

The Ashes 881

Chapter 881

No one expected Michael and Kenny to have such powerful connections in Blumedale. Many people's expressions shifted at that moment.

Those who had thought Michael was overstepping his bounds and digging his own grave now realized he was not acting recklessly he had every reason to be confident.

This was not just defiance anymore. He had the backing to be arrogant.

Tiana warned, "Andrew, you better think carefully. If you let Michael drag the Driscoll family's attention to Jayrodale, it won't just be you-Marvin will be doomed too!"

Lauren's voice was filled with frustration. "Why should Dr. Lloyd beg a scumbag like Michael? What did he do wrong to deserve this humiliation?"

Tiana snapped, her tone sharp. "The situation is bigger than personal pride! Acting on impulse will only bring destruction! I told you before-there was never a chance for you two. Now the problem has escalated, and if Andrew refuses to submit, he'll face the full wrath of the Driscoll family-that means relentless pursuit and certain death!"

Lauren's face turned pale. This was exactly what she had feared all along.

The Driscoll family was an untouchable, towering force-something even she knew was impossible to fight against.

"Mr. Lloyd," one of the Rhodes Corporation executives spoke up. "A real man knows when to surrender. Maybe you really should listen to Mrs. Rhodes!"

"That's right, Mr. Lloyd. Sometimes, enduring humiliation is the only way to survive. The Driscoll family is not an enemy you can fight head-on!"

"Sigh... Fate is cruel. Mr. Lloyd, we truly wish we could help, but there's nothing we can do!"

The upper ranks of Rhodes Corporation spoke up, their words laced with helplessness.

They despised how smug Michael was acting, but there was no choice. Michael and Kenny had the upper hand in Blumedale, and if Andrew refused to bow, he would only end up destroying himself!

Marcus spoke bitterly. "Mr. Lloyd, you are a man worth following and a man worth respecting. I don't admire many people in this life, but you.. you're one of them. So I hope you make the right choice-to protect yourself first and foremost real man knows when to fight and when to step back."

Michael was absolutely reveling in this moment. Even the pain in his body seemed to fade, replaced by overwhelming satisfaction. He strolled up to Andrew, hands behind his back, looking down at him with contempt.

Michael sneered, "Andrew, did you hear that? Whether it's Aunt Tiana or your loyal lapdog, Mr. Chapman, everyone is telling you to get on your knees before me and beg for mercy.

"Heh, don't worry, I'm in no rush to kill you now. As long as you kneel like a dog and grovel until I'm satisfied... Then maybe just maybe I'll be generous enough to let you live. Hahaha!"

As he spoke, the mere thought of Andrew kneeling before him, debased like a pathetic stray, sent a rush of pleasure through Michael. He could not help but burst into wild laughter, feeling like he was walking on air.

All eyes were on Andrew. But instead of fear, he smiled.

He said calmly, "First, I want to thank everyone for looking out for me. I know

many of you are only advising me out of concern for my safety."

Lauren looked at him with deep emotion, her voice trembling. "Dr. Lloyd, you don't have to humiliate yourself. I'll leave Jayrodale with you. We can go somewhere far away and start over!"

Andrew shook his head. "I can leave, but you can't. You have family, people who depend on you. If I make you run away with me, I'd be forcing you to betray them, to abandon your responsibilities. I can't be that selfish."

Michael let out a loud, mocking laugh. "Andrew, you really are a sentimental fool. Even I'm a little moved by your speech. Too bad you're just a worthless nobody. Sure, you've got some strength and a bit of wit, but in the face of true power,

speck of

you're nothing more than power,

dust.

"With just a breath, I can make you disappear! So now that you're done with your

little emotional speech... are you ready to crawl on your knees and pass under my legs?"

Chapter 882

Michael pointed at his crotch, a smug, taunting grin on his face as he stared

Andrew down. He wanted to humiliate him beyond repair, to break him completely and turn him into nothing but a disgrace.

The room fell into complete silence.

Everyone knew that with Kenny backing him up and the Driscoll family as his trump card, Michael had all the power here. Andrew had no room to resist.

Tiana smirked, her eyes full of mockery. She had warned Andrew not to throw himself into the fire, but he refused to listen, too reckless and arrogant for his own good.

