

R Cultivator 156

Chapter 156: The Capital of Rosefall Kingdom

The flying boat soared gracefully through the sky, cutting through the clouds as it travelled across the vast countryside. Its sleek, streamlined design gleamed under the sun, crafted from a blend of lightweight metals and enchanted wood, allowing it to move swiftly and silently. The hull was etched with intricate arrays that not only enhanced its speed but also created a shimmering aura around it, masking its presence from prying eyes. Its sails, made from enchanted fabric, caught the wind effortlessly, guiding the boat with a steady purpose.

Inside the flying boat, Tyler, Lily, and Isadora were nestled in a cozy, well-furnished cabin. The interior was as refined as the exterior, with plush seats and a small table in the center where Tyler and Isadora were engaged in a game of poker. Meanwhile, Lily, disguised like the others, was at the helm, her hands steady on the controls as she piloted the vessel with practiced ease.

Tyler glanced at his cards and sighed. "It's kind of boring," he remarked, his tone flat.

"Is it because you're losing?" Isadora teased, raising an eyebrow.

"tsk tsk... No, it's because it's boring," Tyler replied, shaking his head.

Isadora rolled her eyes and threw her cards down in frustration. "What does that even mean? Even your boring monologue makes me lose interest."

Tyler grinned, leaning back in his seat. "So, why are you called Manhunter?" he asked, his curiosity piqued.

Isadora smirked, a mischievous glint in her eye. "Because I suck men dry," she answered with a casual shrug.

"Oh... And can you suck me dry too?" Tyler asked, his tone playful yet completely deadpan.

"What?" Isadora was taken back.

"What?" Tyler echoed.

Before the banter could continue, Lily interrupted them, her voice cutting through the air like a whip. "Enough flirting. We're about to leave the island and head to the Rosefall capital. It looks like the capital is going to be lively."

Tyler and Isadora exchanged a glance before turning their attention to the window. Outside, the vast sea stretched out below them, dotted with ships of all sizes. Most of them were unmistakably pirate ships, their black sails billowing in the wind as they made their way toward the capital.

"Huh... Looks like everyone's expecting the Labyrinth to open," Tyler mused aloud. The rumours of Astrid's capture and the King's illness had spread quickly, and now there was a chance that the fabled Labyrinth might be unlocked—a treasure trove that had drawn pirates and adventurers alike.

Lily's gaze remained focused on the horizon, "They will probably seal the borders to prevent pirates causing havoc."

Tyler sat back, his mind whirring with curiosity about the Labyrinth. He had heard whispers and rumors, but the specifics eluded him. Yet, with Isadora sitting across from him, he couldn't simply ask outright—he is acting like he already knows everything about the Labyrinth.

"So," Tyler began, shuffling the deck of cards absentmindedly. "The capital's going to be a madhouse with all these pirates sniffing around. They must be desperate for whatever's inside that Labyrinth."

Isadora glanced up, her sharp eyes catching the slight hesitation in his voice. "Desperate is an understatement. Some of these pirates would sell their own mothers for a chance to get inside."

"Can't blame them," Tyler said, leaning forward as if in deep thought. "Not every day you get a shot at something that ancient. Imagine the kind of relics or lost techniques that could be hidden in there. It's almost... predictable."

Isadora tilted her head, intrigued. "Predictable? What do you mean?"

Tyler shrugged casually, as though it were common knowledge. "Well, the Labyrinth's been around for ages, right? A place like that... it's bound to attract attention. But it's not just the treasure, is it? There's got to be more. I mean, anyone who knows anything about history would know what's really important there."

Isadora's gaze narrowed, a slight smirk playing on her lips. "You're not wrong, but you make it sound like you've got it all figured out. Care to enlighten me?"

Tyler feigned a nonchalant smile, but inside, he knew he had to play this carefully. "Oh, I wouldn't want to spoil the surprise for you. But let's just say, when you've been around as long as I have, you start to notice patterns. Ancient places like the Labyrinth... they tend to have something more than just gold and artefacts. Something... essential."

He watched Isadora closely, gauging her reaction. He needed her to fill in the blanks, to give him the answers without realizing she was doing it.

Isadora chuckled, clearly entertained by his cryptic approach. "Essential, huh? Well, if you're referring to the clues about that ancient treasure, you're on the right track. But I doubt even you know what's at the heart of it."

Tyler leaned back, playing along. "Oh? And what might that be?"

She leaned in, her voice lowering to a conspiratorial whisper. "The Immortal Spark. They say it's hidden deep within the Labyrinth, guarded by ancient mechanisms and trials. Whoever finds it... well, you know what an Immortal spark, right?"

Tyler nodded, satisfied with the direction the conversation had taken. Isadora had unknowingly revealed exactly what he needed to know, and all without him asking directly. The Labyrinth was more than just a maze of trials—it has an Immortal Spark. Tyler knew that even with a lot of money it's not easy to buy it.

