

I Created 356

Chapter 356

Elara, drawing on the bond she's formed with Alix, suggests a new approach. "Alix, remember the battle where we faced those elemental beasts in the tomb earlier? The way they moved, it was like a dance," she says, her eyes lighting up with inspiration. "What if the sequence is less about order and more about harmony? Like the elements themselves."

Alix pauses, considering Elara's insight. "Harmony... of course. The elements aren't just forces; they're a balance, a cycle. Let's try aligning the runes with the elemental cycle—water feeds wood, wood fuels fire, and so on," he proposes, his voice filled with newfound hope.

With renewed vigor, the group sets to work, their movements synchronized as they activate the runes in a sequence that mirrors the natural cycle of the elements. The air thrums with energy, a tangible sense of anticipation building with each successful activation.

Finally, as the last rune glows brightly, a deep rumbling sound emanates from the gate. The ancient stones tremble, and slowly, the gate begins to open, revealing the darkness beyond.

A collective sigh of relief and triumph fills the air. Alix, Elara, and Eryx exchange glances, their expressions a mix of exhaustion and exhilaration. They've solved the puzzle, unlocking the gate and earning their passage into the heart of the tomb.

"This is it," Alix says, a smile spreading across his face. "Whatever lies beyond this gate, we'll face it together."

Elara nods, her hand finding Alix's in a silent gesture of unity. "Together," she affirms, her voice steady and resolute.

As they step through the opened gate, the group is ready for whatever challenges await them in the depths of the tomb.

The gate closes behind them with a resonant thud, sealing them inside. The dimly lit arena unfolds before their eyes, a vast expanse of sand and stone circled by towering walls. The air is thick, charged with a palpable tension that forebodes the trials to come.

Alix surveys the arena, his eyes quickly adapting to the dim light. "Be careful, everyone," he warns, his voice echoing slightly in the open space. "This is the first stage of the challenges."

No sooner has he spoken than a large timer materializes in the air above them, starting a countdown from two hours. A disembodied voice, ancient and resonant, fills the arena, "Survive until the time is up."

As the voice fades, the ground around them begins to tremble, and from the shadows of the arena, undead creatures start emerging. Their forms are grotesque, a mix of decay and darkness, with eyes that burn with a malevolent green light.

Eryx cracks his knuckles, a grin spreading across his face. "Looks like it's showtime," he says, darting forward with electrifying speed. His strikes are a blur, enhanced by his lightning element, which sends arcs of electricity zapping through the undead. Each hit leaves a trail of fire, incinerating the undead in an instant.

Zam steps beside Alix, his hands igniting with intense flames. "Come guys, let's light up this place," he declares, launching fireballs at the approaching undead. The fireballs explode upon impact, creating blasts of fire that consume groups of undead in fiery infernos.

Nox and Kato position themselves back-to-back, their defensive skills forming an impenetrable barrier. Nox extends his hands, creating shields of fire that absorb and deflect the undead's attacks, while Kato uses his mastery over fire to create walls of flame that corral and contain the undead, preventing them from overwhelming the group.

Jin, wielding his sword with precision, dances among the undead. Each swing of his blade is accompanied by a surge of fire, slicing through the undead with ease. His movements are fluid and efficient, leaving a trail of destruction in his wake.

Elara, standing in the center of the arena, raises her seven-star sword high. The blade glows with a radiant light, pulsing with energy. With a graceful motion, she swings her sword, releasing waves of light that cut through the darkness. The light sears the undead, their forms disintegrating under its purity.

As the battle rages, the group moves in perfect harmony, their elements complementing each other. Alix, clad in his flood dragon armor, stands as a beacon of strength. He moves with purpose, his armor absorbing the undead's attacks while he uses his mastery over fire to incinerate any undead that come too close.

"Keep it up, everyone! We've trained for this," Alix calls out, rallying his team as they fight back the undead horde. The arena becomes a battlefield of light and fire, the group's determination shining as brightly as their elemental powers.

The timer ticks down, each second a testament to their resilience and strength. As the last of the undead falls, the group stands victorious, their breaths heavy but triumphant.

