

R Cultivator 331

Chapter 331: Mimic-kun Leads the Way

"Is she gone?" one of the grandmasters asked, his voice low and cautious.

Everyone waited for Tyler's response. Only after he gave a small nod did the group finally breathe out in relief. Shoulders relaxed, tension drained from their expressions, and the air inside the bubble felt a little less heavy.

Aside from Tyler, Mathilda, Mana, Astrid, and the four grandmasters, there was one more odd companion among them—something that had caught everyone's attention several times but hadn't said a word: a treasure chest-shaped mimic.

The creature, disguised as a standard ornate chest with gold trimming and gem-studded locks, had been unusually restless ever since they arrived on this Abyss floor.

Tyler squatted down in front of it, furrowing his brow. "You've been acting weird, buddy."

The mimic gave a small twitch, its lid quivering like a nervous jaw. Slowly, it creaked open, revealing rows of sharp teeth and a swirling void inside—its version of a mouth.

"Nope... No swallowing," Tyler said sternly, narrowing his eyes.

The mimic immediately snapped its lid shut in a pout-like manner, almost as if sulking.

Then, without warning, it began hopping up and down using its two stubby legs, tapping against the inner surface of the concealment bubble. It wasn't trying to attack—it was trying to break out.

Tyler blinked. "What? Do you want to go below?"

The mimic paused mid-hop and nodded its entire chest-body enthusiastically.

Everyone looked at each other.

"...It's trying to lead us somewhere?" Astrid asked, tilting her head.

"Or it's finally decided to betray us and escape," Mana muttered from behind Tyler.

Tyler chuckled. "Honestly, that's a fair possibility."

Still, curiosity tugged at his instincts. He stood up and walked over to the array control panel etched into the inner wall of the bubble. With a few practiced hand seals, he modified the concealment array, allowing a small opening to form at the base of the barrier. Strangely, no water flowed in—the array held the barrier firm even with the gap.

"Go on, then," Tyler said, gesturing.

The mimic bounced gleefully and leapt out of the bubble. It plopped into the surrounding lake water with a muffled splash, then sank downward like an excited puppy following a scent trail.

Tyler watched it disappear into the dim, bluish depths.

"Hmm... I wonder where it's going?" he murmured, eyes narrowed thoughtfully.

"You're sure it's not just running away?" Mana asked, arms crossed.

"Ahh... possible," Tyler replied with a shrug. "But I have a feeling it's leading us somewhere important."

Without hesitation, he began manipulating the main array core. The bubble began to shift in direction, gliding silently through the water like a massive orb. It followed the mimic's path deeper into the lakebed.

"Wait... Are we not going to continue following the compass direction?" one of the grandmasters asked, looking puzzled.

Tyler turned slightly and gave him a blank stare. "Well, if you really want to go back up and fight that Divine Seeker Realm fox lady, I don't mind..."

The grandmaster immediately held up his hands. "Never mind. Forget I asked."

"Good. Because that lady's aura alone could crush half of us if she gets serious," Tyler added. "And since we can't safely move along the surface anymore, this is honestly a better alternative."

The others didn't argue. The last thing any of them wanted was to cross paths again with that powerful cultivator above. The risk wasn't worth it.

Inside the lake, the scene was nothing short of surreal.

A lone mimic, shaped like a treasure chest with two tiny legs, marched determinedly across the lake floor, sending puffs of silt into the water with each step. Behind it, a large bubble floated silently like an underwater fortress, carrying Tyler, Mathilda, Mana, Astrid, and the four grandmasters.

"Walking Box is too slow... Should I put an acid on it's back and sped it up?" Mathilda muttered under his breath.

"Please Don't," Tyler replied, half amused. "Let's go.. I don't even notice that there is a safer passage underwater. It seems like this Mimic-kun has already been in this place before.."

"I'm still betting it's leading us to a stash of fake treasure and man-eating seaweed," Mana said, arms crossed.

But even her sarcasm couldn't mask the underlying curiosity in the group. The mimic continued on confidently, swaying left and right in its odd, cheerful rhythm.

After a while, the mimic paused before what appeared to be a natural underwater cliff face. Tyler leaned closer toward the bubble's edge. At first, it just looked like a blank stretch of stone—but then the mimic approached it and knocked on a specific spot with its tiny foot.

Clunk. Clunk.

The cliff face shimmered, revealing a circular opening—an underwater cave, hidden by illusionary runes and stone disguise.

"Well, would you look at that," Tyler said with a grin.

The mimic stepped inside, vanishing into the dark passage beyond.

Tyler adjusted the arrays, guiding the bubble forward. As it entered the cave, the water surrounding them began to recede—mysteriously absorbed into the walls, until the interior of the cave was filled with breathable air. The bubble faded away completely, and the group found themselves standing on solid, damp ground.

"Interesting..." Mathilda murmured, tapping her fingers against her arm. "Auto-draining cave. This place wasn't formed naturally."

"Definitely not," Tyler said. "It's naturally formed cave... Natural Arrays are rare, we are lucky to encounter one..."