The Capital of Rosefall Kingdom

As the flying boat glided through the air, the majestic capital of the Rosefall Kingdom came into view. The city was a breathtaking sight, nestled on a small island entirely devoted to the grandeur of the capital. At its heart, a towering castle rose high above the surrounding buildings, its spires reaching toward the heavens like a beacon of power and authority. The castle, with its gleaming white stone and intricate architecture, was the crown jewel of the island, visible from miles away.

The city sprawled outward from the castle in concentric circles, each ring of buildings reflecting a different era and style, blending seamlessly into a cohesive whole. Tall, elegant towers and grand estates lined the streets closest to the castle, while farther out, the architecture became more modest, with smaller homes and bustling markets filling the spaces between.

Encircling the entire island was a massive stone wall, its height and thickness a testament to the kingdom's desire for security and protection. The wall was dotted with watchtowers, and from their vantage points, guards kept a vigilant eye on the horizon and the sea beyond. The only way into the capital was through a single, heavily fortified gate, where all who sought entry had to pass through a thorough inspection by the kingdom's guards.

As the flying boat descended, Tyler, Lily, and Isadora could see the bustling activity below. The capital was alive with movement—merchants peddling their wares, travelers making their way toward the gate, and citizens going about their daily lives. The island might have been small, but it was a hive of energy and purpose.

The flying boat hovered just outside the capital's airspace, where it was forced to stop. "No flying boats allowed within the city limits," Lily reminded them as they prepared to disembark. Tyler nodded, and the three of them leaped gracefully from the boat, landing lightly on the cobblestone path below.

The atmosphere near the gate was charged with anticipation. A long line of people—merchants, adventurers, and travelers from all walks of life—snaked its way toward the entrance, each person waiting to be checked by the guards before they could enter the city. The guards were thorough, inspecting papers, belongings, and even casting spells to detect any signs of deception or danger.

Tyler, Lily, and Isadora joined the line, moving steadily forward with the crowd. As they approached the gate, Tyler glanced around, noting the tension in the air. Everyone here was eager to enter the capital, especially with the Labyrinth's rumoured opening drawing near. But the process was slow, and the guards showed no signs of hurrying.

When it was finally Tyler's turn to be checked, the guard stepped forward, his expression stern as he prepared to question them. But before he could say a word, Isadora moved ahead, her dark eyes locking onto the guard's. She leaned in close, whispering something too soft for Tyler or Lily to hear. The guard's stern expression faltered, his eyes glazing over slightly as Isadora's words took hold.

Without another word, the guard nodded absently and stepped aside, allowing them to pass through the gate without further scrutiny. Tyler glanced at Isadora, who walked past the guard with a faint, knowing smile on her lips.

Once they were inside, Tyler couldn't help but chuckle softly. "That was impressive," he said, glancing over at Isadora. "Your hypnosis is as effective as it is terrifying."

Isadora chuckled and she moved closer to Tyler's ear, "Well, I have even more impressive tricks in bed. Wanna try?"

Phantom Blackwood, Temptress and the Manhunter entered the capital.

Chapter 157: Kidnap

The bustling streets of the capital were filled with merchants peddling their goods, children playing, and nobles strolling as if they owned the world. Tyler led the group to a large restaurant, one that stood out with its grand entrance and the delicious aroma wafting from within. It was the perfect place to gather information discreetly.

Once inside, they found a table near the back, away from prying eyes. The interior was just as grand as the exterior, with high ceilings adorned with chandeliers and walls lined with tapestries depicting the history of the kingdom. The restaurant was busy, filled with the chatter of diners and the clinking of utensils. They ordered their food, and it wasn't long before plates of steaming peri-peri chicken were set before them.

"Aren't we going to rescue that Half-Angel?" Isadora asked as she eyed Tyler and Lily, who were already digging into their meals with enthusiasm.

"This chicken tastes amazing," Lily said, ignoring Isadora's question as she took another bite. "What did you say it was called?"

"Peri-peri chicken," Tyler replied, savouring the spicy, tangy flavours. "They say it's from an island in this country that's full of farmland and poultry. They even have arrays that speed up the growth process."

"Both of you are impossible," Isadora sighed. She finally gave in, picking up a piece of chicken herself. The moment the flavours hit her tongue, she couldn't help but let out a small sound of appreciation. "This is... really good," she admitted, her annoyance momentarily forgotten.

Tyler and Lily exchanged knowing looks, smug smiles tugging at their lips as they watched her enjoy the food.

"But," Lily said, leaning back in her chair, "restaurants and bars are the best places to gather information."

With a subtle motion, she placed a few Lydia notes in the hand of the waiter who had come to refill their water. The waiter's smile widened, and he leaned in slightly, lowering his voice.

"What can I do for you, ma'am?" he asked politely.

"We're new to the city," Tyler said, his tone casual but curious. "What's been happening in the capital lately?"

The waiter glanced around, ensuring no one was listening too closely. "There's quite a bit of turmoil brewing, sir. The King's fallen ill, and it's got everyone on edge. The Crown Princess has returned, but there's talk that she's going to marry the Prime Minister's son."

