had no place left to return to. Goldridge had already fallen into the hands of the McCormicks and Henry. Going back meant living branded as a traitor.

Besides, after spending time with Andrew, Eric realized that following him was not such a bad option after all. The fall of the Driscolls spread like wildfire, hitting every corner of Gabo Creek like a tornado. In one night, one of the region's three ruling families had been erased, a fact that many found impossible to believe. Yet, reality stood in front of them. When old powers collapsed, new rulers rose, and nothing could stop that. That very day, the Goldings and the Wrights, two of the Five Apex Families, immediately paid Andrew a visit. Read complete version only at findnovel.net

They made no attempt to hide their intentions, and it was clear to everyone that this was their way of showing allegiance. The Wrights hardly needed explanation since Yara was already one of Andrew's people. ---- The Goldings, however, had always stayed on the fence and even clashed with Andrew before. Yet fate was cruelly ironic, and now they came crawling to Andrew's feet with humble expressions, showing their submission. This was the intimidating power that absolute strength brought.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

---- Chapter 2033 At this point, looking across Blumedale, Andrew had already taken off." The Haywoods were filled with gloom from top to bottom. Xavier remained silent for a long time, his face dark with frustration. If even the Driscolls had been wiped out, then what chance did the Haywoods have against Andrew? To press on blindly would only lead them to the same fate. Aidan let out a heavy sigh. "That's it, it's all over now. Xavier, you'll go in person to congratulate Mr. Lloyd. And take our family's gift with you. Make sure the gesture carries weight." Xavier's voice shook with anger.

"But Father, what about the grudges, the humiliation he put on the Haywoods. Are we just going to let that go?" Aidan answered calmly. "What choice do you think we have? Right now, not just us, even the Phelans and the Fischers probably couldn't do anything to him. The wise adapt to the times. For the sake of our family, swallow the past and act like it never happened." Xavier's lips trembled. "I-I can't accept this! I refuse to believe he can stay powerful forever. The Haywoods..." - --- Aidan interrupted him before he could continue, "Save it! Don't underestimate someone because he's young.

Xavier, you're already 30. How many second acts do you think you get? "Then you hit my age, and the line becomes 'the best revenge is living well'. You know what they tell you after that doesn't work?' Focus on your health', and then finally... 'Rest in Peace'." The words hit Xavier like lightning, leaving him stunned. "Dad, how can you raise others up while crushing our own spirit?" Aidan's tone softened with gravity. "Xavier, I just don't want you to throw your life away. Go, mend the relationship... Whether you have to cling shamelessly or fake sincerity, just do it.

The Goldings already did... Richard and Elon are a lot smarter than we are." Xavier replied weakly, "Fine, I'll go show my face. But if you expect the Haywoods to become his lapdogs, that's absolutely impossible." Serenity Villa had been renovated once again. This was already the second time it had been restored. The last time, it was nearly destroyed by an assassin's assault. This time, it had been invaded by the Driscoll family's Shadow Division elites, who had damaged about 75% of everything. For more chapters visit [find\(N\)ovel.net](http://find(N)ovel.net)

---- Nonetheless, The Sovereign Residences' standards were indeed impressive Working overtime around the clock, they had restored everything to its original condition. The damaged furniture and other items were flown in overnight from overseas. Before long, Serenity Villa was once again magnificent and luxurious, as if nothing had ever happened. The developer behind The Sovereign Residences was one of the wealthiest magnates in the entire Gabo Creek region, and he personally appeared to present Andrew with lavish gifts.

He responded politely but distantly, leaving Logan and Eric to entertain the stream of guests, since he had no patience for playing host. Zachary also arrived with Ruby, bearing lavish gifts. Andrew waved it off, uninterested in the formalities. He got straight to business and asked, "Have you been able to reach Mr. Thornton?" Although Zachary had succeeded in winning the apprenticeship that day, it had essentially bankrupted him. Jerome had been betrayed, and a great battle had erupted at the Southern Martial Union headquarters.

Later, he had only escaped with his life thanks to Andrew's help. ---- "I've made contact, but Mr. Thornton can't show himself publicly, " Zachary replied with worry evident on his face. Andrew patted his shoulder reassuringly. "Don't worry about it. As long as Mr. Thornton is safe, that's

what matters." Zachary nodded. "Mr. Thornton is indeed fine now, but the McCormick family's people and Henry still haven't given up looking for him."