The group followed the mimic deeper into the tunnel-like passage. Dim phosphorescent moss clung to the ceiling, giving the walls a faint green-blue glow. The air smelled faintly of rusted metal and ozone.

Then they saw them—strange figures lurking near the walls and in the shadows.

They weren't beasts. Nor were they people.

They were things.

Old weapons. Half-formed gauntlets, broken swords, armored limbs, and jagged, runed shields—all moving. They twitched, floated, or scraped slowly across the ground. Some had sockets that flickered with dim red or violet light, others made low humming noises, like groaning metal.

"What... the hell are those?" Mathilda whispered, staying close to Tyler.

One of the grandmasters, eyes bright with hope, stepped forward slightly. "Are those... soul-bound equipments?" he asked eagerly.

Mana shook her head almost immediately. "No. Mana don't sense a soul presence."

"Then what are they?" another grandmaster asked.

Mana narrowed her eyes. "Corrupted consciousness. That's all Mana can feel from them."

Tyler glanced around, his expression more serious now. "So... not soul equipments. Just remnants... infused with lingering will. Maybe abandoned, maybe broken..."

"What are they doing?" Astrid asked softly.

"Probably after getting consciousness" Mana replied. "These things... they don't want to be up there. This is their shelter. These weapons are probably dead Abyss travelers or fallen from another world. These weapons tainted by blood of their owners or Abyss beasts, they didn't corrode but mutated."

Despite the unsettling nature of the place, most of the weapons didn't approach. In fact, they slowly moved aside as the mimic passed, clearing a path for it. Some gave curious flickers of light or released mechanical whirring sounds—almost like greetings.

"They're... welcoming it?" one grandmaster said.

Tyler exhaled slowly. "This might actually be its home."

The group followed in silence as the mimic led them further down a winding series of tunnels. The environment shifted subtly—stone became metal, then back to stone again. Strange inscriptions pulsed faintly along the walls. Sometimes, the temperature dipped sharply; other times, it felt humid and heavy.

Eventually, the mimic stopped before a second entrance, circular and lined with glowing runes. The opening pulsed faintly, connected to an ancient array that resonated with dimensional energy.

"A way out?" Tyler muttered, tilting his head.

The mimic turned and nodded, bouncing slightly in affirmation.

"All right," Tyler said. "Let's go."

But just as the group prepared to step forward, the mimic didn't follow.

Instead, it took a few steps back and stood by the side of the passage. Then, to everyone's surprise, two tiny hands sprouted from its sides and began waving in a cheerful bye-bye motion.

Tyler blinked. "Wait. What?"

"You're... not coming?" Astrid asked.

The mimic shook its entire chest-body like a firm 'no.'

"Oh, like hell I'm leaving you here." Tyler marched over, grabbed the mimic by its stubby legs, and raised it upside down.

But before anything else could happen, the runes near the passage flared brightly.

WHOOSH!

In a flash of light and forceful energy, the entire group was ejected. The teleportation array activated without warning, flinging Tyler, Mathilda, Mana, Astrid, and the grandmasters out through a spatial tunnel.

They tumbled through a vortex of light for a few seconds before landing in a different location—a cavern mouth near the lake's edge.

"Damn it... Mimic-kun..." Tyler groaned, brushing dust off his robes.

"So it was an escape plan after all," Mana said with a sigh.

"Yeah, yeah," Tyler muttered, stretching his back. "But at least it gave us a shortcut. And honestly, I don't care about some cheap treasure that replicates."

Mathilda chuckled, brushing leaves from her cloak. "I'll miss him a little." while licking her lips.

"Shut up pervert."

Chapter 332: Encountering The Winged Arbiter Again

The water rippled beneath the heavy chains as the slaves struggled to drag the colossal Dragon Corpse across the vast, shallow lake surface. Their feet splashed and stumbled through knee-deep water, some nearly losing balance as the sheer weight of the creature strained their backs and shoulders. The corpse itself was a grotesque wonder—majestic once, now lifeless and twisted. The dragon's glimmering scales reflected the eerie light from glowing abyssal lanterns, casting fragmented hues across the water's surface.

"Careful! Each cell of a dragon is a precious material! Careful, careful!" roared a giant, his voice booming through the cavernous lake cavern.

Towering above everyone, the giant stomped toward the nearest slave. "You, idiot!" he snarled, delivering a brutal kick that sent the frail man flying backward, crashing into a floating wooden platform. The other slaves gasped and redoubled their efforts, terrified by the display.

"Move faster, or you'll join the corpse pile!" the giant barked again, his eyes glinting with fury.

The atmosphere was suffocating—between the unnatural humidity and the oppressive presence of the dragon's decaying body, even breathing felt like a chore. The shallow lake itself seemed to groan under the weight of so much death and pressure, the water tinted dark from the oozing dragon blood.

From a narrow side passage, a figure appeared—a fox lady, her nine silver tails gliding across the water like silk. Her arrival was almost soundless, but the giant noticed her immediately.

