

R Cultivator 276

Chapter 276: Moonhaven Academy

Tyler and the others underwent a thorough body check before they were allowed to enter the camp. The precaution was necessary to ensure none of them had been parasitized or that no Abyss monster had managed to infiltrate their group.

Once cleared, they proceeded inside and went directly to submit their mission report. Tyler handed over the tube containing the Corrosive Liquid they had collected during their ordeal.

"Tyler, what's your plan now?" Brolin asked, his voice light but curious.

"I'm exhausted. I'm going to sleep," Tyler replied, waving a hand lazily as he said goodbye to the group.

On his way to the barracks, Tyler noticed a crowd gathering near the training grounds. Curious, he stopped a passerby to ask, "What's going on over there?"

"Oh, students from Moonhaven Academy have arrived in the city," the man explained. "They've brought the Tri-Moon Stairs with them and are challenging our academy's students to ascend it."

"Tri-Moon Stairs?" Tyler asked, raising an eyebrow.

"It's a test of temperance and discipline," the man said. "Each step gets exponentially harder the higher you go. It's a famous trial designed to temper both body and mind."

"Hmm... sounds like a nightmare for someone like me," Tyler muttered under his breath. He could already imagine failing miserably on the first step. With a shrug, he dismissed the thought and headed to his quarters.

Once there, he collapsed onto his bed and fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

The next morning, Tyler awoke feeling refreshed. As he walked toward the mission board, he noticed another commotion brewing nearby. Groups of students and adventurers had gathered in excited clusters, chatting animatedly.

"What now?" Tyler muttered to himself. Since he had just completed a mission, he was officially on break for the next few days unless an emergency arose. Curious, he strolled toward the source of the excitement, his hands tucked into his pockets and his expression casual.

"I guess I'll see what all the fuss is about," he murmured, ready to observe.

The scene at the training ground was tense. Students in red and white uniforms, the signature attire of Moonhaven Academy, stood confidently, their postures exuding pride. They looked down at the students of Starfire Academy as though they were kings surveying their subjects.

Moonhaven Academy was the second-ranked institution, trailing just behind Starfire Academy. Despite this, the gap between them was negligible, and their rivalry was legendary. Like Starfire students, Moonhaven students were frequently sent on missions to various cities, honing their skills and showcasing their capabilities.

"What's going on?" Tyler asked as he approached Brolin, who was standing on the sidelines with Rabbit Kyla.

Brolin, lost in thought, jumped at the sudden question and blurted out, "Nothing happened between me and Kyla!"

Rabbit Kyla, flustered and red-faced, quickly elbowed him in the ribs. "Will you stop saying nonsense?" she hissed before shooting Tyler a warning glare.

"I didn't hear anything," Tyler said quickly, raising his hands in mock surrender. He gestured toward the commotion. "I'm talking about the Moonhaven Academy students. What's their deal?"

"Oh... them." Brolin sighed, rubbing the spot where Rabbit Kyla's elbow had landed. "They're here to challenge us to duels. Our combat department isn't present right now, so they're trying to use this opportunity to make us look bad and establish their superiority."

"Isn't that your department?" Tyler asked, raising an eyebrow.

Brolin let out another sigh. "I'm just a 2-star Master Warrior. That guy over there is a 5-star Master Mage. Normally, I'd have no problem taking down an ordinary 5-star Master-level Immortal Practitioner. But these Moonhaven students are cut from the same cloth as ours—they're elite. It's not that simple."

Tyler turned his attention to the dueling arena, where a fierce match was underway. A Starfire Academy student, a 4-star Warrior Mage, faced off against a Moonhaven student. The Starfire student charged forward, his blade gleaming, but a powerful water wave from his opponent sent him sprawling to the ground.

"I admit def—" The Starfire student barely managed to get the words out before the Moonhaven mage lashed him with a water whip, knocking him unconscious and out of the training grounds entirely.

"Hah! Is that all Starfire Academy has to offer?" the Moonhaven student sneered, his voice dripping with contempt.

The Starfire students watching from the sidelines erupted in anger.

"You coward! You're only doing this because our 5-star students aren't here!"

"Yeah! Why don't you wait until they get back and see how tough you really are?"

The Moonhaven mage smirked, crossing his arms. "Losers always have excuses," he said mockingly.

The verbal battle escalated quickly, with both sides hurling insults and taunts.

"Your academy might be ranked second, but your attitudes are second-rate!" a Starfire student shouted.

"Second-rate? Coming from a bunch of weaklings who can't even defend their honor?" a Moonhaven student shot back.

"We don't need to stoop to your level to prove ourselves!"

"Then why are you standing there whining like children?"

The shouting match drew more onlookers, including Tyler, who stood with his arms crossed, observing the chaos. "This is getting out of hand," he muttered.

At that moment, another Starfire student stepped forward to challenge the Moonhaven mage. It was clear from his stance and movements that he was a skilled fighter, but he was still outclassed. Within minutes, he was sent flying off the platform by another water-based attack.

"Pathetic," the Moonhaven mage said, shaking his head. "If this is the best Starfire Academy has, then your reputation is grossly overrated."

The Starfire students clenched their fists, their anger boiling over. One stepped forward, shouting, "Why don't you fight someone at your level?"

The Moonhaven student raised an eyebrow. "Why don't you guys have someone to fight at my level?"

Tyler sighed. This wasn't his fight, but the arrogance of the Moonhaven students was starting to get under his skin. He glanced at Brolin, who looked equally frustrated but hesitant to act.

