

Rising from the Ashes (Andrew and Lauren)

Chapter 3401

[821 words]

---- Chapter 3401 Outside Azure Gate, the sky gradually darkened. In the distance, heavy black clouds rolled across the horizon, thick and suffocating. Shiloh's eyes snapped open from meditation. She said, "I have to go! This journey will take me deep into the darkness, straight to the Dark Clans' stronghold!" On top of Azure Gate, night fell fast, and the cold wind cut like knives. Philip stood before the gathered powerhouses from every faction, his voice low and thunderous.

"Anyone willing to join the expedition, step across the white line." A white line had been drawn on the ground, and on one side of the line stood warriors from all factions, packed together. On the other side, only one person stood: Andrew He had positioned himself there early on, needing no one's rallying cry. For Shiloh's sake alone, Andrew would march into the Blood Sanctum. Beyond that, it was something he had to do anyway. First, for Holtrien, his homeland, for the people he wanted to ---- protect, and for his son. Second, for the honor of the Lloyd family ancestor, Valerius.

He still had not forgotten Valerius' legacy, which he had obtained in the Outlands. Third, the Vampire Queen had awakened this time and rallied forces globally to besiege Holtrien. Besides resisting with everything they had and eliminating the enemy, Andrew had no other choice. Moreover, after this expedition, he would have to personally open the path to the Veiled Paradise. The road ahead was fraught with difficulties, and he had no choice but to take action. Elio was the first to set an example, crossing the white line.

He declared, "Even if I'm torn to pieces on this journey, I have no regrets fighting for Holtrien, for my homeland!" With a hearty laugh, Pablo, patriarch of the Hearst royal family, led his clansmen across the white line with an air of nonchalance, standing beside Elio. He said, "Elio, we're one people, united against the common foe." Elio smiled. "Patriarch Pablo, I truly admire your courage!" Besides Pablo, the Hearst family also brought Nate, the martial ---- god who had once been defeated by Andrew and looked like a down-or-his-luck scholar. He bowed slightly to Andrew. "Mr.

Lloyd, we meet again!" Andrew smiled. "It's good to see you!" Zavian and the Hearst family's last white-haired martial god were among them as well. Many people were filled with admiration because the Hearst royal family had mobilized all their martial gods without exception. They were not leaving themselves any fallback position at all. Next came the Cavendish royal family's patriarch, Atticus, leading Cormac and Asher across the white line. Cormac said calmly, "Our family still has one martial god stationed at Cliffside Gate.

Beyond the pass, remnants of the Three Empires' armies remain, and we can't afford to be careless." Philip nodded. "The Cavendish royal family owes no explanations. We Holtrien have never had cowards, and for 1000 years, the Cavendish royal family has produced numerous heroes who willingly died for this land." The others roared in agreement, "That's right! The Cavendish royal family has always been a family of heroes!" ---- Next came the Lloyd royal family. "Go, Sheena. Follow in Andrew's footsteps." Donovan looked at his granddaughter with a smile, his face showing tragic determination.

Sheena's eyes reddened slightly. "Grandpa, after I leave, please take care of yourself." Besides Sheena, two hidden elder martial gods from the Lloyd royal family also stepped forward. Both elders were over 100 years old, yet they walked at Sheena's sides with steady strides and unwavering eyes. Philip and Elio both looked toward Andrew. "Andrew, the Lloyd royal family doesn't need to do this. You're already going, so Sheena can stay behind. No matter what, the Lloyd family should leave at least a spark to survive." Andrew remained silent, but Sheena snorted coldly. "No need.

If he's going, then I, as his senior, will follow him no matter what, even if it means death. Our family has never failed Holtrien or any of you." Everyone was deeply shaken. Among the three great royal families, the Lloyd royal family had quietly risen to the highest prestige, and the other two bore no ---- resentment toward that fact. Next came people from the four noble houses. According to the conditions given, those who had not reached the martial god level did not need to participate.

However, the four noble houses' representatives currently at Azure Gate, along with their strongest warriors, all stepped forward together. Philip and Elio ordered some of them to return. In the end, only a third remained. Then came the people from the Eight Ancient Sects Luna accompanied Bridget as the mother and daughter stepped forward. Andrew thought for a moment and shook his head. "Luna, you stay behind." Luna said stubbornly, "Andrew, I can listen to you on everything else. But not this time. I want to be with you, and I'm also a general in the military. It's my duty."