Now, the Driscoll family's shadow loomed over him, ready to strike at any moment. Andrew had no choice-if he dared to defy them, he and Marvin would be utterly destroyed.

Under the weight of countless stares-some sympathetic, some amused, and some outright gloating-Andrew suddenly moved, and what he did next stunned everyone.

Without any hesitation, he raised his hand and slapped Michael across the face.

A crisp smack echoed through the room as Michael's head snapped to the side. The sheer force of the blow sent him flying into the long conference table, his forehead slamming against the edge with a sickening thud.

Blood gushed down his face. His teeth shattered, his lips torn apart from the impact.

"You bastard! I'm going to fucking kill you!" Michael's furious, agonized screams filled the air as he fumbled for his phone, his first instinct to call Kenny.

The others were frozen in shock, and their minds went blank. They all thought Andrew had a death wish for laying his hands on Michael.

Meanwhile, Andrew remained unfazed, his expression as cold as ice. Without a word, he lifted his foot and stomped hard, and a sickening crack rang out.

Michael's scream was deafening, raw with agony. He could not believe that Andrew actually dared to injure him. Not only had he struck him, but he had crippled him.

"You're dead, Andrew! I swear I'll kill you! I'll kill your whole family!" Michael screeched, his voice hoarse from the pain.

He coughed up blood, his face twisted in a grotesque mix of fury and suffering.

"My hand! My fucking hand! The Driscoll family-my father-will tear you apart!"

Andrew did not even acknowledge his threats. Instead, he stomped down again— once, then twice.

With another sharp crack, Michael's other wrist shattered. Then, for good measure, Andrew drove his foot into Michael's groin-the same spot he had already injured earlier.

Michael's body spasmed violently before going limp. His screams died in his throat, unable to escape. His chest heaved, his eyes bulging as if he were on the verge of passing out.

A terrifying chill spread through the room, and everyone stood paralyzed, staring at Andrew like he was a monster.

"Mr. Lloyd, you've gone too far! You're pushing Michael to his grave!"

"Are you just throwing everything away? Do you think the Driscoll family and Kenny will let you walk away from this?"

"Andrew, you've really lost it! You've doomed yourself!"

Cries of disbelief and outrage filled the air.

Andrew's actions had shaken them all to their core. With this, there was no turning back—he had pushed himself straight into the abyss.

However, something even more unbelievable happened.

Andrew ignored all of them and crouched down beside Michael. Then, he slapped him across the face again, hard enough to send his already broken nose askew.

Only then did he finally speak, his voice slow and deliberate. "Mr. Rhodes, weren't you just telling me to crawl under your legs? Weren't you demanding that I get down on my knees? Come on, get up. Keep talking tough. Show me how much of a big shot you are."

He reached over, picked up Michael's phone, and dangled it in front of him.

"You wanted to call your daddy, right? Wanted to snitch to the Driscoll family? Go ahead. Say the number—I'll dial it for you. Call Joe over. Tell him to come deal with me."

Michael was no longer screaming. His body twitched feebly, barely holding on to consciousness. Blood dribbled from his mouth, and his swollen, disfigured face contorted in silent agony.

Around them, everyone—including Lauren—stared at Andrew like he was the devil himself.

Chapter 883

Everyone thought Andrew was beyond mad and reckless—he was downright unstoppable. Even with Kenny and the insurmountable force of the Driscoll family looming over him, he still dared to beat Michael to a pulp.

Even Tiana could not help but suck in a sharp breath. Unable to hold back any longer, he shouted, "Stop, Andrew! If you kill him, you won't just destroy yourself—you'll drag Lauren down with you!"

She shot to her feet, her voice laced with fury.

Andrew did not even spare her a glance. His voice was cold. "Relax. I take full responsibility for my actions. Kenny, the entire Rhodes family, and even the Driscoll family—if any of them think they can control me, they can give it a try." Michael lay sprawled on the floor, his bloodshot eyes locked onto Andrew. His breath was shallow and ragged as he mumbled, "Y-You're doomed..."

Andrew did not bother responding and simply kicked Michael square in the face.

Michael's eyes rolled back, and his body went completely limp. No one could tell whether he was dead or just unconscious.

Andrew's tone was indifferent. "If you're going to act like you're dead, at least be quiet."