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

---- Chapter 2034 Zachary explained, "Now the Southern Martial Union is in complete chaos. This has led to signs of unrest within our own Gabo Creek territory as well." Andrew remained silent. Without a leader to maintain order in the Southern Martial Union, it would be strange if chaos did not break out. However, these were not problems he could manage, nor were they his responsibility to worry about. Keeping his own territory secure was enough for now. After letting Zachary do whatever he pleased, Andrew walked to the lawn behind Serenity Villa.

He said, "Victoria, go inside, it's cold out here." Victoria was strolling in the back with Miles and Liliana, and she lifted her face with a faint smile as she shook her head. "Don't worry, I'm fine. You should go in... Today's guests are important, and you're the star. This is the time to build your reputation and network, so don't waste it." Andrew chuckled. "Victoria, being King of Gabo Creek really doesn't suit me." She grew serious. "Foolish child, if you want to fight your way back into Chetvine, then massive preparations are unavoidable.

---- A lone man is just a reckless hero, but the one who controls the whole board is the true commander. That's the only way to secure victory and remain undefeated, Don't you understand that by now, Andrew?" She continued, "Back then, when you and Reggie escaped from Chetvine, you should have learned that lesson. Without massive backing, no matter how gifted you both were, there would come a day when others would settle accounts and treat you like nothing." Andrew gave a bitter smile. "Fine, Victoria, you're right as always.

I hear you." Victoria smiled sweetly, and not a single wrinkle could be seen around her eyes or brows. On the contrary, aside from her slightly pale complexion, she actually looked younger and more charming than before. Tiana approached wearing elegant formal attire, dressed in a way that was both classy and alluring. "Here, Victoria, care for a drink?" She held two glasses of wine in her hands and offered one to Victoria. Andrew frowned. "Mrs. Rhodes, Victoria shouldn't drink." Victoria waved it off. "Who says I can't? I've got no more worries ---- now, I should sit back and enjoy life.

If I don't drink while you're looking after me, when am I supposed to drink?" She took the glass and clinked it with Tiana's. The two women chatted and laughed together, gossiping and making fun of others, gradually walking away from the youngsters. Miles and Liliana stood awkwardly, saying nothing but clearly wanting to speak. Andrew smiled. "Miles, go to the front too. Governor McCormick will be here later, and that's your chance to make connections.

It'll greatly help you when you take over the Peck family." The Peck family had already been placed under Miles' control, which left him overwhelmed with gratitude. However, Victoria thought it was no big deal, since passing power to her son was only a matter of time. Still, Miles looked uneasy rather than happy, and Liliana also seemed weighed down with worry. Andrew noticed but did not press, since he was not the type to pry. He had already done plenty for the Pecks out of respect for Victoria, so there was no need to interfere further. Chapters first released on Find1Novel.net

Yet as Andrew started to leave, Miles and Liliana could no longer hold back. "Um, Mr. Lloyd, please wait a moment!" Liliana stammered ---- nervously, her fingers intertwined as she called out

softly. Andrew stopped and turned back with a puzzled expression. " Ms. Peck, is there something else you need?" Liliana's heart beat even faster. The man before her was a terrifying existence who could destroy the Driscoll family and defeat Maurice in direct combat. He was a martial saint! Liliana never imagined that she would have the privilege of speaking with such a powerful figure in this lifetime.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

---- Chapter 2035 Liliana said awkwardly, "Well, it's really not that important... Mr. Lloyd, I'm not good with words, and I'm afraid I'll say something wrong, so maybe I should let Miles speak instead." Andrew immediately looked toward Miles, waiting quietly for him to continue. Miles opened his mouth, then closed it again, as if gathering tremendous courage before finally speaking up. "Mr. Lloyd, Liliana and I have made a decision! P-Please become our stepfather!" Andrew's mouth twitched uncontrollably, thinking there must be something wrong with his hearing. "What did you say?"

Miles, could you please repeat that?" Since it was already out, Miles no longer held back. "I said we'd like you to be with our mom. It's obvious she cares about you. She's lost her martial strength, and though she puts on a happy face, Liliana and I know she spends her nights restless and staring into the dark. The only time her eyes light up is when you're around." He continued, "We both know she's barely had a single happy day in her life. Our father married into the family, but he turned ---- out to be useless and betrayed her in the end.

We don't want her trapped in this unfair life forever. "Mr. Lloyd, you're a man worthy of respect, and though what I'm saying might sound crazy, even shocking, it's what we truly want as her children. As long as Mom is happy, nothing else matters." Andrew froze, staring at Miles up and down. The man looked perfectly sane, but the words coming out of his mouth were insane, the kind of wild nonsense only someone suffering decades of brain fog might blurt out. Liliana quickly jumped in, embarrassed. "Mr. Lloyd, I know this might sound exaggerated and hard to accept right away.

