

R Cultivator 321

Chapter 321: 'That Thing'

Tyler sprinted through the ancient village, gripping a copper pot upside down in one hand while the copper ladle is inside.

The Silver Honey Hard Candies poured out endlessly, cascading across the ground like a river of shimmering sweets.

"Yeah... fill me with all your white stuff... aahnn..." a deep, ancient voice moaned in pleasure.

Tyler nearly tripped. His face twitched.

"Can you shut your damn mouth?" he snapped.

"You mean the village entrance?" Vale, the village itself, asked innocently.

"That Ladle makes things easier." Mana muttered.

Everytime Tyler asked Mana to make copies before the Ladle. But now with the Ladle inside he can pour out copies without stopping. Mana felt that the Ladle took her job.

Far away, Mathilda, Misra, Astrid, and the others abruptly turned toward the direction of the village.

"Did I just hear a moan?" Mathilda tilted her head, her brow furrowing in confusion.

Back in the village, the eerie, colorless atmosphere seemed far less intimidating now, mostly thanks to Vale's downright embarrassing voice.

The candies that had fallen to the ground were being absorbed little by little, vanishing as the village greedily took them in.

Tyler sighed, trying to push aside the awkwardness. "Half the village is already covered in these candies. Now, tell me what's happening."

Tyler threw the Copper Pot and Ladle to Mana and asked her to continue.

Mana happily took it, she even gave a smug look to the ladle. Thankfully Tyler didn't see her silly reaction.

Vale's massive voice shifted, as if considering the request. Then his voice, deep and rumbling, filled the air.

"If you see any souls, just ignore them," Vale warned. "They won't harm you. Those pitiful things can't reincarnate... but whatever you do, don't try to destroy them. It might only strengthen that thing."

Tyler's eyes narrowed. "That thing?"

Vale hesitated, as if struggling to hold onto the thought before his memories could be wiped again. Meanwhile, the Silver Honey Hard Candies were depleting even faster—the village was absorbing them desperately, as if clinging to its fleeting consciousness.

"Actually..." Vale's voice took on a nostalgic tone. "These fruits that enhances... they were carried by one of the outsiders long ago. I collected them. I planted them. I hoped someone would use them to regain their memories... to escape this cursed place..." It began to speak little gibberish as if lost in thought "Then those Bees sucked sap from those flowers came out from those fruit trees and mutated..."

The ancient village seemed to tremble.

"Wow... even my old memories are coming together..." Vale muttered, his voice growing fainter, yet filled with revelation.

Mana circling in the village, making sure more candies fell onto the ground. If Vale was finally remembering things, then he had to keep this up.

Vale's voice deepened, filled with something between realization and sorrow.

"Long ago... something fell here. It wanted to rest in peace ... but it failed... The day that thing fell here, it was overflowing power. Even Half - Gods and Half - Devils from the deepest Abyss Floor got interested in it..... "

Tyler asked. "What was it?"

A heavy silence.

Then Vale's voice dropped into a whisper.

"...A Pinky Finger."

Tyler was dumbfounded.

A Pinky Finger?...

"A Pinky Finger?" Mana asked loudly.

The air grew heavy as Vale hesitated, his voice strained as if something were resisting him.

"Yeah... Don't underestimate that thing..." he warned. "That... Pinky Finger fell into this Abyss Floor. It took control of everything. The Half-Gods couldn't descend to the top floor, so they sent Celestial Immortals instead... but they were all absorbed by the Pinky."

Tyler's mind raced. His thoughts flickered to Adam—the one who had saved him before. Even Adam, as powerful as he was, would seem insignificant compared to this pinky's owner, right?

"Where is it now?" Tyler asked.

Vale's voice suddenly broke, static-like distortions crackling through the air. It was as if something—or someone—was trying to silence him.

Then—

CRACK!

The entire village trembled. The ground lurched violently, nearly throwing Tyler off balance. Buildings warped, twisting into unnatural shapes, as if reality itself were distorting.

"Shit—what's happening now?!" Tyler shouted, bracing himself.

Vale groaned, his voice carrying an eerie, echoing resonance. "It's not happy... it knows what I'm trying to do..."

Tyler's eyes narrowed. It?

His heart pounded as he realized the truth.

The Pinky Finger...

It was aware of them.

Before he could question further, a deafening howl erupted from deep within the village.

A massive shadow rippled across the ground.

Something was coming.

Mathilda, Misra, and the others, still standing at a distance, felt the air shift.

"That's not normal," one of Grandmaster muttered, gripping his weapon tightly.

"Tyler's in trouble," Astrid said, already stepping forward.

Back in the village, the dark shadow expanded, covering the entire area in a suffocating pressure.

Tyler instinctively braced himself.

Then—

It emerged.

A colossal, twisting mass of darkness clawed its way up from the very center of the village.

Its shape was ever-changing, shifting between a monstrous figure and a writhing storm of black tendrils. Deep within it, thousands of souls flickered like dying embers—trapped, imprisoned, screaming in silence.

Tyler's breath caught in his throat.

"...Those are the trapped souls?" he asked, eyes locked onto the monstrous entity before him.

Vale's fading voice rumbled, barely audible.

"The Pinky is inside those... Please... don't... destroy... the souls..."

Then, silence.

The entity loomed over Tyler, its sheer presence crushing down like an overwhelming tide.