"Are you really going to let them talk to you like that?" Tyler asked.

Brolin looked at him, conflicted. "I can't just rush in. I'll get crushed."

Tyler shrugged. "Sometimes, it's not about winning. Sometimes, it's about standing up for yourself."

Brolin considered his words, then looked at Rabbit Kyla, who nodded encouragingly. Taking a deep breath, he stepped onto the platform.

The Moonhaven students sneered as he approached. "Another lamb to the slaughter?"

Brolin ignored the taunts and took his position. Tyler watched closely, silently rooting for his friend.

The match began, and Brolin held his ground, using his skills to dodge and counter the Moonhaven mage's attacks. While he was clearly outmatched in power, he used the Axe to swung down making the ground quake, making the Mage shook a little. Even the Moonhaven students seemed impressed, though they didn't show it.

The mage panicked a little and used a Charm against Brolin.

"Shameless." Rabbit Kyla shouted.

"Hmph... It's all allowed." A student from Moonhaven Academy retorted immediately.

In the end, Brolin was defeated, but he wasn't humiliated. He walked off the platform with his head held high, earning cheers and support from his peers.

"Good job," Tyler said as Brolin rejoined him.

"Why are these losers cheering?" one of the Moonhaven Academy students sneered, his voice cutting through the air and silencing the crowd.

"These guys..." Tyler muttered, shaking his head. He wasn't the type to interfere, but this had crossed the line. Deciding to step in, he walked forward.

"I'll be your opponent," Tyler said calmly.

The Starfire Academy students, initially hopeful, deflated like balloons when they noticed Tyler's level.

"Heh... Looks like your combat department only has a Level 1 Master Warrior left. No, wait... you're a dual Warrior and Mage?" The Moonhaven student seemed surprised for a moment before sneering again. "So what? A one-star is still a one-star."

"Why is he stepping in? Isn't the humiliation enough?"

"Who is he?" murmured several Starfire students, their tone filled with doubt.

Brolin and Rabbit Kyla exchanged nervous glances, clearly worried for Tyler.

"I'm not from the combat department," Tyler clarified, his voice calm and steady.

"Not even combat department?" A collective groan rippled through the Starfire students as they lost what little hope they had left.

"Charms are allowed, right?" Tyler asked.

The Moonhaven student laughed hysterically, joined by his classmates. "So, your big plan is to use charms? Yes, charms are allowed," he said mockingly, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

"Alright. Let me take them out," Tyler said, completely ignoring the sneers.

From his storage device, he retrieved a small destructive charm and placed it on the ground.

Then another.

The crowd stared at him, their expressions ranging from confusion to disbelief. Who asks for time to prepare charms during a duel?

"Take your time, take your time," the Moonhaven student said, struggling to suppress his laughter.

But soon, his laughter faded.

Tyler continued placing charm after charm. The first few drew ridicule, but as he reached the tenth charm, the atmosphere shifted.

The entire campus fell silent, all eyes on Tyler as he methodically pulled out more charms.

Eleven. Twelve. Thirteen. Fourteen. To be continued.

Chapter 277: Tyler vs Maxwell

Maxwell, a student of Moonhaven Academy, harbored a grudge against Starfire Academy. Before arriving in Luka City, he had crossed paths with Lily Gomes, a final-year Starfire Academy student. Captivated by her beauty, Maxwell had tried to flex his abilities before her. However, his arrogance was swiftly met with humiliation as she decisively defeated him in combat. The experience left him seething with resentment, fueling his desire to disgrace any Starfire students he encountered.

Upon arriving at Camp 640 for a joint mission, Maxwell saw his chance to vent his frustrations. Ensuring that the more powerful 5-star Master-level students from Starfire were away, he began challenging the remaining students. He beat several of them with ease, their inability to match his skill offering a temporary balm to his wounded pride.

After defeating yet another opponent, Maxwell prepared to end the sparring session, satisfied with the day's conquests.

"I'll be your opponent," came a calm voice from the crowd.

Maxwell turned to see a young man stepping forward. At first glance, Tyler's youthful appearance intrigued him, but Maxwell quickly dismissed it. There were pills and treasures that could preserve

youth, so appearances were often deceptive. Sensing Tyler's aura, he realized his challenger was merely a 1-star Master Mage. Even more underwhelming, he could detect both Aura and Prana from him, signifying that he was a dual Warrior and Mage—an impressive feat on paper, but at such a low level, it hardly mattered.

A one-star is still a one-star afterall. Maxwell sneered, his disappointment evident.

"I'm not from the combat department," Tyler said casually, further deflating the crowd's expectations.

Maxwell barely hid his irritation. Still, he decided to indulge this upstart, believing it would only add to the humiliation Starfire would face.

The opponent even asked if Charms are allowed.

Maxwell laughed, as did his Moonhaven peers. So his big plan is to use charms? He decided to entertain them.

He even patiently allowed him to take his charms out.

But that is when he started to regret.

The Moonhaven students exchanged uneasy glances.

But as Tyler continued, the humor evaporated. One charm turned into five, then ten, then twenty. A mini mountain of charms soon stood in front of Tyler, each one glowing faintly with dormant power.

"What is he doing?" a Moonhaven student whispered nervously.

"Is this even allowed?" another murmured.

All the students gulped. Maxwell can Dodge one or two. But a whole bunches? Heck, even the spectators might get affected.

By the time Tyler finished, the once-confident Maxwell looked visibly uneasy. The Starfire students, who had initially doubted Tyler, now watched with a mixture of awe and apprehension.