"That doesn't sound too bad," Lily remarked, though her tone suggested she was fishing for more.

The waiter's expression turned puzzled. "That's the strange part. The Prime Minister's son is... well, he's not exactly a model citizen. Spends most of his time in brothels. No one understands why the Princess would choose him."

"Interesting," Tyler said, exchanging a glance with Lily. "Anything else we should know?"

The waiter continued, sharing various bits of gossip and rumours that painted a picture of a kingdom in chaos. The Prime Minister had announced the wedding with alarming urgency, and it was set to take place within the week. Some said the Princess was being forced into it, while others believed she had her own reasons.

After the waiter left, the three of them sat in silence for a moment, processing the information.

"So, what's the plan?" Isadora asked, her tone light but her eyes sharp. "Are we going to kidnap the bride? She's probably locked up in some golden cage by now."

Tyler shook his head. "No, kidnapping the Princess would draw too much attention. We're going to stop the wedding, but we'll do it in a way that no one sees coming."

"And how exactly do you plan to do that?" Lily inquired, raising an eyebrow.

A sly smile crept across Tyler's face as he leaned in closer, lowering his voice. "We are not going to kidnap the bride, we are going to..."

That night, under the cover of darkness, a ripple of unease spread through the Prime Minister's estate. The Prime Minister's son disappeared.

The next morning, Tyler, Lily, and Isadora gathered in a hidden room of their temporary hideout. Before them lay a figure, unconscious and bound, his rotund form slumped against the floor. Even in his inert state, the sheer weight of him caused the wooden floor to creak ominously.

"This fatty is the Prime Minister's son?" Tyler asked, his voice laced with disbelief. He circled the man, inspecting him from different angles, as if hoping a different perspective would yield a more plausible answer.

"Hard to believe, right?" Lily commented, nudging the man lightly with her boot. The floor groaned in protest.

"How did he even enjoy girls in brothels? Won't they break?" Lily asked.

"That's your problem?" Isadora's mouth twitched.

"Probably, Cowgirl position." Tyler replied.

"Don't answer her." Isadora shouted.

"But the Prime Minister doesn't seem to be taking any action," Tyler remarked, his brow furrowed in confusion. "It's like he doesn't care that his only son has gone missing."

"Are we sure this is actually his son?" Isadora questioned, her own confusion evident. She recalled the events of the previous night, when she had infiltrated the brothel where the Prime Minister's son was known to frequent. Disguised as one of the working girls, she had effortlessly hypnotised him and led him away, ensuring multiple times that he was indeed the right target.

She'd even gone so far as to ask the man himself, in his hypnotised state, "Are you the Prime Minister's only son?"

His answer, slurred and lethargic, had been affirmative, yet here they were, doubting it all.

"Well... let's wait and see," Tyler said, tapping his chin thoughtfully. "Does the Prime Minister have any other sons?"

Lily shook her head. "No, just this one. He has two daughters, but no other sons."

"Hmm," Tyler sighed, the mystery deepening. "Strange."

Isadora picked up a newspaper that had been left on the table. Her eyes scanned the headlines before landing on something that caught her interest.

"Looks like the White Merchant Group has created a new shopping mall in the port city," Isadora said, raising an eyebrow as she glanced up from the paper.

Tyler's expression shifted from puzzlement to mild amusement. "Oh, those guys? They're swimming in money. I've dealt with them before—they're always generous with their payments."

Lily glanced at him, "Uh... Their Vice Captain is also beautiful."

"Tsk... Why are you guys praising them so much." Isadora sighed. She has no idea how these two are the most terrifying pirates.

The old castle, once a symbol of ancient grandeur, had undergone a remarkable transformation. Now fully renovated, its stone walls and towering spires still held a sense of history, but the interior was a bustling hive of modern commerce. The grand halls and chambers that had once housed nobility were now divided into over 1,500 individual rooms, each meticulously designed to serve as rentable shops.

Each square foot of space within the castle came with a hefty price tag—5,000 Lydia per year. Given the castle's prime location and the sheer number of people wanting in, this price was no deterrent. In fact, it only added to the allure. The stores varied in size, with the rent calculated accordingly, making some of the larger shops worth a small fortune.

Among the tenants were two of the most prestigious businesses: White Auction Hall and Immortal Bytes. These entities, closely tied to the mall's operations, had naturally secured prime locations within the castle, their presence lending an air of exclusivity and prestige to the entire complex.

Mana and Mathilda had outdone themselves with the creation of the White Crown Galleria. The transformation of the old castle into a bustling commercial hub was nothing short of extraordinary. Not only had they meticulously planned the layout of the mall, but they had also ensured its security and functionality by inviting a host of renowned array masters to infuse the castle with powerful arrays. These included Monitoring Arrays for surveillance, Defence Arrays for protection, and Binding Arrays to enforce order within the premises. The result was a fortress-like shopping mall, impenetrable to threats and perfectly suited to its new purpose.