But think about it... My mom's still young, and she's as elegant as ever. "Honestly, her charm outshines mine by far, and in Blumedale, there's no shortage of men who admire her. She's alone now, while you're unmarried. And you know the saying: an older woman is a treasure. "if my mom could be with someone like you, she'd be overjoyed. And for you, Mr. Lloyd, having a stunning older woman is an experience no young girl could ever give." As the girl rambled further off the rails, Andrew raised his hand. " Enough. Let's keep this between the three of us. Original content can be found at findnovel.net

My stand is simple, and you two need to stop with the ridiculous ideas. ---- Victoria treats me like family, like her own son, and I see her the same way. I've never had improper thoughts about her. Honestly, you two need a doctor. Miles panicked and pressed harder. "Mr. Lloyd, please, just think it over! We didn't come to this lightly... We really considered it. It may sound absurd, but things like this do happen. And even though Mom has lost her martial strength, she's kept herself in great shape.

When you're out together, no one would even notice much of an age gap." Andrew's face went cold. "I don't want to hear this again. That's final." He had no desire to argue further. The whole thing gave him a headache and made his chest tighten. He did not even want to imagine what would

happen if Tiana ever found out about this. She would probably explode. As for Victoria, Andrew fell silent. He had never been able to read this elegant woman clearly. But one thing was certain: Andrew was not a monster, and there were some things he simply would not do.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

---- Chapter 2036 Watching Andrew walk away like that, Miles and Liliana were left feeling completely helpless. They wanted to step forward and say more, but they were afraid of making Andrew angry. "Miles, he doesn't want to," Liliana said uneasily. "Do you think it's because I offended him before? Maybe that's why he dislikes me and refused our suggestion." Miles gave a wry smile. "Liliana, it probably has nothing to do with you. Mr. Lloyd may be our age, but the things he's accomplished and the way he carries himself are far beyond us.

Don't worry, he won't hold petty grudges against you." Liliana frowned. "Then why won't he at least think about it? Mom's charm is undeniable, and half the men in Blumedale would line up to marry her if they could." Miles shook his head. "Mr. Lloyd is probably too principled for that. It makes sense because he's just not the type of man to do something like this. It's only a shame for Mom, since she lost her martial strength and was betrayed by Dad." He sighed and added, "Liliana, we must take good care of her." Liliana snorted. "Calvin isn't my father!

It was bad enough when he was useless and cowardly in the past. But this time, he ---- actually colluded with outsiders to scheme against Mom. That heartless bastard doesn't deserve to be my father." Miles let out a sigh. His sister's blunt nature and hatred for injustice reminded him of Victoria herself. Nonetheless, he was much more cautious than Liliana. Calvin's betrayal of the Peck family and his scheme against Victoria were indeed unforgivable, yet in the end, Calvin was still his biological father. Miles could only hope Calvin escaped Blumedale and never returned. Content originally comes from FindNovel.net

If he ever showed his face again, too many people would want him dead. And first on that list would be Andrew, whose influence in Blumedale was now untouchable. Calvin's return would only mean certain death. Andrew walked from the backyard into the first-floor hall of Serenity Villa. Immediately, pairs of burning eyes looked directly at him from every corner of the room. His companions were, of course, the first to notice, each of them stunning. Lauren was dressed in a striking red gown, gracefully mingling with Blumedale's business elite.

Her beauty was radiant, her polite smile perfectly balanced with distance, neither too warm nor too cold. Francesca usually did not like to dress up excessively. However, ---- this busty, petite beauty had a small yet explosive figure that was incredibly lethal. Her petite frame paired with her explosive curves made her the most dangerous kind of temptation. However, Francesca was no longer the gentle, helpless doctor. She was a violent little spitfire who could make people cough up blood with a single punch. A few clueless rich kids still hovered around her, fawning and trying to impress.

Francesca exchanged eye-rolls with Aspen across the room. As Andrew's personal secretary, Aspen was mainly entertaining the government officials who had come. The highest-ranking official present was, naturally, Derek. His face wore a peaceful smile as he chatted with the other distinguished guests one by one, showing very refined manners. However, anyone paying attention knew he had not come without purpose. By attending this banquet, Derek was publicly standing

beside the newly risen Gabo Creek Chamber of Commerce. More specifically, he was showing support for its leader, Andrew.

