

R Cultivator 251

Chapter 251: The Ladle's Ability

As Qiao Fu and his men retreated, Tyler calmly retrieved the ladle from his waist. With a wave of his hand, the seemingly ordinary utensil grew larger. He placed a folded letter inside its bowl and swiped it forward with a casual motion towards the retreating figure.

Qiao Fu's wife suddenly felt something in her hand. Startled, she glanced down and saw the letter, which had appeared as if out of nowhere. Her heart raced as she quickly tucked it into her dress, near her breast, her movements careful not to draw attention. She sighed in relief upon confirming her husband hadn't noticed. Before following the group, she stole a glance back at Tyler, who stood watching with a faint smirk.

"What was that?" Mana asked, her curiosity piqued.

"One of my weapon's specialties," Tyler replied, his tone smug as he shrank the ladle and hooked it onto his waist beside his copper pot.

"Does it work on living things?" she asked, her interest growing.

Tyler scratched his chin thoughtfully. "Maybe... I've never tried it." His eyes darted toward Reva, the shortest member of their group, who was busy inspecting her shield.

Without warning, Tyler expanded the ladle again and swiped it in Reva's direction.

The elven warrior stiffened in panic, quickly raising her oversized shield. "What are you doing?!" she cried, bracing herself.

Nothing happened.

When Reva cautiously opened her eyes, Tyler and Mana were standing a short distance away, deeply engrossed in conversation. Confused, she lowered her shield and looked around. She sighed and turned away.

"I aimed for this bug and caught it," Tyler explained, holding up the utensil.

Mana leaned closer, her brows furrowed. "What kind of ability is this?" she murmured, astonished.

"It's pretty overpowered," Tyler admitted with a grin. "I can snatch anything from a distance as long as I swipe it in the right direction. I can also deposit items in specific locations, like what I did with the letter."

Mana's eyes gleamed with excitement. "Give me a copy!"

Tyler shook his head. "I wish I could, but it doesn't work that way. This ladle is part of a unique set with my copper pot. It can't be replicated.."

Mana pouted but quickly turned contemplative. "So, you're saying it can't replicate it because it is part of it."

"Exactly." Tyler nodded and said, "I think there is another piece of this set in further North. Probably in Dragon King's territory. "

Roel, who previously owned the Ladle, told Tyler that he felt a resonance in the Dragon King's territory.

Tyler and Mana walked towards the Bodyguard Trio.

Reva narrowed her eyes at him. "Boss, Next time, warn me before you start swinging anything."

Tyler chuckled. "Relax, I wasn't aiming for you. Besides, it was just a bug."

Reva huffed and turned away, muttering about his reckless experiments. Although She is curious what is the Ladle's Ability, she doesn't ask. It's not her business anyways.

"Thank goodness. If all those grandmasters had used their domains..." Tyler began, but his voice trailed off as he considered the consequences.

"That wouldn't have been possible," Mana replied, shaking her head. "If multiple grandmasters activate their domains simultaneously, they would clash, even if they're allies. It would create chaos rather than synergy. Also, our own grandmaster bodyguards didn't use their domains. But unlike the others, these three have an advantage—they can combine their domains and attack together."

"Oh, right," Tyler said, nodding as he recalled what he had learned about domains. "These three were originally adventurers in the same party. Of course, they'd know how to combine their domains effectively."

Domains were the pinnacle of a grandmaster's abilities, akin to Tyler's own Chess Spell, which was considered a pseudo-domain. Grandmasters could create a personal space that bent reality to their will, using it to suppress enemies or amplify their own strength. However, creating a domain required immense skill, energy, and focus. The difficulty only increased when attempting to merge domains with another grandmaster's.

"It's even more challenging than spell merging," Mana continued, her tone instructive.

Tyler nodded again. Spell merging, while difficult, was a more common technique where two or more mages combined their spells to create a stronger or more versatile attack. It required precision and compatibility between the mages involved, but merging domains was on an entirely different level.

"I do have a way to suppress Qiao Fu's domain," Tyler admitted. His tone turned serious as he considered the odds. "But with him surrounded by twenty grandmaster-level practitioners, it's not worth the risk. We'll need another plan to deal with him."

Mana observed him closely, noting the contemplative look on his face. Tyler's tendency to think ahead and plan for contingencies was what made him such a formidable strategist. She trusted him to come up with something ingenious.