"Did you find anything?" he asked, turning to face her.

She shook her head, her expression cold. "No one. Nothing left. Perhaps it was just a lost traveler from the Abyss. Nothing more."

The giant grunted, unconcerned. "Hmph. Then it's fine. Whoever it was... he got squashed under my foot like a bug."

He chuckled darkly, clearly pleased with himself.

The fox lady tilted her head slightly, watching the dragon's body being hauled through the water. "Strange, though... I still feel traces of foreign energy lingering around."

"It's gone now," the giant replied dismissively. "This corpse will fetch us more than enough resources. Forget the rest."

But just then, a gust of wind swept across the lake's surface as a bird-like figure descended rapidly from above.

Water splashed and scattered as the feathered being landed gracefully. Clad in scaled leather and sharp-winged armor, the bird-man's talons tapped lightly against the water as he bowed slightly.

"Master has issued an order," the bird-man said firmly. "He wants everyone to regroup immediately."

The giant scowled but gave a nod of acknowledgment.

The fox lady glanced at the bird-man with mild curiosity. "You again," she murmured.

If Tyler's group had been present, they would have recognized the newcomer instantly—Raptor, the same formidable opponent they had faced not long ago. His sharp beak and amber eyes held the same predatory gaze, though now there was a distinct tension in his posture.

"Why the sudden call?" the fox lady asked, eyes narrowing.

Raptor replied with two words, "Angel Hunt"

Elsewhere.

Tyler walked quietly through a strange forest, the eerie silence broken only by the occasional crunch beneath his boots. The trees around him stood tall, leafless and ghostly, their twisted branches reaching up like skeletal hands grasping for something unseen. Yet despite their bare branches, the ground beneath them was scattered with fresh, green leaves—vibrant and soft, as though they'd just fallen moments ago. A stark contrast to the lifeless trees.

He knelt for a moment, picking up one of the leaves and flipping it between his fingers. No veins, no wilting. It was as if the trees had shed their essence rather than their waste. Strange. This place didn't follow the normal laws of nature—it carried a sense of forgotten magic, a lingering anomaly that piqued his curiosity.

A few hundred meters behind him, Mathilda and the rest of the group had formed a temporary camp. Ever the enthusiast, Mathilda was already immersed in her work, surrounded by magical instruments and analysis tools from her personal storage ring. What most would call a mobile high-end laboratory, she called her "basic field kit."

"Look at this, it's emitting low-level mana radiation," she mumbled, scanning the green leaves with a mana-spectrum analyzer. "But the trees have no core... How is this happening?"

She scribbled furiously into a glowing notepad.

Even the four Grandmasters, veterans of numerous mystical realms, couldn't hide their awe. Despite their years of experience, they had never seen someone casually pull out a full research lab in the middle of a forest.

"Just how much wealth do they have..." one of the Grandmasters muttered under his breath.

The other three nodded silently, exchanging glances. They had come along for a mission, but now they had something else in mind. After witnessing the convenience, power, and resources Tyler's group wielded, they had already decided—once this mission was over, they would ask for permanent positions under him. Becoming hired experts for a powerful faction like this could give them access to things they never dared dream of.

Meanwhile, Tyler had already constructed a concealment array across the area with Astrid's help. This time, unlike their previous rushed attempts, they had time to refine it. The array was now near-perfect, laced with complex scripts and illusion layers interwoven with spiritual masking patterns.

Even if the fox lady returned, Tyler was confident—unless she had some high-grade tracking artifact, she wouldn't find them.

He stepped toward the edge of a small cliff overlooking a slope that descended into a shimmering ravine. There, near a strange curvature in space, a small spatial crack flickered, like a thin tear in the fabric of reality. It was hard to spot unless one paid close attention, and yet... Tyler's eyes were drawn to it like a moth to flame.

"Lily..." he whispered.

He couldn't explain why, but something in his soul pulsed whenever he looked at that crack. A deep instinct told him—she was on the other side. Just intuition. But he'd learned to trust that instinct. It had saved him too many times to ignore.

Just then, he noticed movement near the passage that led toward the spatial crack.

Figures.

Tyler instinctively held his breath. He gestured subtly, and in moments, the others joined him silently, eyes scanning the path ahead.

From the shadows emerged three figures. One was an eight-foot tall Giant, muscles bulging and aura oppressive even from a distance. The second was unmistakably the fox lady, her silver tails swaying gently as she walked gracefully over the terrain. But the third caught everyone's attention.

"...Raptor," Tyler muttered under his breath.

The bird-man warrior, who had clashed with them before, looked visibly worn. There were still bandages and magical seals across his body—residual injuries from their last encounter. His wing moved stiffly, and the way he landed confirmed it—he hadn't fully recovered.

Unlike them.

Tyler's group was fully healed, thanks to his wealth of high-grade elixirs and recovery talismans. Not a single scratch remained from their previous fight.

"He is still injured..." Mathilda noted, watching carefully.

