

R Cultivator 176

Chapter 176: Temptress vs Silver Eye

While Tyler was confronting Evergreen in Astrid's body, Lily, along with Isadora Nightkiss, watched from a distance as the Silver Eye Pirates set up a mysterious formation.

The Vice-Captain, a towering figure in his giant form, barked orders, directing the pirates to place small, engraved devices into specific positions. The devices were covered in complex arrays, glowing faintly as they were arranged. Meanwhile, Captain Silver Eye sat cross-legged, waiting patiently for everything to be ready.

After a full day of work, the pirates finally completed the formation. Little did they know, four watchful eyes had been observing their every move from afar.

"Captain, it's done," the giant Vice-Captain reported, his deep voice rumbling across the clearing.

Captain Silver Eye stood, walking toward the center of the array with deliberate steps. As he approached, he extended his hand, infusing the formation with his powerful aura. The array shone brightly, sending a ray of light shooting upward into the sky.

His silver eyes gleamed with excitement, and in the center of the formation, a silver flame ignited. It was a strange fire—one that emitted no heat yet had the power to melt the very ground beneath it. The indestructible surface, which had withstood the previous battle between Tyler and Captain Silver Eye, now melted away like wax under a candle flame.

"So there is something hidden beneath," Lily whispered from her vantage point atop the maze wall.

"Since we're already here, why don't we snatch it for ourselves?" Isadora suggested with a sly grin, her black eyes flashing with mischief.

"I don't mind," Lily replied with a shrug, "but let's wait and see what they dig up first."

As the ground melted away, a small, strange cube was revealed. Even the fire couldn't harm it. The cube bore intricate patterns and glowing green inscriptions that pulsed with an otherworldly energy.

"That looks familiar," Isadora said, her brow furrowing as she tried to recall where she had seen it before.

Captain Silver Eye's grin widened as he approached the cube, reaching out to claim it. But just as his fingers were about to touch it, a whip shot out from nowhere, coiling around the cube and yanking it away.

With a swift motion, Lily pulled the cube into her hand, landing gracefully on the ground in front of the startled pirates.

"Well, well... look at this," Lily said with a smirk, twirling the cube in her hand.

"Phantom Pirates... Temptress," Captain Silver Eye growled, recognizing her instantly.

"Vice-Captain Temptress, actually," Lily corrected, her voice dripping with mock formality.

"Is that even important right now?" Isadora chimed in, rolling her eyes.

The tension in the air thickened as the Silver Eye Pirates began to surround them, weapons drawn and ready for battle.

"You can't escape like your captain did, Ms. Vice-Captain," Captain Silver Eye sneered, taking slow, deliberate steps toward her.

Lily calmly tried to store the cube in her storage pouch, but to her frustration, it didn't work. The inscriptions on the cube prevented any magical containment. Sighing, she tied the cube securely to her waist and pulled out her whip, the leather crackling with latent energy.

"Why would I need to escape?" she retorted, her eyes glinting with excitement for the impending fight.

As the pirates closed in, Isadora suddenly smiled. "My darlings... be good boys and fight for me, will you?"

Her voice carried a seductive charm, and to Lily's amusement, half of the pirates froze in their tracks. Their eyes glazed over, and they turned on their own comrades, weapons raised.

Chaos erupted as Isadora's enchantment took hold, throwing the pirates into disarray. The once-united crew now fought amongst themselves, slashing at each other with reckless abandon.

Captain Silver Eye's expression darkened as he watched his men turn on each other. "Damn you, succubus!" he roared, his silver aura flaring with rage.

Captain Silver Eye dashed toward Lily with blinding speed, his hand morphing into shimmering silver. But Lily was faster. With a flick of her wrist, her whip cracked through the air, lashing out at his hand. The whip coiled tightly around his arm, sparking violently against the metallic surface.

Suddenly, a massive leg loomed overhead, threatening to stomp down on Lily. Before it could land, several pirates leaped onto the giant foot, dragging it away just in time.

"It's you... the annoying Manhunter," Vice-Captain Burgess growled, glaring at Isadora, who stood with a smirk on her lips.

"Let's finish what we started last time," Isadora said confidently, drawing a small, gleaming knife from her belt.

Burgess, once a towering figure, suddenly shrank down into a dwarf-like form, though his fists remained unnaturally large. With a grunt, he swung his massive arm at Isadora, but she easily dodged. The giant fist crashed into the fluffy ground, bouncing off its surface like a spring. The impact caused Burgess himself to bounce uncontrollably, much to Isadora's amusement.

"Haha... you look cute like that," Isadora teased with a laugh.

"Cute? Tsk..." Burgess clicked his tongue, though his face flushed with embarrassment.

Isadora noticed his reaction, her sharp eyes gleaming. So he's mentally exhausted from working on that array all day. I might be able to control him. She thought, already plotting her next move.

Meanwhile, Captain Silver Eye's legs transformed into silver, giving him an even greater burst of speed as he raced to catch Lily. Thinking quickly, she snapped her whip at the ground, using the recoil to launch herself into the air just as Silver Eye stumbled beneath her.

Seizing the opportunity, she lashed out again, her whip aiming for the back of his neck. But at the last moment, his skin turned to silver, causing the whip to spark harmlessly against the hardened metal.