The grand opening of the White Crown Galleria took place just two days later, an event so significant that the Governor himself attended, cutting the ribbon in a ceremony that drew the attention of the entire kingdom. The opening attracted not just local merchants and townsfolk, but also pirates and adventurers from across the seas. The allure of the Galleria was so strong that even the prestigious Bank of Atlantis decided to relocate one of its branches to the city, choosing the White Crown Galleria as its new home.

As the buzz of the grand opening began to settle, Mana was busy sorting through a stack of invitations and documents that had arrived in the wake of their success. She paused, her eyes catching on an ornate card at the bottom of the pile.

"Wow... Mana Thinks Tyler might want this," Mana said, holding up the invitation card for Mathilda to see.

Mathilda leaned over to take a look, her eyebrows raising in surprise. "An invitation to the Princess's marriage? So, this was part of his plan all along..." she mused aloud, understanding the implications. "He's not just building a business empire; he's also using it as a means to gain influence and get closer to Astrid."

Mana nodded, a sly smile forming on her lips. "It seems Tyler always thinks several steps ahead."

Chapter 158: The marriage didn't stop

Tyler kicked the unconscious man with enough force to send him rolling across the room like a ragdoll. He watched him tumble, his expression unreadable. "There is nothing more frightening than a foolish person having conviction and nothing more dangerous than an ignorant person having power," he muttered, his voice laced with disdain.

Lily, standing at the opposite side, didn't hesitate to add her own strike, sending the man flying back toward Tyler. "From what I've heard, this one loves to force himself on women, using his father's name to escape every crime he's committed," she said, in bored tone.

Tyler caught the man with another kick, sending him sprawling back to Lily. "Where's Manhunter?" he asked, almost as an afterthought.

"She went out," Lily replied, landing a final, decisive kick that left the man slumped on the floor, unmoving. "But we don't really need her now. We already know Astrid's whereabouts."

"True..." Tyler agreed, but something gnawed at him. He stared at the unconscious man, his mind racing. "It's odd, though. The prime minister doesn't seem to care about his son. The marriage preparations are still ongoing."

Lily nodded, her eyes narrowing in thought. "That's what troubles me too. It means the groom isn't this piece of trash," she said, gesturing at the man on the floor.

Tyler pulled a letter from his coat, along with an ornate invitation card. "I received this from Mana. It's an invitation to attend the marriage ceremony."

Lily's eyebrows rose in surprise, then settled into a thoughtful frown. "Looks like we have to attend it. Not as pirates, but as representatives of the White Merchant Group."

"Hmm... Opening a big business in this kingdom was the right choice," Tyler murmured, considering their options. It wasn't every day that someone received an invitation to such a high-profile event.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the capital, Isadora Nightkiss, known as the infamous Manhunter, was meeting with a figure in the shadowy corners of the city. She moved with purpose, her every step measured as she navigated the labyrinthine alleys to reach her destination.

She found herself facing the vice-captain of the Silver Eye Pirates, a grizzled dwarf who had a tankard of beer in one hand and a sneer on his lips. "It's you, b*tch. You've infiltrated our ship many times. Now you dare show your face here?" he snarled, his small, beady eyes filled with malice.

Isadora didn't flinch. Instead, she delivered her news with cool indifference. "I came here to inform you that the Phantom Pirates have kidnapped Prime Minister Rover's son."

The dwarf's expression shifted, the weight of her words sinking in. He hurried off to a nearby room, where the Silver Eyed Captain, a man as infamous as he was feared, sat drinking in silence, lost in his own thoughts.

The vice-captain knocked gently, then relayed the situation to his captain. The captain, without even glancing away from the ceiling, spoke calmly, "Tell the prime minister to open the Labyrinth. Or else he won't see his son again."

A few hours later, Isadora returned to Tyler and Lily, her expression as inscrutable as ever. "It seems the prime minister will open the Labyrinth during the wedding," she said.

Tyler's eyes narrowed, processing the implications. "So, you told the Silver Eye Pirates because they have a way to contact the prime minister?" he asked, already knowing the answer.

Isadora nodded, her gaze steady. Tyler fell silent, his mind churning with possibilities. If the Labyrinth was going to be opened, it would draw in every faction vying for power. Yet, the idea of kidnapping the prime minister himself flickered briefly in his thoughts before he dismissed it as impractical.

Their goal was clear: they needed to disrupt the wedding and rescue Astrid. But the Labyrinth added a dangerous new variable to their plans.

As the news of the Labyrinth's impending opening spread like wildfire through the capital, the atmosphere in the city grew increasingly tense. Pirates from all corners of the sea converged on the island, their ships anchored just outside the capital's boundaries, waiting for the fateful day when the Labyrinth would finally reveal its secrets. These weren't just ordinary pirates; they were hardened crews, each with its own reputation for ruthlessness and cunning. Captains whispered in darkened taverns, strategizing their moves, while their crews busied themselves with last-minute preparations, sharpening weapons, and readying supplies for the dangerous journey ahead.