Then, without warning—

It lunged.

Tyler barely managed to dodge, rolling to the side as one of its massive tendrils smashed into the ground where he had just stood. The impact sent a shockwave through the village, shattering the already fragile ruins into dust and rubble.

"How the hell am I supposed to beat this thing without my Aura or Prana?" Tyler muttered, frustration creeping into his voice. "And how do I get the Pinky Finger without killing these souls?"

A strange, familiar voice called out.

"Huh... Tyler..."

Tyler's eyes widened as he turned toward the Soul Monster. His heart nearly stopped when he saw a familiar figure inside the writhing mass.

Mana!

She floated among the other trapped souls, her expression oddly calm despite the chaotic storm of spirits swirling around her.

"Are you trapped?!" Tyler asked, raising his trident in alarm.

Mana simply waved, completely unfazed. "Ah... don't worry. Mana is safe."

To prove her point, she swam through the entity's mass like it was water, weaving effortlessly between the other lost souls.

Tyler's brows furrowed. "So... you can move freely?"

Mana nodded. "Looks like the other souls could do the same, but they don't have awareness like me."

Tyler exhaled, still tense but slightly relieved.

"See if you can reach the finger inside it," he called, dodging another tendril strike.

Suddenly, the creature's movements became faster. The tendrils lashed out wildly, nearly nailing Tyler to the ground.

He braced for impact—

But the ground beneath him shifted.

The earth itself moved like waves, carrying Tyler away from danger just in time.

Tyler's eyes widened in realization. "Thanks, Vale... You still alive?"

No response.

The air was thick with an unsettling silence.

"It seems like you can't answer," Tyler muttered. His grip on the trident tightened. "Fine. Let's just buy some time until Mana reaches the finger."

As if understanding his intent, the ground beneath him moved again.

The entire village shifted.

Buildings creaked and twisted unnaturally. The land reshaped itself, rubble merging together in an impossible reconstruction.

Then, before Tyler's eyes—

A massive giant formed.

It was made of stone and earth, towering as high as the Soul Monster. Its glowing, hollow eyes mirrored the shape of Vale's, yet its body was composed of the very village itself.

Tyler stood at its peak, gazing down at the battlefield below.

A grin tugged at his lips. "Now that is cool."

He gave the giant a solid pat, as if reassuring a friend.

The Soul Monster screeched, its wailing voices overlapping in a cacophony of rage and sorrow.

Tyler's gaze hardened. "Alright, big guy. Let's do this."

The earth giant responded with a deep rumbling noise before raising one of its enormous fists.

Then, with a force that shattered the air—

It swung.

The impact sent a shockwave through the entire village. Dust and debris exploded outward as the Soul Monster reeled back, its form distorting from the sheer force of the blow.

Tyler held his ground, watching closely.

The creature was staggering, but it wasn't weakening. If anything... it was reforming.

"Damn it," he muttered. "Just as I thought. Physical attacks won't work on this thing."

Then the monster attacked, but the village didn't fight back—it simply endured the assault.

"Oh, right... You wouldn't have attacked if physical attacks actually worked," Tyler muttered as realization dawned on him. "You don't want to destroy those souls."

Tyler's mind raced, quickly deciding on his next move.

Suddenly, Mana reappeared and tossed his copper pot and ladle back to him. Catching them, a plan formed in Tyler's mind.

He pointed the ladle toward the soul monster.

Chapter 322: Ashes to Ashes.

As Tyler pointed his ladle toward the monstrous entity, he made a sweeping gesture.

The effect was immediate.

The countless souls that had been clinging to the creature's form were suddenly stripped away, vanishing in an instant.

They weren't destroyed—no, they were inside the ladle.

Tyler exhaled, steadying his thoughts. He knew the Copper Pot didn't have the ability to copy souls, so there was no point in even trying. Instead, he simply released them. The souls, momentarily freed, drifted away... only to merge back into the Soul Monster.

His brows furrowed. 'That's not enough. I need to separate them from the monster completely.'

Just then, Mana's voice rang in his head.

"Found it!"

Tyler snapped his attention to the center of the monster's writhing form.

A faint glow pulsed from deep within its mass.

The Pinky Finger.

There it was—floating inside the core of the creature, radiating that eerie, silver light.

A wave of unease crawled down Tyler's spine. He had to extract it, but how? If he destroyed the monster outright, the souls trapped inside it might be lost forever. He needed another way.

The Soul Monster let out an ear-splitting wail, its form contorting as if in agony. Then, without warning, it lashed out.

A tidal wave of souls surged toward Mana.

Tyler's breath hitched. 'Is she in danger?!'

But Mana just... laughed.

"Ahaha! That tickles!" she giggled, spinning playfully as the souls swirled around her like ocean currents.

Tyler mouth twitched, he casually took a soul using the copper ladle and touched the soul. He felt sting in his hand.

"How the heck she feels tickled?" Tyler muttered.

The monster's form shifted again, refocusing its wrath on him.

Tendrils shot out, slamming into the massive stone giant he stood on. The force sent cracks spider-webbing across its rocky body.

Tyler gritted his teeth. "Yeah, yeah. Keep swinging. This punching bag can take it."

Another attack. Another thunderous shockwave. The air itself seemed to vibrate from the sheer intensity of the battle.

The Soul Monster roared in frustration, its howls growing more chaotic.