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Chapter 3402

[650 words]

---- Chapter 3402 Andrew was about to order Luna to return when Nyx spoke up. " Let Luna join us. I'll stay by her side at all times." Philip added, 'Andrew, Luna will remain under my command, so rest assured, She'll lead the Iron Cavalry." Only then did

Andrew feel somewhat relieved. Orson let out a loud laugh. "The Nieves family will send only me. We can't spare more, and honestly, we don't have more to offer!" For the first time, Andrew looked at Orson with genuine respect. Orson glared at him. "Andrew, I admit it, you beat me fair and square.

Whatever happened between you and the Nieves family is settled. We're even. What you've done for Holtrien, I couldn't catch up to you no matter what. So yes, I respect you." Andrew smiled. "Grand Elder Orson, you're a man of true character. I've already let the past go." Orson muttered, "Good. I was worried you'd hold a grudge and, once you became Holtrien's number one, come back to settle accounts with the Nieves family. At that point, we wouldn't stand a chance against your reckoning." Finally, Philip spoke. "The lineup is complete. Holtrien is sending ---- 1500 people on this expedition.

No matter the outcome, these 1500 names will be carved into Holtrien's monument, their spirit enduring forever. Now, I invite Mr. Anderson of the Divine Dragon Order to say a few words." Elio stepped forward and scanned the crowd before his gaze settled on Andrew. "I have nothing to add. Andrew will be the next Grand Commander of the Divine Dragon Order, and I'll serve under him. So if there is anything to be said, let him say it." He began clapping first, and the applause quickly grew thunderous. Countless burning eyes turned toward Andrew.

At this moment, even Philip and Elio did not command as much influence as Andrew. The three royal families, the four noble houses, the Eight Ancient Sects, the Nieves family of Sylvan Peaks, and martial artists from across Holtrien who had come to help all looked at him with wholehearted respect. Some may not have fully accepted it, like Alfredo, the head of Swordhaven Keep, but that no longer mattered. Andrew had already stepped into the Beyond Mortal realm, and crushing Alfredo would be like stepping on an ant.

Moreover, with the Divine Dragon Order publicly declaring him ---- the next Grand Commander, with a peak figure like Elio openly calling himself a subordinate, no one dared raise objections. The tide of fate had already chosen its course. Andrew stepped onto the high platform and looked toward the distant horizon. His voice was steady and deep. "This expedition will decide Holtrien's fate for the next hundred, even thousand years. Only by eliminating the Vampire Queen and ending the Dark Clans' bloodlines can Holtrien's thousand- year war with the Western Continent finally come to an end.

"For that, I'm willing to lead from the front, daring to be first to face the world, just like my ancestor, Valerius. I hope everyone stays safe. I hope we all return alive!" His words were brief, yet heavy with emotion. The blazing passion in everyone's eyes slowly transformed into iron determination. Andrew raised his voice one last time. "I'll fight alongside you until the very last moment!" A thunderous roar erupted. "Until the last moment!" "The last moment!" ---- "Fight to the death!" Jakob, the martial god from the Divine Dragon Order, stood among the crowd.

He gave a bitter smile and murmured, "When there's a gap, you have to admit it." Below Azure Gate, the massive doors swung open, and the 1500 warriors marched out in a mighty surge. They represented the very peak of Holtrien's current generation. Azure Gate was left in the hands of Jeffery, Donovan, and the others. They would lead Holtrien's grand army and hold off the Dark Clans' armies outside until news of victory finally returned

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Chapter 3403

[631 words]

---- Chapter 3403 Under the cover of the night, Shiloh walked alone toward the distant horizon. Before long, a rumbling sound rose behind her. She frowned at first, then relaxed and let out a helpless sigh. "I really can't stand that guy. But fine, come along! If anything happens to you, I'd worry too." Her words were full of concern, yet only she heard them. This expedition was destined to be filled with danger at every turn. The first challenge was crossing the vast Outlands. But now, the Outlands belonged to Andrew.

It could be said that he was the uncrowned king there, the absolute ruler of the Wastelands. Therefore, their first stop was Throne City in the Outlands. Andrew led the 1500 elite warriors and arrived there ahead of the others. He said, "We'll rest in Throne City for one day and depart tomorrow morning. Here, we'll formulate our battle strategy. In this fight, everyone must give their all!" ---- When Holtrien's top warriors entered Throne City, they were deeply shocked by the prosperity and grandeur before their eyes. However, what surprised them even more was Andrew's status here.

