

R Cultivator 401

Chapter 401: Lily vs The Clown

"Nicolaf," Tyler said, his voice calm but cold as he stepped closer to the battered man on the floor. "I saw everything. How you were once a prisoner of the Federation... and how you later joined the Circus to hide."

The injured man's eyes widened in disbelief. It was the Ring Master—his extravagant clothes now torn, his pride shattered, and blood trickling down the corner of his mouth.

"You were after us this whole time?" he croaked. "Did you... collect information on the entire Circus?"

Tyler shook his head, lips curled in a faint smirk and showed Clown's Diary "Nah. Not at first. I found the truth in the Clown's room. His diary is fully twisted." Honestly, I wouldn't have cared if your pirate group hadn't turned hostile first."

Nicolaf's brows furrowed, his breathing uneven. "Impossible," he hissed. "I was monitoring the entire floor. Every corner. Every inch. I never saw you step foot into the Captain's room."

"Yeah," Tyler replied casually. "About that... those tiny surveillance arrays of yours? They're cute. But they're also laughably easy to tamper with if you know what you're doing."

The Ring Master clenched his jaw, fury flickering in his eyes. "So this was all part of your plan?"

"Not really," Tyler said, his tone unbothered. "You brought this on yourselves. If you'd let us go, we would've walked away without a fight. But your group insisted on turning it into a circus act."

Nicolaf tried to push himself upright but collapsed again with a grunt. His strength had left him, but his pride refused to die.

Tyler stepped closer and knelt, looking him in the eye. "You should've known better. You don't play games with people who just want peace. In short, Don't push anyone so far, They will bite back with everything they got."

For a long moment, silence fell between them.

Then Tyler stood up, brushing the dust from his coat. "Anyway... enough talk."

He turned toward the shattered remains of the Game Arena, the battlefield littered with broken cages, scorched earth, and the groaning of freed slaves still recovering.

"Time to clean up this mess," Tyler said flatly. "Let's bring the Clown back to the Circus."

Behind him, Mana emerged from the shadows, her expression sharp and unamused.

The Ring Master looked up weakly, realization dawning in his fading eyes.

"You're not just a merchant," he murmured. "You're something else..."

Tyler gave him one last glance, eyes gleaming with purpose. "Well..." he said. "I am just The Rich Cultivator.."

"Roll credits..." Mana shouted.

"Don't causally break the Fourth Wall." Tyler bonked her head.

In the Sea...

Lily was flung into the water, her body spiraling mid-air before crashing with a splash. Blood billowed into the ocean like crimson ink, dyeing the surrounding waves. Her whip, her signature weapon, floated nearby—snapped and useless once again. She grit her teeth as the salt stung her wounds.

Behind her, the massive white ship—the White Pearl—was unnaturally stuck in place. It wasn't damaged, but it wasn't moving either. Its entire hull was resting on an enormous playing card floating unnaturally in the sea.

The card was massive, easily the size of a naval platform, and it is a King of Diamonds card. It had materialized beneath the ship without warning, effectively anchoring it in the middle of the open sea.

Hovering high above the spectacle, laughing maniacally, was the Clown.

"HAHAHAHA... This is fun!" he shrieked, flipping his palm dramatically.

A flurry of playing cards materialized in his hand. With a flourish, he hurled them toward the wounded Lily.

The cards ignited mid-air, glowing red-hot like flash paper. Upon contact, they exploded with sparks, forcing Lily to dive beneath the waves to avoid further injury.

"I love playing Whack-a-Mole!" the Clown giggled. "Only this mole bites back! HAHAHAHA!"

Floating effortlessly in the sky, he pulled a different set of cards—sharper, sleeker. With another flick of his wrist, he sent them hurtling downward like blades.

The cards cut through the air with terrifying speed, slicing the water's surface as if it were paper. Each card left behind a hiss and a bubbling trail, narrowly missing Lily as she swam frantically to escape the lethal barrage.

Meanwhile, aboard the immobilized White Pearl, chaos was mounting.

Mathilda stood at the helm, staring down at the giant card beneath them in frustration. The ship refused to budge, trapped atop the card.

"We're stuck," she muttered. "Brilliant."

Her frustration was met with a flickering light. A translucent projection of Serena appeared beside her.

"Based on current mass and trajectory," Serena began in her usual analytic tone, "if everyone on board collectively pushes the ship, there is a 12.4% chance of achieving minimal movement—"

"—And a 100% chance we'll all die trying," Mathilda interrupted, arms crossed. "Yeah, thanks, genius."

Serena paused, flickering again. "Then... I suggest using the cannon propulsion system. Adjust the output angle to a reverse firing mode."