"Well, Since she got the letter. It's time for me to move." Mana said as she disappeared like a Ghost, Though she is a Ghost....

After a brief silence, Tyler spoke again, "Well good luck..."

Deep underground, in a room that exuded an ancient and eerie atmosphere, Qiao Fu's wife was hard at work. She moved her fingers gracefully, as if weaving through the threads of the cosmos.

"Move left to the Yuji Star Position; move right to the Yaoguang Star Position," she commanded, her voice steady and deliberate.

The maids scurried to follow her instructions, carefully shifting statues across the stone floor. At the center of the room stood a massive cauldron, filled to the brim with a thick, red liquid that gleamed ominously under the flickering light of torches.

Qiao Fu had once struck gold—or more accurately, struck something far darker. Many many Years ago, during the time when he was just an ordinary woodcutter, he had accidentally slain an Abyss Demon, a creature of unimaginable power and malice. Instead of selling all the spoils, he had taken a perilous gamble, devouring the Abyss Demon's fragmented soul. In doing so, he had inherited fragments of its memory, including a forbidden method to strengthen his body using the blood of the Abyss.

The process was not without its costs. The blood's corrosive properties heightened aggression, made him prone to bouts of uncontrollable rage, and gnawed at his sanity. But the benefits were undeniable—it was an unparalleled tool for building an unshakable foundation in immortal Practice.

In a grand chamber not far from the underground ritual, Qiao Fu stood among the grandmasters he had hired to eliminate Mana. His face was contorted with fury, his temper frayed from the effects of the Abyss Demon's blood.

"Useless! Absolutely useless!" he roared, pacing back and forth. His voice echoed through the chamber, reverberating against the high stone walls.

The leader of the grandmasters stepped forward cautiously. "We didn't anticipate he'd have so many Defense Twin Star Arrays," he explained, his tone measured but strained. "Each array can withstand a Grandmaster-level attack for only a few minutes. But that man—he was able to replace them one after another, just as they were about to break."

Qiao Fu's rage flared even hotter. "Defense Twin Star Arrays? Do you have any idea how expensive those are? One costs at least two million Lydia!" He clenched his fists, his voice rising with every word. "How many did he use? Ten? Twenty?"

The grandmasters exchanged uneasy glances, their expressions grim. One of them finally spoke, his voice low and hesitant. "It... it was far more than that, Master Qiao. Over fifty, perhaps even more."

For a moment, there was silence. The enormity of Tyler's resourcefulness struck them like a physical blow. The thought of so many expensive arrays being used and replaced with such ease was almost incomprehensible.

Qiao Fu's face turned crimson with rage. "More than Fifty?! Does he think Lydia grows on trees?" he bellowed. The veins on his forehead bulged as he slammed his fist into the wall, leaving a sizable dent. His hired grandmasters dared not speak further, fearing they would provoke his ire even more.

"Tsk... How did that fallen family B*tch found such a nouveau rich Sugar Daddy?" He murmured.

Meanwhile, in a dimly lit corner of the underground chamber, Qiao Fu's wife took the opportunity to examine the mysterious letter she had received earlier. The memory of how it had appeared in her hand without warning still sent shivers down her spine. She unfolded it carefully, her heart pounding with both curiosity and dread.

She began to read the letter.

Dear Lady Qiao,

You look Hot...

"..." Lady Qiao.

Chapter 252: Tyler's Plan

The letter was written in elegant but sharp handwriting, its tone a mixture of teasing and foreboding:

"Dear Lady Qiao,

You look hot... I mean—

You stand at the edge of a precipice. The man you call your husband delves deeper into darkness, blinded by ambition. He risks not only his life but also yours and your household's future. Should you wish to escape the abyss he has bound you to, I offer you a path. Seek me out at the end of this week, and we shall discuss the terms of your freedom.

—T.W."

Lady Qiao's hands trembled as she read the signature. Tyler White. The name was unfamiliar, but the precision and confidence of the letter's tone unsettled her. She glanced toward her husband, who was pacing in a nearby room, shouting orders at his hired grandmasters. Carefully folding the letter, she tucked it into the folds of her dress, her mind racing with questions.

Could this be a trap? Or salvation?

Then, a realization hit her. Her face twitched.

Isn't the end of the week... tomorrow?!

The following day, Tyler stood before a secluded villa constructed of cedar wood, nestled deep within the forest. This private retreat belonged to Lady Qiao and was a place few ever visited. The air was heavy with the scent of pine and damp earth.