Mana used the momentary distraction to dive deeper into the creature's core.

"I'm almost there!" she called out.

Tyler exhaled sharply, gripping his ladle in his hand. "No pressure, but hurry the hell up!"

The monster lunged again.

This time, its entire form shifted into a monstrous maw, lined with countless wailing faces. The sheer horror of it sent a shiver down Tyler's spine.

The giant beneath him reacted instinctively, raising a massive stone arm to block the attack.

CRACK!

Fissures splintered across the giant's body. Its form was weakening.

Tyler winced. 'Not good.'

Mana's voice rang out again, but this time, it wasn't a playful giggle.

Something was wrong.

Just as she reached for the Pinky Finger, the Soul Monster let out an earsplitting, inhuman shriek. The sheer intensity of it made Tyler's head feel like it was about to split open.

Mana, however, just laughed.

"Haha! Not again!" she cried as another wave of souls washed over her. They were 'attacking' her again. Tyler could tell. It was more like they were trying to stop her in some strange, desperate way. Or it's just soul attacks didn't work on Mana.

But then—

The Pinky Finger vanished.

One second, it was right in front of Mana. The next, it was simply gone.

The Soul Monster froze.

For the first time since the battle had started, it stopped moving.

Mana floated backward, tilting her head in confusion. "Huh? Where'd it go?"

Then—something shifted.

The countless trapped souls inside the monster... their hollow, vacant eyes flickered with something new.

Recognition.

It was as if, for the first time in who knows how long, they understood what had happened to them.

And in that moment—

The monster collapsed.

Its massive, grotesque form unraveled, breaking apart like mist caught in the wind.

The remaining souls, now freed, drifted away—some ascending into the sky, others simply fading into nothingness.

Tyler, standing atop the broken stone giant, looked down at his ladle.

And there it was.

A small, shriveled pinky finger sat in the center of it, glowing with that ominous silver light.

Tyler let out a small smile as he casually twirled his copper ladle. The once-elusive Pinky Finger now rested securely inside it.

The world around them shifted.

The eerie, unnatural landscape dissolved as the Village of Vale began to reappear in its original form. The oppressive aura lifted, replaced by an almost peaceful silence.

Just then, the others arrived, rushing toward him.

"Wow, you guys are fast," Tyler said, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

Mathilda, slightly out of breath, rolled her eyes. "Huh... We tried running toward the village, but no matter how fast we ran, we couldn't get any closer. It was like an illusion." She paused before asking, "So... what happened?"

Tyler was about to answer, but Misra spoke first.

"It's over."

Her voice was soft yet filled with certainty. She lifted her gaze, her expression unreadable. "I can feel it..."

Above them, countless souls appeared, flickering like fireflies against the dim sky. Some hovered momentarily before vanishing, while others drifted upward, dissolving into the heavens.

Mana, who had been floating nearby, suddenly flew back toward Tyler. Without warning, she threw herself at him, she disappeared into Tyler.

"Tyler... Mana is tired. Mana's gonna sleep," she murmured drowsily.

He let out a chuckle. "Yeah, yeah. Just don't drool in me."

"Yeah... No insertion of liquid inside you." Mana replied.

"Can you please stop phrasing like that." Tyler sighed.

She didn't respond—her breathing had already slowed into a soft, steady rhythm.

Tyler sighed, shifting his gaze back to the scene unfolding before them.

Misra stood still, her eyes locked onto a single soul drifting toward her.

It looked just like her.

The two figures stared at each other for a long moment, neither speaking. Then, gently, the soul extended a hand.

Misra hesitated before reaching out.

Their fingers barely brushed—then suddenly, a soft smile appeared on Misra's lips.

A silent understanding passed between them.

Back in the village of Vale, the inhabitants of Vale began to regain their memories.

But as they did—one by one, they faded into dust.

A husband and wife held each other tightly, sadness and acceptance etched onto their faces. They shared one final embrace before their bodies crumbled away.

Children, who had been trapped in time, now bore mature expressions far beyond their years. With quiet sighs of relief, they too dissolved.

The village itself—the wooden homes, the winding river, the dense forest—began vanishing.

One after another, they turned to dust.

The Monsters in the forest, the animals, the plants. Everything was disappearing one by one. Finally the Dark Horizon is also disappearing.

Back inside the Dark Horizon,

"Looks like I was just consciousness created by that Finger ..." A handsome man in a clay form said.

"Vale?" Tyler asked.

"Bye My friend." Vale simply waved his hand and disappeared.

Misra stood frozen, her gaze fixed on her own soul.

Then—she too began to fade along with her soul.

Her hands, her arms, her legs... little by little, she was disappearing.

Mathilda's breath caught in her throat. "Misra..."

Misra turned, smiling softly.

"Don't be sad... Leon, darling." She reached out, patting Mathilda's head. But her hands disappeared.

Mathilda trembled. "But—"

Before she could say more, Misra suddenly giggled.

"Ahh... I wanted to give a long, dramatic speech," she said quickly, her words rushing as if she knew she was running out of time. "Something inspiring, maybe even a little poetic—Anyways I love yo—"

She vanished turned into Ashes and disappeared.

Her final words were cut off mid-sentence, leaving nothing but empty air where she had stood.

Mathilda stood frozen, her hands clenched into fists. Then, silently—

Tears spilled down her cheeks.