Before Mathilda could respond, a violent crack of lightning exploded from the sea. A surge of energy burst upward, and from within it, Lily soared back into the sky.

Her body still bore bruises and lacerations, but her aura flared as she popped a glowing pill into her mouth. Her wounds began to mend slowly as sparks of electricity danced around her.

She wasn't done yet.

On the giant card surrounding the White Pearl, members of the Circus Pirate Crew had begun to gather. They circled the ship like hyenas.

One pirate, leaning on a curved sword, watched Lily's descent with a cautious squint.

"If we jump in now, that lightning girl might fall into disadvantage," he muttered.

"True," another responded lazily, polishing his nails with a dagger. "Go ahead and try. I'll watch."

The first pirate scowled. "I didn't say I'd do it! I'm just pointing it out."

"Relax," a third pirate added. "Let the Clown have his fun. Anyone who gets in his way ends up... well, you know..."

Suddenly, the ground beneath their feet trembled.

"Wait... is the card shaking?" someone asked, alarmed.

The pirates turned toward the White Pearl—and were dumbfounded.

Inside the ship, all the canons had been turned towards one side, angled slightly off-center toward the card below.

"Fire" Mathilda shouted from the deck.

With a thunderous roar, the cannons blasted, not at enemies but against the card itself.

The recoil was immense. The ship jerked violently, launching itself off the card with raw propulsion power.

The Circus pirates were caught off guard.

"What the hell are they doing?!" one of them shouted, barely staying upright.

"Using canons... for movement??"

Soon they met with the high speed ship. Caught Off-guard, they were sent flying and some even lost life.

The White Pearl didn't stop there. With its engines re-engaged and momentum regained, it soared forward across the card gradually gaining speed as it escaped the trap.

Lily, hovering mid-air with sparks arcing around her fingertips, looked down at the Clown, who still hovered high with an amused grin.

"Oh? You're still playing?" he asked mockingly. "Good, I was getting bored."

Lily narrowed her eyes.

The Clown grinned and gave a flamboyant wave of his hand. The massive King of Diamonds card, then began to shrink rapidly. In seconds, it turned back into small card and flew back into the Clown's sleeve like a well-trained pet.

He didn't spare a single glance at the Circus pirates who had been standing on the card—they were of no concern to him.

Back aboard the Circus ship, the Juggler watched the chaos unfold through narrowed eyes. His hand gripped a flask, but he hesitated. He had been considering a sneak attack on Lily while she was distracted. But he knew better than to interfere when the Clown was in one of his "moods."

Ruining the Clown's fun meant certain death—or worse. And besides, there was that damned alchemist aboard the White Pearl. He wasn't risking his life just yet.

Suddenly, the entire Circus ship jolted violently.

"What the—?!" the Juggler cursed, stumbling to grab onto the nearest railing.

The cause became clear immediately: the White Pearl had slammed into the Circus ship with force.

To be fair, this wasn't an ordinary ship. The White Pearl was reinforced with advanced arrays, some of the most expensive and rare enchantments in the known seas. Even the prized Circus ship couldn't compare.

Thanks to its shock absorption array, the White Pearl's crew barely felt the impact. Meanwhile, the Circus ship rocked violently, and some of the deck crew tumbled overboard.

"HAHAHAHA! There are no brakes, huh?!" the Clown roared with laughter from above, clearly entertained by the collision.

Still floating in the sky, he produced another card—this time, the Queen of Hearts. With a flick of his fingers, he launched it toward the sky. The card spun rapidly, slicing the wind as it disappeared into the clouds.

Lily narrowed her eyes, instantly on alert.

Something wasn't right.

She instinctively looked up—just in time to see a Queen of Hearts card materialize in midair and tear itself apart.

BOOM!

The explosion sent her flying. She gritted her teeth and twisted her body midair, regaining her control.

But there was no time to recover.

Another Queen of Hearts dropped from the sky and exploded before it even reached her. She dove again, avoiding the brunt of the blast.

She managed to land back on the White Pearl, bruised and bleeding but still on her feet.

"Got you!" Darla shouted from the CIC. With a quick motion, she deactivated the a portion of barrier where she fell.

"Hahahaha... This is going to be fun..." the Clown giggled from above, his voice like nails on glass.

Then, with a theatrical snap of his fingers, the sky darkened. A sinister aura spread out in a ripple, and in the blink of an eye, thousands of Queen of Hearts cards appeared above the ship, all aimed downward.

Each one glowed ominously, like they were seconds away from igniting.

The entire White Pearl crew froze, staring upward.

Mathilda slowly turned her head.