The Labyrinth, an ancient and mysterious structure, had long been the stuff of legends. Some said it was naturally formed, a relic of a bygone era when Immortals roamed the south. Others believed it was a deliberate creation, a test left behind by an Immortal in the North to challenge the brave—or the foolish. The promise of treasure hidden within its depths was more than enough to draw these pirates like moths to a flame. But what truly stirred their greed and ambition was the rumor that an Immortal Spark was buried somewhere deep within the Labyrinth's twisted corridors.

Yet, it wasn't only the pirates who were drawn to the capital. Adventurers of all kinds—treasure hunters, mercenaries, and seekers of glory—flocked to the city, eager to claim their share of the riches or carve their names into history. The capital's streets buzzed with activity as these adventurers formed temporary alliances, bartered for information, and acquired supplies. Every inn and tavern was filled with talk of the Labyrinth, and the anticipation hung thick in the air. Everyone knew that when the Labyrinth opened, chaos would reign, and only the strongest—or the luckiest—would emerge victorious.

Adding another layer of tension to the already volatile mix was the arrival of several Federation ships, their sleek, imposing forms cutting through the waters as they docked at the capital. The Federation, a powerful and authoritarian force, was not there merely to seek treasure. They had a different, more personal mission: to hunt down Isadora Nightkiss, the notorious 'Manhunter' who had been spotted in the capital. Reports had reached the Federation that she was now with the Phantom Pirates, and they were determined to capture her at all costs. It is the Silver Eye Captain who snatched her out.

But the Federation had another, more covert mission: they too sought something within the Labyrinth. Rumors abounded that their true objective was tied to a powerful artifact or ancient knowledge hidden within its depths, something that could shift the balance of power in the world. This dual mission—capturing Isadora and securing whatever lay within the Labyrinth—meant the Federation was prepared to go to any lengths, including engaging in open conflict with the pirates and adventurers if necessary.

In the dimly lit cabin of the Federation ship, the air was thick with the scent of salt and tension. The Lieutenant, a man with a stern face and cold, calculating eyes, leaned back in his chair, staring out of the small porthole at the bustling capital in the distance. His expression remained unflinchingly bored, despite the gravity of the mission at hand. The Ensign, standing at attention before him, shifted uncomfortably under the weight of the silence.

"We were unable to capture Manhunter on Rich Berg Island," the Ensign finally reported, his voice edged with a hint of unease.

The Lieutenant's gaze didn't waver from the window. He let the words hang in the air for a moment before he finally turned his attention to the Ensign. "Sorry, sir," the Ensign added quickly, as if trying to fill the void left by the Lieutenant's silence.

With a slow, dismissive wave of his hand, the Lieutenant replied, "Don't worry about it. She's slippery, but she won't get far. Just wait for the Labyrinth to open. We'll hunt her down then."

He paused, his voice lowering as he leaned forward, eyes narrowing with a predatory gleam. "And remember, our mission isn't just about her. We have something far more valuable to retrieve from that place. There's a good chance the Labyrinth holds clues about it—'that thing' we've been searching for."

The Ensign, now fully aware of the deeper implications of their mission, nodded firmly. The mention of 'that thing' was enough to send a shiver down his spine. It was the true reason for their presence here, the elusive objective that had driven the Federation to this remote corner of the world. Capturing Isadora Nightkiss was important, yes, but 'that thing' was the key to power and influence on a scale that few could comprehend.

"We can't afford any mistakes this time," the Lieutenant continued, his voice a quiet but steely command. "The Labyrinth is our only lead, and we'll use whatever means necessary to get what we came for. If we have to go through pirates, adventurers, or even the local authorities, so be it."

The Ensign straightened his posture, determination hardening his features. "Understood, sir. We'll be ready."

"Good," the Lieutenant said, leaning back in his chair once more, his expression returning to one of cold indifference. "Now, get the men prepared. The moment that Labyrinth opens, we make our move."

The Ensign saluted crisply and turned to leave.

As the wedding day approached, the capital turned into a powder keg, with tensions mounting by the hour. The Labyrinth's opening would be the spark that ignited a fierce and unpredictable battle, with pirates, adventurers, and Federation forces all vying for what's within.

Chapter 159: The Wedding (part 1)

"What about the fatty you mentioned?" Mathilda asked, her bright green dress shimmering as she twirled a strand of her golden hair. The dress, with its flowing sleeves and intricate embroidery of silver leaves, was a perfect blend of ancient elegance and modern sophistication, making her look both regal and approachable.

Tyler, dressed in a white robe adorned with red accents. His outfit, reminiscent of traditional attire but with a contemporary twist, had sharp, clean lines and a high collar that accentuated his broad shoulders. The red sash tied at his waist added a touch of boldness to his otherwise serene appearance.

"I packed him as a wedding gift and sent him to the prime minister," Tyler replied, his tone casual yet edged with a hint of mischief. "It seems like the prime minister doesn't care much about his son. Just to be safe, I arranged for a delayed delivery."

Lily, who stood beside him, wore a bright blue dress that caught the light in all the right ways. "The wedding is tomorrow," she said, her voice steady and determined. "But the castle is already welcoming guests. We'll go inside under the guise of the White Merchant Group and find Astrid."