The three enemies stood near the spatial passage but didn't enter it immediately. Instead, they engaged in what seemed like a quiet but tense conversation. Tyler couldn't hear their voices from this distance, but their body language told a story.

After a few minutes, the Giant and the Fox Lady stepped through the passage, leaving only Raptor, who spread his wings and flew off in the opposite direction, disappearing toward the northeastern sector of the forest.

"Hmm..." Tyler narrowed his eyes. "They split up?"

"Looks like it," Astrid whispered, peering from behind a tree.

Tyler's gaze didn't leave the horizon as he analyzed the situation. "Probably to keep an eye on something... maybe that dragon treasure tmi felt earlier."

That thought sparked a realization. He turned toward the Grandmasters, who instantly straightened under his gaze.

"There's a 70% chance Raptor is now alone," Tyler said calmly, tapping his chin. "Maybe he has some slaves or a couple guards, but his injuries and lack of backup give us an opportunity."

The Grandmasters shared uneasy looks.

"You're thinking ambush?" one of them asked.

"Exactly." Tyler's eyes gleamed with sharp calculation. "If we can capture or kill him, we can get whatever treasures he's guarding—most likely the dragon heart, or other materials from that corpse."

"Still risky," another Grandmaster said. "That bird is dangerous even at half strength."

"But it's also worth the risk," Tyler countered. "I'll make it fair. I'll give you 50% of the loot, or equal compensation in wealth if the treasure is something we can't divide."

The Grandmasters looked at one another.

"Fifty percent... split between us?" one asked, voice hesitant but hopeful.

"Exactly," Tyler nodded. "A direct split. Or equivalent value. Your pick."

A beat of silence passed.

"Deal," all four said in unison.

Chapter 333: Ambush By Lake (1/2)

After arriving at the spatial passage, the massive Eight-foot Giant raised his hand and barked, "Hey! Stop right there! Where do you think you're going?"

The Raptor came to a halt, confused. "But... Master called everyone. Didn't he?"

"Then who's going to guard the Azure Dragon's corpse, huh?" Lady Fox narrowed her eyes. "You stay here. We'll explain it to the boss ourselves."

Raptor hesitated for a moment, but eventually nodded. "Alright."

The two entered the spatial passage, leaving Raptor behind. He let out a low sigh and turned his gaze toward the distant lake, where a group of slaves were still struggling to drag the enormous Azure Dragon corpse across the shallow waters. He flew over with a crackle of energy, a lightning-infused whip in his hand, his presence immediately casting a heavy shadow over the weary workers.

Seeing him arrive, the slaves froze. The oppressive aura and the faint scent of burnt air from the whip was enough to make their knees tremble.

"What are you staring at? Get back to work—!"

Before he could finish, something shot from our if nowhere at high speed and crashed into him, sending Raptor flying through the air and plunging into the lake with a massive splash.

The slaves screamed and scattered, some stumbling into the shallow water, others hiding behind the corpse, too afraid to even breathe.

Lightning surged from within the lake, and a moment later, Raptor burst out of the water with a furious snarl. Another figure shot out along with him—a man clad in robes, surrounded by swirling wind, eyes sharp and focused.

Raptor's eyes widened in recognition. "Itu awak!"

The Grandmaster didn't understand the language, but from Raptor's tone and expression, he could tell what was being said. He simply smirked and nodded. "Yes, it's me."

This Grandmaster was the one with a Wind Domain—swift, unpredictable, and deadly. Raptor had been caught completely off-guard by the sudden ambush.

"Sekarang pusingan dua," the Grandmaster said proudly, repeating the translated phrase Tyler had taught him earlier: "Now, round two."

Raptor growled, his eyes flashing with anger. He shouted something at the slaves again, and they instantly resumed dragging the massive corpse, terrified of his wrath even mid-battle.

Suddenly, spikes made of sharp, compressed water surged from beneath the lake, targeting Raptor from below. He reacted instantly, cracking his lightning whip and slicing one spike clean in half while dodging the others with quick bursts of flight.

The surface of the lake trembled. A whirlpool began to form, growing rapidly in size and intensity as Water Domain energy surged. The water rose upward in a spiraling vortex, aiming to trap Raptor.

Unfazed, Raptor roared and slammed his whip into the air. The sky answered his call—thunder cracked, and clouds darkened, forming a swirling dome of storm above them. A bolt of blinding lightning surged from the heavens and smashed into the rising water vortex, evaporating it mid-air in a violent explosion of steam and light.

Another Grandmaster—the one with the Water Domain—emerged from the lake's depths, coughing and slightly wounded from the earlier exchange.

"Injured my ass," he muttered under his breath, glaring at the sky. "How the heck is this guy still so powerful even after getting beaten before?"

The clouds continued to churn violently. The sky now looked like a hellscape of pure elemental chaos. Hundreds of ball lightnings orbited around Raptor's domain, spinning like miniature moons. Each orb crackled with lethal power, zipping through the air in erratic patterns.