When Tyler finally stood, his calm demeanor only heightened the tension. "Ready?" he asked, his voice cutting through the silence.

Maxwell, his bravado faltering, tried to mask his unease. "Are you trying to blast the whole Camp 640?" he asked, baffled.

Tyler chuckled. "Ah, no, no, no. Let me explain. These charms aren't just explosives. Look, this one's a Blaze Charm," he said, holding one up. "And this one is a Hydro Charm. Oh, and this one's a Sword Charm..."

As he spoke, Tyler casually activated and demonstrated a few of the charms. A burst of fire erupted from the Blaze Charm, a surge of water from the Hydro Charm, and spectral blades from the Sword Charm danced momentarily in the air before dissipating.

The spectators, both Moonhaven and Starfire students alike, stared in stunned silence.

Maxwell gulped, realizing he might have bitten off more than he could chew. The sheer volume of charms, coupled with their varied effects, made dodging impossible.

Maxwell's mind raced as he evaluated the situation. While the pile of charms in front of Tyler was intimidating, he realized that as long as he struck Tyler before he could activate them, he might still escape unscathed.

His eyes narrowed, scanning for an opening. Tyler, seemingly unaware, was casually turning around to pick up more charms. Maxwell smirked. "Now's the queue," he muttered under his breath, preparing to launch his attack.

"You're right, now is the queue," Tyler's voice suddenly echoed, calm but unnervingly precise.

Maxwell froze. Before he could react, an immense weight pressed down on him. His legs buckled under the sudden force, and his eyes darted upwards in panic. Above him, an enormous mountain shimmered into existence, its presence oppressive and inescapable.

"An array? B-But how?" Maxwell stammered, his voice laced with disbelief and confusion.

Then it hit him—he remembered the seemingly random charms Tyler had thrown down earlier for his "demonstration." A wave of realization washed over him, and his face twisted in a mix of shock and admiration.

"Looks like you've figured it out," Tyler said nonchalantly, a faint smile playing on his lips. "Yep, this is the 'Five Elemental Mountain Suppression Array.' It's powered by connecting five basic elements: fire, water, wood, metal, and earth. The charms I placed earlier were specifically arranged to form this array."

As Tyler spoke, faint scales began to shimmer into view on his skin. He pulled out additional charms—Temporary Strengthening Charm, Swift Charm, and several others—and applied them to himself with practiced ease.

He also held Thousand Explosive Punches Charm, Three days diarrhoea and so on.

"Impossible... Then how did you connect these without using additional materials?" one of the Moonhaven Academy students blurted out, their voice quivering with disbelief.

Tyler grinned, clearly relishing the moment. "Simple. I used this..."

A glowing chessboard materialized beneath him, its ethereal lines crisscrossing like veins of light.

"D-domain?" gasped a Moonhaven student, their voice echoing the collective shock of the crowd.

Even the Starfire students were taken aback. A domain, even a pseudo-domain, was something only advanced practitioners like Grandmaster and above could manifest, and for someone at Tyler's level, it was very very rare.

Tyler nodded. "It's just a pseudo-domain, nothing fancy. I temporarily used it to link the five elements and complete the array." His eyes locked onto Maxwell, who began to squirm under the increasing pressure.

Maxwell's instincts screamed at him to retreat. Realizing the tide of the battle had turned against him, he shouted, "I gi—"

Before the words could leave his mouth, a shard of pure, crystalline ice formed in front of him, sealing his lips in an unyielding frost.

"Too late," Tyler said, his voice a low whisper that carried an air of finality.

In the blink of an eye, Tyler vanished and reappeared before Maxwell. His fist, glowing with an explosive power that seemed to ripple through the air, connected squarely with Maxwell's stomach.

Maxwell's body crumpled from the impact, and the ice sealing his mouth turned red as blood seeped through it. His eyes rolled back as his unconscious form hurtled 50 meters across the sparring ground, landing in an unceremonious heap.

The spectators stood frozen in silence, their minds struggling to process what had just occurred. Then, slowly, murmurs began to ripple through the crowd, growing louder with each passing second.

Later, as the story spread throughout the camp, rumors abounded. Maxwell's humiliation was retold with increasing embellishment. The most enduring tale claimed that he had pooped himself for three days upon being knocked out by a mere 1-star Master-level Immortal Practitioner. Whether true or not, the legend only served to cement Tyler's unexpected victory in the annals of camp gossip.

At present, Tyler walked back to Rabbit Kyla and Brolin as the whole camp erupted in cheers. The students of Moonhaven Academy, their faces twisted in humiliation, ignored the commotion and quickly scattered away, feeling as though they had swallowed their pride alongside bitter defeat.

"That was awesome," Brolin said, patting Tyler on the back with enthusiasm.

"Haha, they got a taste of their own pills," Rabbit Kyla laughed, her voice carrying a mixture of satisfaction and amusement.

The three of them continued to chat casually as they walked away from the sparring grounds.

"Where's the other Kyla?" Tyler asked, glancing around.

"Ah, she's having Code Red today," Rabbit Kyla replied.

"What's Code Red?" Brolin asked, his face filled with genuine confusion.

"It's something that arrives every month exclusively for girls," Rabbit Kyla explained, her expression exasperated. "It makes them panic."

"Is there any way to stop it?" Brolin asked, his tone serious and innocent.

"Well, if you work hard enough, you can stop it for nine months," Tyler said with a straight face.