He was actually the sole ruler of this lawless land! That was Andrew's influence and authority. The remaining Dragonfang members who had been stationed in Throne City rushed forward with joy to welcome Andrew and Nyx. Petra, Juno, Knox, and Othniel were all there. When Holtrien's warriors saw them, they were startled again. They noticed that four more martial gods stood before them. Knox, who carried the Primordial Thunder legacy and Othniel, were especially formidable, standing at the top tier among martial gods.

Everyone marveled that Andrew's power base had grown so strong that, within Holtrien, it likely surpassed the thousand-year foundations of the three great royal families. Andrew made no restrictions on the guests. Since they were resting for a day, these visitors from Holtrien could move freely around Throne City. ---- Elio laughed heartily and clapped Andrew on the shoulder. "You little punk, you're really something else now,

aren't you? Impressive, truly impressive. Even if you never went back to Holtrien, you'd still live like a king out here in the Outlands.

If you wanted, you could even carve out your own territory and become the most comfortable king in the world!" Andrew ignored the old man's teasing envy and asked instead, "Where are the other two old geezers from the Divine Dragon Order? Besides you, what about Lachlan Pavone and Pietro Fabbri? Those two old farts aren't playing dead, are they?" Elio snorted coldly. "What are you thinking? Those two will definitely lead from the front. Andrew, I know you still have strong opinions about them.

Back then, when Reginald left the Divine Dragon Order and was pushed aside by all of Holtrien, you blamed those two, didn't you? "But you never knew the reasoning behind it, Originally, Reginald was the final leader of the Divine Dragon Order. His mission was to oversee regions outside Holtrien. So he had no choice but to leave." Andrew replied coldly, "So much time has passed. I'm not a child anymore, and I already knew that. But knowing doesn't mean I feel good about it. Elio, I'm not interested in that top position in the Divine Dragon Order. You've seen this place.

This is my kingdom, a world that belongs to me alone. ---- "If I'm unhappy, the entire Outlands can mobilize a million troops and go head-to-head with any power in the world, even entire nations. Even Lomuia Grand Cathedral, the three great empires, and the Dark Trinity. Right now, I would dare to confront them openly." He continued, "So what about Holtrien? And what about the Divine Dragon Order? If you make me unhappy, then the Divine Dragon Order won't have an easy time either."

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Chapter 3404

[614 words]

---- Chapter 3404 Elio stood there for a long moment before giving a bitter smile. "I knew it. You were never easy to reason with. Lachlan, Pietro, and I have already thought this through. Looking at Holtrien's next generation, the Divine Dragon Order can only be handed to you or Reginald. "But Reginald is trapped inside the Veiled Paradise, and no one knows if he is alive or dead. So in this critical moment, the three of us unanimously decided that the Divine Dragon Order will be entrusted to you.

In the future, you will serve as Holtrien's blade in the dark, protecting the hidden side of this nation." Andrew let out a cold laugh. "Why? Why should I let you arrange my path again?" Elio replied calmly, "For no other reason than the fact that no one is more

suitable than you. You may not care about the title or the overwhelming power it carries. But Andrew, the greater the ability, the greater the responsibility. You can't run from it." Andrew waved his hand. "So Lachlan and Pietro have already left ahead of us for the Blood Sanctum?" Elio nodded gravely. "That's right.

The Vampire Queen has summoned all the dark progenitors. Jorge, Ragnar, Darcy Battier, and the others have awakened from their long slumber. ---- "And on top of that, the Emperors of the Three Great Empires have joined forces. This battle will settle everything between Holtrien and the Western powers. In the end, our hope still rests 'on your shoulders, and of course, on Ms. Greene as well." Andrew fell silent for a moment before nodding. "Understood. Elio, take care of yourself too. By the way, do you have any news about my master, the God of Medicine?" Elio gave another bitter smile.

"Andrew, telling you this now will probably make you angry. But time is running out, and you deserve to know. Mr. Zeroual died at the hands of the Vampire Queen." Andrew was stunned, and his face instantly turned pale. "When did this happen?" Elio answered in a heavy voice. "The Divine Dragon Order confirmed the news three years ago. It was right when the Vampire Queen awakened from her slumber. Mr. Zeroual tried to seize that moment to kill her while she was still weak. But clearly, he failed. Losing him was one of Holtrien's greatest tragedies." Andrew clenched his fists, his voice low.