Tiana's face turned ghostly pale. Furious, she shouted, "Andrew, you're digging your own grave! Run! Run for your life while you still can! This is my last warning if you don't, no one will be able to save you!"

Lauren grabbed Andrew's arm, her voice urgent. "Dr. Lloyd, Michael's death will trigger Uncle Kenny's wrath. He has the backing of the Golding family, and he'll hunt you down. Come with me—we need to leave Jayrodale now and lay low until this blows over!"

She tightened her grip on his arm, trying to pull him away.

Tiana's voice turned icy. "Andrew can run, but Lauren-you're not going anywhere. Jerry, take Lauren back to Rhodes residence now!"

Jerry stepped forward without hesitation, prying Lauren away from Andrew.

Andrew's gaze darkened.

Tiana's voice cut through the tension like a blade. "Andrew, if your truly love Lauren and care about her, don't drag her into this disaster with you! Don't force her into danger just because of your stubborn pride!"

Marcus's scalp prickled with unease. "Mr. Lloyd, listen to her-Ms. Rhodes cannot go with you. I've dealt with Kenny before. If Jameson is a true gentleman, then Kenny is the complete opposite-a ruthless conniving bastard who stops at nothing to get what he wants. If Ms. Rhodes follows you, she will suffer for it."

Lauren struggled, her face red with anger. "Let me go, Jerry! No matter what, I'm staying with Dr. Lloyd!"

Jerry's patience snapped. "Miss, open your eyes! Do you really not see the situation you're in? If you leave with Andrew, you'll doom both of you! If you stay behind, he might still have a chance to escape. But if you go with him, you'll only be a burden!"

Lauren's face turned stark white, and she hesitated.

Andrew gave her a reassuring smile. "Lauren, listen to your mother and Jerry—go back. Don't worry, I'm not running. I have no reason to. I'll handle this mess first. Then, I'll come find you."

Tears welled up in Lauren's eyes. She knew he was only saying that to comfort her.

In reality, once Kenny unleashed the Golding family, there would not be anyone left in Jayrodale to stop them. Not even the underground forces could stand against one of The Five Apex Families of Blumedale.

Even Jayrodale's wealthiest man, Marvin, would not be able to shield Andrew from this storm.

Tears streamed down Lauren's face as she choked out, "Dr. Lloyd, no matter what happens, I swear I'll stand by you. I'll beg my father. He will find a way to help you. You have to hold on!"

Chapter 884

Tiana barked out an order, her voice sharp. "Jerry, take Lauren away. Now!"

Jerry immediately gripped Lauren by the arm, hurried her out of the building, and straight back to the Rhodes residence.

Meanwhile, Andrew pulled out his phone and made a call. "Come get this dead loser out of here."

Tiana's expression turned even colder. "You're seriously not planning to run? Even now, you're still standing here, wasting time?"

Andrew glanced at her and let out a mocking chuckle. "Did I ever say I was running, Mrs. Rhodes?"

Tiana's head buzzed as if she had just been struck. Her voice turned razor-sharp. "Andrew, do you actually think you can go up against Kenny and the Golding family?"

"You have no idea what you've done. Your reckless, idiotic bravado isn't just going to get you killed—it's going to drag Marvin down with you! You didn't just make a mess—you just signed a death warrant for yourself and everyone around you!"

Andrew remained expressionless, completely unfazed by her outburst. "Mrs. Rhodes, Lauren is gone now, so I suggest you watch how you talk to me. Michael did say something right today—when I respect you, I call you Mrs. Rhodes. But if I don't respect you... then you're nothing."

Tiana's face turned a shade of red so deep it was almost purple. She glared at him, her fury nearly boiling over. "What did you just say?! Say it again, I dare you!"

Her bodyguards immediately stepped forward, their voices booming. "Watch your mouth!"

Across the room, Marcus and the rest of the Rhodes Corporation executives stood frozen. Their minds were blank, struggling to comprehend just how far this whole situation had spiraled.

Andrew had already beaten Bane to a pulp and completely crippled Michael. Now, he openly challenged Tiana as if he did not care about the consequences.

At this point, Marcus did not even bother trying to intervene, knowing there was no point.