"Tsk..." Lily muttered under her breath in frustration.

Silver Eye's eyes glowed ominously, and Lily barely dodged as a wave of silver fire scorched the spot where she had just been standing. The fire hissed and crackled, but the ground, unlike before, remained intact.

For a moment, they stood apart, gauging each other's strength. Both of them knew they were evenly matched.

"Give me the Orion Cube," Captain Silver Eye demanded, his voice cold and unyielding.

"The Orion Cube!" Isadora's eyes widened as the name registered. She couldn't help but glance back at the mysterious cube tied to Lily's waist.

"Hey, darling," Isadora called sweetly, turning her attention back to Burgess. "You don't really want to fight a maiden, do you?"

For a brief moment, Burgess faltered, his movements slowing as a dazed expression crossed his face. He shook his head, then nodded, his mind clouded under Isadora's subtle influence.

But Captain Silver Eye wasn't about to waste any more time. His body erupted in silver fire, his entire form gleaming like polished metal.

"Looks like I'll have to end this quickly," he muttered. Without warning, he shot forward, transforming into a blinding beam of light.

Before Lily could react, the impact struck her squarely in the chest, sending her flying across the maze. She coughed up blood, her body bouncing painfully against the soft, springy ground.

"Burgess, stop playing around!" Silver Eye snapped, his voice cutting through the haze clouding Burgess's mind. Instantly, the giant's thoughts cleared, and he straightened, his focus restored.

Isadora clicked her tongue in annoyance. But before she could act, Captain Silver Eye turned his attention to her, vanishing in a flash of light and reappearing directly in front of her.

Isadora, ever quick on her feet, activated an escape charm. In the blink of an eye, she vanished from the spot, leaving only a shimmer of fading energy behind.

Captain Silver Eye glanced around, his sharp gaze scanning for any trace of her. Not far off, he saw Lily still tumbling across the maze, using the momentum to propel herself away.

"Tsk... like captain, like vice-captain," he muttered under his breath. "But you won't escape." With that, he disappeared, giving chase.

"How long should we keep running?" Isadora asked.

"Don't worry. His transformation is temporary. Once it's over, we can counter him," Lily replied. Then, glancing at Isadora, she added, "From your reaction earlier, it seems like you know what this is?" She held up the cube.

Isadora took the cube and examined it closely.

"The terrain is changing," Lily warned. The fluffy cloud passage transformed into stone stairs, and an abyss-like hole appeared in the center.

"You can keep the orb you got from the temple. I'll take the Orion Cube," Isadora suddenly said.

Lily was about to retort, but before she could react, Isadora shoved her toward the stone area. In the next moment, she activated a charm and vanished, taking the cube with her.

"This b!tch..." Lily Gomes cursed.

Lily frantically searched for a way out, but the stone stairs looped endlessly, trapping her in a maddening cycle. No matter how fast or far she ran, she came back to exact place.

Suddenly, a silver flash cut through the darkness, and Captain Silver Eye appeared before her.

Lily growled in frustration.

"Give me the cube..." Silver Eye's words were cut short as he lunged, his fist glowing with silver energy.

Before she could react, his punch connected with her chest, sending her flying off the stairs and into the abyss below.

As she plummeted into the dark void, her thoughts raced. " That Virgin Manhunter, I will definitely pay you back. "

A silver light beam followed her.

Chapter 177: Confronting Evergreen

Evergreen, inhabiting Astrid's body, smirked at Tyler, her eyes glinting with a wicked mix of seduction and power. The way she spun around, flaunting Astrid's form, showed that she reveled in the control she had.

"Isn't her body wonderful?" she asked, her voice smooth as silk. "Young, talented, an Angel bloodline, and, let's not forget, the crown princess-soon to be queen." She paused, twirling gracefully, making Astrid's beauty and elegance all the more striking.

Tyler's gaze remained cold, unflinching. "So, you manipulated your own son, the prime minister, the king, and even this entire country... just for Astrid's body?"

Evergreen laughed, a haunting melody. "Why wouldn't I? With Astrid's body, I can live eternally, rule unchallenged, and bathe in the luxury of being both adored and feared."

She stepped closer, her movements sultry, and pressed herself against Tyler. "You're quite the man, Tyler White. A merchant, adventurer, pirate, warrior, and a mage. You are everything that survived the treacherous seas. How about this? Let's join forces. You'll be my consort, and together, we can lead this country to prosperity. You could monopolize every business in the kingdom, command its wealth, and stand beside me."

Her intoxicating scent wafted through the air, a mix of holy purity and sinful temptation. For a brief moment, even Tyler was caught off guard. 'Holy but sinful'... This is kind of new taste for Tyler. But he quickly shook his head.

But Lutz's voice broke through the haze. "S-Stop... You've already taken everything from her! Her country, her father... even me, her childhood friend. Now you steal her body? At least spare her dignity!" Lutz knelt, tears glistening in his eyes, his voice trembling with desperation.

Evergreen rolled her eyes, bored. "Tsk. You're just like your father, Lutz. Always hopelessly in love with the popular girl." She dismissed him with a flick of her wrist and returned her attention to Tyler, her fingers tracing his chest.