"Yeah... we're dead." she muttered.

Chapter 402: Astute

"Hahahaha... This is going to be fun..." the Clown cackled from above, his voice sharp and twisted like nails scratching on a glass pane.

With a theatrical snap of his fingers, the sky above the White Pearl suddenly darkened. A ripple of eerie energy pulsed outward, distorting the clouds. Then, in a flash of red and gold light, thousands of Queen of Hearts cards appeared in the sky, all pointed like knives toward the ship.

Each one glowed ominously, flickering with unstable magical energy. The hum of raw power buzzed in the air, like a swarm of insects gathering for the kill.

"Well, well, well... Like a butcher trapped in a chicken shop," the Clown mused with a tilted head, giggling uncontrollably.

"Isn't it the other way around?" came a voice from the sea.

"Yeah, it's supposed to be a chicken trapped in a butcher shop," said another voice.

Two bedraggled pirates were floating in the water nearby, drifting aimlessly after the massive King of Diamonds card had vanished. Their once flamboyant outfits were soaked and torn, and both were holding onto broken pieces of driftwood.

Suddenly, a playing card floated between them.

"Wait, what is this?" Pirate One blinked.

"It's a Queen of Hearts...? Eh? NO! RUN! SWIM!!" Pirate Two screamed.

BOOM!

An explosion erupted in the water, sending a geyser of steam and foam high into the air. The shockwave knocked the pirates away like ragdolls. Even though they talked with low voice, the clown heard everything.

Back on the top of the White Pearl, the Clown floated serenely, completely unaffected by the chaos. His crimson eyes locked onto Lily, who stood firm on the deck, blood dripping from her cheek but her gaze unwavering.

"How about this," he said, tone turning cold. "Lily Gomes, right? You're strong. I can give you that. But your captain—Tyler White—he's already dead."

His words cut through the wind like daggers.

"Join the Circus. You and your crew. Hand over this magnificent ship. I'll paint it with my own colors—turn it into a parade of madness worthy of the chaotic northern waters."

He wasn't laughing anymore. Madness burned in his eyes like twin infernos. His smile was gone, replaced with something much more terrifying—intent, "This ship is made specifically for the Northern Waters. As expected Tyler, when he said he is Rich, he was not joking."

Lily scoffed. "Tch. Like hell you can kill the captain."

"HAHAHAHA! Are you his girlfriend?" the Clown sneered. "Too bad your boyfriend's dead! Oh, you don't believe me? Then allow me to show you."

He turned toward his battered ship in the distance. Most of the mast was cracked, and its sails were torn. The once vibrant paint had been battered by the Collision from the White Pearl's impact.

"Tell the Ring Master to send the Candy Crush footage of their ex-captain," the Clown ordered. "And while you're at it, summon three more ships. We'll need help dragging this beauty."

He wanted three more ships to acquire the White Pearl. The reason why he didn't attack is to acquire the Ship without any damages.

Dr. Juggler frowned. He was still on the Circus ship, bandaging his hand from a shard of wood.

"I'm sorry, Captain. The comms are down. The ship took too much internal damage from the collision. We... can't contact the Tent." Then Dr. juggler poured some liquids on his wound.

At the same time, Darla whispered something into Lily's ear. A smirk crept onto Lily's lips. She glanced up at the Clown with a mischievous glint in her eye.

"Looks like we got the signal," she said.

In a flash of blue light, Serena materialized near the mast. She raised her hand, and a massive 3D screen appeared in the air above the White Pearl, shimmering like glass.

Serena can appear and make holographic in any part of the ship because of the arrays in the White Pearl.

All eyes turned to it.

The screen flickered to life. At first, all that was visible was the top hat of the Ring Master. The angle began to shift downward, and a voice echoed across the sea.

"Ring Master? Good. Show them the state of Tyler White," the Clown called out, still hovering.

But a different voice answered.

"Ring Master? Nuh-uh. He's... licking his wounds," the voice teased.

As the camera panned down further, Tyler White came into view, seated on top of the Circus Tent, looking incredibly smug. His white cloak fluttered behind him, and he was sipping something from a carved coconut.

"Also," he added casually, "this is the current state of Tyler White. Sitting on top of your precious Tent. Which, by the way, is loaded with more explosive charms than you can count."

The blood drained from the Clown's face.

"Y-You... You're alive?!" he shouted.

Tyler gave him a thumbs-up.

"Yeah. I really don't get why you turned on me, though. But after experiencing your diary—yes, I experienced it—I guessed it was because you saw something, right? A future where I killed you? That's it, isn't it? So you decided to take me out first."