Mana, who was quietly observing the conversation, wore a stunning yellow dress. The colour was as bright as the sun, with intricate lotus patterns embroidered in white along the hem and sleeves.

As they regrouped in the bustling capital, the four of them stood out among the crowd, not just because of their finely crafted outfits but also due to their confident, purposeful demeanour. The capital was alive with excitement, with guests from all corners of the realm arriving for the royal wedding. The streets were decorated with vibrant banners, and the scent of freshly bloomed flowers filled the air.

Tyler looked around at his companions, a sense of resolve settling over him. If it had been the day he first met Astrid, he might have hesitated to risk so much for her. Back then, she was just a passenger on his ship, someone he barely knew. But over the past few weeks, things have changed. Astrid had become a friend, not just to him but to everyone on the ship. Tyler was not the kind of person who abandoned his friends in their time of need.

After presenting their invitation, Tyler and his companions entered the castle, the grand gates opening to reveal a magnificent interior that took one's breath away. The walls were adorned with intricate carvings and tapestries depicting scenes of ancient battles and grand celebrations. Crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling, casting a soft, golden light that made the entire hall shimmer. Marble pillars, each carved with painstaking detail, lined the path as they walked deeper into the castle.

Despite the grandeur, Tyler and his group remained composed, their faces reflecting only a calm confidence as they took in their surroundings. Unlike the other guests who marvelled at the splendour, gasping in awe, Tyler's group walked with a purpose, their mission never far from their minds.

Rows of maids and butlers stood at attention, each one dressed impeccably in traditional uniforms that matched the opulence of the castle. They welcomed the guests with polite bows and guided them along the tour of the castle, pointing out areas of interest and historical significance. The tour eventually led to

a designated lunch area, where tables were set with exquisite porcelain dishes and silver cutlery, awaiting the guests.

As they walked, Tyler noticed something and asked. "Where's Mana?" he asked, his eyes scanning the hall.

Lily, still walking beside him, smirked slightly. "She disappeared the moment she heard the word 'lunch.' Probably already sampling the dishes."

Tyler sighed and then looked around again. "And where's Mathilda?"

Lily pointed to the far side of the hall, where Mathilda was engaged in conversation with one of the maids. "She wandered off when she saw those pretty maids."

Tyler followed Lily's gaze and saw Mathilda whispering something to a maid, who was blushing furiously at her words. Mathilda's hand casually rested on the maid's lower back, dangerously close to her butt. The maid's face turned an even deeper shade of red as she shyly tried to keep her composure.

Tyler shook his head, a mix of exasperation and amusement on his face. "What in the world...? Well, at least you're still—"

Before he could finish his sentence, he noticed Lily dashing off into the crowd.

He quickly followed, weaving through the guests until he spotted Lily near the center of attention: a woman dressed head-to-toe in pink, who had just slapped a maid across the face. The maid recoiled in shock, her hand trembling as she touched her reddened cheek.

"Do you know who I am?" the woman in pink said, her voice dripping with arrogance. Her heavily embellished gown, made of the finest silk and adorned with gemstones, reflected her high status. "How dare you touch my dress?"

Lily approached the woman with a casual stride, her bright blue dress flowing behind her like water. "Wow... you're so pink," Lily said, her tone innocent, almost as if she were admiring the woman.

The woman's anger faltered for a moment as she took in Lily's appearance. Lily was a stunning sight in her intricately designed dress. The woman assumed she must be from an influential family, possibly even nobility. She smoothed her dress, trying to regain her composure. "Huh... Thank you," she replied, her voice softening as she preened under the perceived compliment.

But Lily wasn't done. She tilted her head, her expression curious as she added, "You look like a pink butterfly plug."

The woman's eyes widened in shock, her face turning a shade darker, almost matching her dress. The surrounding guests, who had been watching the exchange, stifled their laughter. Even the maid chuckled.

"You—how dare you!" the woman sputtered, her haughty demeanour shattered by Lily's words.

"Huh... Defective personality." Tyler sighed. Lily's defective personality rarely shows up. It's like her both personalities are merging together as Time goes by.

Tyler looked at the back of his hand. Another thing that makes him wonder. "Why did this dragon sleep for months?"

Tyler doesn't understand Zuzia either. She rarely shows up. Most of the time she is sleeping.

While Lily was busy trading barbs with the lady in pink, Tyler quietly slipped away, blending into the crowd unnoticed. As he wandered through the castle, a maid approached him with a respectful bow. "Sir, please follow me," she said in a soft voice, her eyes downcast. Tyler nodded and followed her without a word, curious about where this would lead.

The maid led him through a series of corridors, the sounds of the ongoing festivities fading into the distance. They arrived at a private room, secluded from the main hall. As Tyler stepped inside, he was greeted by a surprising sight.

Mathilda was lounging casually on a plush sofa, a confident smile on her lips. Beside her, the maid she had been teasing earlier was half-naked, her breath coming in ragged gasps as she leaned heavily against Mathilda. The maid's neck bore fresh bite marks, the skin around them reddened and tender.