"This expedition can only succeed. Failure is not an option! No matter what it takes, I'll destroy the Vampire Queen!" ---- Elio replied, "That's right. Either we succeed, or we die trying." Later, Andrew went to visit Tobiah, the old chieftain of the Highland Tribe. Tobiah spoke directly. "Mr. Lloyd, let Knox go with you on the expedition." Andrew was moved. "Absolutely not. Knox is the Highland Tribe's future. I can't take him into danger." Tobiah chuckled. "The Vampire Queen's terror makes her a common enemy of the entire Wastelands.

If we don't eliminate her, then our tribe will never develop in peace. Mr. Lloyd, the life you brought me and the peace you gave our tribe haven't been long, but I'm deeply grateful. "This is the life our Highland Tribe has always wanted. For that, we're willing to resist and fight. So please, take Knox with you. It is only right for him to shed blood for the Highland Tribe." Andrew sighed. "Very well, Mr. Wieser Senior. I'll take Knox with me. Othniel then stepped forward. "Mr. Lloyd, please take my son Hershel as well.

He may not have reached the martial god level, but he can absolutely contribute to the expedition." Andrew nodded firmly. "I won't stop you, Mr. Fernsby. I ---- understand why you're doing this."

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Chapter 3405

[532 words]

---- Chapter 3405 Petra thought for a long time before stepping forward on her own. "Let me go too. I want to follow you again." This time, Andrew did not agree. Instead, he spoke seriously. "Petra, you and Juno don't belong to Holtrien. You belong to Dragonfang, to yourselves. You've already suffered enough and fought hard enough in your past. So now I am ordering both of you to stay and guard Throne City. Throne City is your home, and I need you to watch over it for me." Petra opened her mouth, hesitating.

"But I still want to fight alongside you." 1 Juno added, "Me too." Andrew patted their shoulders. "You're all my friends. Listen to me. Stay in Throne City, guard our home, and wait for me to come back." Juno nodded. "Alright. I'll listen to you. Oh, by the way, the crown prince of Eastonia, Vance, has been killed. Right now, only Vance's sister, Iridessa, is alive. She's temporarily staying in Throne City." Andrew was moderately surprised. "Vance was killed? Who did it?" ---- Juno's voice turned cold. "He died at the hands of the werewolf progenitor, Ragnar.

Iridessa arrived in Throne City with Eastonia's top fighters. She wants revenge for Vance." Andrew remained indifferent. He had no interest in Eastonia's internal affairs. Juno's expression turned strange. "Iridessa wants to see you. As soon as you arrived, she asked to meet you, but I didn't allow it." Andrew frowned for a moment. "Let her come." Ten minutes later, Andrew received Iridessa in the Throne Hall. She wore a bright dress, her soft bangs framing a delicate, slightly flushed face. When she saw Andrew, joy flickered in her eyes, though she quickly concealed it.

She said softly, "Iridessa Titoria, here to see you, Lord Andrew Lloyd." She knelt formally in front of him. Andrew was slightly surprised, wondering what the Eastonian princess was doing with such a grand gesture. He said calmly, "Ms. Titoria, there's no need for such formality between us. Tell me, what do you want?" ---- Iridessa looked up and bit her lip. "I want to ask you to avenge Vance. For that, I'm willing to offer myself again." Andrew let out a cold laugh. "Offer yourself? Like last time?" Iridessa quickly shook her head, her face turning red. "No, not like last time.

This time, I'm willing to serve you properly! Whatever you ask me to do, I'll do it. As long as you, Andrew, agree to help me get revenge." With that, she stood up and suddenly sat in Andrew's lap. She half-closed her eyes and brought her lips close to Andrew's face. "I'm Eastonia's top covert artist. If you desire it, I can satisfy any request. Vance is dead. He was framed by Sorya's Ezekiel Beckett and ultimately killed by the werewolf progenitor, Ragnar. I can't avenge him myself, but I know you can definitely help me.

"For this, I'm willing to remain in Throne City forever and ever, becoming your servant, serving you day and night, letting you do whatever you want with me!" She was truly staking everything on this. Even Andrew felt the pressure and silently thought he might not be able to withstand it.