The Clown's face twisted with rage and disbelief. He turned toward the sea as if expecting someone to explain this madness.

"Don't you move! Don't try anything, or I'll... HAHAAHA destroy your girlfriend and that shiny ship of yours!" the Clown shouted.

"HAHAHAH...." Tyler laughed again, this time louder and with a sharp edge.

"Seriously?" he said, his smile vanishing. "Just because you laugh like a maniac doesn't make you a good Clown."

Then he leaned closer to the recording device.

"Also... I've actually got a new girlfriend now."

He casually turned the camera to the side.

On a nearby bed, a beautiful young woman lay asleep. Her entire body was clean unlike before painted like a clown. She is also not naked like before.

The Clown's expression crumbled.

"D-Don't! What are you doing!? Amber?! Run! Run away from him!" he shouted, panic overtaking him.

"'Amber'? What a good name," Tyler mused as he laid down beside her and winked at the camera. His hand entered her dress and squeezed her breast.

"Sooo soft." Tyler muttered loudly.

"STOP!!" the Clown cried. His face twisted in despair as he let out a deranged laugh and a broken sob at the same time. "HAHAHAHA... HA... HA..."

"Come quickly or else," Tyler said as he placed her before him and his hand entered her crotch area, "I will come in her Instead..."

The screen vanished.

The clown quickly disappeared. He shot across the sky like a meteor, flying toward the Tent.

The Queen of Hearts cards above the ship shimmered for a moment... then vanished all at once, dissolving into sparkles of red mana. A single Queen of Hearts card floated gently down and drifted towards the Clown.

On the White Pearl, the crew finally exhaled.

"So... we're safe?" Lily said with a deep breath.

"How dare he... with another girl..." Mathilda muttered, her eyes burning with jealousy.

"He did it to save us... probably," Darla said with a faint blush.

"Who was that girl? Why didn't he let me join the fun?" Mathilda pouted, her arms crossed.

"That's your problem?!" Darla said, genuinely baffled this time.

"Once this is all over, I'm going to ask Tyler to lend her to me," Mathilda said with her usual shameless grin, a bit of drool escaping the corner of her mouth. "I'll play with her day and night..."

"Huh... Hate to break it to you," Lily cut in, her tone flat and precise. "But I think she's already dead. Didn't see even a hint of breathing in that video. No chest movement, no subtle shifts—nothing. She's gone."

Her voice was calm, but the chill in her words was unmistakable. Lily's observations were as sharp and unsettling as ever.

"He was molesting a dead body?" Darla was shocked for another reason.

With the Clown gone, several dazed pirates looked around, uncertain of what to do. Even Dr. Juggler was dumbfounded.

"What now?" one of them asked nervously.

Dr. Juggler, still leaning on his cane, sighed and gave the order, "The Tent is under attack. We retreat and protect the Tent."

Just as they were about to turn the ship around, a voice rang out—sharp and confident.

"Did I say you could leave?"

Everyone turned.

A young girl now sat elegantly on their deck, legs crossed, sipping tea. She had fox ears, and multiple fluffy fox tails waved lazily behind her. Her golden eyes shimmered with playful malice.

Behind her, an entire red shrine had appeared out of nowhere, floating in the middle of the sea.

The air grew still. The waves crashing on the shrine which indicates the Shrine is not a mirage. The atmosphere turned divine—dangerous.

Dr. Juggler blinked. "Who... who are you?"

Su Fei smiled. "Oh? I'm just a little fox. My job is to step in when things get out of hand—but it looks like they don't even need me."

Chapter 403: Ashes of Amber

When the clown arrived at the circus, rage burned inside him like wildfire. Yet his face betrayed none of it. It was Twisted, it was both laughing and crying—an eerie expression that only amplified the madness in his eyes.

"HAHAHA... I got cucked! Damn you, Tyler... TYLER WHITE!" he screamed, voice echoing like a haunted melody across the empty circus. "I'll make you bleed from every organ and orifice. You'll become Tyler Red! HAHAHAHA...."

His deranged laughter mixed with sorrowful sobs as he reached the top of the main tent. But no one was there—only a lone bed and a torn dress, the one Amber had worn in the video he saw before. He froze, then with a manic flick of his wrist, he summoned a card.

It spun through the air like a blade and struck the bed, causing a small explosion that ripped a gaping hole in the tent. Feathers and ash danced in the air like mocking snowflakes.

Without hesitation, the clown dove into the hole, landing gracefully in the center of the colorless circus floor. Everything around him had turned monochrome—black and white. The vibrant circus turned into Black and White, probably, Tyler did something.