Tyler hugged her and patted her back. He didn't notice the finger inside the Ladle is slightly glowing a little.

Then it disappeared.

Chapter 323: Leaving

The finger was missing.

Yet, none of them noticed.

Tyler, Mathilda, and the others had no recollection of the Pinky Finger's existence. Their memories had been silently erased, leaving behind only fragments of the battle they had just fought.

To them, it was simple—they had defeated an Abyssal Being and were now escaping.

Nothing more.

No lingering doubts. No gaps in memory.

The scene around them shifted.

The oppressive darkness that had once surrounded them vanished, giving way to something familiar.

Tyler turned his gaze toward a lake—a shimmering body of water reflecting the dim light of the sky.

Recognition flickered in his mind.

It was the same lake they had seen before, the one near the illusory village.

Yet—

The Village of Vale was gone.

Nothing remained. No structures, no streets, no sign that it had ever existed.

It was as if the village had been nothing more than a dream.

A sudden, sharp crack echoed through the air.

Tyler's eyes snapped toward the sound.

In the empty space where the Village of Vale had once stood, a rift had begun to form. A jagged, spiraling tear in reality.

The space distorted, twisting like shattered glass before finally splitting apart.

A spatial rift had emerged.

The pathway to the another floor.

A sense of relief washed over them.

There was no time to waste.

Tyler turned to his team. "Move. Now."

One by one, they stepped forward, vanishing into the Spatial Rift.

Tyler was the last to enter. After he stepped in, the whole Abyss floor was lingered with silence.

Then—

A faint glow appeared.

It flickered. Moved. Floated.

A severed Pinky Finger slowly emerged from the ground, its surface pulsing with an unknown energy.

It hovered, scanning the area as if searching for something.

Then—

It twitched.

The Spatial Rift was forcefully and was again got hidden by the finger.

The energy around it shifted, and suddenly—illusions began to form.

A village took shape. It is rebuilding the village of vale.

Familiar buildings materialized, their wooden structures rising from the ground like ghosts from the past. The stone pathways reappeared, winding through the streets.

The Village of Vale had returned.

It was perfect. Every detail meticulously recreated, from the way the lanterns flickered.

It was as if the village had never been destroyed.

Then—

A hand appeared out of nowhere.

It grasped the floating Pinky Finger.

The severed digit twitched violently, struggling against the grip of the unknown force.

But it could not escape.

The hand tightened.

A voice—smooth, unhurried—spoke from the darkness.

"Switch."

In an instant, the finger vanished.

In its place—a single, delicate rose rested in the mysterious hand.

The village that was just formed disappeared in an instant.



Tyler and the others stepped out of the Spatial Rift, their bodies tensed, ready for anything.

The moment their feet touched solid ground, a sensation washed over them—the restrictions on their cultivation were lifted.

Their energy flowed freely once more.

Tyler flexed his fingers, feeling the familiar surge of power coursing through his veins. A faint smirk crossed his lips.

Finally.

"I need to replenish my energy," one of the grandmasters muttered, stretching his stiff limbs.

"Don't worry. Let's take a small break," Tyler said, scanning their surroundings.

A vast desert stretched before them.

The landscape was endless—rolling dunes of golden sand, the heat shimmering in the air. The sky above was a brilliant azure, unmarred by clouds. Yet, despite its beauty, there was a lingering sense of unease.

Then—

The sand shifted.

A massive, three-meter-long scorpion erupted from beneath the dunes, its sharp pincers clacking, its tail poised to strike.

Before anyone could react—

A trident flashed through the air, piercing the creature in a single, fluid motion.

The scorpion twitched before collapsing, its body pinned to the sand, lifeless.

The grandmasters barely spared it a glance.

Instead, one of them turned to Tyler and asked, "How are we going to take a break? Do you have enough Aura and Prana Replenishing Pills?"

His voice carried a hint of hope.

Tyler didn't respond immediately. He simply smiled—a knowing, confident smile.

A Few Hours Later...

In the middle of the desert, two enormous houses stood side by side, their structures imposing against the endless dunes.

These were Instant Houses, something Tyler had stored away in his inventory for emergencies. With a flick of his wrist, he had summoned them, effortlessly creating shelter.

A formation encased both houses, shielding them from the Abyss Corruption that tainted this floor.

Inside, the air was pure and refreshing, a stark contrast to the scorching desert outside.

Luminous Blooms—a rare type of flower that emitted a soft glow—filled the rooms in neatly arranged flower pots. Their presence soothed the mind and purified the atmosphere.

In the grandmasters' house, one of the grandmasters sat at a long table, his gaze fixed on two large candy jars that Tyler had casually placed in front of them.

The jars were filled with red and blue pills.

Aura and Prana Pills.

The grandmaster hesitated before picking up a blue pill—one meant for warriors like him—and popping it into his mouth.

His eyes widened.

Not only did the pill instantly replenish his energy, but—

It tasted like candy.

He glanced at the other grandmasters who are already meditating.

"These are luxury goods," the grandmaster murmured under his breath.

Normal Aura and Prana Pills were expensive enough, but these had been refined to taste sweet while maintaining their full potency. Even the price for this is five times of the normal pills, which gave them a nickname called Overpriced Pills.

Such extravagance.

And yet, Tyler had handed them out so casually, as if he were giving candy to children.