From one of the windows, he noticed a figure peeking out cautiously. Tyler quickly observed that the villa seemed deserted—no guards, no servants, just the enigmatic presence inside. The figure retreated, and a moment later, the protective arrays around the villa flickered and deactivated. Lady Qiao gestured for Tyler to enter before hurriedly reactivating the defenses.

As Tyler stepped into the living room, his movements came to an abrupt halt. Lady Qiao stood before him, clad in nothing but a white towel, her damp hair clinging to her skin. The towel barely covered her chest and thighs, leaving little to the imagination.

"I was just finishing a bath. Thank you for coming, Mr. Tyler," Lady Qiao said softly, bowing slightly. The movement revealed a hint of her cleavage, and the glistening droplets on her skin added to the seductive atmosphere.

Tyler, keeping his expression neutral, sat on a plush couch as Lady Qiao joined him. Her intoxicating fragrance wafted through the air, making the atmosphere tense and distracting. She leaned in close, her lips just inches from his ear.

"Would you like a Pink Berry drink?" she whispered. Her voice dropped lower, almost suggestive. "Or perhaps something pink and wet to eat?"

She moved her lips from his ears to his lips.

"How about first my upper lips , them my lower..."

Before her words could register, her hand moved in a blur, aiming a gleaming purple dagger toward Tyler's chest.

In an instant, Tyler's hand shot out, gripping her wrist firmly.

Lady Qiao froze, her confidence crumbling as she realized she couldn't move her hand even an inch. Tyler's grip was like steel. Her dagger quivered, but she could not withdraw it.

"Soul-devouring poison laced on a volcanic mica blade," Tyler murmured, his calm tone betraying no alarm. He examined the weapon. "Strong enough to pierce a grandmaster's defenses. Clever... but you underestimated me."

A smile tugged at the corners of his lips as he released her wrist, pushing the blade aside.

Lady Qiao staggered back, clutching the dagger tightly, her face a mixture of fear and disbelief. She took several steps away, her body trembling.

Before she could respond, a deep, mocking laugh echoed through the room.

"Hahaha! Did you think a random letter could seduce my wife?" Qiao Fu's voice boomed as he emerged from the shadows, his massive frame filling the room. He carried a hefty axe over his shoulder, its blade gleaming ominously.

He walked over to Lady Qiao, grabbing her roughly by the waist. He planted a possessive kiss on her lips, his free hand groping her breast.

"This is our little secret, you see," Qiao Fu sneered, looking back at Tyler. "My wife loves a little... abuse." To emphasize his point, he slapped Lady Qiao hard across the face, leaving a red mark.

Lady Qiao didn't cry out. Instead, a crazed smile stretched across her face as she held her cheek, her eyes alight with a twisted combination of pleasure and madness.

Tyler observed the scene without flinching, his expression unreadable.

"I expected you to bring those three grandmasters with you," Qiao Fu said, pointing his axe toward Tyler. "But it seems lust blinded you. Now you're nothing more than a rabbit surrounded by wolves."

As if on cue, the presence of twenty grandmasters became apparent. Though they didn't enter the villa, their presence suffused the area, an oppressive weight that bore down on everyone inside.

"I don't take the Redwood Family seriously," Qiao Fu continued, his voice filled with scorn. "But I didn't expect someone like you to crawl out for them and disrupt my business." His murderous gaze locked onto Tyler. "Killing you here will solve two problems. You die, and the Ghost Spirit little girl from the Redwood Family dies along with you. One stone, two birds... No, wait..." He paused, laughing at his own thought. "One hack, two trees! Hahaha!"

His laughter boomed through the villa, joined by his wife's manic giggles.

Tyler leaned back slightly, his lips curling into a smirk. He appeared calm, almost amused. "One hack, two trees? Really? That's the best you could come up with?"

Qiao Fu's laughter faltered for a moment, his pride pricked by Tyler's casual dismissal of his joke. "You dare mock me, boy?"

Tyler shrugged. "If you're going to kill me, at least do it with some dignity. That pun was embarrassing."

The grandmasters outside stirred, their focus sharpening as Qiao Fu's face twisted in rage. His grip on the axe tightened, veins bulging in his arms.

"You'll regret those words," Qiao Fu snarled, raising his axe.

Tyler's smirk widened. "We'll see."

As tension filled the air, Lady Qiao's expression shifted she retreated.