Rabbit Kyla blushed furiously at his comment, while Brolin nodded solemnly, taking the statement at face value.

"But the girls will also panic if it doesn't arrive every month," Rabbit Kyla added, trying to regain composure.

As their banter continued, the scene shifted to a nearby settlement. Inside, a man with a literal bird-like nose and feathered hands observed the trio from afar.

"Looks like your junior is quite impressive," the birdman said, addressing a girl in a lab coat standing next to him.

"Yeah, he is. I don't even know who he is, though," she replied nonchalantly, her focus elsewhere. "Well, I don't really care which side won, to be honest. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to experiment on a liquid that melts almost everything."

Without waiting for a response, the girl turned and walked away, her lab coat billowing slightly behind her.

The birdman took one last look at Tyler, his sharp gaze lingering. Then, with a swing of his arms, his hands transformed into wings, and he ascended into the sky, disappearing into the horizon.

While flying, He opened his communication device and looked at a picture. It is picture of 'Adult' Tyler.

"Found You..." He muttered as he flew away.

Chapter 278: Abnormal Readings

Flames flickered and crackled, consuming the overgrown vines that had overtaken the ruins of Crustle City. A group of mages worked diligently, their concentrated spells clearing the path toward the famous Mayor's "Good Boy" Statue, a once-pristine symbol of the city's pride.

Warriors stood on high alert, scanning their surroundings for any signs of danger, while the mages continued their task. The air was heavy with tension and the faint, oppressive hum of Abyss Mists swirling in the distance. Once the area was cleared, the mages placed glowing barricades around the statue, their energy shields flickering to life. These shields served as a temporary barrier, ensuring the Abyss Mists couldn't encroach further into the safe zone.

Tyler and the other Engineers moved swiftly, their hands deftly assembling pieces of equipment. They hurried inside a nearby building that had been repurposed as their temporary operations hub, the remnants of shattered glass and twisted metal crunching under their boots. Tyler set to work on building a series of interconnected arrays, the hum of prana-infused machinery filling the air.

As the Engineers worked, a girl in a white lab coat strode in with an air of authority, her eyes glued to the screen of her communication device. It was Sandra, a renowned researcher who often appeared aloof yet commanded respect with her sharp intellect. Without acknowledging the Engineers, she approached the central monitor in the room, her expression growing more serious with each passing second.

Tyler, carrying a pillar-like piece of equipment, noticed Sandra's intense focus as she studied the readings on her device. Intrigued, he placed the pillar near the monitor and walked closer to her. Before he could speak, Sandra grabbed his arm and pulled him closer.

"What are y—?" Tyler began, startled by her abrupt action.

"Shush," Sandra interrupted, her sharp gaze never leaving the monitor.

She studied the data intently, her fingers hovering over the controls as if afraid one wrong move would set off a catastrophe. Tyler, now curious, leaned over to glimpse the readings. His eyes widened.

"The Abyss Energy level is at 5.1?" he muttered under his breath, barely able to contain his shock.

Abyss Energy levels were measured on a scale of 1 to 10, with anything above 5 considered dangerously high.

Rabbit Kyla entered the room, carrying another device in her hands. She froze in her tracks when she saw Sandra holding onto Tyler. Her first instinct was to scold Sandra, as there was still much work to be done, but something about the woman's intense focus made her pause.

Rabbit Kyla's eyes darted to the monitor, and her face mirrored Tyler's earlier shock.

"A reading of 5.1 Abyss Energy? Is this feedback from the center of the Breakout?" she asked, her voice loud and filled with alarm.

Sandra's focus broke at Rabbit Kyla's words. She let go of Tyler abruptly, as if realizing only then that she had been holding him.

"When did you come?" Sandra asked, her tone casual despite the gravity of the situation. She pushed past Tyler and answered Rabbit Kyla's question, "This is an anomaly we detected in Crustle City. Probably..."

"An entrance," Tyler finished her sentence grimly.

Sandra nodded. "Yup. An Abyss Entrance might have appeared nearby. Readings above 5.1 are already catastrophic in our world. If it reaches 6, we could be facing the second Breakout."

Her voice was calm but laced with tension, the implications of her words hanging heavy in the air.

Rabbit Kyla frowned, her expression mirroring the concern on Tyler's face. "What are you going to do about it?" she asked.

Sandra didn't answer immediately. Her sharp eyes flicked between the readings on the monitor and the field report in her device. After a long pause, she finally replied, "I'll think about it."

With that, she turned and walked out of the room, leaving Tyler and Rabbit Kyla behind, their unease only growing as the oppressive hum of the Abyss Mists seemed to intensify in the distance.

Brolin was sitting on a crate, happily munching on some snacks, when Tyler strolled over to him. Not far away, a group of mages from Moonhaven Academy caught sight of Tyler and immediately scattered, running as though they'd seen an Abyss monster.

"Am I really that scary?" Tyler asked, raising an eyebrow at the retreating mages.

Brolin chuckled, his mouth still full of food. "You don't remember? They're Moonhaven Academy students. You totally destroyed their 5-star Master Level mage during that sparring match."

"Ah," Tyler replied, clearly uninterested. His gaze wandered for a moment before shifting to something else. "Speaking of mages, I haven't seen any warriors among them. What's that about?"

Brolin swallowed his food and shrugged. "That's because Moonhaven Academy only takes mages. Not only Moonhaven Academy, all academy only accepts Mages. Our academy is the only one that accepts warriors. Haven't you heard? Sects are for warriors, academies are for mages, and guilds are open to everyone. It's just how things are. Our academy really don't care whether Mage or Warrior as long as people seeks knowledge."