From the surface, Tyler and the rest watched the battle unfold from a safe distance. They stood on a floating sheet of ice conjured by the Ice Domain Grandmaster.

"We can't use the array again," Tyler muttered, eyes narrowed. "He's deliberately staying over the water to avoid land-based traps."

"Then what do we do now?" the Ice Domain Grandmaster asked, glancing toward the dragon's corpse. Her gaze lingered on the enormous creature—its azure scales shimmered faintly, even in death.

"That dragon corpse... It might be a special kind," Tyler said thoughtfully. "I tried storing it in my spatial ring, but it didn't work. It's either bound to this realm or it has a natural resistance to spatial manipulation."

Tyler tried again, this time using a copper ladle embedded with spatial transfer runes. But the moment the ladle touched the corpse, the runes fizzled and dimmed. "Still no effect," he sighed. "Looks like it's immune to even high-tier spatial magic."

Meanwhile, the battle raged on.

Raptor's eyes turned colder, more vicious. With a furious cry, his body exploded into a thick cloud of demonic mist. The sudden burst of malevolent energy sent shockwaves across the water, raising violent gales and causing massive waves to slam against the lake's edge.

The Wind Domain Grandmaster gritted his teeth, dodging the blast by leaping backward, only to be caught mid-air by the Rock Domain Grandmaster, who hurled him toward safety using enhanced strength.

The Water Domain Grandmaster dove back into the lake, rejoining the battle from beneath, using the depth and currents to his advantage.

But Raptor's domain was getting more intense. The demonic mist began to swirl and grow, twisting the air into an oppressive pressure field. Waves surged to nearly ten feet high, and every crack of lightning that followed was enough to make the lake feel like a battlefield of gods.

"This is getting bad..." Tyler muttered, gripping the handle of his trident. "If he keeps this up, the Grandmasters might not hold him off much longer."

"We need to tip the balance," the Ice Domain Grandmaster said, forming jagged ice projectiles at her side. "If we can land just one critical blow, it might be enough to disrupt his domain."

"Alright." Tyler said, eyes fixed on Raptor. "Wait for my signal."

"Hmmm... I am not sure if this will work. But let's try it..." Tyler muttered.

Tyler narrowed his eyes at the raging battle in the distance. The lake had become a battlefield of elemental chaos, and the sky above was a swirling maelstrom of lightning, mist, and wind. The Grandmasters were doing their best, but Raptor's ferocity was becoming more overwhelming with each passing moment.

"It's time to end this," Tyler muttered under his breath. He also looked at the slaves though they were still dragging the corpse Tyler could see they are paying attention here.

He ignored them and was ready to act.

Chapter 334: Ambush by Lake (2/2)

"Mana do me a favour...." Tyler then gave some instructions to Mana. Mana nodded and disappeared she also took a Halbred from Tyler.

With a flick of his wrist, he pulled out his halberd—its blade infused with a deep, ominous glow of Abyss Aura. The weapon pulsed with raw power, the air around it trembling slightly as if reality itself was resisting its presence.

"Need a little help here..." Tyler said, hurling the halberd toward the battlefield.

This time, it wasn't just a projection—it was the actual halberd, heavy with killing intent and deadly aura.

The Wind Domain Grandmaster instantly caught on. With a sharp nod, he snatched the weapon mid-air just as the lake began to churn again. Another series of elemental attacks surged—jets of water and chunks of boulders rained from above, coordinated strikes from the Water and Rock Domain Grandmasters.

The Wind Domain Grandmaster didn't waste a second. With the momentum of wind accelerating him, he spun and hurled the halberd like a bolt of lightning. It streaked through the air, almost invisible to the eye, and struck Raptor's shoulder with pinpoint precision.

Blood splattered. The weapon had pierced through flesh and bone, but the injury was shallow. Raptor let out a guttural growl and reached for the halberd, intending to yank it out.

Far from the chaos, Tyler calmly whispered, "Boom."

A violent explosion erupted as the halberd self-destructed. The blast tore through Raptor's shoulder, sending shockwaves through the lake and flinging water dozens of feet into the air. The monstrous warrior let out a scream of agony, clutching his now mangled arm.

Tyler smirked. "That should hurt."

Without delay, he pulled out three more halberds from his storage ring and threw them toward the Grandmasters.

The three of them caught the weapons mid-flight, their expressions twitching. Each halberd vibrated ominously, the Abyss Aura radiating like a cursed relic. Even the seasoned Grandmasters exchanged wary glances—these were not weapons to be taken lightly. A single mishandling could cost them their lives.

"Where the hell is he getting these from?" the Rock Domain Grandmaster muttered under his breath.

Nevertheless, they wasted no time. In perfect coordination, the three Grandmasters flanked Raptor from different directions, each one hurling the explosive halberds with full force.

Pierce. Boom! Pierce. Boom! Pierce. BOOM!

Three massive explosions shook the entire area. Raptor's body convulsed violently from the successive detonations, his screams echoing through the valley. The lake roared in response, the shockwaves splitting the surface like a divine punishment. His once-proud figure now looked battered and broken, his armor shredded, his domain flickering with instability.