"So, what will it be, Tyler? Will you stand by my side, or must I crush you like all the others who opposed me?" Her voice held both threat and promise, her touch lingering on his chest.

Tyler's eyes narrowed, and his response came with icy resolve. "Obviously, no."

Evergreen sighed, her demeanor changing in an instant. The playful seductress was gone, replaced by the cruel, calculating master of magic. "Too bad. I would have enjoyed this," she said, her tone laced with disappointment. "Now, I'll just have to make you regret that decision."

"Be careful!" Lutz shouted, knowing that if Tyler fell, Astrid would be lost forever. His heart pounded in his chest, hoping against hope that Tyler would find a way to survive.

Evergreen's power flared, her prana igniting around her like an inferno. As a Master Level Mage, her control over magic was unparalleled. Without hesitation, she launched five rapid attacks at Tyler's chest, her hand glowing with destructive energy.

But instead of hearing the agonizing cries of a man brought to his knees, there was... something else.

"Aaahh..." Tyler's moan echoed through the chamber, filled not with pain, but pleasure. He stood firm, his face twisted in an expression of rejuvenation.

Evergreen's face twisted in confusion. "What the...?" She narrowed her eyes and increased her output, sending ten more waves of energy at him. Each one hit with the force to topple armies.

"No!" Lutz cried out.

But Tyler's reaction was, once again, completely unexpected. His body shuddered, and his eyes nearly rolled back as a groan of bliss escaped his lips. "Aaaaannnn..."

"..."

"..."

The room fell silent.

Lutz stared, speechless.

Evergreen, too, was at a loss, her fury dissipating into utter bewilderment.

Finally, Tyler spoke, a smirk tugging at his lips. "Did you forget that Astrid's specialty is healing magic?"

He straightened, looking completely refreshed, as though Evergreen's attacks had given him a full-body massage.

"Now what are you gonna -?" Before Tyler could finish his sentence, a sharp sword slash interrupted him, forcing him to step back.

"My sword skills have gotten a bit rusty," Evergreen mused, her movements swift and precise. "It's been a while since I've used them."

"Huh... Little help here, Lutz?" Tyler called out, eyes darting toward the kneeling mage.

"He can't," Evergreen said, her tone dripping with confidence. "If he tries to interfere, his little lover's body will suffer the consequences." She moved with fluid grace, her eyes never leaving Tyler.

Tyler clicked his tongue in frustration, feeling the familiar power surge through his veins. Scales began to appear on his arms and legs.

Mode Dragon.

Suddenly, a burst of ice shot up from the ground, freezing Evergreen's leg in place. Taking the opportunity, Tyler stomped his left foot down, followed by his right, using the momentum to launch himself forward for a powerful punch.

"Will you really punch me, Mr. Tyler?" Evergreen's voice took on a pitiful tone, her face adopting an expression of Astrid.

Bam!

The answer came in the form of Tyler's fist, which connected with a satisfying impact, sending Evergreen flying. She skidded across the ground before coming to a stop. Slowly, she stood up, wiping blood from her lip and spitting out a tooth. A moment later, a white light enveloped her body, healing the damage, and even her lost tooth regrew.

"That hurts," she remarked with a sly smile, brushing herself off. "You're not the gentleman Astrid thinks you are."

Tyler cracked his knuckles, unfazed. "I believe in gender equality," he replied with a smirk.

Evergreen's eyes gleamed with amusement, but beneath that amusement was a flicker of frustration. "Very well then, let's see how far your equality takes you," she said, raising her sword for another round.

Evergreen and Tyler, locked in combat, suddenly froze mid-action, their attention pulled to the side. Tyler's expression shifted as his phantom mask materialized over his face. Both of them stared at the sudden commotion.

"Catch meeeee!" a voice echoed as a figure flew through the air.

Without hesitation, Tyler moved. He caught the flying maiden and spun in midair, using the motion to slow her down and bring them both safely to a stop.

"Temptress?" Tyler said, recognizing Lily in his arms.

"Captain..." Lily panted, trying to catch her breath. "That Silver Eye guy is burning through his fuel fast. Stall him a bit longer."

"Captain Silver Eye?" Tyler glanced past her. His eyes widened as he spotted a beam of light hurtling toward them at terrifying speed.

Just before it could reach them, the water on the ground suddenly surged upward, forming a massive spherical barrier. Captain Silver Eye, focused on his target, ignored it initially, but in an unexpected turn,

the water sphere moved, trapping him inside. He struggled, but no matter how hard he tried, his movements were completely immobilized.

Tyler turned around and spotted Lutz, his hands raised, controlling the water with intense focus.

"Huh? Isn't he the enemy?" Lily asked, her brow furrowing in confusion as she stared at Lutz.

Tyler gave her a knowing smile. "Well..." He leaned in close, whispering the quick details of everything that had transpired between them.

Lily's eyes widened in surprise as she processed the information. She shifted her gaze toward Astrid's body, now inhabited by Evergreen, realizing the gravity of the situation.

"What's your plan?" Lily asked, her gaze sharp.

"Knock her out until the real Astrid takes back her body?" Tyler shrugged, his voice casual.