"We did it," Eryx pants, a wide grin on his face.

"Yes, but this is just the beginning," Alix replies, his gaze fixed on the timer as it reaches zero.

Before they can contemplate their next move, the center of the arena illuminates, drawing their attention to three items that appear as if conjured by magic. The items float gently down to the sand, each radiating a distinct and powerful aura.

Alix, his curiosity piqued, approaches the items with his team closely behind him. The first item they examine is a pill, glowing with an inner light that seems to pulse in rhythm with the heartbeat of the world. "This is a 6-star Ascension Pill," Alix announces, awe in his voice. "It's said to aid a cultivator in breaking through the Core Formation Realm. To think we'd find such a treasure here..."

Next to the pill lies a sword, its blade shimmering with an ethereal light. The craftsmanship is exquisite, each detail of the hilt and blade speaking of ancient and powerful techniques. "And this," Eryx picks up the sword, weighing it in his hands, "is the 6-star Flameheart Sword. Its edge can cut through the steel like butter. A worthy weapon for any warrior."

The third item, another pill, radiates a soothing, healing energy. "This is the 6-star Lifesaver Pill," Elara reads the inscription etched on the pill's casing. "It can heal any injury, as long as the cultivator is not dead. A miraculous item indeed."

The group exchanges looks of amazement, their expressions a mix of disbelief and excitement. "To think the reward for clearing just the first stage would be 6-star items," Zam says, his voice tinged with wonder. "The tower's mysteries are beyond our wildest dreams."

Just as they begin to discuss who would benefit most from each item, Elara's keen eyes catch a glimpse of something partially obscured in the sand near the base of the display. She strides over,

brushing aside the sand to reveal a weathered piece of parchment that seems almost to have been waiting for them. With a gentle touch, she lifts it, and her eyes scan the ancient script.

"I think we can only pick one," Elara says, a hint of regret in her voice as she points to the crucial line in the letter that dictates their limitation. The excitement that had filled the air momentarily dampens at her revelation.

Nox, ever the optimist in their group, chuckles softly, breaking the brief silence that had fallen. "Haha, it would be too good to be true if we got to keep all three items," he remarks, his laughter lightening the mood.

The group gathers closer, casting their votes and sharing their thoughts on which item would serve them best in the trials ahead. After a moment of thoughtful consideration, Alix steps forward, his decision clear in his mind.

"Let's take the Lifesaver Pill," Alix declares, his voice resonating with the authority of a leader. "While the Ascension Pill and the Flameheart Sword hold incredible value, our survival is paramount. This pill could be the difference between life and death in the challenges to come."

The group nods in agreement, recognizing the wisdom in his choice. The Lifesaver Pill, with its potent healing capabilities, could indeed be their key to enduring the tomb's trials, where even a moment's falter could lead to dire consequences.

Alix reaches out, his hand hovering over the Lifesaver Pill. As his fingers make contact, the other two items fade away, leaving behind a sense of what could have been. Yet, the weight of the Lifesaver Pill in Alix's palm reassures them that they've made the right choice.

"Let's move forward," Alix says, turning to face his team with renewed determination.

The group advances to the next stage, their steps echoing in the vastness of the tomb. The anticipation and tension from the previous battles linger in the air, a reminder of the challenges they've faced—and those that still lie ahead.

As they enter the next chamber, the ambiance shifts dramatically. Instead of another battlefield, they find themselves before an enormous chessboard, the squares alternating in shades of dark and light stone. The pieces themselves are human-sized, carved from the same stone, each imbued with an aura of ancient magic. The pieces seem almost alive, poised and ready for command.

Alix and his vice-captains exchange puzzled looks. This challenge is unlike any they've encountered before.

"I've never played chess," Alix admits, scanning the board with a frown. "Does anyone know the rules?"

Eryx, Zam, Nox, Kato, and Jin shake their heads in unison, their expressions a mix of curiosity and apprehension. It's clear that this game of strategy and intellect is foreign to them.

Elara steps forward, her eyes lighting up with recognition. "I know how to play chess," she says, her voice tinged with a mixture of nostalgia and determination. "Althea—my sect master—used to play with me. She loved chess."