A glimmer of something unreadable flashed in Tyler's eye, his calm demeanor a stark contrast to the growing unease in the room.

"What are you waiting for? Come on in!" Qiao Fu barked, his voice filled with authority. Yet, there was no response. The grandmasters outside didn't move an inch, their presence eerily silent.

"What's going on?" Qiao Fu growled, glancing toward the door.

Tyler tilted his head, his lips curling into a faint smirk. "What are you waiting for? How about we all give a round of applause for the Legendary Woodcutter's lame joke?"

For a moment, Qiao Fu didn't understand, his face twisted in confusion. Then he froze, as did Lady Qiao.

From outside, the sound of clapping erupted, sharp and deliberate, like an eerie echo of Tyler's words. The grandmasters were applauding.

"W-what is happening?" Qiao Fu stammered, his voice trembling for the first time.

Lady Qiao's face turned pale, her eyes darting between the door and Tyler. The sound of the clapping grew louder, a mocking rhythm that reverberated through the villa.

"It seems your 'invincible' grandmasters are more obedient to me than to you," Tyler said nonchalantly, inspecting his nails as if the entire scene was beneath his interest.

Chapter 253: End of Woodcutter Association

"That's impossible!" Qiao Fu roared, his grip tightening on his axe. He stormed toward the door, his fury uncontrollable, but Tyler's voice cut through the air, sharp and commanding, halting him in his tracks.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," Tyler warned, his words laced with an unsettling calm. "Unless you want to lose your life in the hands of your so-called loyal subordinates in one fell swoop."

Qiao Fu hesitated, his knuckles white as he gripped his weapon. He turned back to face Tyler, his eyes blazing with fury. "What have you done to them?"

"Nothing much," Tyler replied with a nonchalant shrug. "Just a little... persuasion. You see, loyalty is a fragile thing, especially when greed are involved. I simply offered them more money."

Tyler's smirk widened. "In simpler terms, I bought them."

The words hit Qiao Fu like a thunderclap. His mind raced, trying to process the sheer audacity of Tyler's actions. During the previous battle, He understood that Tyler is rich. But it seems like he underestimated his wealth. Those grandmasters—his prized assets, whom he'd paid generously. They are group of pirates who gave up on pirate buisness and worked for him.

Qiao Fu's voice trembled with disbelief. "You think you can just buy loyalty like that?"

"Of course I can," Tyler said with a chuckle. "Loyalty to someone like you is as shallow as a puddle. When faced with a better offer, they didn't even hesitate."

Qiao Fu's jaw tightened, his rage boiling over. Yet, despite his fury, a sliver of doubt began to creep into his mind. He had always ruled with fear and wealth, but now he realized how tenuous that grip truly was. Facing with someone who is wealthier, he felt like an ant.

As the tension between the two men reached a boiling point, far from the villa, another storm was brewing.

At the headquarters of the Woodcutter Association, a different kind of battle was taking place.

Isha, For now, she represented herself as a high-ranking representative of the White Merchant Group, strode confidently into the association's grand hall, her steps firm and deliberate. Behind her walked her 'entourage' : Reva, Gru, and Hart, their grandmaster presence imposing enough to make any onlooker think twice about causing trouble.

The association's main shareholders had gathered, their faces a mix of concern and curiosity. The once-thriving Woodcutter Association, founded and led by Qiao Fu, had been struggling for the past year.

Losses had mounted, and many shareholders had grown desperate, selling their stakes to the highest bidder.

What Qiao Fu didn't know, as he faced Tyler in his villa, was that his greatest rival had been quietly orchestrating his downfall from the shadows. Through various aliases and intermediaries, Mana had acquired a controlling interest in the Woodcutter Association, consolidating those shares under the banner of the White Merchant Group.

Now the highest shareholder of Woodcutter Association is White Merchant Group.

Isha, now seated at the head of the table, represented the majority shareholder. Her calm demeanor exuded authority, and the shareholders quickly realized the tide had shifted.

Clearing her throat, Isha addressed the room. "Ladies and gentlemen, I am here on behalf of the White Merchant Group, the majority stakeholder in this association. After thorough deliberation, we have decided on a course of action that will ensure the survival and prosperity of the Woodcutter Association."

Her words sparked a murmur of uncertainty. Some shareholders nodded, seeing the writing on the wall, while others bristled with resistance.

"What are you proposing?" one of the senior shareholders asked, his tone cautious.