"So... you don't really have a plan." Lily sighed, falling deep into thought before adding, "Ask Mana. She might have a solution."

"I sent her to Silvia right before the Labyrinth emerged," Tyler replied.

Lily groaned, "So, plan B: knock her out and bring her to Mana."

"Can you two *please* stop discussing your plan in front of me?" Evergreen, still in Astrid's body, stomped her foot in frustration. Despite the seriousness of the situation, she looked oddly cute in Astrid's form, her angelic features betraying the sinister mind controlling them.

Tyler chuckled, but before he could respond, Evergreen snapped, "This will not work. Lutz, go on and attack Tyler. And release that pirate, since he's after the Temptress." Her voice carried a cold authority.

Lutz glanced at Evergreen, then back at Tyler. His expression wavered.

Evergreen took a knife and slashed her own arm. Blood dripped to the ground.

"No... stop!" Lutz cried, panicking. His expression grew wild as he saw the wound. He turned to Tyler, "Sorry."

With a pained sigh, Lutz released Captain Silver Eye from the water prison. As the beam of silver light emerged, water began swirling around Lutz, preparing for an attack.

"That's cheating," Tyler muttered under his breath, watching the situation escalate.

Evergreen, meanwhile, used Astrid's natural healing ability to mend the wound, the cut sealing quickly. She grasped her sword, the gleam of magic pulsing through the blade.

"Phantom Blackwood. Temptress. Give me back the Orion Cube," Captain Silver Eye growled, his voice laced with burning fury. His silver form crackled with intensity, his eyes glowing with an unrelenting fire.

Lily tightened her grip on her whip and took a defensive stance. "Looks like we're not going to talk our way out of this one."

Tyler sighed. "It never goes smoothly, does it?"

Chapter 178: Battle at the Depth of Labyrinth

Water began swirling ominously around Tyler and Lily, forming shimmering tendrils that snaked toward them with increasing speed. Lily, ever quick on her feet, snapped her whip at the ground with a fierce crack. The force sent her soaring into the air, allowing her to nimbly dodge the incoming attack.

As she sailed through the air, she glanced down and saw Lutz chanting incantations with his staff pointed directly at Tyler. The water around him morphed and swirled, forming a perfect sphere, trapping him inside.

Water Prison.

Tyler, now fully submerged in the sphere of water, struggled against the pressure and lack of air. His limbs flailed as he tried to swim, but the magic was too strong, holding him fast.

Meanwhile, Lily remained unfazed. Her eyes locked on her true target—Captain Silver Eye. With Tyler held captive, this was her chance. She cracked her whip once again, this time laced with lightning, and lunged forward. The whip struck Silver Eye's body with a sharp, electrifying crack, causing his form to ripple with energy.

Silver Eye's previously abnormal, buffed state seemed to weaken, the lightning spell draining some of his unnatural power. His muscles, once swollen with magic, visibly deflated, and he staggered back a step, disoriented. Noticing the change, Lily smirked and launched a barrage of relentless attacks. The crackling whip was a blur in her left hand, while in her right, she drew a short sword. The blade gleamed as she began a flurry of dual-handed strikes, combining the finesse of her swordsmanship with the raw power of her whip.

"You're not so tough now, are you?" Lily taunted, her voice dripping with confidence.

Silver Eye grunted as he parried her strikes, but his defense was faltering. The relentless combination of lightning-infused whip strikes and swift sword slashes was too much for him to keep up with. His footing slipped, and he was forced to retreat.

On the other side of the battlefield, Lutz stepped closer to the water sphere, his eyes fixed on Tyler inside. He watched carefully, waiting for any sign of Tyler losing consciousness. His grip on the staff tightened as he mentally prepared to reinforce the spell if necessary.

But just as Lutz assumed victory, something shifted within the water prison. Tyler's struggles ceased, and for a moment, the surface of the sphere became eerily calm. Then, in a flash of movement, Tyler slipped through the water like a serpent, breaking free from the sphere's confines in one swift motion. His body, now shimmering with scales, glowed faintly in the dim light.

Lutz's eyes widened in disbelief. "What...?"

Before he could react, Tyler was already in front of him. With a powerful punch aimed directly at Lutz's chest, Tyler's scaled fist hurtled through the air.

"How can a Kun Peng gets hurt of water?" Tyler mumbled.

But just as the punch was about to connect, a translucent, shimmering shield of water formed in front of Lutz, absorbing the full force of the blow.

"What in the world...?" Tyler muttered, his eyes narrowing at the water barrier. The impact sent ripples through the shield, but it held firm.

Lily landed gracefully beside him after executing a flawless backflip, a playful smirk on her face despite the intensity of the battle. "Shield Spell. These mages are so annoying," she said with a hint of frustration as she cracked her neck and readied her weapons for another assault.

Tyler frowned, his eyes still locked on Lutz. "Whatever Onion Cube is that, can't you give it to him? Might make things easier."

Lily sighed dramatically, shaking her head. "It's Orion Cube, not 'Onion Cube.' And no, I can't. Isadora stole it from me."

Tyler's lips curled into a teasing grin, his sharp features softening for a moment despite the tension in the air. "Wow, our great detective got fooled. How could you let that happen?"