Andrew had clearly lost all concern for consequences, and if he went ahead and destroyed the Rhodes Corporation too, Marcus might as well pack his bags, retire, and enjoy life with his daughter.

Tiana's murderous intent was practically radiating off of her, but Andrew ignored her entirely. He pulled out his phone again and made another call.

"Marvin, I've got Kenny Rhodes' son, Michael, right here. He's not dead yet, but he's really close. Blumedale is about to get noisy-Kenny and the Golding family won't just sit still after this. Get ready on your end."

On the other end of the line, Marvin let out a low chuckle. "Well, well, well. Finally, you're acting like a real beast, Mr. Lloyd. Honestly, I was dying for you to let loose already.

"Figures—it always takes a woman

to get a man to really go all in. I have

to say, I like this Lauren girl. Mr.

Lloyd, don't even stress. Kenny? That little worm? I could squash him in my sleep. The Golding family, though... that's gonna be a bit of a hassle.

"But hey, back in the day, we fought our way out of Chetvine. Do you think some

Gabo Creek goons are gonna stop us now? Hah!"

Marvin burst into laughter before hanging up, sounding absolutely thrilled about the chaos Andrew had just unleashed. Even though Andrew had just stirred up a storm that reached Blumedale's most powerful families, Marvin showed zero signs of panic.

If anything, he was more excited than Andrew, as if he lived for this kind of madness.

Chapter 885

Andrew felt like his head was about to explode. Was there anyone around him who was not completely insane?

Tiana scoffed, her tone dripping with sarcasm. "Well, at least you had the decency to warn Marvin ahead of time so he could prepare. But it won't make a difference. Against the Golding family, one of the Five Apex Families, Marvin won't even have the right to speak—he'll just be forced to smile and nod.

"And if Marvin dares to say even one wrong word? He'll end up dead too. So no one can help you, Andrew. You have no way out but to run for your life while you still can!"

Tiana had only heard Andrew's side of the phone call with Marvin. If she had actually heard Marvin's response, she probably would not have said any of this. Instead, her eyes would have widened in sheer disbelief, thinking that Andrew and Marvin were both lunatics.

At that moment, Dylan arrived at Rhodes Corporation with his men. Andrew did not waste time with explanations—he simply motioned for them to take Michael away.

Tiana immediately stepped in front of them. "Andrew, you can't take him! If you do, how am I supposed to explain this to Kenny?"

Andrew's voice remained calm. "You don't need to explain anything. Just tell him his son is in my hands."

Tiana's fury boiled over. "You arrogant little bastard! Do you really intend to keep digging your own grave? Do you have any idea what you're doing?! You're throwing away your life!"

Her tone was a mix of frustration and disbelief, as if she could not understand how someone could be so stubbornly suicidal.

Andrew smirked, unbothered. "Mrs. Rhodes, should I take that as a show of concern?"

Tiana grabbed him by the collar, her expression ice-cold as she pulled him close. She hissed, "Andrew, this isn't a joke. Yes, I do admire you. I don't want to see you get completely destroyed by the Golding family.

"But if you keep being this reckless, you're pushing yourself beyond the point of no return. And once you cross that line, death is the only thing waiting for you."

Andrew let out a short, dismissive laugh. "I'm gonna say something you might not like, Mrs. Rhodes-Kenny and the Golding family? They mean nothing to me. I said before that Michael wouldn't be leaving Jayrodale alive, and I meant it."

Tiana was practically shaking with fury. "Fine! Then let's see how your arrogance destroys you!"

She had never met someone so

outrageously insane. He actually dared to brush off the Golding family like they were nothing. To her,

Andrew was not just being

reckless-he was begging for death.

Andrew had nothing more to say. He simply gestured for Dylan to take Michael away before turning and walking out of Rhodes Corporation himself.

The moment he stepped outside, Tiana's phone rang-it was Kenny. She exhaled sharply before answering.

"Tiana, where the hell is Michael?" Kenny's furious voice roared through the speaker. "If anything happens to him, you know I'll destroy your entire family!"

His rage was like a thunderstorm, violent and uncontrollable.

Tiana's voice remained cold. "Kenny, you aren't the family head yet. I suggest you watch your tone when you speak to me."