Before Tyler could respond, Rabbit Kyla joined them, biting into a sandwich with quick, deliberate munches.

"Huh. Don't you have to install a few more observation devices?" Tyler asked, eyeing her lazily.

Rabbit Kyla froze mid-bite, her cheeks puffed like a squirrel's. "Quick lunch break," she mumbled, her words muffled by the sandwich.

Brolin, watching her panic, smiled and offered his own sandwich. "Here, take mine."

She grabbed it without hesitation, gave him a quick peck on the cheek, and dashed off with her prizes.

Brolin sat there, beaming like an idiot, his expression dreamy.

Tyler rolled his eyes at the lovestruck warrior. "You're hopeless."

"Hey, Tyler bro," Brolin said suddenly, snapping out of his daze. "Help me write a love letter."

Tyler blinked, staring at him like he'd just spoken in tongues. "A love letter? Dude, that's ancient."

Brolin scratched the back of his head. "Yeah, but Kyla's into that old-fashioned stuff. What about a poem? Think you can come up with something for me?"

"Still old," Tyler said, leaning against the crate, "but let's see what I can do."

Brolin quickly whipped out a pen and paper, ready to jot down Tyler's words.

Tyler gawked. "Seriously?"

"Seriously... " Brolin wrote that.

"No no no... That's not the poem. Strike it off."

Tyler groaned and thought for a moment before smirking. "Alright, here's one."

Brolin poised his pen over the paper.

"Roses are red,

The sun gives off heat,

If you are ever tired,

Use my face as your seat."

Brolin furrowed his brow as he scribbled the words down. "Is this even a poem? Will this even work?"

"Let's test it," Tyler said, snatching the paper and passing it to Human Kyla, who had just walked into the room.

Human Kyla accepted the note with a curious expression. Her eyes scanned the words, and her face turned beet red before she burst out laughing. Shaking her head, she nodded at Tyler and left the room, still chuckling.

"It worked?" Brolin asked, bewildered. Then he grinned mischievously. "What are you planning, Tyler? Trying to get lucky tonight?"

Tyler crossed his arms, smirking. "Lucky? Nah, I'm aiming to get suffocated tonight."

The next morning, Tyler and Human Kyla walked out of the same room, their expressions nonchalant. However, as they turned the corner, they spotted Rabbit Kyla and Brolin exiting another room nearby.

Both pairs froze in place, their gazes locking awkwardly. After a tense moment, they exchanged stiff smiles and quickly went their separate ways without saying a word.

A short while later, everyone gathered for a meeting in one of the camp's larger rooms. Sandra stood at the front, addressing the group with a grim expression.

"The Abyss Energy reading has risen to 5.3 within just a day," she began. "That's an increase of 0.2, which is significant. To address this, we're forming three expedition teams to investigate the area showing abnormal readings. Once we locate the source, we will work to mend the Abyss Spatial Crack causing this instability."

A hand shot up in the crowd. "What if the readings are coming from an Abyss Monster?"

Sandra nodded, anticipating the question. "That's why each team will include an alchemist, engineers, combat warriors, and mages. This way, we'll have a balanced group prepared for any scenario."

She glanced around the room, her tone growing firm. "Team assignments will be randomized. You'll receive a message shortly."

A Few Hours Later

Brolin approached Tyler with Rabbit Kyla and Human Kyla in tow. Their expressions ranged from neutral to mildly amused.

"We three got assigned to the same team," Rabbit Kyla said, her voice tinged with excitement. "It's going to be fun working together!"

Tyler glanced at his communication device and sighed heavily.

"What's with the sigh?" Human Kyla asked, smirking as she nudged him. "Sad you're not with us?"

Wordlessly, Tyler tilted the screen toward them. The device displayed the team assignments: Team A, Team B, and Team C. Tyler's name was listed under Team C, alongside a familiar name in the leader's column: Maxwell—the very person he had humiliated during the sparring match.

"Talk about luck," Brolin muttered under his breath, wincing on Tyler's behalf.

Tyler sighed again.

Chapter 279: Expedition into the Abyss Breakout

Maxwell walked out of the lodging area, a noticeable air of pride surrounding him. In his hand, he carried a long staff with an intricate dragon head carved into its edge, radiating elegance and power.

"Cool staff," one of his colleagues remarked, nodding toward the gleaming artifact.

Maxwell grinned, clearly reveling in the compliment. "Yeah, it's my Dragonova."

"The model that increases a user's magic power by 10%?" the man asked, astonished.

Maxwell nodded with smug satisfaction. "Exactly. Not everyone can afford something like this."

As he left, his chest puffed out with pride, he overheard a snickering conversation from the group behind him.

"Lol, what were you talking about with poopy-pants Maxwell?" one of them whispered, barely containing their laughter.

"Don't come near us. You smell like shitt now."

"Next time, use toilet paper, bro," another chimed in mockingly.

"Shh! Shut up. He hasn't left yet," the first whispered urgently, though it only made the others laugh harder.

Maxwell's face turned crimson as their words reached his ears. He quickened his pace, gripping his Dragonova staff tightly, and muttered curses under his breath.

At the Good Boy Statue

Maxwell arrived at the meeting point, his embarrassment still simmering beneath his skin. The imposing statue cast a long shadow over the group gathered there. Spotting his teammates, he strode toward them, trying to reassert his authority.

"You're late," Maxwell barked the moment he approached Tyler, his voice sharp with irritation.