Only one thought crossed the grandmaster's mind—

Nouveau riche.

Ostentatious.

He silently sighed before grabbing another handful of pills. If Tyler was going to throw away riches like this, then he wouldn't refuse them.

Meanwhile, in Tyler's House...

Tyler sat on the edge of his bed, his fingers lightly tracing the surface of a compass.

The guiding compass was supposed to point toward Lily Gomes—but something was wrong.

The needle wobbled, pointing in one direction before abruptly shifting to another.

Then it moved again.

Tyler frowned. "Is this thing broken?"

He tapped the compass lightly, but it continued its erratic movements.

Finally, with a sigh, he tucked it away, deciding to deal with it later.

Standing up, he stretched, his muscles still sore from the previous battle.

A hot bath. That's what he needed.

Tyler walked toward the bathroom, reaching for the door handle—

A hand landed on his shoulder.

He turned.

Astrid.

The half-angel stood behind him, her cheeks tinged pink.

Tyler raised an eyebrow, a smirk playing at his lips. "What's up?"

Astrid shifted uncomfortably. She hesitated, then spoke in a hurried, awkward tone.

"Is Mathilda alright?" Astrid asked.

"I didn't see her. She is probably Drowning in sorrows." Tyler sighed.

Astrid then talked awkwardly about different topics finally arriving at the main topic.

"I—Let's talk about Catherine's relationship."

Tyler blinked.

Astrid had deliberately referred to herself in the third person, unwilling to say "me."

He sighed, rubbing the back of his neck.

"Well... I can't really say sorry, not I can ignore it saying 'it was an accident'. But I won't lie to you either."

His gaze softened.

"I really like Catherine."

Astrid's eyes flickered with surprise.

Tyler continued, his voice quieter now.

"I just... I have no idea how to handle this situation."

A brief silence.

Then—

Astrid's expression brightened.

Her lips parted slightly, as if she wanted to say something but hesitated.

Finally, in a soft, barely audible voice, she murmured, "Well... Catherine might not hate you..."

And then—

She spun around and ran off, her face burning red.

Tyler watched her retreating figure, a small chuckle escaping his lips.

He shook his head and turned back toward the bathroom.

Pushing open the door—

He froze.

Inside the bathtub, Mathilda and Mana were already soaking in the water.

Mathilda is grabbing Mana Breast from behind and massaging it. Both of them froze and looked at Mana.

Both of them stared at him.

Mathilda raised an eyebrow.

Mana tilted her head.

Silence.

Then—

Tyler slammed the door shut.

From inside, Mathilda's laughter rang out, followed by Mana's amused giggle.

The door opened again and beautiful hands dragged Tyler into the bathroom.

The desert winds howled outside, sweeping over the sand.

Chapter 324: Abyssal Paths and Hunters

Tyler and his group trudged through the vast expanse of the Abyssal Desert, the scorching heat bearing down on them. Though their cultivation had returned, the oppressive nature of the Abyss still weighed heavily on them. Each step they took kicked up blackened sand that shimmered unnaturally, as if infused with residual energy from the void.

"Ever heard of Abyss Hunters?" Astrid asked, breaking the silence.

"Yeah," Tyler responded, not taking his eyes off the erratic compass in his hand. "They hunt and gather rare materials in the Abyss, then sell them to other worlds. From what I heard, some of them literally live in the Abyss for centuries."

"In a way, we're also like Abyss Hunters," Mathilda added, glancing at the desolate landscape.

Tyler nodded. "Nope... More like we are Visitors."

Mathilda smirked but said nothing more.

Tyler, Mathilda, Mana, Astrid, and the five grandmasters pressed forward, their movements steady despite the shifting terrain. Tyler glanced at the compass again, watching the needle flicker between two slightly different directions.

"Can any of you see what's wrong with this compass?" he asked, his brows furrowed.

One of the grandmasters sighed. "We can't. The curse master in our group died, so we have no way of analyzing it properly. We have no choice but to follow it."

Tyler clicked his tongue in irritation but didn't argue.

Astrid suddenly pouted. "Listen to me."

Tyler looked at her. "Yeah... continue."

Astrid hesitated briefly before saying, "I once saved an unconscious man in one of the Abyss floor. His name was Apollo. Apparently, he was an Abyss Hunter. But after I saved him, he tried to take advantage of me and was about to do improper things."

After saying this she glanced at Tyler, trying to observe his reaction.

Tyler's expression remained unchanged. "Tell me who he is. We'll teach him a lesson once we find him."

Astrid's eyes lit up with satisfaction at his reaction, and she continued, "Well, he was weak at the time due to his injuries, so I slapped him and escaped. But before that, he bragged about having five powerful subordinates and thousands of slaves."

Mathilda scoffed. "Abyss Hunters are ruthless, but he sounds especially vile."

Tyler shrugged. "We'll be careful. Don't worry. As long as we don't get trapped in something like the Village of Vale again, I'm confident we can escape any situation faster."

Mathilda nodded in agreement.

"What happened to the angel that was chasing you?" Mathilda asked Astrid.

Astrid sighed. "Jerahmeel. He said he was from my mother's clan. He was arrogant, tried to forcefully capture me. But Lily helped me escape. He tried to sneak attack me, but I accidentally jumped into the Abyss Crack. After that, he kept chasing me across multiple floors, but Lily held him back. I don't know what happened after that."