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Chapter 3406

[526 words]

---- Chapter 3406 Just as Iridessa leaned in closer, trying to throw herself completely into his arms, Andrew suddenly pushed her away. She fell to the floor, sitting there in shock and confusion as she stared up at him. "Sorry, but a honey trap like this, or the stakes you're offering, aren't enough to make me help you," Andrew said coldly. He felt nothing for Iridessa. As for Vance, he did not care. Iridessa's eyes turned red, and she looked utterly miserable. "After everything I've done, you still feel nothing? Andrew, I know what kind of man you are.

You didn't kill me last time, and that was when I knew you were upright, kind, even tenderhearted. In the Outlands, you are the king, the ruler of this land. Other than you, I truly have no one else to turn to." Andrew remained indifferent. "Tears don't work on me. Iridessa, you and I stand on different sides. We were never connected to begin with. Vance was framed by Ezekiel and eventually died. I can sympathize with that, and I understand your desire for revenge. But you are missing the core issue: why should I help you?" Iridessa lowered her head as tears streamed down her face.

"I ---- know you have no reason to avenge me. But Andrew, I'm willing to give you my body and my loyalty." Andrew sneered. "You just tried that. Did I look moved to you? Go back. I can't help you. Yes, I may be the uncrowned king of the Wastelands, but you should know I am not the kind of man who loses his head over a woman and throws everything away for her." Iridessa's body trembled as she pleaded, "But I truly have no one else who can help me. Andrew, I beg you. Help me just this once. I...

I love you." The first two pleas left Andrew unmoved, but that last sentence truly caught him off guard. His voice turned even colder as he asked, "What did you just say? Iridessa, do you really think that trick would work on me?" Iridessa gathered her courage and lifted her tear-streaked face. She walked back to his feet and knelt in the highest form of Eastonia's women's etiquette. Then, she pressed her cheek gently against his leg and leaned against him "Andrew, I'm not playing tricks. I... I really do have feelings for you. Last time, I disguised myself as Nyx to assassinate you.

But I failed, and instead, we became intimate. That's the truth. After that, I tried to forget you, but your image kept appearing in my mind. Later, I realized I had fallen for you. In truth, from the very ---- first time I saw you, I couldn't stop thinking about you." Andrew only found it laughable. "And so what? Eastonia's female covert artists are known for their schemes. When you want something, you'll use any method, even pretending to fall in love and offering your body. Once you achieve your goal, you withdraw calmly or finish the job with a blade. Ms.

Titoria, you don't actually think I'm some fool who would fall for that so easily, do you?"

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Chapter 3407

[637 words]

---- Chapter 3407 Iridessa broke down in tears. "That's not true, Andrew. You can't think of me like that. Back then, when you took my mother hostage and escaped from Eastonia, I saw your real face. From that moment on, I remembered you. "All these years, I wanted revenge, so I followed Vance and moved from place to place. But when I finally had the chance and the strength to get close to you, I realized that to you, I was nothing. I don't even know when it started... but somehow, you were already in my heart." Andrew felt a wave of irritation. "Fine.

Even if everything you said is true, Iridessa, I still can't help you." Her eyes filled with despair as tears poured down. "Andrew, when you escaped Eastonia back then, did my mother help you?" Andrew narrowed his eyes. "What are you trying to say? Are you trying to cash in on that favor?" Iridessa cried out, "I have no other choice but to do this! After I avenge Vance, I'll never return to Eastonia. I no longer have the right to go back. The other princes will fight for the throne, and if I return, I'll only end up dead. "I have nowhere left to go, Andrew. Do you understand?

That's ---- why I can only rely on you. This is my last option." Seeing her broken expression, Andrew took a deep breath and said coldly, "Fine. I'll help you take this revenge. If I see Ezekiel, I will kill him. As for Ragnar, I was already planning to storm the Blood Sanctum. So this doesn't conflict with my own goals. But Iridessa, from this day on, there'll be nothing between us." Iridessa collapsed to the ground and cried out loudly. "Andrew, I'm willing to be your servant. If I do that, will you take me in?" Andrew shook his head. "I'm sorry. I won't." Iridessa gritted her teeth. "!

brought many skilled fighters from Eastonia. This time, let me follow you to the Blood Sanctum. If I die there, then it will settle everything at once." Andrew truly did not know how to deal with her, and a trace of reluctance stirred in his heart. He frowned and said, "Iridessa, you're strong, and you have loyal subordinates. Even if you never return to Eastonia, you can still live well. Why throw your life away?" She bit her lip and said softly, "Because I want to follow you. I was born to follow someone. Before, Vance was my everything. I wanted to help him build his empire, his kingdom.