It was an unspoken but powerful message: Derek and Andrew were now allies. The statement was clear. Andrew had destroyed the Driscolls, claimed their place, and secured top-level government backing. ---- From this point on, his rise in Blumedale would only accelerate, and he would walk the city like an untouchable force.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

---- Chapter 2037 Aspen wore light, elegant makeup on her face. Her beautiful hair was pinned up high, revealing her snow-white and slender neck. Except at home or around familiar people, Aspen rarely spoke, and with Andrew deliberately shaping her into a cold, untouchable presence, her aura felt even more distant. Aspen, 46: BUH Other than the occasional moment when she poured Derek a drink or greeted the heads of major families, she hardly smiled. Yet, the colder she seemed, the more eager the tipsy scions and young men who had just returned to Blumedale came to strike up conversation.

Yet, whenever one of them tried, Aspen shut it down with a single line. "I already have a husband, and he's also my boss. His name is Andrew Lloyd." The name crushed every fantasy in an instant. No matter how cocky or self-important they were, each man immediately backed down, apologized, and slunk away. After all, only a fool would try to hit on the woman of the man who had just destroyed the Driscoll family. Even the most hormone-driven heirs were not that suicidal. ---- Meanwhile, Chantelle had finally stopped wearing her work uniform. Instead, she was rarely seen wearing a pair of pear!

earrings, with her hair styled in big waves, slightly curled. Wrapped in an elegant lavender gown, her tall, graceful figure resembled Lauren's, though their styles were worlds apart. Lauren was blazingly gorgeous, intelligent, generous, and intoxicating. However, Chantelle was cold and alluring. She gave people the feeling of being unreachable yet made them desperately want to pin her down on a bed and conquer her completely. Andrew's appearance made the whispering hall fall silent. He was young, handsome, and unfathomable. His presence was powerful, yet he did not seem aggressive.

For example, the ninth son of the Phelan family, Jasper Phelan, and the acting head of the Fischer family, Lucian Fischer. These two were considered tonight's top-tier figures, ranking alongside Derek Of course, George had to be added to that list as well. However, George positioned himself as one of Andrew's own people and considered himself the host, so it was not surprising. His current role was more like the chief steward managing Andrew's forces behind the scenes.

---- He chuckled and said, "Andy, let me introduce you to some people." George actively approached, planning to tell Andrew about Jasper and Lucian's identities. Derek stepped forward first with a smile. "George, you handle your side. I'll make the introductions here." George smiled, "That works too." Everyone in Gabo Creek saw him as a pillar of the community. But George? He himself took the thrill of who he was right now over that "pillar" any day. With the Driscoll family gone and Andrew's rise, the Keller family naturally rose with the tide. NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON find—novel.net

His busy work for Andrew represented something crystal clear: the Keller family and Andrew were now in the same boat, like brothers. George felt a deep sense of relief. Here he was, at his age, witnessing the Keller family's second act. Inside, his gratitude had evolved into genuine respect, and so taking on that responsibility as Andrew's chief steward felt natural. Derek introduced smoothly, "This is Jasper Phelan of the Phelan family. General Luna's ninth uncle, and the next in line to lead the Phelan family.

And this gentleman is one of our Gabo Creek's most famous martial arts experts, Mr. Lucian Fischer, currently ---- managing all Fischer family affairs." After finishing the introductions, he seemingly casually added another piece of information, "Oh, by the way, Mr. Lucian and Mr. Henry from Goldridge are brothers. One manages the inside, the other the outside."

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

---- Chapter 2038 Jasper had the kind of face that looked agreeable from every angle, always smiling like the perfect good-natured gentleman. In powerful families, people like him were the most welcomed, since they could handle matters inside and outside without ever being a thorn in anyone's side. Lucian, however, was the opposite. His massive frame and bulging muscles strained against his suit, and his presence was overwhelming, even larger than Henry's. His sharp eyes gleamed like a predator's, though his voice came out surprisingly calm. "An honor, Mr. Lloyd.

I've heard of you for a long time, but I never had the chance to meet you. Now that I see you, it's clear you're a young hero. At your age, I wasn't even a tenth of what you are." Andrew replied flatly. "Mr. Fischer, you flatter me. I'm just an ordinary man." Lucian nodded. "Henry has mentioned you often. He said you're amazing in both wit and courage, and that even in desperate straits, you show incredible willpower and boldness. "What's more, you're fearless, unmatched in martial skill, leaving your enemies seething, helpless, and nearly on their deathbeds.