Kenny nearly exploded. "Don't give me that bullshit! I'm asking you-where the hell is Michael? And that bastard Andrew-tell him. I'm coming for his life! He better pray for a quick death!"

Tiana hesitated, wondering if she should tell him the truth. If she did not, Kenny would likely turn his fury toward Jameson, or worse, come straight to Jayrodale himself.

Either way, it would end in disaster. She took a deep breath and silently muttered, 'Andrew, don't blame me for this.'

She exhaled slowly before answering Kenny, "Michael is missing. Andrew took him, and I don't know if he's dead or alive."

Chapter 886

Tiana hung up the phone without hesitation. She did not need to think twice to know that Kenny would definitely be coming after Andrew now. After all, his only son was in Andrew's hands, barely clinging to life. If Kenny did not retaliate, pigs would surely start flying.

Tiana let out a cold sneer and muttered, "That reckless idiot... he could've been a diamond in the rough, but instead, he's throwing himself into the fire."

"His arrogance, his overinflated sense of confidence-it's all just a show, isn't it? He's trying to prove to me that he's worthy of Lauren. Hah! What a joke. Instead, he's dug his own grave."

The more she thought about Andrew's blatant defiance, the angrier she became. To her, all of this was his way of trying to show off his strength in front of her. Then again, what was the point?

Joe did not even have to lift a finger, and people would naturally bow before him, recognizing him as a king among men. Meanwhile, no matter how much Andrew fought or how much noise he made, he was speeding toward a dead end.

Tiana scoffed, shaking her head. His fate was beyond ironic. After a moment of thought, she picked up her phone and called Marvin.

She said coldly, "Marvin, Kenny is about to deal with your so-called 'masterpiece'-Andrew. I'm just letting you know, out of courtesy. I figured I owed you that much for old times' sake. But as for Andrew's fate? That's out of my hands."

She had expected Marvin to either thank her for the warning or react with anger and panic. Instead, what she got was laughter—a calm, amused chuckle.

"That's it?" Marvin replied, sounding unbothered. "Hah. Sounds great."

Tiana blinked, thinking she must have misheard him. She let out a laugh of disbelief. "Marvin, are you deaf, or just stupid? Andrew is about to die, and you think it's great?"

Marvin chuckled again. "Yeah, I do. Mostly because I don't think Andrew is actually in any real danger. Kenny? Please. He's not even worth my time."

Tiana's voice turned icy. "That's only because you have money. But Kenny has the Golding family behind him—they're his in-laws. And

knowing that power-hungry mongrel, he'll definitely call on them to deal with Andrew.

"And when that happens, you'll either step up and get yourself destroyed alongside him, or you'll stay quiet and watch him die."

Marvin let out a low whistle. "Ah, the Golding family. One of Blumedale's Five Apex Families. Yeah, I suppose they could be a bit of a headache."

Tiana smirked. "So, are you finally starting to panic?"

Marvin yawned. "Nah. I just said they're a headache-I never said I was worried. In fact, already picked out the funeral music."

Tiana let out a mocking laugh. "What, you're already mourning Andrew? At least you've got some foresight."

Marvin chuckled again. "No, no. The music is for the Golding family. If they want to march into Jayrodale, they might as well do it to their own requiem."

Tiana's eyes widened, her mind struggling to process what she had just heard.

Andrew was already insane, but Marvin Marvin was just as bad.

The thought of the Golding family coming after them must have finally broken him—there was no other way

to explain how he could other way

something so suicidal.

Chapter 887

At that moment, over in Blumedale, Kenny was on the verge of exploding. "That little bastard! If I don't skin him alive, I don't deserve my last name!"

Inside the villa on his private lake estate, Kenny was so enraged that he grabbed a crystal tea set from the table and smashed it into a thousand pieces.

The housekeepers nearby trembled in fear, their heads lowered, barely daring to breathe. That tea set was not just any tea set-it was a gift from the Golding family, worth millions of dollars.

Yet, he had shattered it without a second thought. That was how furious he was.

A low, chilling laugh suddenly echoed through the room. "Well, well, Mr. Rhodes. Quite the temper you have there. Why don't you let me take care of this problem for you?"

A tall man in black stepped into the villa. He had a single eye, the other covered by a dark leather eyepatch.