But now that Vance is dead, you're my everything. Deep down, I am still a woman. If you cherish me, I would willingly devote my life to you. ---- Andrew felt a headache coming on. Iridessa was undeniably captivating. The young princess of Eastonia had both a flawless figure and a beautiful face, and especially that gentle softness about her that even the women around Andrew lacked. But the truth was, Andrew and Iridessa had never reached that kind of relationship. Moreover, he was not an actual emperor who could simply claim her and add her to a harem without a second thought.

In the end, Andrew sighed. "Iridessa, if you wish, you may stay and live in Throne City. For your mother's sake, I will give you one last choice." With that, he stood up and left. Iridessa quietly wiped away her tears. A sorrowful yet determined smile appeared on her lips as she mumbled, "Vance, once I avenge you, I'll devote myself to living in Throne City. I'll try my best to become Andrew's woman and make him accept me. I love him, but he doesn't love me at all... not even a little." In the end, her heart ached, and she broke down in tears once more.

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Chapter 3408

[906 words]

---- Chapter 3408 The next day, Andrew led Holtrien's expedition force out of Throne City. Their next stop was the dark stronghold itself. Early that morning, Iridessa had already arrived at the city gates with 30 elite warriors from Eastonia, waiting in formation. The moment she saw Andrew, she ran straight toward him. * Andrew, no matter what, I'm going." Andrew replied calmly, "As long as you're not afraid to die, then fall in. By the way, one last question: is Ezekiel running with the Dark Clans now?" Iridessa clenched her teeth and said, "Ezekiel wants the entire Outlands.

So he sold himself out and became a lapdog for the Dark Clans. Ragnar promised him that if he obeyed, they'd conquer the whole Outlands and make Ezekiel its king." Andrew answered coldly, "Then killing him will sit just fine with me.' With 1500 top

fighters from Holtrien, along with Iridessa and her warriors, the force headed straight for Blood Sanctum. Their route would take them across the entire Outlands. As they pushed deeper into the western frontier, an eerie landscape slowly appeared before them. Everything looked pale ---- and lifeless, as if death itself had settled there.

Dark clouds hung low overhead all year round, pressing down like a suffocating ceiling. Philip lowered his voice and said, "I haven't stepped into this restricted zone in years. If the Vampire Queen hadn't awakened, no one would risk going this deep into the darkness." Elio replied calmly, "Don't overthink it. We move forward. In this battle, either they die, or we do. The sacrifices we make now are for a bigger, brighter future for Holtrien." As they advanced, the oppressive atmosphere grew heavier with every mile. Even proud figures like Alfredo and Orson fell silent and moved cautiously.

Andrew strode at the very front of the expedition, moving at incredible speed. Vehicles were pointless for people like them. Not one among them was ordinary, and relying on their own bodies, they could outrun anything short of fighter jets or artillery. Iridessa caught up to Andrew and said quickly, "The first ones we'll run into are Ezekiel and the Sorya lackeys who follow him: They've volunteered to act as guard dogs for Blood Sanctum." Andrew replied flatly, "Then we'll tear them out at the roots.

It won't take much effort." ---- After Shiloh arrived in Throne City, she disappeared without a trace. At first, Andrew had worried she might take a reckless tisk. If she attacked too early and Holtrien could not back her up in time, this entire campaign would lose its edge. Fortunately, Shiloh had left a message before she vanished. She said she would wait in the depths of the darkness for Andrew and the main Holtrien force. At the end, she had added one more line. [Stay safe.] Andrew felt a faint warmth in his chest.

Even though Shiloh had regained her memories, she was slowly beginning to accept him again. A sharp, freezing wind, tinged with a thick aura of darkness, rushed toward them. Although it was broad daylight, the sky suddenly dimmed as if someone had flipped off the sun. Andrew looked ahead and, through the black mist in the distance, saw a massive mountain range rising from the ground. High above, almost level with the clouds, stood a gigantic crimson palace. Even from far away, they could feel the suffocating pressure and raw fear radiating from it.