Tyler smirked. "Let's barbeque his wings when we find him."

Astrid let out a small laugh, though the tension in her shoulders didn't fade.

Meanwhile, Tyler glanced at the compass once more. It still pointed in one direction but wavered slightly toward another. He ignored the deviation and focused on moving forward.

The desert seemed endless, but as they moved forward, the ground slowly became firmer, shifting from sand to cracked obsidian. In the distance, a ruined fortress loomed, its jagged edges barely visible against the eerie horizon.

"This place..." one of the grandmasters murmured. "It feels... wrong."

Tyler frowned. "Elaborate 'wrong.'"

The grandmaster hesitated. "Like something unnatural is watching us."

A sudden gust of wind howled through the ruins ahead, carrying whispers that no one could understand. The air grew colder, the oppressive heat of the desert vanishing as if they had crossed into another domain entirely.

Mana shivered. "Mana hate this place."

"We should move cautiously," Tyler said. "There must be some creatures here.."

Then He took the lead, gripping his trident tightly. As they approached the ruins, the compass flickered wildly, its needle spinning erratically before finally locking onto the giant spatial crack in the centre.

"This is where we need to go," Tyler announced, stopping in front of a ruined fortress.

"Just like that?" Mathilda muttered. "I mean, it was a smooth journey."

Tyler shot her a look. "Would you rather have something go wrong?"

Mathilda crossed her arms but said nothing. The fortress stood before them, ancient and foreboding. The obsidian ground beneath them seemed to absorb sound, making their footsteps unnaturally loud. The massive doors of the fortress were broken, hanging off rusted hinges, as if something had forcefully torn them open. Strange symbols were carved into the walls, glowing faintly.

One of the grandmasters stepped forward, examining the symbols. "This writing... it's probably an ancient script from another world."

"Yeah... and we don't have a translator," Mathilda pointed out.

"Oh, wait a minute," Tyler said, pulling out a crystal. It gleamed, untouched by the Abyss's corrosive energy.

Mathilda watched as Tyler scanned the symbols. "Are you recording it?"

Tyler nodded. "This is a profound imagery stone. Far better than a high-resolution video camera."

After capturing the script, he stored the stone in his storage device.

"Actually, we do have a good translator. We can bring this to her after leaving the Abyss." Tyler turned back toward the fortress entrance, where a faint shimmering indicated a spatial crack leading to the next layer of the Abyss.

"Seriously, this floor was too easy," Mathilda said, her fingers twitching as if she were waiting for something to go wrong.

Tyler shrugged. "Maybe all our bad luck was used up when we got trapped in the Village of Vale."

Astrid shuddered at the memory. "Let's hope so."

Without further delay, the group stepped into the spatial passage and vanished.

Far from the spatial crack, the desert remained eerily still. However, in the distance, something stirred.

Two small houses stood in the middle of the desert—temporary shelters Tyler had created during their journey. The structures, though simple, were reinforced with arrays and should have been safe from the Abyss's influence.

The sand around them began to shift unnaturally. At first, it moved in small ripples, then in waves, before rising like a massive tide.

A colossal form took shape—a giant, slime-like creature, its body made entirely of Abyssal sand. It towered over the temporary houses, its grotesque form shifting as if it had no definite shape.

Then, without warning, it opened a massive maw and swallowed the structures whole.

The buildings vanished into the creature's depths, as if they had never existed. A moment later, the monstrous entity crumbled back into the desert, returning to mere grains of sand.

Silence fell once more.

The creature just woke up after the Group left. Talk about Luck.



Apollo stood with his arms crossed, clad in his golden armor, radiating an aura of authority. His sharp eyes followed the movement of the half-eagle, half-humanoid creature flapping its enormous wings before him.

"You know where this lady is?" Apollo asked, his tone casual as he flipped his palm, projecting a shimmering image of Astrid in the air.

The eagle-headed creature studied the projection for a moment before shaking its head.

"Tsk... Useless." Apollo clicked his tongue in irritation. "Get out of my sight. If you find her, inform me immediately."

The humanoid bird nodded and took off into the crimson-hued sky, vanishing beyond the ruined towers of the city.

Apollo turned his gaze to the surroundings. This Abyss floor resembled an ancient medieval city—stone streets, towering buildings with gothic architecture, and eerie silence. However, despite its realistic appearance, he knew better than to trust what his eyes perceived.

A heavy set of footsteps echoed from behind.

"Bring the Phantasm Defibrillator!" a deep voice roared.

A massive eight-foot-tall giant, his body covered in dark tattoos, strode toward Apollo. His presence alone was enough to make the slaves around him tremble.

"Don't shout near my ear," Apollo said with mild annoyance.

"Sorry, Leader." The giant grinned, his tusks protruding slightly as he turned away.

A group of slaves struggled to drag a massive device into the center of the city. The Phantasm Defibrillator. Unlike the medieval surroundings, this device was futuristic—crafted from an unknown metallic alloy, pulsing with ethereal energy.

A fox-eared woman emerged from the shadows and approached the device. Her furred tail flicked behind her as she placed a hand on the controls.

"Activating the device," she said softly.

The moment she did, an unnatural glow spread outward, consuming the entire cityscape.

A deep hum reverberated through the air.