Tyler raised an eyebrow, his expression calm and unbothered. "I'm the earliest one here. You're the one who's late."

Maxwell's eyes narrowed. "I'm the leader here. If I say you're late, then you're late. As punishment, you'll guard the frontline."

Tyler crossed his arms. "I'm an engineer, not part of the combat department."

"Then scout ahead," Maxwell snapped, refusing to back down.

"Alright," Tyler replied casually, giving a small shrug.

Maxwell blinked in surprise. He had expected Tyler to argue further. But Tyler's quick agreement robbed him of the satisfaction he was seeking, leaving him slightly off balance.

With that, Team C—under Maxwell's reluctant and abrasive leadership—set out to begin their mission.

The team moved cautiously through the broken streets of Crustle City. The oppressive aura of the Abyss Mist hung heavily in the air, distorting the ruins and making every shadow seem alive.

The three combat mages in the group except Maxwell, pointed at their wand , staffs and burned the vines that are silently trying to get closer to them. The vines are so smaller, so even a small spark is enough to burn them. So they didn't use more prana.

Tyler walked ahead of the group, scanning the area with a handheld device. The screen flickered with energy readings, the numbers climbing steadily as they advanced.

"We're getting closer to the first checkpoint." Tyler announced, his voice steady.

Maxwell, who had been trailing behind, quickly stepped forward. "Everyone, stay alert. This area could be crawling with Abyss creatures."

The group nodded, their expressions tense. Engineers, mages, and warriors alike kept their eyes peeled, weapons and tools at the ready.

As they approached a collapsed building, the Abyss Energy readings spiked dramatically. Tyler held up a hand, signaling the group to stop.

"Wait," he said, frowning at his device. "The Abyss Energy level here is 3.5. There's something big nearby."

Maxwell immediately stepped forward, taking charge. "Mages, prepare defensive barriers! Warriors, form a perimeter! Engineers, stay behind the lines!"

Tyler glanced at Maxwell briefly but said nothing, focusing instead on fine-tuning his device to pinpoint the exact source of the anomaly.

Suddenly, a low, guttural growl echoed from the shadows. The group froze as a massive, deformed creature emerged. Its twisted, monstrous body was cloaked in black mist, and its glowing red eyes locked onto the group like a predator sizing up its prey.

"Abyss Beast!" someone shouted in alarm.

Maxwell raised his Dragonova staff, his face stern. "Hold your ground! It's a Deadly Panther. We can take it down if we work together!"

The mages immediately began casting defensive spells, their chants forming a shimmering barrier around the team. The warriors drew their weapons, spreading out cautiously, while Tyler adjusted his device to record the encounter.

Maxwell unleashed an attack first. A giant water dragon materialized from his staff, surging toward the Deadly Panther. The creature didn't flinch. Its red eyes glowed ominously, and with a burst of light, the water dragon dissipated into ordinary water, splashing harmlessly onto the ground.

"Beware of its red light!" Maxwell shouted. "It negates prana and aura-based attacks. Coordinate your strikes! Warriors, don't engage in close combat unless absolutely necessary. Mages, look for openings to attack from range."

Tyler was impressed despite himself. Maxwell might have been insufferable, but his knowledge of Abyss creatures was undeniable.

Maxwell conjured another water dragon while the other mages launched elemental spells from different angles. The Deadly Panther snarled, its focus divided between the simultaneous attacks. Unable to negate all of them at once, it was struck by several spells, roaring in pain.

A warrior, seizing the opportunity, darted in from behind. His spear found its mark, piercing through the creature's thick hide and pinning it to the ground. The Deadly Panther let out a final, anguished growl before collapsing lifelessly.

Cheers erupted from the group. The tension melted away as they celebrated their victory, many of them praising Maxwell's leadership.

But Tyler remained silent, his eyes glued to his device.

Maxwell noticed and frowned. "What are you still doing? The fight is over."

"The heck..." Tyler muttered, his voice laced with concern. "There are more of them."

"What?" Maxwell's confidence faltered for the first time.

Tyler raised his head, meeting Maxwell's panicked gaze. "Well, leader, I suggest setting up a Concealment Array. Now."

As if on cue, a series of growls echoed from deeper within the ruins. Shadows shifted, and soon, more Deadly Panthers emerged—an entire pack of them. They prowled toward the group, their eyes glowing with predatory intent.

The team hurriedly activated a Concealment Array, its shimmering barrier enveloping them just as the pack reached the spot where their fallen companion lay.

They ate the fallen panther.

The Deadly Panthers sniffed the ground, growling softly as they investigated the area. Inside the array, the team held their breath, their hearts pounding in unison.

"Don't make a sound," Maxwell whispered, his earlier bravado replaced with genuine fear.

The Abyss Beasts prowled closer, their hulking forms just meters away from the group. Tyler monitored the array, his fingers hovering over his device to ensure it remained stable.

"Please work... please work..." one of the mages whispered under her breath.

One of the Panthers paused, lifting its head as if sensing something. It turned toward the concealed group, its glowing red eyes narrowing.

Time seemed to stretch endlessly as everyone waited, praying the array would hold.

Finally, the Panther let out a low growl and turned away, joining the rest of the pack as they moved deeper into the ruins.

The team remained silent for several minutes after the Panthers disappeared, too afraid to make a sound.

"They're gone," one of the girl in the group finally whispered, exhaling a shaky breath.

"They didn't leave." Tyler said, showing the device the Panthers are gathered together nearby. Wandering aimlessly.