Finally, the monstrous Raptor crashed back into the lake with a deafening splash. He didn't rise again.

On the shore, the slaves stood in stunned silence. Then, slowly, one by one, their faces softened. A faint, involuntary smile crept onto their lips. The tyrant who had tormented them had fallen, and though they dared not cheer, a sense of relief—of satisfaction—washed over them.

But just as the moment felt triumphant, a sudden flash of lightning struck from above.

CRACK!

A bolt of lightning fell like divine judgment, striking a group of slaves and burning them to ashes on the spot.

Tyler's smile vanished instantly. "What the hell? Why did he attack the slaves?"

"Maybe it was misfire? Or just... friendly fire?" Mana who just returned said, though her voice lacked conviction.

Tyler clenched his fist. "No. That wasn't an accident. That was intentional."

He turned toward the Grandmasters. "Kill him. Now."

The three Grandmasters nodded, preparing to unleash one final coordinated attack to end Raptor once and for all.

But just then—something strange happened.

The air quivered—a ripple surging outward, as if a single drop had shattered the stillness of an unseen ocean.

A strange ripple distorted the space beside Tyler. Before anyone could react, a figure emerged from the anomaly. A girl with long silver hair, striking red eyes, and a pair of soft rabbit ears stood in front of them. Her presence was so sudden, so seamless, that even Tyler's senses hadn't picked her up until she was already there.

With a single leap, she darted past them all, light as a feather, swift as a shadow.

Everyone froze. None of them had sensed her approach. Even the Grandmasters stood still, baffled and tense.

The mysterious girl paused mid-air, turning her head slightly. Her eyes locked with Tyler's.

Tyler felt her red eyes familiar.

"Someone powerful is coming," she said softly. "You'd better run."

Before anyone could respond, she vanished—disappearing into thin air, as if she was never there.

The group was stunned.

"...Who was that?" Mathilda asked, blinking in disbelief. Despite the chaos around her, she couldn't help but be mesmerized by the girl's ethereal beauty.

"I don't know," Tyler said, his voice grim. "But if someone like that is warning us... we better listen."

Without hesitation, he gave the order. "Retreat. Now!"

No one argued. Within seconds, they gathered their equipment and fled the battlefield, soaring away from the lake on elemental platforms and wind-boosted flight techniques.

In less than ten seconds, the area was abandoned.

Back on the lake, Raptor's broken body twitched slightly. He coughed, blood dribbling from his lips. His mouth curled into an irritated snarl as he realized his enemies had escaped.

He wanted to chase. To kill. To tear through the skies and drag them back, one by one.

But his body wouldn't move.

Raptor's limbs trembled, not from rage, but from the sheer toll the battle had taken on him. His shoulder was mangled, his internal organs damaged by the successive explosions. His once-proud aura flickered weakly, like a candle struggling to stay lit in a storm.

Yet just as he tried to push himself up from the lake's surface, a new pressure descended from the heavens.

It was overwhelming.

Crushing.

His instincts screamed danger even before his mind caught up. He turned slowly, and what he saw froze him in place.

A golden-armored man stood calmly in the air, radiating power that made even the sky seem dim. His flawless features and glowing eyes gave him an almost divine presence. His armor shimmered with celestial inscriptions, and on his chest glowed a sun-shaped crest—Apollo, the enforcer of the Celestial Order.

Beside him floated a fox-eared woman, dressed in an alluring yet battle-ready outfit, her nine shimmering tails fluttering gently behind her. Her sharp golden eyes scanned the lake with mild amusement, as if nothing here could possibly pose a threat.

A massive Giant stood behind them, his muscular body towering like a mountain. He carried no weapon—his fists were more than enough.

And then there was the shadow—a mysterious figure clad in a black leather jacket, his face partially obscured by a dark hood. He stood silently, emanating a quiet killing intent that made even the air tremble.

The four of them stood calmly in the sky, as if walking on invisible platforms, divine in presence and terrifying in power.

"As expected... an ambush," Apollo said, his voice calm but commanding. "When I sensed multiple slaves dying at the same time, I arrived immediately. But it seems I'm still a step too late."

His golden eyes swept across the battlefield. Nothing escaped his gaze. The torn terrain, the faint traces of domain energy, the remnants of Abyss-infused explosions—it all painted a picture.

Apollo's Divine Sense flared, enveloping the entire area. His brows furrowed slightly.

He turned his gaze back toward Raptor, who still lay half-submerged in the lake.

"You didn't call for me the first time," Apollo said coldly. "And even now, you failed to inform me again... I'm disappointed."

Raptor bowed his head, trying to suppress his fear. "M-My Lord... I—"

"That angel... she was within my reach. Twice. And both times, she slipped away." Apollo's voice was no longer calm. It was cold steel laced with rage. "You lost her again."

"I-I swear... please give me another chance!" Raptor pleaded, forcing himself to kneel on the water's surface. "I will find them. I will bring her to you... just grant me the opportunity!"