A powerful suction force emerged from the device, and suddenly, the entire city trembled as if it were alive. The once-solid buildings flickered, turning translucent. The very ground beneath them rippled like the surface of a disturbed pond.

The city let out a low, eerie groan.

The illusion fought against the defibrillator, as if resisting its fate. But the device was relentless. Bit by bit, the towering structures dissolved, sucked into the machine like water being absorbed into a sponge.

Minutes passed, then an hour.

A sudden blur shot through the air.

Apollo's eyes narrowed as he caught sight of a small, imp-like creature bolting away at breakneck speed. Its body was a grotesque mix of shadows and mist, its eyes glowing with fear.

"A Nightmare Imp." Apollo smirked.

Without hesitation, he disappeared from his spot, reappearing right in the imp's path. The creature let out a shriek, trying to change direction, but it was too late.

Apollo's hand snapped forward, grabbing it by the neck.

The imp squirmed, its tiny claws scratching at his gauntlet, but it was powerless against his strength.

"There are always creatures like you," Apollo muttered, observing the imp's writhing form. "Making fake illusions of places and luring Abyss travelers to their doom."

The imp let out a desperate cry.

Apollo ignored it and reached into his storage ring, pulling out a golden cage. With a flick of his fingers, he tossed the imp inside and locked it.

The imp clawed at the bars, hissing and wailing.

Apollo chuckled, shaking the cage slightly. "Well, at least you'll sell for a fortune. I wonder if God Finger is real...? All I get is Creatures like you. Huh"

Chapter 325: Mimic

The Abyss devours worlds. It is a boundless, insatiable force that consumes entire civilizations, leaving only remnants of what once was. In certain depths, one might stumble upon the echoes of lost worlds, where ancient ruins cling stubbornly to existence, slowly corroding away in the Abyss's gluttonous embrace.

Mana soared through the air, her emerald eyes scanning the decayed structures beneath her. The remnants of an old civilization lay sprawled across the abyssal floor, their once-grand architecture now mere skeletons of stone and steel. Time had not been kind, nor had the Abyss, which seemed to relish the slow decay of its feast.

Below her, a shimmering protective array hummed faintly, shielding a small group from the corrosive influence of the Abyss.

"Which direction are we going?" Mathilda asked, arms crossed as she glanced at their leader.

Tyler reclined in his chair within the array's safety, lazily sipping a cool, citrusy juice. "I randomly picked a direction from the compass. Let's bet on luck. Once Mana returns, we can move forward."

A distant roar shattered the eerie stillness.

The ground trembled as a massive Abyss creature—a bear-like monstrosity with jagged, obsidian fur and molten cracks running along its hide—raged in the distance. The beast let out another agonized howl, swiping its colossal claws at the five Grandmaster-level cultivators battling it.

Mathilda turned, observing the skirmish with mild interest. "Still fighting that thing, huh?"

The Grandmasters, having regained their Aura and Mana after entering this region, resumed their duties as bodyguards. Their swift, calculated movements contrasted with the raw fury of the beast.

Tyler remained unbothered. "They'll handle it."

Then, a voice echoed in his mind.

"Tyler... Come and look at this..."

It was Mana's voice.

Tyler set his drink down and stood. "I'll go check on Mana."

The Grandmasters, sensing the battle nearing its end, redoubled their efforts. With a series of coordinated strikes, they brought the massive Abyss beast to its knees. One of them sealed the dying creature in a storage artifact before following Tyler.

They traversed through the ruins of an abandoned kingdom, past crumbling archways and shattered statues of long-forgotten deities. The air was thick with the scent of dust and decay.

Soon, they reached Mana.

She stood in the middle of an open courtyard, pointing excitedly at something before her.

"Look, look! A treasure!"

Tyler's gaze followed her outstretched hand—to an old treasure chest sitting amidst the ruins.

At first glance, it seemed ordinary—weathered wood reinforced with golden bands. A faint, ancient energy emanated from it, hinting at valuable relics possibly hidden within.

Mathilda arched an eyebrow. "A real treasure chest in the Abyss?"

Tyler narrowed his eyes. Something felt off.

The Grandmasters instinctively reached for their weapons, sensing danger.

But before anyone could stop her—

The chest's lid snapped open.

A cavernous maw filled with razor-sharp teeth was revealed.

In an instant, a grotesque, slimy tongue lashed out, wrapping around Mana's waist and yanking her inside.

"AAAAAHHHH!"

CHOMP!

The mimic devoured her, leaving only her butt and kicking legs sticking out.

For a few seconds, no one moved.

"...Interesting view," Mathilda muttered, tilting her head. Her eyes were on Mana's butt.

"If only I have a D and pound her from behi-"

"Cough... You are leaking your thoughts." Tyler reminded her.

One of the Grandmasters exhaled. "A mimic..."

Astrid's eyes widened. "Like in those old adventurer tales? Mimic are real?"

Inside the mimic's gaping mouth, Mana struggled against its slick, muscular tongue. "YUCK! IT'S LICKING ALL OVER! THIS IS DISGUSTING!"

Mathilda smirked. "Licking all over, you say?" Her eyes gleamed with dangerous amusement.

Tyler shot her a glare. "Stop being a pervert!"

He then gestured toward the Grandmasters. "One of you, get her out."

One of the Grandmasters, a seasoned warrior with a steely gaze, stepped forward, his aura flaring as he approached.

The mimic twitched.