"What should we do?" Asked a warrior.

"We will retreat and take another route." Maxwell quickly made a decision, everyone nodded. They quietly retreated.

"They're gone," one of the girls whispered, exhaling a shaky breath.

"They haven't left," Tyler interjected, holding up his device. The screen showed the Abyss Panthers lingering nearby, moving aimlessly but still dangerously close.

"What do we do now?" a warrior asked, his voice laced with unease.

Maxwell furrowed his brows, his earlier confidence returning. "We retreat and take another route. Stay quiet and move carefully."

The group nodded in agreement, their movements cautious as they began to backtrack. The Concealment Array still shimmered faintly, masking their presence from the prowling creatures.

Tyler kept his eyes on the device, monitoring the Panthers' movements. Every step felt like an eternity as the team carefully navigated the ruins, avoiding the beasts.

After what seemed like hours, they finally reached a safer area. The oppressive atmosphere of Abyss Energy began to thin, and everyone let out a collective sigh of relief.

"That was too close," a mage muttered, her hands trembling slightly.

Maxwell turned to the group, his expression stern but calm. "We'll regroup and reassess. This mission is not over yet. I will update the information in the log."

He quickly updated the information in the log which will be received by the people in Camp 640.

Tyler sat on a broken debris and looked at the foggy sky. He has bad premonition in his heart. Something is coming.

Beyond the Ixalaria Continent lies the gateway to the True North, a region of chaotic oceans inhabited by powerful Immortals.

On one of the floating islands, an Immortal sat regally on his throne, exuding an aura of dominance.

A man appeared before him, kneeling respectfully. "Immortal Feng, we've located Tyler White," he reported, his tone reverent.

He proceeded to provide detailed information about Tyler White, even presenting a current image.

Immortal Feng's eyes slowly opened, glowing with an intense light. "At last... it's time to settle the score."

In the blink of an eye, he vanished from his throne and reappeared at the edge of the Ixalaria Continent. The speed of his movement defied comprehension.

Standing at the precipice, he gazed out at the land before him, where half of the continent lay shrouded in the ominous Abyss Mist. A faint smirk curled his lips.

"This time, my powers are unrestricted," he murmured, his voice filled with resolve. "Let's see if your luck can save you now, Tyler White."

Chapter 280: 280. Exploring Further

Floating above the clouds, Feng Feiyan's piercing gaze was fixed on the land below, half of which lay veiled under the ominous Abyss Mist. A faint smirk played on his lips, his expression a mixture of confidence and malice.

His purpose here was singular: to find Tyler White and settle a score that had haunted him for years.

After countless years of searching, tracking, and frustration, Feng Feiyan finally had a lead. Tyler White was within his grasp, and this time, no force in the universe would stop him from achieving his goal.

As he prepared to descend into the Ixalaria Continent, a sudden disturbance broke his concentration. A group of figures appeared before him, blocking his path.

"Greetings, respected Senior." The voice came from a man in a pristine white uniform, bearing the insignia of a high-ranking officer. "I am a Commander-level officer from the Federation."

Floating beside the officer was another group, their leader a dignified merman clad in an impeccable suit and coat. The merman bowed slightly and introduced himself, "I represent the Bank of Atlantis. My colleagues and I welcome you to the Ixalaria Continent, but—"

"But we regret to inform you that entry for Immortal-level beings is restricted due to the Abyss Breakout," the commander interrupted, his tone firm yet respectful.

Feng Feiyan's eyes narrowed. "This level of Abyss is nothing to me."

"We are well aware of your strength, Senior," the merman replied politely. "Your reputation as a Half-Celestial precedes you. However, our organizations have decreed that Immortal-level interference is prohibited during this breakout. The Abyss serves as a crucible for young practitioners to grow. Moreover, your presence could potentially trigger the ascension of a powerful Abyss Monster."

Feng Feiyan's expression remained calm, but his tone was firm. "I have business here."

The commander and merman exchanged glances. The tension in the air was palpable. Finally, the commander spoke, "We understand the urgency, but our orders are absolute. If your business is truly critical, we are authorized to assist you. Be it rescuing someone or finding a person, we can help."

Feng Feiyan's smirk deepened. "How about killing someone?"

The merman's calm demeanor faltered for a moment before he quickly shook his head. "That we cannot do. Taking a life invites karmic repercussions. Unless the target is an enemy of our organizations, we cannot involve ourselves in such matters."

The commander, however, seemed curious. "What is the level of the individual in question?"

"Master-level," Feng Feiyan replied casually.

The group of immortals stared at him, their shock evident. How could someone so far beneath Feng Feiyan's rank provoke such wrath? If they knew that this "low-level" practitioner had humiliated Feng Feiyan in front of billions as a mere mortal, their astonishment would have been even greater.

"We cannot condone direct interference," the merman reiterated. "However, you could place a bounty on this individual. Let the Abyss practitioners handle him."

Feng Feiyan's eyes glinted with determination. "I want to kill him with my own hands." His calm tone belied the ferocity of his intent, sending chills down their spines.

"Then perhaps an 'alive only' bounty?" the commander suggested. "This way, the bounty hunters would bring him to you without crossing the line of karmic interference."

After a moment's thought, Feng Feiyan nodded. It wasn't ideal, but it would suffice for now. His gaze shifted back to the Ixalaria Continent, where the Abyss Mist loomed ominously over half the land.

'Perhaps it is your 'luck' that the Abyss Breakout occurred now, Tyler White,' he thought coldly. 'But that 'abnormal luck' won't protect you forever.'