But before he could finish his sentence, a heavy thud echoed.

A golden boot crashed down on his head.

Raptor's face slammed into the surface of the lake with a brutal splash. Blood oozed from his mouth and nose, staining the water around him.

He struggled, trying to rise, but Apollo pressed harder, grinding his face into the water below.

The air grew heavier.

The fox girl watched silently, one brow raised in mild interest. The Giant cracked his knuckles with a low grunt. The leather-clad shadow didn't even flinch—he simply stared.

"You had your chance," Apollo said softly, his voice echoed with less interest. It wasn't a shout, but it struck harder than any roar. Raptor's spine stiffened, an icy dread clawing up his nerves.

"I—urk—" Raptor tried to speak, but the pressure bearing down on him was overwhelming. His vision blurred. His limbs trembled. His very bones groaned under the crushing weight.

Then came a sickening crack..

Blood spilled like ink across the air as Apollo's golden boot pressed down mercilessly. The ground beneath trembled slightly—then, with a wet, grisly squelch, Raptor's head exploded under the force, crushed like a ripe melon in a vice.

His body twitched once, then fell limp—motionless and ruined.

Apollo calmly pulled his boot back, unbothered by the gore.

"Now let's go for Angel Hunt," he said, his tone calm as ever, wiping the blood off his boot with a flick.

Chapter 335: Taking a short Break from Abyss Journey

freewebnovel.com

Meanwhile, far away from the Abyss Hunters, Tyler and the others had already stepped through another spatial passage. The moment they crossed over, the stifling darkness of the Abyss was replaced by the brilliance of open skies and verdant landscapes.

Fresh green mountains stretched into the horizon, their peaks kissed by misty clouds. Birds soared freely in the sky, and a gentle breeze carried the scent of pine and blooming wildflowers. The group stood at the edge of a forest overlooking a wide river, its crystal-clear waters glinting under the sunlight.

"Did we leave the Abyss?" Mathilda asked, her voice laced with relief and awe as she looked around at the breathtaking view.

"We're probably in another world altogether," Tyler replied, pulling a compact, intricate device from his storage ring. It resembled a compass fused with several glowing crystals and rotating rings. He pointed it toward the spatial crack still shimmering behind them, taking readings as the device pulsed with faint lights.

After a few moments of analysis, he frowned slightly. "This spatial passage isn't stable. The connection to the Abyss is weak and fluctuating—could collapse at any time."

Tyler eyes still fixed on the readings. "We should stay in this world for a while. Let things settle. Also..." He turned toward the crack again, "It doesn't seem like any Abyssal creatures managed to slip through with us. That's good."

With a sharp glance, Tyler turned toward one of the Grandmasters. "Stabilize this spatial passage. Anchor it temporarily with your domain. If anything tries to come through—kill it on sight. Since we are staying in this world as uninvited guests we should atleast do a small favour."

The Grandmaster nodded firmly. "Understood."

Satisfied, Tyler scanned their new surroundings. His gaze fell upon a serene stretch of land by the riverbank—a perfect place to rest and regroup.

He raised his hand, and from his storage device , a small, ornate object shaped like a miniature palace appeared in his palm. With a flick of his wrist, he tossed it toward the ground.

The moment it touched the earth, the object pulsed with light and rapidly expanded, unfolding like blooming lotus petals. In mere seconds, it transformed into a majestic castle—tall spires, intricate carvings, shimmering banners, and a courtyard surrounded by protective barriers. The palace radiated an aura of elegance and defense, clearly inscribed with multiple arrays.

The girls looked at it with wide eyes.

"Why the castle though?" Mathilda asked, raising an eyebrow.

"I don't know what kind of world is this nor which era this world is," Tyler said with a casual shrug. "So Lets try to be mysterious power if locals of this worlds finds us."

The others chuckled, though they were visibly impressed.

"Let's go inside and rest," Tyler said, gesturing toward the castle entrance. He then turned to the remaining Grandmasters. "Take shifts protecting the palace and monitoring the spatial passage. Maintain a tight formation and stay alert. If something crawl out of Abyss, I want it dead before it takes a step."

"Consider it done," one of them replied, already moving to take position.

The group entered the castle, welcomed by warmth and comfort. The interiors were lavish—marble floors, crystal chandeliers, velvet drapes, and rooms enchanted with temperature regulation and soundproof barriers. It wasn't just a temporary shelter; it was a fortress disguised as luxury.

The girls dispersed to freshen up and relax, while Tyler moved to a spacious balcony overlooking the river. He leaned on the railing, taking a deep breath. The fresh air felt rejuvenating after days surrounded by the suffocating aura of the Abyss.

Mathilda soon joined him, holding a cup of herbal tea she'd brewed in the palace's kitchen.

"What are you gonna do?" Mathilda asked softly, her voice barely above a whisper.

Tyler didn't respond right away. He remained still, his gaze fixed on the shimmering ripples of the river beyond the balcony. The golden light of the setting sun bathed the valley in warmth, but his eyes were distant, reflective.