"Had fun?" Tyler asked, raising an eyebrow at the scene before him.

Mathilda shrugged, her fingers idly tracing circles on the maid's bare shoulder. "Not really. I'm just gathering information." Her tone was light, but there was a hint of something darker beneath it. Without breaking eye contact with Tyler, she reached out and pulled the maid who had brought him here closer. With a slow, deliberate movement, Mathilda captured the girl's lips in a deep, intoxicating kiss. The maid melted into her, her body going limp as if completely under Mathilda's spell.

Tyler watched the exchange, a mix of confusion and intrigue playing across his face. "What's going on with these girls?" he finally asked.

Mathilda broke the kiss and smirked at him, her eyes glinting mischievously. "My lip shades are my own creation," she explained, her voice laced with pride. "They have certain... unspeakable properties. It's all in the Alchemy. Care to try?"

Tyler chuckled, shaking his head. "I'll save that for the ship. But for now..."

Mathilda leaned forward, whispering in the maids' ears. "Hey, my darlings, where is Crown Princess Astrid? Take us to her."

One of the maids, still dazed but responsive, nodded weakly. "We might know where she is," she murmured, her voice soft and breathy.

"Well, that was easier than I expected," Tyler remarked, slightly impressed.

Mathilda grinned, wiping a trace of her lipstick from her lips. "True, but be careful. This formula is still in the testing phase. Sometimes it works a little too well and drives people a bit... wild." Before Tyler could react, she suddenly leaned in and pressed her lips against his in a swift, unexpected kiss.

When she finally pulled away, a thin string of saliva connected their lips for a moment before it broke. Mathilda's eyes gleamed with a playful light as she whispered, "Looks like I might be a little affected too."

The two maids, who had witnessed the kiss, seemed to lose what little restraint they had left. Without warning, they both lunged at Tyler, their hands grasping at him as they took turns kissing him, their lips hungry and eager.

Chapter 160: the Wedding (part 2)

"Mathilda-sama's kiss... you can't have it!" one of the maids pouted, pulling back just long enough to catch her breath.

"It's ours... we're stealing it!" the other maid added, her voice dripping with excitement and jealousy.

Mathilda, watching with amusement, decided to join in on the fun. "Let me add more kisses, then," she teased, leaning down and kissing Tyler herself, the softness of her lips catching him off guard. The moment her kiss landed, it seemed to fuel the frenzy even more.

The maids, seeing Mathilda's bold move, intensified their efforts. The kisses came faster, more insistent. "Oh, what will you do if I kiss his cheeks?" Mathilda asked playfully before planting light pecks on both sides of Tyler's face.

That was all the encouragement the maids needed. They each mirrored Mathilda, pressing their lips to his cheeks from both sides, their movements becoming increasingly eager. Before he could protest, they pushed him onto the sofa, surrounding him and kissing him in turns, alternating between his lips and his cheeks, their soft giggles echoing through the room.

Tyler, half-amused and half-overwhelmed, attempted to sit up, but the two maids held him in place, hugging him from either side. They seemed lost in the moment, their playful rivalry turning into a competition to see who could kiss him more.

"I think we've already stolen Mathilda-sama's kiss," one maid declared breathlessly.

The other maid, not to be outdone, shook her head. "Idiot! If you want Mathilda-sama's kiss, you just have to do this!"

In a sudden, unexpected move, she grabbed Mathilda by the arm. Mathilda, caught off guard, stumbled forward, landing on top of Tyler. The maid didn't stop there; she cupped Mathilda's face, as if about to kiss her directly. But at the last moment, she turned Mathilda's head and pressed her lips to Tyler's once more, making the whole scene even more chaotic.

"What the-" Mathilda gasped, completely thrown by the maid's boldness. But before she could fully comprehend what had happened, the maid pulled her away and mounted Tyler herself, her lips once again finding his. The second maid, determined not to lose, quickly followed suit, joining the next round of their spontaneous kissing session.

Maybe the drug was stronger than Mathilda anticipated, or maybe it was the maids' growing desire, but things escalated quickly. The two maids, now completely caught up in the heat of the moment, began pulling at their own dresses, letting them slip from their shoulders one by one. Tyler, too, found himself losing track of his clothes as the maids giggled, their hands eagerly working at the fabric.

Mathilda, watching from the sidelines at first, soon found herself dragged into the mix by the overly enthusiastic maids. For a brief moment, Tyler locked eyes with her, both of them caught off guard by how things had spiralled. This was definitely the first time the two of them had been so close in this way.

Mathilda, ever the bold one, broke the silence between them. Her lips curved into a teasing smile, her voice barely a whisper as she leaned in. "Stop staring at me and start doing something," she said, a light blush colouring her cheeks as she tugged at the last piece of fabric clinging to her body.

Tyler swallowed, not entirely sure how to respond. The room was charged with a mixture of playful teasing and something more intense. But just before things could go any further, Mathilda's usual mischievous grin returned. She pushed a finger to his chest, playfully shoving him back into the cushions of the sofa.