His remaining eye was sharp and predatory, piercing like a hawk's, making it impossible to meet his gaze without feeling a deep sense of unease.

Kenny turned around, his face lighting up with relief.

"Phantom Eye, you're finally here!" he said, his tone eager. "I have one simple request—head to Jayrodale immediately and bring my son Michael back to Blumedale."

Phantom Eye let out a dry chuckle. "That's it? That's all you need?"

Kenny's expression twisted into something far more sinister. He snarled, "Of course not! Not only do I want you to bring Michael back, but I want you to tear Andrew apart-limb by limb. I assume that's not too difficult for you?"

Phantom Eye scoffed. "Kenny, do

you realize how insulting that request is? You're asking me to personally step into some backwater dump like Jayrodale? That's already beneath me. If it weren't for my ties to the Golding family, I wouldn't even entertain your request. As for cutting down some nobody? It's not a matter of difficulty—it's just... boring."

Kenny forced a smile. "Of course, I'd never question your strength—you are ranked on the Underworld Index, after all. Taking out a punk like Andrew is nothing to you."

Phantom Eye let out a low, disinterested grunt. "You do understand that my services don't come cheap, right? Also, your daughter married into the Golding family. You have them as your allies, yet instead of calling on their power, you came to me. Why?"

Kenny shook his head. "No, no—you misunderstand. The Golding family may be my in-laws, but that's exactly why I don't want to call in a favor from them. They're my trump card, my ace up my sleeve. I can't waste that on something trivial. As long as you handle this, I won't have to trouble them."

Phantom Eye nodded approvingly. "Smart. You actually understand how to preserve your resources. Instead of relying too much on the Golding family, you're keeping them in your back pocket for something bigger.

"You're right—if I go to Jayrodale personally, Michael will be fine. That is if he survives long enough for me to get there. If he's already dead by the time I arrive, well... that's not my problem."

Kenny's face darkened. He clenched his fists, slamming them down onto the table as he growled, "That bastard Andrew had Michael captured and even made sure Tiana called to inform me. He wants something from me—he's stalling. That means my son is still alive."

Phantom Eye tilted his head slightly, his single eye gleaming with amusement. He asked, "So what about Tiana? Want me to take her out too? Honestly, I've had my eye on her for a while. I wouldn't mind having a little fun with her first before finishing her off."

Kenny quickly waved a hand. "Tiana's not an easy target. Forget about her for now just focus on getting Michael back. We'll deal with her later."

Phantom Eye let out a disappointed sigh but nodded. Without another word, he turned and strode out of the villa.

Kenny watched him leave, his jaw tightening. Phantom Eye was one of the most lethal enforcers in Blumedale's underworld, ranked No. 35 on the Underworld Index. He was a martial artist whose skills surpassed even the most seasoned assassins.

With him heading to Jayrodale, this battle was as good as won. All Kenny needed to do was confirm that Michael was still alive and bring him back home to Blumedale.

Chapter 888

Kenny's next move would be to deal with Lauren and her family. In Holtrien's underground world, two major ranking systems determined a martial artist's status -the Titan List and the Underworld Index. Every martial artist aspired to make it onto one of these lists.

The Titan List was on a whole different level. It was reserved for monsters- legendary figures born into powerful families, heirs to elite dynasties, or top-tier military generals and special operatives.

Anyone ranked on the Titan List was not just a fighter-they were a walking earthquake, a force that could shake the entire underworld. On the other hand, the Underworld Index, while not as terrifying, was still a prestigious ranking.

Although it could not compare to the Titan List, for most crime families, syndicates, and martial arts clans, making it onto the Underworld Index was a once-in-a-lifetime honor.

Jayrodale had plenty of fighters, but none had ever made the list. Yet, Phantom Eye ranked No. 35 on the Underworld Index. His strength had already surpassed most high-level enforcers-he was already a semi-martial king. Wherever he went, he dominated.

Kenny had just hired him, and he could indeed create havoc in Jayrodale. Strictly speaking, Phantom Eye was out of Kenny's league.

Nonetheless, thanks to his daughter's marriage to the Golding family, Kenny had pulled the right strings. Phantom Eye was doing this as a favor.