"A merger," Isha said, her gaze sweeping across the room. "The Woodcutter Association will merge with the Redwood Company. This merger will stabilize operations, eliminate redundancies, and bring in new resources to revitalize the business."

"Merge? With Redwood?" another shareholder scoffed. "Do you think we'll just hand over everything we've built to you?"

Redwood company is the name of the company registered under mana, Which is also subsidiary company of White Merchant Group.

Isha met his defiance with a calm smile. "I understand your concerns, but the reality is simple. Without this merger, the association will collapse. The losses from the past year are unsustainable, and the leadership—" she paused, letting the implication hang in the air, "—has failed to address the root causes. Under the White Merchant Group's guidance, we can restore profitability."

Her words carried the weight of inevitability. For the dissenting shareholders, there was little room for argument. They could resist, but they knew the outcome would be the same. Slowly, one by one, their objections began to fade.

Back at the villa, Qiao Fu remained oblivious to the silent dismantling of his empire, his focus entirely on the man standing before him.

"Your schemes won't work!" Qiao Fu growled, his voice echoing with fury. His knuckles tightened around his axe as he prepared to unleash his ultimate power. He only needed one move to end this once and for all. As long as I activate my domain, he thought, not even the Grandmasters outside can save him.

The air around them grew heavy. A metallic sheen began spreading across the room like a wave, consuming the floor, the walls, and even the furniture. Within moments, the entire villa had transformed into a cold, unyielding expanse of shimmering metal.

"This is my domain!" Qiao Fu roared, his voice reverberating through the metallic chamber. "World of Metal!"

Tyler felt an oppressive force clamp down on him like a vice. His body refused to move, as though the air itself had solidified around him. He tried to channel his aura, then his prana, but both were suppressed by the domain's overwhelming power. It was as if he had been sealed inside an unbreakable prison.

"Struggling is pointless," Qiao Fu sneered, his confidence surging. "In my domain, I am the ultimate authority. You are not even Grandmaster Level, You can't use your aura. You're nothing more than a worm waiting to be crushed."

Tyler remained silent, his expression unreadable as Qiao Fu's axe began to glow. A brilliant light enveloped the weapon, its edge humming with raw energy. Qiao Fu's aura locked onto Tyler, ensuring there would be no escape.

Outside the villa, the Grandmasters stood in tense silence, their expressions a mixture of curiosity and skepticism. None of them moved to intervene, as per Tyler's explicit instructions. He had paid them handsomely, with one simple condition: stay out of it, no matter what happens.

"That brat's finished," one of them muttered, his arms crossed. "There's no escaping Qiao Fu's domain."

Another Grandmaster, an older man with a long beard, stroked his chin thoughtfully. "Perhaps, He must have something up his sleeve."

The Grandmasters exchanged glances but kept their attention fixed on the villa. They were eager to see how, or if, he could escape Qiao Fu's devastating attack.

Suddenly, the metallic domain shattered like glass. A shockwave rippled through the area, leaving Qiao Fu momentarily stunned. He swung his axe behind him. But his blow met only air.

Lady Qiao, holding her towel tightly, had nimbly backflipped away from the attack, her movements as swift as they were unexpected. Qiao Fu's eyes widened further as he spotted the knife now plunged into his back. The blade shimmered faintly, its surface glowing with a malevolent energy.

"Soul-devouring poison laced on a volcanic mica blade," Tyler said calmly, echoing his earlier words. "Strong enough to pierce a grandmaster's defenses."

Qiao Fu staggered, his strength rapidly draining. "W-why?" he stammered, his voice thick with betrayal.

His gaze darted toward his wife, disbelief etched across his features. "No... You're not her?"

Lady Qiao's presence feels different, her aura seems more like nether energy. She smirked and pointed toward the letter sitting on the table—the one Tyler sneaked in the Lady Qiao's hand "Mana was hiding in that letter. But when you activated your domain Mana had no choice but to hide in her body."

Qiao Fu's jaw clenched as the realization dawned, but before he could react, her voice changed again, and a familiar face emerged from within hers. Mana.

"It's you," Qiao Fu growled, fury and panic mixing in his voice. He tried to lift his axe, but his body betrayed him. His aura, vitality, and strength drained at an alarming rate.

Mana Ghost face went back into Lady Qiao.

"S-Save me!" he pleaded, his knees buckling as he collapsed. "If you don't save me, you'll never know what happened to the Redwood Family."