"Don't get any ideas, though," she whispered, her eyes gleaming. "We can do it later. I want you to do me alone."

Tyler let out a chuckle, shaking his head at her, though he felt the growing tension in the air. The maids, completely enraptured by their playful desires, continued to shower him with affection.

She looked at his overgrown part.

"They say there are 206 bones in the human body, I saw the 207th bone." Mathilda said.

"It's alright. Use these maids to vent, the drug effect stopped a few minutes ago, these two are just...."
As Mathilda said the two maids flinched and blushed.

After thoroughly enjoying her bullying of the haughty lady, Lily scanned the area but couldn't spot Tyler anywhere. She quickly sought out Mana, who was busy making her way through a third round at the buffet.

"Mana, where's Tyler?" Lily asked, knowing Mana, as Tyler's Ghost Spirit, could sense him nearby.

Mana paused, her eyes glowing faintly as she tapped into her connection. "He's... eating meat. No, wait... he's serving meat to two maids, and Mathilda's feasting her eyes."

Lily glanced around the buffet. "Huh? They're in the buffet too?"

"Nope..." Mana replied casually, stuffing another bite of food into her mouth.

A few minutes later, she and Mana arrived at a private room, and Mana silently signalled toward the door. Lily carefully opened it, peeking inside.

Inside, two naked maids were snuggled up on the sofa, looking quite satisfied. Tyler, however, was in the middle of wearing his clothes, with a nonchalant expression on his face.

"You beast. You had to go two more rounds each just to get satisfied." Mathilda murmured.

Lily crossed her arms, raising an eyebrow. "Are you here to save Astrid or to make out with maids?"

Tyler glanced at her, completely unfazed by her irritated tone. "Don't look at me like that. We got information."

Mathilda, lounging nearby, let out an exaggerated sigh. "Yes, our dear captain had to *sacrifice* his body for the cause," she said in a mock-dramatic tone, though a mischievous smirk was clearly visible.

Lily rolled her eyes, unimpressed. "I hope that information was worth all this... *sacrificing*."

Tyler shrugged, a smirk playing on his lips. "Let's just say, we know where Astrid is now."

Tyler shut the door to the private room and tossed the key into the room by the door gap below. "They'll be able to open it when they wake up," he muttered. With that, he and the others set off toward the area the maid had mentioned. Thanks to their treasure masks, infiltrating deeper into the castle was a breeze. They were able to conceal their Presence.

Eventually, they came to a stop.

"From what I've heard, there are a lot of guards up ahead. We should take another route-through the Emperor's harem," Tyler suggested.

They snuck into the harem, a section of the palace reserved for the Emperor's concubines. The space was lush, with an expansive garden and a serene, artificial lake. There, young ladies and mature women, whose beauty had remained untouched by time, played and bathed in the shimmering waters.

A sweet, intoxicating fragrance filled the air, a blend of jasmine, roses, and exotic spices. It was a scent that seemed to wrap around them, lingering like a seductive promise, drawing all who entered into its hypnotic allure.

"I envy the Emperor," Mathilda whispered with a smirk, her gaze lingering on the concubines.

Tyler sighed, though he couldn't help but steal a glance himself. "Stop peeking," he said half-heartedly.

Mana leaned in and said. "That concubine's butt is... thick."

Tyler : "Gyatt...."

Mathilda : "Smash... Next "

Tyler blinked, his cheeks warming as Mathilda leaned in to whisper something more suggestive in his ear. His eyes widened. "Is that... possible?"

Before he could consider it further, a sudden chill crept up his spine. Lily's voice, quiet but commanding, reached them from behind. "Stfu and follow me. Or I'll smack both of you."

"Yes, ma'am!" Tyler and Mathilda chimed in unison.

"And no adding aphrodisiacs to the lake," Lily added with a sharp glare.

Tyler and Mathilda nodded. They were from a demon sect, of course their thoughts are a little chaotic. Of course Tyler would never force himself on a woman. He did it with those maids only after Mathilda said that they were sober.

The trio left the harem and moved toward a secluded area, one of the castle's most guarded chambers. According to the maids, this might be where Astrid was being held. While one side of the room was heavily guarded, they had found an unguarded passage leading to the chamber.

Sneaking past the final barrier, they reached a locked door.

Inside, Astrid sat in silence, her gaze fixated on the scene displayed by the Room of Thoughts, a mystical room that reflected the thoughts of those inside it. She is still locked in a gold and silver cage. Her childhood version is now running with Lutz around the cage. She looked at them with a happy expression.

She heard the sound of the door creaking open. She thought it was someone delivering food and ignored it

Suddenly, the scene playing was replaced by something else entirely-two maids were kissing Tyler on a sofa, their hands exploring him with enthusiasm. Their dress fell on by one as Tyler's thing stood straight.

Astrid blinked in confusion and then blushed, "What in the world...?"

A voice broke her train of thought. "Mathilda, you're letting your thoughts leak out again," she heard Tyler say.