Lily shot him a glare, though there was a hint of amusement behind it. "Don't push your luck, or I'll let Silver Eye finish you off."

Tyler laughed, but the moment of levity didn't last long. Silver Eye, though weakened, was regaining his composure, and Lutz, too, was readying another spell. The tension thickened as both sides prepared for the next clash.

"I'll deal with Lutz," Tyler said, his voice taking on a more serious tone as he adjusted his stance. "You focus on Silver Eye. "

Lily gave a quick nod. "Got it. I'll keep him occupied. Don't drown on me, Captain."

With that, they sprang into action again.

Just as Tyler prepared to continue his assault, Lutz's voice echoed through the air as he chanted again. The water surrounding them began to swirl ominously, reforming into the same spell Tyler had already escaped from—Water Prison. Confusion crossed Tyler's face. He was sure the same spell wouldn't work on him twice. But something was different this time.

As Tyler tried to move, attempting the same maneuver he used before to slip out of the sphere, he noticed something unsettling. The water prison was reacting to his movements, adapting and moving with him. Every twitch, every shift, the sphere anticipated and closed in tighter, leaving him truly trapped this time.

"Damn," Tyler muttered to himself, frustration bubbling inside him. This wasn't going to be as easy as the first escape.

Meanwhile, across the battlefield, Lily's whip cracked through the air once more, latching around Captain Silver Eye's neck. With a fierce yank, she pulled him toward her, closing the distance between them in an instant. Her sword gleamed in her other hand as she prepared to strike, aiming directly for his chest.

But in that split second, Silver Eye's eyes flashed an eerie, unnatural light.

"Oh no..." Lily's instincts screamed danger. Panic shot through her, and she shifted her grip just in time, redirecting the sword away from its intended target. As her blade connected with Silver Eye, it was engulfed in silver flames—flames that gave off no heat but began to eat away at her sword as if it were made of paper. The blade melted in her hand, crumbling away into nothing.

Captain Silver Eye, though wounded, wiped the blood from his mouth as if it were nothing more than a minor inconvenience. His movements were slow, deliberate, and despite the chaos, his breathing had calmed.

Lily took a step back, narrowing her eyes at him. Something had changed.

"You're losing strength, Captain," she taunted, keeping her voice steady despite the fact her sword had just been destroyed. "Listen to me, the Onion Cube—"

"It's Orion Cube!" Tyler's muffled voice echoed faintly from inside the water prison.

Lily shot a glance in Tyler's direction, only half-rolling her eyes before turning back to Silver Eye. "Whatever. That cube you're after? It's in the hands of the Manhunter now. She betrayed me. You're wasting your time."

Silver Eye's brows furrowed, but his silence indicated he was listening.

"And besides," Lily continued with a smirk, "if you keep fighting, you're only putting yourself at a disadvantage. I can see how much you've strained yourself chasing after me. How long can you keep this up?"

Silver Eye wiped more blood from his lips but said nothing.

Lily took the opportunity to press further. "My captain? He's just toying with that mage. Once he's done with your boy over there, you won't have a chance."

Satisfied with her speech, she turned confidently toward Tyler, expecting to see him triumphant.

Instead, she was greeted with the sight of her captain trapped inside a large sphere of water, running helplessly in mid-air like a hamster in a wheel. He was trying to break free, but every movement caused the water to shift and imprison him further.

Lily's confident expression faltered, her mouth falling open in disbelief. "You've got to be kidding me..."

Silver Eye let out a low chuckle behind her, though it was laced with weariness.

"You can't escape..." Lutz's voice was soft but resolute, as he tightened his grip on his staff, focusing all his energy on maintaining the Water Prison. His face was pale, beads of sweat forming on his brow, but he kept his stance firm.

"Yo! Captain! Enough playing around!" Lily's voice suddenly cut through the air, loud and commanding.

The water sphere surrounding Tyler came to an abrupt stop.

Tyler, who had been struggling inside like a caged animal, immediately paused, his sharp eyes locking on Lily.

In that moment, something changed. The water, which had previously been fluid and shifting, began to solidify. A cold mist formed around the sphere as the water froze, turning into ice in a matter of seconds. Lutz's eyes widened in panic as he lost control of the spell. His connection to the water prison had been severed, and now, the icy structure was beyond his control.

Cracks formed in the ice, and with a sudden explosive force, the entire sphere shattered, sending shards of ice flying in every direction like deadly glass.

Tyler landed on the ground, brushing ice from his shoulders with a calm, almost bored expression.

Chapter 179: Escaped?

"How about we swap opponents?" Tyler suggested, eyes glinting with mischief.

Lily glanced at Captain Silver Eye and then over at Lutz, who was wielding his staff with concentration. She scrunched her face in doubt.

"I have a feeling that's not a good idea," she muttered. But despite her words, she moved, swapping positions with Tyler, ready to face Lutz.

Tyler stepped forward, now facing Captain Silver Eye, who eyed him with cold calculation.

Silver Eye's frown deepened. "Last time you ran like a coward."

"-Bounced away like a rabbit," Tyler corrected mockingly, a smirk tugging at his lips.

Silver Eye remained still, his sharp eyes narrowing. He had witnessed Lily's power firsthand. If she was only the Vice-Captain of the Blackwood Pirates, then Tyler, the Captain, must be even more dangerous. Caution filled his gaze as he readied himself.