For you to speak so humbly now almost makes me feel foolish!" ---- Andrew's eyes narrowed slightly, a faint smile playing on his lips. "Mr. Fischer, isn't your praise a bit exaggerated? Compared to the talent in the Fischer family, I fall far short." Lucian's expression remained unchanged as he replied calmly, "Whether you fall short or not isn't decided by words, but by strength. Henry and I work hand in hand. I haven't yet crossed paths with you, but Henry has already suffered at your hands more than once. "Honestly, he dreams of defeating you.

It eats at him so much that he can't eat or sleep, always haunted by the humiliation of being toyed with by you." Andrew smiled calmly. "If he wishes to spar, I'll gladly welcome it. Back in Goldridge, things weren't exactly pleasant between us anyway." Lucian nodded once. "Don't worry, Mr. Lloyd. I'm sure we'll have that chance." His words carried a direct challenge, but he did not bother to hide it. He ignored Derek and Jasper, grabbed a drink, and stood by himself, his towering frame making him look out of place. One drink later, he simply left without another word.

He was arrogant and overbearing to the end. ---- Jasper gave a strained smile. "Mr. Lloyd, don't take it to heart. The Fischer family is all rough warriors with low emotional intelligence... They're all the same." Andrew shrugged. "No worries, Mr. Phelan. I won't read into it. In fact, I almost expect it... After all, the Fischers seem eager to test themselves against me. I don't mind. I'd like to see how fierce they are." Jasper forced a chuckle but wisely did not continue. Everyone knew Lucian was as dangerous as they came, and Henry alone had already proven that. Content originally comes from find•novel.net

The Fischer brothers were no ordinary men, and neither was Andrew. Both sides were destined to clash head-on. Derek broke the silence and said to Andrew, "Old powers crumble, new ones rise. Some will celebrate, some will resent it, but there's no reason for you to trouble yourself with what others think. Let's just enjoy our own success." Andrew lifted his glass with a grin. "Well said, Governor McCormick." Derek cleared his throat, and Jasper, understanding the cue, politely excused himself. Once no one else lingered nearby, Derek sighed with a wry smile.

"With the Driscolls gone, you've put me under enormous ---- pressure." Andrew returned a faint, apologetic smile. "I understand. Their collapse has shaken so many things, but you've still stood by me, Governor McCormick... You helped carry the weight for me." Derek waved it off. "Don't exaggerate. This was all your own strength. I barely did anything. By the way, Barnaby came to Gabo Creek himself, didn't he? He must have found you." Andrew nodded. "He did. He also knows I'm the Lloyds' heir." Derek seemed to want to say something, but he hesitated.

The political ramifications were clearly weighing on his mind. Andrew only smiled. "Don't worry. If those from Chetvine learn that I'm still alive, it's only natural that some will want me dead."

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---- Chapter 2039 Andrew said calmly, "But the fighting won't spill into Blumedale here in Gabo Creek. I'll go to Chetvine, or elsewhere if needed, and settle these grudges myself." Derek looked guilty. "It's not that I'm afraid, but the families in Chetvine are not ordinary enemies. If things explode there, I won't be able to help you much." Andrew gave a sincere smile. "Regardless, Governor McCormick, I'm grateful for all your support during this time." Derek chuckled. "Truth be told, I've admired your father, the great Mr. Reginald Lloyd, for years.

He probably never knew me, but I've always respected him deeply. "If you don't mind, just call me Derek... It'll make us closer. Of course, maybe I'm just being shameless and taking advantage, so if you're unwilling, let's call it a joke." Andrew laughed. "Governor McCormick, you're far too humble. Alright, I'm glad to call you by your name." Derek's face lit up, and he could not resist clapping Andrew on the shoulder. "Outstanding! You're the most impressive young man I've ever met. When I studied in Chetvine, Mr. Lloyd Senior was just as much a legend.

With talents like you, our nation truly ---- has a future!" His excitement was obvious, but he did not care. Andrew clinked glasses with him again, catching Chantelle's sight nearby. She was gazing at him with pride and tenderness, her eyes glowing. However, when their eyes met, she quickly turned away, pretending to admire the room instead. Derek noticed and said, "Andrew, there's your chance. From what I know, Elle seems to have quite the feelings for you." Andrew raised a brow. "Oh? Go on." Derek lowered his voice. "Elle got it bad for you. I've known for a while...