Mana's expression didn't waver. " Mana already know," she said coldly, brushing a lock of hair from her face. "When Mana possessed her, Mana gained access to her memories. You're no longer needed."

With that, the infamous woodcutter and founder of the Woodcutter Association, Qiao Fu, crumpled to the floor. His lifeless body lay in the ground with unwillingly eyes.

Mana stepped out of Lady Qiao's body, her form shimmering as she separated herself from the trembling woman. Lady Qiao regained control of herself, staring at her fallen husband with wide eyes.

There was more Panic than grief.

She turned to Tyler, her lips quivering as she forced a smile. It was an awkward, desperate expression, more pitiful than endearing in Tyler's eyes.

Lady Qiao let her towel fell in the ground. She walked near Tyler.

"I really don't wanna kill you.... But..." Tyler said with regret expression.

Mana spat in the ground, "Say that after you remove your fiendish claws from her breast."

Tyler hands were groping her breast with regretful expression.

Chapter 254: Vegus City

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Tyler hands were groping her breast with regretful expression.

"Oops... Sorry..." Tyler muttered, pulling his hand back instinctively. But Lady Qiao's grip was firm, her eyes pleading.

"You can do anything to me," she whispered, desperation dripping from her voice.

Tyler's expression remained indifferent. "Mana," he asked calmly, "did she have anything to do with the destruction of the Redwood Family?"

Mana's figure flickered into view, her face cold as she nodded.

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Mana's figure flickered into view, her face cold as she nodded.

Tyler immediately withdrew his hand, stepping back. The warmth in his demeanor vanished as if a switch had been flipped. Lady Qiao's hopeful expression faltered, and her knees buckled slightly.

Lady Qiao suddenly lost her consciousness for a moment when she regained her senses, she felt no pain, but her life was rapidly fading. Her gaze drifted downward, and horror dawned as she saw a knife buried deep in her stomach. Blood began to pool beneath her as her breathing grew shallow.

The last thing Lady Qiao saw before the darkness claimed her was her husband's lifeless body sprawled next to hers.

Unknown to her, Mana had possessed her body for a fleeting moment, delivering the fatal blow.

The act was swift, clean, and without malice.

"She won't feel pain," Mana said softly, her voice devoid of emotion. She stepped away from the dying woman, her gaze unwavering. "When the Redwood Family was attacked, she didn't just stand by. She brought the family's maids into this household and forced them into unspeakable horrors, driving them to their tragic ends."

Tyler's jaw tightened, but he said nothing, allowing Mana to continue.

"Giving her a painless death...," Mana concluded, "... is the only mercy I could offer."

It had been a week since Mana successfully took over the cedar wood business on Cedar Island. Under her meticulous guidance, the newly formed merger was officially renamed Cedar Wood Company. The shift marked a new era for the island's most lucrative resource.

The cedars of Cedar Island were unlike any other in the world, boasting unique properties that enhanced Aura manipulation. Even rarer were the underwater cedar trees, harvested using specialized techniques, which added a layer of mystique and value to the company's portfolio.

With the industry now monopolized, Situ, the newly appointed head of the Cedar Wood Association, made a bold decision: to raise the prices of cedar wood significantly.

It wasn't a gamble. The unique qualities of Cedar Island's trees ensured there was no competition. Buyers who relied on the wood's Aura-enhancing properties would have no choice but to pay the

premium. The move all but guaranteed immense profitability for the company in the coming years, solidifying its dominance.

Meanwhile, Tyler, Mana and Isha already left the Cedar Islands. They arrived at the Vegus City.

Vegus City was a sprawling metropolis teeming with activity. Its harbor buzzed with the constant movement of ships, traders, and travelers.

Tyler had a specific reason for coming here. After a year, the flagship of the White Merchant Group was finally making its way to the continent. This wasn't just any ship—it was his home. It was his whole journey from the south.

Tyler's gaze shifted to the horizon, where the sails of a massive ship became visible in the distance. The sight of the White Merchant flagship approaching filled him with a sense of happiness.

"Let's go greet our ship," Tyler said, stepping onto the bustling docks of Vegus City.

As the ship docked at Vegus Port, Tyler leaped onto its deck with an air of familiarity. He felt as if he had returned home. His gaze swept over the crew, and a satisfied smile graced his lips.

"Tuman," Tyler called out.