"That's the Blood Sanctum," Bridget said, her voice trembling. " The source of darkness, the first progenitor of the West, the ---- Creator's first living being, the Vampire Queen herself lives there. Andrew took a deep breath and turned to look at everyone behind him. Finally, he growled in a low voice, "Attack!" The others responded in unison, "Attack!" Their speed surged instantly. Andrew took the lead and charged toward the mountain. As soon as they reached the base, the first checkpoint appeared. It was an abandoned, shadowy castle.

On its walls, transformed werewolves and vampires patrolled back and forth, watching every corner. Inside the castle, Ezekiel's eyes glowed with a blood-red light. He held a

goblet filled with fresh blood. "Andrew, back at Holtrien's Martial Tower, you destroyed my martial foundation. But you never expected my master would transform me into a vampire, making me one of Her Majesty the Queen's progeny. Since you've come to my territory, death is your only outcome!" Through the eyes of the vampire soldiers outside, Ezekiel easily spotted Andrew standing before the castle.

With a cruel grin, he drained the crimson blood in his cup in one ---- gulp. Two massive fangs emerged from the corners of his mouth Ezekiel shot up from his chair. His body exploded into countless. bats, which burst through the shattered ceiling of the hall and swarmed into the sky. In midair, the bats gathered and reformed into his body as he let out a chilling laugh. "Andrew, I've been waiting for you! Come on. You and I will settle this one-on-one and end our old grudges once and for all!" In front of the castle, Andrew signaled for everyone else to fall back.

He did not draw Godslayer; instead, he handed it to Nyx beside him. "Give me one minute. I'll kill him. The rest of you, wipe out the remaining dark trash!" After giving the order calmly, Andrew's body shot straight into the air. Then, he dove forward and slammed directly toward Ezekiel Ezekiel threw his head back and roared.

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Chapter 3409

[647 words]

---- Chapter 3409 A massive storm burst outward in an instant. Andrew grabbed Ezekiel by the throat and hurled him straight down from midair into the ancient castle below. The veins on Ezekiel's face bulged, his eyes nearly popped out, and thin streams of blood seeped from his nose and the corners of his eyes. He looked terrifying He tried to scream, but not a single sound came out because Andrew had crushed his throat in a death grip. Terror filled Ezekiel's eyes as he attempted to shift fully into his vampire form and push his power to its peak.

But then, his body slammed through the castle roof with a loud crash. He smashed through the floor and blasted a crater nearly 20 feet deep before everything finally stopped. It was not only Ezekiel who felt fear. Even the vampires and werewolves stationed on the castle walls began trembling. Philip and Elio were visibly shaken. Andrew's combat power now clearly led the pack. ---- Even Elio, one of the three leaders of the Divine Dragon Order, knew that although they were in the same realm, he would likely lose in an actual fight against Andrew. "Andrew...

You..." From the deep crater, Ezekiel roared with venom, trying to say something. Andrew raised his hand, and a streak of red Primordial Thunder struck straight down into the pit. All movement ceased instantly as Ezekiel's head was blown apart, and he was completely dead. Iridessa and her Estonian warriors stood frozen in shock. Vance had died in humiliation, and they had never possessed the strength to avenge him. Yet, now Andrew had killed Ezekiel as easily as swatting a fly. Iridessa clenched her fists and stared blankly at the figure standing atop the highest point of the castle.

Compared to the brother she once believed was the most remarkable man in her world, Andrew now completely won her respect. This was the kind of man who could shake her soul. Unfortunately, he did not want her. The thought made her heart ache again. Nyx, Jakob, Zavian, and other martial gods attacked with full ---- force. In no time, every remaining member of the Dark Clans inside the castle was wiped out. Without pausing, Andrew moved on alone, his black coat whipping in the wind as he began climbing the massive crimson mountain. Behind him followed the full top-tier force of Holtrien.

They kicked off the cliffside like spinning tops, launching themselves dozens of feet upward with each leap. Soon, they disappeared into the thick black fog surrounding the mountainside. Once they reached the summit, the ultimate war between the eastern and western continents would erupt. At the peak of the dark mountain stood an enormous red palace, ancient in design, twisted and sinister in shape. Two massive red dragon statues crouched at the entrance. On top of each dragon's head sat a giant brazier.

Suddenly, with two thunderous booms, the braziers ignited, and towering blood-red flames shot upward. They gave off no heat, yet burned an intense crimson, blazing like giant torches across the mountaintop. At nearly the same moment, inside Blood Sanctum at the far end of its central hall, a woman in a long crimson gown opened her eyes from atop a throne that stood over 300 feet tall. ---- As her eyes opened, the crowd below, tiny as ants from her height, stirred with unease "Your Majesty!" Voices echoed respectfully through the vast hall.