If he knows Tyler's real strength he would have already beaten him to death. But the fact that Stronger one won't be subordinate to weaker one didn't cross his mind.

Meanwhile, Lily was almost caught by Lutz's Water Prison spell. She swung her whip through the forming sphere of water, breaking the spell before it could fully trap her, though beads of sweat dotted her forehead.

"Damn... he's strong. He's a Master-Level Mage," Lily panted as she moved back to stand beside Tyler. The two of them stood back-to-back, surrounded by their respective opponents.

"Master Level? He doesn't seem that strong to me," Tyler said with a puzzled look. Despite being at just the Elite level himself, Lutz's attacks hadn't felt as overwhelming as he'd expected.

"Probably because he's a water mage. His water attribute puts him at a disadvantage against you. There's a saying: battle is like a game of rock-paper-scissors. If you find the right counter, you can win. You've got the Kun Peng inheritance, which makes you resistant to water attacks. And your Ice Attribute is strong against water," Lily explained quickly.

Tyler nodded, processing her words. "Should we swap again?"

Lily held up a hand. "Wait, let me try something first."

With that, she darted towards Lutz, leaving Tyler to face Silver Eye alone.

Tyler shifted his focus back to his opponent. His eyes sharpened as he prepared his next move.

Brain Freeze.

A mental attack, it sent sharp, icy needles directly into Silver Eye's mind, aiming to disrupt his thoughts and slow him down. Silver Eye froze in place for a moment, a shudder running through him, but to Tyler's dismay, he quickly shook it off.

"It's not very effective, huh," Tyler muttered under his breath, realizing that stalling wouldn't work for long. He needed to finish this quickly.

He cycled through his spells in his mind, and suddenly, black and white squares began to materialize on the ground beneath them.

Chess Spell.

It was a unique technique Tyler had acquired through a series of strange coincidences—a spell that could trap an enemy within a mental battlefield, forcing them to play by his rules.

"This... is this a domain?" Captain Silver Eye's eyes widened. "No, something like a domain," he muttered in shock. From what he knew, only Grandmaster-level Immortal Practitioners could use domains, or at best, a pseudo-domain. To see something like this from someone at Tyler's level was extraordinary. It meant Tyler was a rare genius who could potentially reach the Grandmaster level one day.

Silver Eye's mind raced as he weighed his options. He didn't want this fight to drag on any longer. "I don't care about anything else. I just want the Orion Cube," he said, voice firm but tinged with a desire to avoid unnecessary bloodshed.

Tyler reached into his pocket and pulled out a small communication charm, tossing it towards Silver Eye, who caught it on instinct.

"With that, you can communicate with anyone inside the Ruins. Use it to contact your subordinates and tell them to capture the Manhunter," Tyler said calmly.

Silver Eye gritted his teeth but nodded, deciding it was best to retreat for now. "Hmph... I'll let you live today. We'll meet again someday. And when we do, we can settle this properly." With that, he glanced over at Lily and Lutz, then turned away, disappearing into the distance.

Lily, who had been dodging Lutz's attacks on her flying sword, landed next to Tyler.

"Hey, Captain, you managed to get rid of Silver Eye?" she asked while deflecting one of Lutz's water-based spells with a crack of her whip.

"Yeah. We came to an understanding—for now."

Lily smirked but quickly turned her attention back to Lutz. She swung her whip again, but a water shield blocked her strike. Her frustration mounted.

"Tsk..." she clicked her tongue, trying to think of a better way to break through.

Suddenly, an idea flashed in her mind. "Hey, Lutz!" she called out mockingly. "Did you notice that your 'mommy dearest' who's currently using your lover's body has disappeared?"

Lutz hesitated, his eyes widening as he glanced around. She was right.

Evergreen—who had possessed Astrid's body—was nowhere to be found. She had vanished without a trace.

"Chance..." Lutz barely registered the word before Lily's whip struck. The next thing he knew, everything went dark.

Lutz hit the ground, knocked unconscious by Lily's swift attack. As he collapsed, ice began to form over his body, freezing him in place. Tyler walked over to him, his eyes scanning the area for any signs of Evergreen.

Lily landed beside him, letting out a breath. "Where'd she go?"

Tyler's serious expression faded as he looked around in disbelief. "The heck... she's really gone."

Evergreen had escaped.

Tyler's frustration was palpable. He knelt beside Lutz's frozen form, muttering curses under his breath. "We had her, and now she's just... gone. Vanished like smoke."

Lily crossed her arms, equally irritated. "Well, she's a tricky one. You should've expected this from her."

"Yeah, but I thought we had more time," Tyler grumbled, still scanning the surroundings as if Evergreen would reappear any moment.

Lily glanced at Lutz, then back at Tyler. "What now?"

Tyler stood up and dusted off his hands. "First, we need to wake up Lutz. He might know where she went."

Lily raised an eyebrow. "And if he doesn't?"

Tyler sighed. "Then we're back to square one. But one thing's for sure—we can't let Evergreen keep control of Astrid's body. We have to figure out how to separate them."