She looks at your photos and finds excuses to visit you. But she's thin-skinned and disciplined, so I never mentioned it. Still, 'm certain she likes you. If you feel the same, Andrew, you should take it. You have my full support." Andrew hesitated, suppressing a grin. "Derek, what if I told you that there's a chance Ms. Garcia and I are already together?" Derek blinked. "Together? What do you mean by that?" Andrew saw he truly did not know, so he leaned in. "I'm not hiding it from you, Derek. Chantelle and I are already a couple.

To be clear, we've already shared a bed as man and woman." Derek froze, then stared wide-eyed. "Y-You've already slept ---- together? I didn't know a thing! Young people these days sure move

fast!" He turned to look at Chantelle, his expression like that of a protective father realizing his precious daughter had been swept away. A father's daughter was never truly his forever. Before the moment could linger, a stir rippled through the hall. The sharp stomp of military boots echoed, and a pair of impossibly long legs in knee-high boots appeared first. Chapters first released on FindN()vel.net

Then, Luna stepped into view, her icy beauty turning heads instantly. She ignored everyone, not even acknowledging Derek, and walked straight to Andrew. Her eyes locked on him for a long moment before she spoke, her voice carrying a strange softness. "I never expected you to be one of the Lloyd royals from Chetvine. Andrew, I have something to tell you in private. Will you come with me?" Her tone was not the usual cold command. It carried an unfamiliar trace of gentleness.

Andrew was stunned, unable to figure out what this woman was planning. Meanwhile, Lauren, Francesca, Aspen, and Chantelle all tensed at once. They looked at Luna with a wary, defensive gaze.

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

---- Chapter 2040 Andrew said, "Alright, Ms. Phelan, come with me." With too many eyes in the hall and no clue what Luna wanted, he led her upstairs to the second-floor balcony of Serenity Villa. Luna glanced around casually and smiled. "This place is impressive." Andrew rarely saw her smile, which left him puzzled. "There's no one here now, Ms. Phelan. If you have something to say, you can say it here." She pulled her gaze back and studied him, not rushing to speak, while Andrew met her eyes. Up close, she was breathtaking.

Her brows were sharp with pride, and her beauty carried an innate dominance that demanded attention. Even when she was not trying, she looked like someone born to stand above others. Most people accepted that her arrogance was natural, but Andrew had never liked that about her. "Andrew, it seems you don't really like me, do you?" she asked bluntly. Andrew shook his head. "With you, Ms. Phelan, it's not about like ---- or dislike. I'm just used to being free and don't like living under someone else's shadow." Luna nodded slightly, a soft smile on her lips. "I can see that.

You're not someone who can be easily tied down. Even if there were countless ways to restrain you, you'd still maintain your independence. That's something I admire now, though, truthfully, I used to hate it. I don't like people I can't control." Andrew sighed. "If you came just to tell me this, then excuse me. I don't like spending too much time alone with women I don't know well." Luna stepped closer, tilting her chin up with a bit of force in her tone. "What's wrong? Do you feel pressured being alone with me?

Or are you worried your beautiful companions will get jealous?" Andrew's voice stayed flat. "Neither. I just think this is boring." Boring? Luna froze. Men lined up from Blumedale to Chetvine for a chance to be alone with her, yet this man found it dull and wanted to walk away. She took a deep breath, suppressing the irritation rising inside her. "Fine. Let's talk business. From Governor McCormick, I've learned enough about your background and past. You really aren't ordinary. [READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT find—novel.net](#)

The Lloyd royals of Chetvine never produce mediocrity, but even among them, you stand above the rest." ---- Andrew's face stayed calm. "And then?" For Luna to know he was one of the Lloyd royals was not surprising. After all, Andrew had never really tried to hide it "Andrew, since you are from

the Lloyd family, I want to ask you about someone." Her next words stopped Andrew cold. She continued, "The Dragon Prince of the Lloyds, the one with the Blood-Eyed Black Dragon tattoo... Ten years ago, when several Chetvine families joined forces against the Lloyds, I arrived too late.

"I wanted to see him one last time, to tell him everything I had kept in my heart. But it's been more than ten years, and even after using every connection in the military, I still haven't found him.

"andrew, do you know where the Dragon Prince is now? If you do, please tell me. Don't worry. I understand the rules, and I won't reveal his location." Andrew stared at her, momentarily stunned. First, this woman was looking for the Dragon Prince, which was him.

Second, her tone carried guilt and regret, like a lady searching for a lost love Yet, as far as Andrew remembered, he had never had any connection with Luna back in Chetvine. ---- He had no idea what else to say, so he asked, "Ms. Phelan, the Dragon Prince you're talking about... Are you sure it's him you're looking for?"