"I'm going to cultivate," he finally said, his voice calm but resolute.

Mathilda nearly choked on her tea.

"Prrrrr—!" She sputtered, a startled sound escaping her lips as she spilled some tea down her chin. "Wait, what?! You—cultivate?"

She stared at him in disbelief, eyes wide as if he'd just announced he was going to grow wings and fly.

"I've never seen you do that before," she said incredulously, wiping her mouth with the sleeve of her robe. "Seriously, you? Cultivate?"

Tyler turned his head slightly and gave her a subtle, amused glance. "Just because you haven't seen it doesn't mean it doesn't happen."

"I've lived with you for years, and I am pretty sure I almost never seen you do that." she quipped.

Before Tyler could reply, a sudden shimmer in the air caught their attention. Mana appeared silently beside him, as if space itself had gently released her.

"Mana," Tyler said, extending his hand without looking. "The thing."

Without a word, Mana reached into thin air and retrieved a box from her spatial storage. The moment she opened the lid, a sudden wave of pressure washed over the balcony like a tidal force.

Even Mathilda, seasoned and powerful, instinctively tensed. Her brows rose high in surprise, the aura from the box pressing against her senses.

"What is that?" she asked, peering into the container. Her eyes widened the moment she saw what was inside—a small chunk of crimson-streaked dragon flesh, still glistening with vitality, and a vial of thick, shimmering golden blood.

The essence inside the vial pulsed with power, each beat releasing faint shockwaves that made the very air hum.

"That's..." Mathilda leaned in closer, her alchemist instincts kicking in. Her expression shifted from curiosity to outright fascination. "That's a dragon's blood essence... and that flesh... it's from an Azure Dragon, isn't it?!"

Tyler nodded casually, as though it wasn't a big deal. "Remember when Raptor was fighting us? I secretly sent Mana ahead. I told her to snatch some materials while the chaos was still fresh. Took a piece of dragon flesh and essence before they could burn everything."

Mathilda's breath caught in her throat. "That Azure Dragon essence... it's legendary. Just a drop of that could evolve someone's meridians... If I can make some Potions" Her eyes shined.

"Yeah, yeah," Tyler replied nonchalantly, already turning to go inside. "Take a closer look if you want. Just don't drink it."

Mathilda rolled her eyes, still captivated by the sheer potency of what she was seeing.

Mathilda and Mana followed Tyler as he walked into the cultivation chamber of the palace. The room was circular, its walls etched with flowing runes that glowed softly with arcane light. In the center, Tyler placed the box on a raised stone altar, surrounded by activation arrays and spirit-absorbing formations.

He then took out his copper pot, placed the box in it.

Mathilda stepped beside him, eyes still sparkling with intrigue. "Yeah... Give me a hundred of those box... I have to do experiments."

Tyler smirked and casually reached into the pot, pulling out another box. He tossed it toward Mathilda, who caught it with practiced ease.

Mathilda's grin lit up her whole face. She opened the box —it contained another chunk of Azure Dragon flesh and a smaller vial of the golden blood essence.

"If you want more, just take it," Tyler said with a shrug, pulling out another box from the copper pot. Then another. Then another.

Mana raised an eyebrow. "You used copper ladle and make the copies faster. Why are you doing one by one?"

"It's been a while since I used it like this." Tyler said with a faint smile. "I still remember how I copied 'Never Melting Ice' just to upgrade my meridians."

Mathilda was still giggling to herself, unable to contain her excitement. She moved toward her own section of the chamber, setting up her alchemy tools. "I'm going to refine this into experimental pills. High-level cultivation boosters, maybe even essence restoration draughts, Temporary Dragon transformation Potion,.... Oh, the possibilities..."

Then Tyler began setting up an array on the floor, his hands moving swiftly as glowing runes formed in the air and etched themselves into the stone surface.

"What is this?" Mana asked, tilting her head curiously as she observed the intricate formation.

"Well, since I already have a dragon bloodline, it's easier for me to absorb this dragon blood essence," Tyler replied while continuing to inscribe the array. "But the problem is, it would take at least twenty years to fully absorb just one box of essence naturally."

Mana raised a brow. "Twenty years?"

Tyler chuckled. "Yeah. Way too slow for my liking."

He activated a few more symbols, the array now pulsing faintly with energy. "These arrays will accelerate the process. I'll only be able to absorb about one percent of the dragon blood essence using this method, but it's much faster—no need to wait decades."

He glanced at her with a smirk. "And honestly, quantity isn't really a problem for us."

Mana folded her arms and nodded thoughtfully.

"Your job is simple," Tyler added, handing her the copper pot that contained the box of dragon essence.
"Just refill the array with dragon blood essence whenever it runs out."

Mana accepted the pot and looked down at it. "Understood."

Then she looked back at him, curiosity gleaming in her eyes. "What realm will you reach after finishing this cultivation?"

Tyler paused for a moment, then gave her a faint, mysterious smile.

"You'll see."