Lily nodded in agreement. "Right. But it's not gonna be easy. Evergreen used some ancient method we don't know the details. We'll need some serious help to break her hold."

"I was thinking the same thing. I sent Mana to stay with Silvia before this whole mess started. She might know how to fix this."

"Mana, huh?" Lily smirked. ".Good idea. If anyone can come up with a solution, it's her. But too bad she is not here."

Just then, Lutz stirred, groaning as the ice began to crack around him. His eyes fluttered open, and he looked up at Tyler and Lily, still dazed from the blow.

"W-what happened...?" he muttered weakly, trying to sit up.

Tyler crouched down to face him. "Evergreen escaped. Do you have any idea where she might be?"

Lutz blinked in confusion, his gaze darting around in panic. "I... I don't know... Tyler please save her."

Lily let out a sigh. "Well, that's not helpful."

"All right, Lutz, I don't really want a time bomb with us. Your mother can easily manipulate you, so you're not coming with us," Tyler said, removing the restraints from the young mage.

Lutz looked down, his face etched with guilt. "I understand," he sighed, knowing he couldn't argue against the truth of Tyler's words.

Tyler handed him a small communication charm, its surface glowing faintly in the dim light. "Use this if you find Astrid. We'll come back for her."

Lutz nodded and pocketed the charm, though the weight of the situation seemed to press heavily on his shoulders. He looked up at Tyler. "Thank you... for trusting me this much."

Tyler offered a tight smile, but before he could respond, the ground beneath them began to rumble. The low tremor quickly escalated, causing the water to ripple.

Tyler's eyes widened in alarm. "Uh... that can't be good," he muttered under his breath.

Lily, who had been eyeing Lutz cautiously, groaned in frustration. "What now?"

The rumbling intensified, and in the distance, an ominous light began to shine, casting eerie shadows across the room of Memories. The light pulsed rhythmically, almost like a heartbeat, filling the space with an unsettling energy.

"Whatever it is, we better deal with it fast," Tyler said, the tension in his voice sharpening his resolve.

Lily cracked her whip, her gaze focused on the glowing light ahead. "Agreed. Let's get moving before this place comes crashing down on us."

The two of them readied themselves, but the trembling continued to grow stronger, now accompanied by a faint, unsettling hum that reverberated through the air.

Ahh... Ann.. aaaaan

They heard someone moaning?

And that voice is familiar to them.

Tyler and Lily looked at each other and thought at the same time , 'Mathilda?'

Chapter 180: Why is she Moaning?

"Did you hear that sound?" Tyler asked, his voice laced with concern.

"Yup... definitely Mathilda," Lily replied, her eyes narrowing as she tried to make sense of the noise.

Tyler frowned, puzzled. "The real question is, why is she moaning?"

Without wasting any more time, Tyler quickly summoned a small flying boat, and both he and Lily hopped aboard. The boat rose swiftly into the air, cutting through the winds as they headed toward the source of the mysterious sounds.

Lily glanced back at Tyler, a mischievous smile tugging at her lips. "You don't think she's in trouble, do you?"

Tyler gave her a sidelong glance, his expression a mix of amusement and wariness. "Knowing Mathilda, anything's possible."

As they glided over the landscape, Lutz appeared on his flying broom, hovering nearby for a moment. "I'm heading off to search for my mom—Evergreen, I mean," Lutz called out. "She's still possessing Astrid's body, and I need to find her."

"Be careful," Tyler shouted back, waving at Lutz as he sped off in the opposite direction. "Don't get yourself caught up in another mess!"

Lutz gave a quick nod and flew into the distance, leaving Tyler and Lily to continue their search for Mathilda.

"How can you even operate a flying boat here?" Lily asked, squinting at Tyler as the boat glided smoothly through the air. "This labyrinth consumes a lot of energy for some reason."

Tyler smirked, as if he'd anticipated the question. "Easy. Just dump all these Aura Stones into the recharge chamber." He handed her several storage bags, each filled to the brim with glowing stones.

Lily accepted the bags but shook her head with a knowing smile. She had made an oath to herself long ago not to pry into Tyler's many secrets. His endless supply of strange items, Aura Stones, and bizarre knowledge was something she'd stopped questioning a while back.

"About Mathilda..." Lily said, trying to change the subject as she placed the Aura Stones into the boat's energy compartment. "Do you think she's in trouble? I mean, is it possible she's getting... you know, sexually assaulted or something?"

Tyler's face grew serious for a moment before his lips curled into a wry smile. "It's probably the other way around. Knowing Mathilda, she's the one doing the assaulting."

Lily burst out laughing, nodding in agreement. "Yeah, you're right. Still, though... I hope she's alright."

As they neared the direction where the sound had come from, they both noticed a drastic change in their surroundings. The labyrinth seemed to shift, and now heavy snow began pouring from above. A cold, biting wind whistled through the air, and the ground beneath them was covered in a thick layer of ice. Snowflakes fell relentlessly, adding a layer of mystery to the already confusing maze.

Tyler's gaze fell on several Immortal Practitioners, frozen in place like statues, their bodies encased in layers of ice. Some looked like they'd been mid-battle, weapons in hand, while others had expressions of terror frozen on their faces.

"Are they... alive?" Tyler asked, his voice laced with uncertainty as he studied the icy figures.