A tall, disciplined man with sharp features stepped forward. Tuman, the son of the former captain of the White Crown Army and now the chief guard of the White Merchant Group, exuded a quiet authority. He jumped down from the deck above with ease and bowed deeply.

"Captain," Tuman greeted, his voice steady and respectful. The crew behind him followed suit, bowing in unison to Tyler.

"Good... Welcome to the Ixalaria Continent," Tyler said warmly, his smile widening.

The days following their arrival were marked by significant changes. Many crew members—particularly the slaves whom Tyler had freed—chose to disembark, seeking new lives on the continent. Tyler, true to his word, gave them a generous sum of money to start afresh. Gratitude shone in their eyes as they departed, thanking him for not only their freedom but for giving them a chance to rebuild.

However, not everyone left. A large number of the crew, driven by their love for the sea, opted to stay. They wanted to continue exploring new horizons with Tyler as their captain.

Addressing them all, Tyler laid out his plan. "For those who wish to continue the ship merchant business, I will provide new ships. You'll form your own crews, establish separate trading routes, and expand under the White Merchant Group's name. The South has vast, untapped markets—make them ours."

The crew's faces lit up with excitement and anticipation. Many had never imagined that their captain would entrust them with such responsibility or provide them with their own ships.

Tyler appointed Tuman to oversee the logistics and execution of the plan. Once everything was in capable hands, Tyler, accompanied by Mana and Isha, departed for Dusk City and the academy he had recently acquired.

Arriving at Dusk City

Upon reaching the Teleportation Hub in Dusk City through Teleportation Array, the group stepped out into the urban environment. Tyler retrieved a sleek flying car from his storage device, and they set off toward their destination.

As they cruised above the city's streets, Isha's attention was drawn to an amusement park undergoing reconstruction. Workers zipped through the air on hoverboards, tirelessly restoring the long-abandoned attraction.

"That's also Tyler's property," Mana remarked, noticing Isha's curiosity. "He bought the amusement park and is having it rebuilt."

Isha's eyes widened in surprise. "You own this too?"

Tyler chuckled. "I've also secured the rights to operate the city's tram system. It's currently being upgraded. But the biggest investment I've made here is the academy."

Their car hovered toward the edge of the city, where the green landscape began to blend with the desert. Tyler gazed out the window, admiring the transformation.

"They've already turned a lot of desert into green fields," he murmured, more to himself than anyone else.

Soon, the academy came into view. The sprawling complex of buildings, which had once looked like discarded toys scattered across the ground, now floated majestically in the air. The academy's arrays, once dormant due to a lack of funding, had been fully restored under Tyler's ownership.

The buildings shimmered, held aloft by intricate arrays that allowed them to hover. Students could now only access the buildings using hoverboards. Well since there are no students now. It's doesn't matter.

The scrambled letters in front of the academy is also Floating in the Air, showing the name.of the Academy in Grand manner.

Inside the Academy

Within the academy's private chambers, a solitary figure floated inside a cylindrical tube. Serena, her serene form suspended in the Time Freezing Capsule, lay in a state of stasis. The capsule, an extraordinary piece of magical and technological craftsmanship, consumed a staggering amount of Aura and Prana stones to maintain its functionality.

A goblin girl, diminutive but industrious, tended to the capsule with unwavering dedication. Her hands moved swiftly as she refilled the chamber's energy reservoirs, ensuring the capsule continued its vital work. Though the task was demanding, her expression remained focused.

Chapter 255: Temporary Solution for Serena

A few hours after Tyler arrived at the academy, another visitor stepped onto its grounds.

"Professor Ellen," Tyler greeted, bowing slightly in respect.

"No need to be so formal," she replied with a smile, waving his gesture away. Her attire, however, was far from typical for a professor. She wore a dress with a deep V-shaped neckline that accentuated her figure, revealing her proud and seductive silhouette. It was a stark contrast to her usual professional demeanor.

Tyler can see some deep mountains which any men wanted to conquer.

"Remember our deal," she added with a playful wink before striding past him. Trailing behind her were several of her female students, who glanced curiously at Tyler before following their professor.

Ellen made her way to the room where the Time Freezing Capsule was kept.

Serena is still sleeping peacefully inside and the Goblin girl GG is taking care of her.

Once inside, she closed the door and immediately began her work. Her students, laden with various intricate components, spread out and set to assembling a mysterious device. For three days, the room remained sealed as they worked tirelessly. Finally, on the third day, the doors opened.