Meanwhile, across Blumedale, inside a luxurious cafe, Aspen sat leisurely, sipping her afternoon tea. A well-dressed young man in a beige suit exuding effortless charm walked over with a confident stride.

"Aspen, this is for you."

In his hands was a vibrant tulip, its fragrance lingering in the air as he held it out to her. His deep, admiring gaze and the six-figure Richard Mille watch on his wrist screamed wealth, prestige, and impeccable taste.

Yet, Aspen did not even reach for the flower. She simply responded flatly, "Seth, how many times do I have to say it? You don't need to bring me flowers. Besides, I'm nothing more than a prisoner right now. Hardly someone worthy of your attention."

Seth Haywood remained unfazed. He simply placed the tulip on the table, then sat across from her with effortless poise.

"Aspen, I don't understand why a perfect woman like you would ever consider herself a prisoner. Tell me who is controlling you? Who's threatening you?"

"If you just give me a name, I will personally pull you out of this mess. And while I'm at it, I'll make sure whoever's mistreating you ceases to exist."

as calm but carried an

His tone was

undeniable dominance—the kind that would have most women completely entranced.

Unfortunately, Aspen was not net

like

most women, completely unfazed.

"My problems are mine to deal with," she said. "And I don't need anyone else to settle my debts—I'll handle them myself."

Seth leaned back, smirking. "See, Aspen, that's what I love about you. Graceful, confident, and proud—just like a swan that will never bow its head."

Aspen shook her head. "Seth, let's not talk about me. Tell me what's been happening in Blumedale lately? Anything interesting?"

Seth chuckled. "Blumedale is always buzzing with gossip, but most of it's boring. Although, there is one little story that caught my attention."

"I heard Kenny Rhodes—the Golding family's in-law—is furious. He actually hired Phantom Eye, one of the top-ranked men on the Underworld Index, to head to

Jayrodale."

He let out a small laugh. "Funny, isn't it? Aspen, didn't you just come from Jayrodale?"

Aspen's brows furrowed. "Kenny hired Phantom Eye to go to Jayrodale? Why?"

Seth shrugged. "What else?"

Apparently, Kenny's son got wrecked

by some nobody in Jayrodale.

Rhodes family's big shot is sending people over-partly to rescue his

pathetic son, and partly to flex his power."

Aspen's heart skipped a beat. For some reason, the first name that popped into her mind was Andrew.

That reckless, fearless lunatic-could he really have been the one to mess with the Rhodes family?

Chapter 889

The more Aspen thought about it, the more convinced she became. "Seth, I have something urgent to take care of. We'll talk next time!"

Without waiting for his response, she turned and left in a hurry.

Seth tilted his head, watching her graceful figure disappear. His tongue flicked across his lips as a smirk formed.

"A top-tier beauty... aside from her chest being a little on the small side, she's damn near perfect. But even though they're small, they're perky-just the right size to fit in my hands.

"What's even better is that she's loaded. She just set up a company worth billions in Blumedale. Once I get her in my bed, I'll kill two birds with one stone-pleasure and fortune."

A slow, greedy grin stretched across his face. Women like Aspen could not be rushed, especially ones with powerful backgrounds, but he was not in a hurry. With his status as a Haywood, it was only a matter of time before he had her naked, completely at his mercy, savoring every inch of her.

There was just one problem-someone was controlling Aspen. After spending the past few days observing her, Seth was certain-there was a man behind the

scenes.

He scoffed, thinking, 'I don't care who he is. Anyone who dares get in my way is signing his own death warrant.'

Aspen rushed out of the restaurant and hurried to her car. She barely had time to catch her breath before pulling out her phone and dialing Andrew.

"Heh, well, well... Ms. Aspen, calling me first? That's rare," Andrew teased.

Aspen did not have the patience for his usual antics. "Andrew, do you have Kenny's son, Michael?"

Andrew chuckled. "Yeah. You really do get your hands on information fast."

Aspen's frustration boiled over. "Listen to me-let him go and run. As far and as fast as you can. Leave Jayrodale now!"

Andrew leaned back, completely unfazed. "Relax. Tell me what exactly did you hear in Blumedale?"

Aspen nearly Sereamed. "Are you seriously asking me questions right now?! I just found out that Kenny hired Phantom Eye to take you He's already on his way to Jayrodale. If nothing goes wrong,

love pode

he'll be there in half a day. So stop wasting time and run!"