Among the three werewolf progenitors, Ragnar had been the first to awaken. Now, another dark progenitor has appeared. As for the last one, the strongest of the three werewolf progenitors had already been annihilated. He had refused the Vampire Queen's summons and even cursed her, claiming she had no right to command a noble werewolf progenitor like him. Thus, the Vampire Queen had personally acted. She ended his life and absorbed his power completely, strengthening herself even further.

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Chapter 3410

[733 words]

---- Chapter 3410 Within the deep, hollow, ancient Blood Sanctum, where time itself seemed frozen, stood the supreme beings of the western continent. The two remaining werewolf progenitors were only part of them. There were also two powerful werewolf princes standing among the ranks. Next came the three vampire progenitors, second only to the Vampire Queen herself. Jorge was only one of them, while the other two were just as ancient and terrifyingly powerful.

Even Raphael and the other vampire princes had been summoned to Blood Sanctum, although in this place, their status was too low, so they stood far in the back. There were also three powerful princes from the sirens' clan. However, the sirens had long been pushed aside by the other two major Dark Clans, and since Marcato was not present, they barely had any presence at all. Finally, the three human emperors of the western continent had arrived. Silvio of Fraines stood tall, alongside Alejandro Ruiz, the Emperor of the Soraine Empire, and Alfonso Ortega of the ---- Mirelan Empire.

Among them, Alfonso clearly held the lead. Dressed in a full military uniform, with features sharp as a statue, he looked up at the crimson figure seated upon the towering throne and asked, "Your Majesty, have you sensed something?" The Vampire Queen wore a tall crown, and she stood half a head taller than most men. Her face was deathly pale and flawless, completely devoid of emotion, while her eyes burned blood red. The corner of her lips curled slightly, though it was impossible to tell whether she was smiling or mocking.

She said calmly, "The Holtrien expedition has begun climbing the mountain. My subjects... prepare for battle. I'll bring an end to the conflicts that have dragged on for countless ages." The three emperors and the gathered progenitors all felt their hearts tighten. Dark, overwhelming, and abyssal auras began to spread throughout the hall. "The Holtrien expedition force actually dares to set foot in the dark forbidden zone. Once they're here, total annihilation is their only fate!" ---- Someone scoffed.

"Inside Blood Sanctum, no one can stand against Her Majesty." "Then let the battle rage until the sky collapses. For 1000 years, the East and West have clashed without end, and this time it will finally be settled." The Vampire Queen's icy voice echoed once more through the vast temple. "Among them, only that woman from the Greene family of Holtrien can threaten me. When the time comes, I'll deal with her personally.

As for the rest of you, ignore everything else and simply eliminate the remaining Holtrien forces." The progenitors, princes, and emperors of the Western continent immediately bowed in obedience. The Vampire Queen's gaze slowly ignited with burning fury. Through layers of walls and distance, it seemed as though she could already see

Andrew and the others nearing the summit. "A descendant of Valerius, is he? Valerius crossed me, and I have never forgotten that agony, not even after 1000 years.

This time, every member of the Lloyd royal family will die." Meanwhile, Andrew's greatsword flared with blinding light. With a single slash, he tore apart the black mist ahead. ---- The massive crimson temple emerged fully into view. Only after reaching the summit and seeing it up close did they realize just how enormous and terrifying the ancient structure truly was. Andrew soared hundreds of feet into the air, yet he still could not take in the entire palace in a single glance.

As he descended, his cold eyes caught sight of a black-clad figure standing motionless on the edge of a rooftop, like a statue. It was the fallen angel, Arya. The white holy sword in her hand had turned pitch black. Her once golden armor, once a symbol of light, was now stained dark, covered with marks that looked as if demons had gnawed at it. Arya's face was cold, and her previously vacant eyes burst with light the moment they locked onto Andrew. "Andrew, you came. I'll purify you," she muttered to herself.

Then, the dark blade in her hand erupted with massive black energy and slashed down at Andrew in fury. Andrew let out a cold snort and swung his greatsword in a violent counterstrike. The entire Blood Sanctum shook violently. ---- Below on the mountainside, massive boulders broke loose and tumbled down. The war had finally exploded into full force, ignited by the first clash between Andrew and Arya

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