Lily shrugged. "Don't know, don't care. What I do care about is whether or not that chameleon, Isadora Nightkiss, is among them."

"Can't believe someone actually managed to fool you," Tyler teased, raising an eyebrow.

"Heh... Captain, if you find Isadora, make sure to seduce her and then betray her," Lily said, her eyes glinting with mischief. "I want her to feel the sting of betrayal. Then maybe she'll crawl back to me, begging for comfort."

Tyler chuckled. "You sound like a third-rate villain in some bad novel."

"Oh yeah?" Lily said, grinning as she imagined Isadora, defeated and humiliated. "There's another thing I found back in that temple-

Before she could finish her sentence, the boat shook violently, nearly knocking them off balance. They had arrived near a large, church-like building, its architecture ancient and imposing, with high, gothic spires that pierced the snowy sky.

"Is this the place?" Lily asked, glancing at the church's eerie silhouette.

"I guess so. The sound led us here, didn't it?" Tyler replied, though there was still uncertainty in his voice.

They both disembarked from the flying boat, their boots sinking into the snow as they approached the grand entrance. The large double doors creaked as they pushed them open, revealing a dimly lit hall inside.

As they stepped through the threshold, they were greeted by an unsettling sight-statues lined the walls, all depicting naked figures, their poses lewd and obscene. The air was thick with the sense of something profane, as if the very room itself was a tribute to hedonism.

"Okay... I can confirm there's a 90% chance Mathilda is here," Tyler said, scanning the room with raised eyebrows.

Lily nodded, her expression one of begrudging agreement. She knew Mathilda's perverted tendencies well. If their crewmate had stumbled upon a place like this, there was a high chance she'd decided to stay, indulging in whatever strange fascination the labyrinth had conjured.

"Let's hurry," Tyler said, already moving deeper into the building. "The faster we find her, the faster we can get out of this creepy place."

Lily followed close behind, still shaking her head at the absurdity of the situation. "Mathilda, you better be okay... or at least having fun," she muttered to herself as they ventured further into the church.

As Tyler walked, he noticed several skeletons scattered along the path, their bones partially melted and warped. He knelt beside one, examining the unusual damage.

"Looks like they were killed by some sort of acid," Lily observed, her eyes narrowing as she spotted traces of dried blood on the ground. "This isn't ancient skeletons or something. These are from groups who got trapped in the labyrinth with us."

Lily then crouched beside him, giving the remains a quick but sharp glance. "Yeah, someone must've used potions to take them out," she analyzed. "The damage is too specific. Probably a strong acid potion or something similar."

Tyler sighed, rubbing the back of his neck. "Mathilda..."

Lily nodded in agreement. "Definitely her. She's an Alchemist. If she was attacked, she'd use her potions in self-defense."

As Tyler and Lily walked further into the labyrinth, they came across a massive statue that left them utterly baffled. It wasn't the sheer size of the statue that caught their attention, but its bizarre and obscene position.

The naked figure with giant mounds, lay on its back, propped against the wall with its legs spread wide apart. Between the legs was a small cave, clearly an entrance to a secret path way. The statue giant mounds were in perfect shape that even made Tyler blush.

Tyler blinked in disbelief. "Are we... seeing this right?"

Lily stared at the scene in stunned silence, but her attention was soon drawn to some ancient characters etched onto the walls near the entrance. She squinted, trying to make sense of the inscription.

After a moment, she read aloud: "Wanna enter the forbidden cave? Wanna get the treasure? Make it wet, and you might get it."

Both Tyler and Lily were left speechless, exchanging glances that were equal parts shock and disbelief.

"What in the world..." Tyler trailed off, rubbing his temple as if that would make sense of the absurd situation.

Lily shook her head, covering her face with her hand. "This labyrinth... I have no words."

Tyler and Lily attempted to enter the cave, but despite the entrance being open, they quickly realized something was preventing them from proceeding. It felt like an invisible barrier was blocking their path.

Lily placed her hand on the cave entrance, her brow furrowing in concentration. "It's warm... like the entrance of the cave is slightly hot."

Tyler let out a resigned sigh. "So, we really have to make it wet, huh?" He glanced around, clearly not thrilled by the task. "I can't exactly make water, but I can make ice."

Without missing a beat, Lily's eyes lit up as she came up with an idea. "Then make an ice pillar."

"Huh?" Tyler blinked, clearly confused by her sudden request.

"Yeah," she said, her voice serious and confident. "Make an ice pillar big enough to fit into the entrance. We need to cool it down."

Tyler stared at her for a moment.

A few minutes later...

Inside the strange church, the massive ice pillar was being inserted into and pulled out of the cave entrance. The friction and heat caused the ice to melt, and water began to drip down from the entrance. The stone itself seemed to twitch, causing both Tyler and Lily to take a step back, startled.

They exchanged glances, sharing a mix of amusement and confusion, before cautiously approaching the cave again. This time, to their surprise, they could pass through without any issue.

As they walked in, Tyler and Lily simultaneously muttered, "When she says it's her first time."

They burst into laughter, their voices echoing through the strange cave as they proceeded forward. Neither of them noticed the massive statue's face has turned into Ahegao Expression.