And then—

CHOMP!

The creature clamped shut, pulling Mana completely inside.

"MANA!" Astrid shouted.

Before anyone could react, the mimic shuddered violently—then spat her out.

Mana hit the ground covered in thick, slimy saliva. She coughed and groaned, struggling to wipe the goo from her face.

"Ugh... Mana hate this thing..."

But before anyone could respond—

The mimic convulsed again.

And then—

It spat out another Mana.

The second Mana landed beside the first, equally drenched in mimic slime.

Silence.

The entire group froze, their eyes darting between the two identical Manas.

"...What?"

One Mana sat up, shaking off the goo. "Okay, Mana really hate this thing."

The other Mana mirrored her movements. "Seriously! That was the worst thing Mana've ever experienced."

A collective sense of unease settled over the group.

Mathilda took a cautious step forward. "So... Which one of you is the real Mana?"

Both Manas turned to each other, their eyes widening.

"WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!" they shouted in perfect synchronization.

"MANA IS MANA. WHO ARE YOU?"

The group tensed, hands hovering over their weapons.

Tyler's mind raced. "A mimic that doesn't just devour people, but... duplicates them? It's seems similar to something."

One of the Grandmasters muttered, "This isn't a normal mimic. It's something far more dangerous."

Astrid hesitated. "Could it be an illusion?"

One Mana huffed. "Not another Village of Vale please."

Mathilda's lips curled into a delighted grin. "Ooooh, I love this! Two Manas! Twice the fun!"

Tyler sighed. "Alright. We need a way to tell them apart."

He looked at the first Mana. "What's your favorite drink?"

Both Mana blushed.

Damn.

Tyler already know the answer because the answer is perverted one.

"Oh.. I know it's Tyler's Yogurt." Mathilda said which made Astrid blush.

Then Mathilda smirked. "Alright, let's try this... Mana, tell me the most embarrassing thing you've done."

One Mana crossed her arms. "Not happening."

The other Mana turned scarlet. "For research purposes Mana and Tyler had sex in different age form!"

Silence.

Tyler slowly turned toward her, his expression unreadable. "...What?"

The first Mana immediately pointed at the blushing one. "FAKE! The real Mana would NEVER admit that!"

Mathilda turned red with anger. "Disgusting! How could you do something like that... without me?!"

Tyler groaned, rubbing his temples. "Shut up, pervert." Then, turning to the remaining Mana, he continued, "She's right, though. The real Mana would never admit something like that." His expression grew firm. "Besides, she's my ghost spirit—our connection is still there."

Mathilda smirked. "Oh... So you were just watching the show?"

The second Mana flinched, her expression shifting to one of disbelief. A sad, knowing smile formed on her lips. "So... This Mana is fake one, huh?"

As soon as she uttered those words, her form shimmered.

Then, she vanished.

A faint golden wisp drifted into the air before fading into nothingness.

For some reason it reminded them of Village of Vale. Even Mathilda who was cheerful felt little sad.

Silence.

A strange heaviness lingered in the air, as if something significant had just been lost.

"For some reason... I feel guilty," Tyler muttered, breaking the stillness.

"Me too..." Astrid nodded.

"Me three .. it's a pity we didn't bang he- ouch..." Mathilda was about to say something but her legs got stomped by Astrid.

"You are not the cute Catherine from before." Mathilda said with a betrayed tone.

"Huh...?" Mana suddenly clutched her head.

Tyler frowned, stepping forward. "Are you okay?"

Mana blinked rapidly, her eyes shining with an unusual light. "M- Mana got her memories." She looked up, realization dawning on her face. "She was Mana's clone. When she disappeared, her memories merged with Mana."

Tyler's eyes gleamed with interest. "A mimic that creates clones instead of just eating its prey..." He turned toward the mimic, curiosity brimming in his gaze.

The mimic, as if understanding the danger, suddenly sprouted two stubby legs beneath its chest-like body. It took two awkward steps backward, trying to escape.

"Oh no, you don't." Tyler smirked turned towards the Grandmasters "We're taking this thing with us."

One of the Grandmasters, who had been observing quietly, nodded. "Alright... after Miss Mathilda finishes playing with it."

Tyler's brows furrowed. "Playing?" He turned to look at Mathilda, only to be met with a bizarre sight.

His face went blank.

"What... are you doing?" Tyler asked, his tone utterly neutral.

Mathilda, who had somehow managed to stick herself halfway into the mimic, looked up nonchalantly. Unlike Mana, whose upper half had been inside the creature, Mathilda's lower half was now inside, while her torso remained outside.

"Just... testing," she replied with a completely serious expression.

Tyler crossed his arms. "Alright... Then explain to me why you're in that position?"

Mathilda's expression remained neutral, though a faint blush dusted her cheeks. "Testing the tongue."

Silence.

Astrid's mouth hung open in horror. "W-Wait, WHAT?!"

The Grandmasters already left the place and distanced themselves. They also made sure not to eavesdrop the conversation even accidentally.

Tyler sighed deeply, closing his eyes for a brief moment. Then, without another word, he stepped forward and placed his hands on Mathilda's face.

Mathilda blinked. "Uh... Tyler?"

Then—

He shoved her.

CHOMP.

The mimic swallowed her whole.

"Wait , I didn't Test the Tongue yet..." Mathilda screams lingered in the Air.