Andrew remained indifferent. "Phantom Eye? Never heard of him. Also, I don't care."

Aspen nearly lost it. "You arrogant

idiot! Do you even know who Phantom Eye is?! He's a top-tier figure in Blumedale's underground scene! Kenny alone could never afford him. If Phantom Eye is involved, it means the Golding family is backing this move."

Andrew smirked. "And? What does that have to do with me?"

Aspen clenched her teeth, barely holding back her frustration. "Andrew, know you run Jayrodale like it's your playground right now. But even the wildest storm

eventually meets a stronger force. Phantom Eye isn't someone you can just punch your way through.

"I've warned you—whether you listen or not is up to you. But when everything falls apart, don't say I didn't try to save your ass!"

Andrew let out a low chuckle. "Not bad, Aspen. You really came through for me by getting to Blumedale early and setting things up. I'll count this as a win for you."

Aspen nearly screamed in frustration. Was this man insane?

Did he not understand the disaster that was about to hit him?

How could he still have the audacity to praise her like some boss rewarding an employee?

Chapter 890

Aspen grumbled, "Fine. If you won't listen, I won't waste my breath."

Her voice turned cold as she added, "Andrew, if you do end up dead, then this ten billion and my freedom will no longer have anything to do with you."

Andrew chuckled. "Alright. If I die, you can take the money and your freedom along with it. But luck tends to be on my side, so don't get your hopes up too high."

Before Aspen could snap back, he ended the call. She stared at her phone, her lips parting as if she wanted to say something, but the words never came.

A tight frustration built up in her chest, an unbearable sense of exasperation she had nowhere to release. She muttered, "Andrew, if you really end up dead, I'd actually be relieved. Don't expect any loyalty from me."

She let out a dry laugh, feeling a little better after saying it out loud. With a hard press on the gas pedal, her red Ferrari roared to life and sped off.

Even though she was certain Phantom Eye would take care of Andrew, she still had her own mission to complete. After all, as much as she doubted it-there was always that one possibility.

And if, by some miracle, Andrew did survive, he would definitely come to

Blumedale to check on her work. If she failed to deliver, she did not even want to imagine what kind of hell he would put her through.

Meanwhile, in Jayrodale, Andrew sat inside West End's headquarters.

"Don't let Michael die yet-keep him barely breathing." His voice was calm, completely devoid of warmth.

Antonio nodded respectfully. "Don't worry, Mr. Lloyd. The Rhodes family brat won't die, but he's not far from it."

West End's top enforcers had all gathered. When they first heard they were about to go head-to-head with someone from Blumedale's underground world, Antonio and the others nearly lost their nerve.

However, the moment Andrew walked in, their confidence steadied.

Antonio was still shaken. On the surface, Andrew was always composed charming, even. But when he moved, it was ruthless. He had taken Rhodes' golden boy hostage in one swift move, triggering an all-out conflict with Blumedale's top brass.

Antonio's heart pounded harder than it had in years. He thought Andrew was not just dangerous-he played the game at a level that made seasoned veterans break into cold sweats.

Andrew glanced at Dylan and Natasha. "There's a guy from Blumedale's underground scene who goes by Phantom Eye. You two know anything about him?"

Dylan's face went pale. "What? Kenny actually called in Phantom Eye? That maniac?"

Natasha's expression turned serious. "Darling, Phantom Eye got his name because of his missing eye-one of them is completely blind. No one knows his real name, especially us lower figures in the underworld.

"But what I do know is that he's ranked No. 35 on the Underworld Index, and he's a semi-martial king. He never wastes his time in smatt place like Jayrodale. Usually, Re's only seen in Blumedale's underground circui southern territories of Holtrien."

Andrew remained unfazed. "A semi-martial king. That's not weak."

His gaze flickered between them. "Natasha, if you and Dylan team up, can you take him down?"

Natasha let out a bitter laugh. "Darling, do you want to get rid of me that badly? Are you sending me on a suicide. mission?"

Dylan immediately chimed in, "Mr. Lloyd, if you ask Natasha and me to ambush a senior grandmaster, we could handle it easily. But Phantom Eye is way out of our league.