Tyler stepped inside and was greeted by a bewildering sight. Before him was a large screen, glowing with an endless stream of dense code—strings of numbers, letters, and symbols flashing rapidly. Beside the screen, strange interconnected machines buzzed faintly, their design sleek and alien. Tyler couldn't see what lay inside the devices, but the materials used in their construction spoke of extreme expense.

"What is this?" he asked, his curiosity piqued. Despite his question, he already guessed something. This device might something to do with a Server.

As Tyler examined the setup, Mana entered the room carrying dinner. The aroma of mushroom soup wafted through the air, a testament to Darla's cooking skills.

Meanwhile, in the academy's kitchen, Darla was showing off her culinary techniques to Taka, who had recently arrived at the Elite Academy of Magic and Technology on Tyler's orders. However, her

confidence wavered as Taka not only grasped her techniques with ease but even began to improve upon them. His innate cooking skills left Darla both impressed and slightly disheartened.

Back in Serena's room, Mana placed the bowl of soup on a nearby table and glanced at the strange machine.

"This is nothing," Professor Ellen said, her tone brimming with confidence. "What's about to happen is everything."

She stepped forward and activated the machine. The large screen, which had been cycling through endless streams of data, suddenly cleared. Moments later, a green-haired figure materialized on the screen, stepping into view as if emerging from a dream.

"Where am I?" the figure asked, looking around with a mixture of confusion and curiosity. Her emerald eyes scanned her surroundings until they landed on a small computer connected to the machine. She approached it and examined the device closely.

"Eating mushroom soup?" she asked, her voice tinged with amusement.

Tyler, Mana, and the others froze, bowls of mushroom soup in their hands. They quickly realized that the camera on the device was transmitting their images to her. The green-haired figure, Serena, was watching them in real time.

"So... what is happening?" Tyler asked, finally breaking the silence.

Professor Ellen smirked, clearly enjoying the moment. "Her consciousness is inside a virtual environment," she explained, gesturing toward the machine with a flourish. "As long as any device is connected to the Core, she can control that device. Until you find a way to save her body, she can freely exist and interact within the digital world."

Ellen's tone carried a note of pride as she continued, "This is no small feat. Her mind, her essence, has been fully digitized. Think of it as giving her a second life—one where she's unbound by physical limitations."

Tyler studied the Serena's figure on the screen. She appeared calm, even intrigued by her surroundings, as if she were slowly acclimating to her new digital existence. "Is she... okay with this?" he asked, his concern evident.

Serena was the one who answered , " I understands the situation. It's not ideal, but it's a far better alternative than sleeping in a stasis capsule indefinitely. This way, I can continue working on the project 'T' , boss. Just help me connect to my Workshop."

Tyler leaned closer to the screen, addressing the figure. "Serena, ?"

The green-haired woman turned toward the sound,. "Don't worry. I am fine here. And it's... not Strange it's just VR... It's just unlike Being in VR , I can control multiple devices at once."

As she said, the cameras in the room moved as she willed.

Tyler smiled back. "Good. Then we'll make sure you're comfortable until we find a way to restore you."

He then turned to Ellen. "How stable is this setup? Are there any risks?"

Ellen's expression grew serious. "The system is stable for now, but it relies on a continuous supply of Aura and Prana stones. If the energy flow is disrupted, her connection could falter. However, I've built redundancies to minimize that risk. She's safe.

Just as she said, it's like VR, but Immortal Practitioners can't stay in VR continuously more than 1.5 years, unless we activate time ratio. Because we can handle only that with mental strength."

Tyler nodded, "Then we'll ensure the resources keep flowing."

In the end everything comes to energy and resources. That's the least thing Tyler ever worried.

Ellen's students began packing up their tools, their part in the project complete. As the room quieted, Tyler took a moment to process everything. Serena was no longer confined to the capsule but was far

from being truly free. This was only a temporary solution, a stopgap measure until a true solution could be found.

"H-Head S-serena?" Suddenly a mild voice resonated making everyone look at GG.

GG is the reason why Serena ended up in the situation.

Serena expression changed. This is the first time seeing anger in her expressionless face.

Everyone thought she is angry at GG.

But

"Who enslaved you?" She asked with anger when she noticed slave collar on GG.

GG broke into tears. Even though she betrayed her Serena is still thinking about her. She sat before the screen and cried loudly.

Tyler and others left the room, giving them some space.