With that, Feng Feiyan turned and vanished into the clouds, leaving the Federation officer and Bank of Atlantis representatives exchanging uneasy glances. The encounter was over, but the storm it foretold was only beginning.

Tyler, blissfully unaware that he had narrowly avoided a catastrophic situation, stretched lazily and emerged from the warmth of his instant home. Yawning, he pulled a juice bottle from his storage device, infused it with a touch of his Ice element to chill it, and took a refreshing sip. The chill beverage complemented his leisurely mood, his actions a stark contrast to the tense atmosphere surrounding him.

Outside, the rest of Group C was still awake, their faces haggard from a sleepless night. They had been tirelessly searching for the anomaly radiating high levels of Abyss Energy. Despite their exhaustion, their disbelief only grew as they watched Tyler step out, completely refreshed.

Tyler, being the scout the previous day, had been granted permission to rest. But no one anticipated that he would deploy an instant house—a luxury unheard of in this harsh environment. He had even invited the group to join him, but Maxwell, their leader, harbored a grudge and had politely declined the offer. Now, the group regretted their decision.

While they endured the freezing Abyss environment, Tyler emerged as though he had spent the night in a five-star suite. His refreshed demeanor only deepened the resentment in Maxwell's heart.

"Good morning!" Tyler greeted cheerfully, oblivious to the glares directed at him.

Maxwell cleared his throat, masking his irritation. "If everyone's ready, we'll proceed. The river route seems to be the best option." He pointed at an engineer and a warrior. "You two, scout ahead."

As the group prepared to move, an alchemist in the team couldn't contain her curiosity. "What about the house?" she asked, her voice tinged with envy.

"Oh, that? It's a one-time setup, not portable," Tyler replied nonchalantly, waving his hand. "But it doesn't matter. I've got more."

The group's collective mood soured further. Several members twitched visibly at his casual wealth. Maxwell, in particular, tightened his jaw and turned away. Deep down, he regretted ever accepting that sparring match against Tyler. In a flash of extravagant charm usage, Tyler had humiliated him without breaking a sweat.

Group C reached the Noy River, but something was amiss.

"Is this really the Noy River?" asked one of the mages, squinting at the unsettling sight before them.

"It used to be one of the clearest rivers I've ever seen," murmured the man with the spear.

The river was now a disturbing shade of red, its waters teeming with bizarre creatures. Strange plant-like organisms had contorted themselves into the shapes of fish, leaping and twisting ominously.

"What in the Abyss..." Tyler muttered as he examined the peculiar plants. They emitted an unsettling aura, mimicking fish but clearly unnatural.

Maxwell's expression darkened. "We need to find a way to cross. Tyler, you take the left side. The rest of us will move this way and look for an opportunity to cross."

The sinister edge in Maxwell's tone wasn't lost on the group. Everyone understood that Maxwell was singling Tyler out, likely as payback. But none of them spoke up, preferring to watch the drama unfold.

"Got it," Tyler replied indifferently and turned to head left. He didn't care about Maxwell's intentions. His calm and disinterested response only fueled Maxwell's irritation further.

Maxwell led the rest of the group along the riverbank, his steps heavy with suppressed frustration. "Let's see if there's a crossing up ahead," he muttered, though his real focus was still on Tyler.

Unbeknownst to the group, a shadowy figure observed them silently from the depths of the forest. Its gaze flicked between Maxwell's team and Tyler, who had taken the left path. Then, with barely a whisper of movement, the figure dissolved into the shadows, vanishing instantly.

Maxwell squinted at the strange fish-like creatures leaping in and out of the crimson river. "Test their strength," he ordered curtly.

One of the mages nodded, conjuring a fireball and hurling it at a nearby "fish." The creature exploded into charred fragments.

"Nice shot. So they're not strong," Maxwell commented, a smirk tugging at his lips.

The engineer of the group was less optimistic. Scanning the area with a compact detection device, she muttered, "But there are a lot of them. A swarm could overwhelm us."

As if in response, the river began to churn. More of the fish-like entities emerged, their numbers multiplying rapidly. The bizarre creatures twisted and dove, their plant-like forms glinting ominously in the dim Abyss light.

Even Maxwell, usually confident to the point of arrogance, took a step back. "Fighting our way through isn't an option," he murmured, unease creeping into his voice. The uncanny nature of these Abyss plants left him unsettled.

For hours, the team tried various approaches to deal with the creatures. Potions to repel them failed, artifacts fizzled out, and magical attacks only seemed to provoke more activity. Exhaustion and frustration began to weigh heavily on the group.

Suddenly, Maxwell noticed a figure approaching them from the distance. He frowned, his hand instinctively moved his staff.

"You're back?" he asked sharply as Tyler came into view.

Tyler nodded, his expression calm. "I found a way to cross the river."

The group froze, stunned. "That quickly?" someone blurted out in disbelief.

"Follow me," Tyler said simply, turning back the way he came.

The group exchanged skeptical glances but followed nonetheless. Tyler led them to an enormous tree, its colossal trunk towering like a skyscraper. Massive branches stretched across the river, forming a natural bridge that connected both banks.

"We can use this to cross," Tyler announced, gesturing at the thick, sturdy branches.

Maxwell eyed the tree warily. "Are you sure it's safe?" he asked, his voice low.

Tyler shrugged nonchalantly. He began climbing up the tree. Showing that it is safe.

The group didn't notice the Giant Tree opened its eyes for a second and closed it.