"Amber... Amber..." he called, his voice trembling. His words echoed endlessly in the hollow space. "Tyler, give Amber back! She belongs to me—and my brother!"

His scream was answered not by footsteps, but by a voice.

"Welcome to the circus, Clown..." Tyler's voice oozed through the tent's speakers like honey tainted with venom.

Then a strange sound followed—a moan. "Aaahn... Sorry, I was feeding my cream to my new girlfriend, Amber. Her mouth and face are full of cream. She's adorable when she's messy."

"Stop! STOP!" the clown shrieked, his eyes wide with fury. He darted toward the monitoring room. Only from there could someone access the speaker systems.

He burst into the room like a storm. "Amber!?"

But there was no one inside—just silence and static. A communication watch lay near the Array console, blinking with an active connection.

"Oh, did you really think I'd be dumb enough to wait for you here?" Tyler's voice echoed again through the watch. "I'm not your average circus act, clown."

Grinding his teeth, the clown sat and tried to activate the surveillance Arrays. He moved his hands across the interface with furious precision, opening every channel, every feed, but—

Buzz. Buzz.

Nothing but static.

"Damn it!" he growled, smashing his fist into the console.

He grabbed the communication watch and screamed into it. "Everyone in this circus—find Tyler White! Search every corner! Don't let him escape!"

As he barked the order, a holographic image of Tyler White appeared across every screen and projection in the circus, showing his face frozen in a smug smirk.

"That's a clever move..." Tyler's voice replied calmly. "But is it really going to help you?"

"I have four words for you," the clown hissed, clenching the watch tightly. "I. Will. Kill. You."

Tyler chuckled. "And I have four words for you... I have a hostage."

The clown's face twitched. "What do you want?"

"You're the one who wanted to kill me," Tyler answered.

"You're the one who burned the circus! I saw it. I SAW IT!" the clown shouted, his voice cracking with emotion.

"No," Tyler replied coolly. "If you hadn't targeted me in the first place, none of this would have happened. The future has multiple possibilities. Just because you saw one, you wanted to kill me."

Tyler paused, then added with a hint of glee, "How about this? Come to the Candy Crush Room. I've placed your beloved Amber beneath the press. You might be able to save her—if you hurry."

The clown's eyes widened. He didn't hesitate. With a flash, he vanished from the monitoring room and appeared at the Candy Crush Room as quickly as possible.

The press was already descending.

"Amber!" he screamed, leaping forward, racing against time.

But he was too late.

Through the small gap of the pit, he saw Amber lying motionless. The press came down, blocking his view entirely as it sealed the hole.

"NOOOOOOO!" he howled, slamming his fists against the side of the machine. He dashed to the control panel in the next room, trying to stop the press.

But the controls were wrecked—deliberately destroyed.

"AMBER!!! I WON'T LET YOU GO, TYLER!" the clown bellowed, veins popping in his neck as his fury reached new heights.

He tried to attack the press, but it suddenly accelerated downward with a violent hiss. The sound of something being crushed echoed through the room, sharp and final.

Once, he had laughed at that sound—relishing it when he was the one crushing other people. But now, it felt like his own heart had been shattered beneath that weight.

Just then, a hologram activated on the watch again.

Tyler appeared, lounging on a throne in the Game Arena, looking relaxed and victorious. Amber rested against him, naked and her eyes closed peacefully.

"Don't worry," Tyler said with a smirk. "That wasn't your Amber in the pit. The real one's right here—with me."

His hand grabbed her breast. His mouth kissed her cheeks.

The clown froze, heart pounding.

Then he vanished again.

A couple of seconds later, he arrived at the Game Arena.

The metal sheets on the arena floor groaned and parted, revealing — a towering, gothic castle bathed in a pale, unnatural glow.

"Oh no... The princess is stuck in the castle," came Tyler's mocking voice from the arena's speakers, saturated with sarcasm and mischief.

"Now... Let's find out... will the Clown save the princess?" Tyler continued, his voice echoing like a cruel game show host announcing the final challenge.

The Clown stood frozen, his wild smile vanishing for the first time in years. His heart, which had long forgotten what it meant to feel genuine fear or panic, skipped a beat. His painted face— with half-

laughing, half-crying expression—twitched involuntarily. Shock rooted him in place. This wasn't just a trick. This was a nightmare designed for him, tailored for his madness.

Atop the castle's highest spire, Amber was tied up, her body limp, her expression vacant. But that wasn't all.

On the balconies, in the windows, on the terraces—everywhere he looked, he saw her. Amber.

There wasn't just one.

There were dozens.

Hundreds.

Every single window, chamber, and hallway of the towering castle seemed to house a peaceful, unmoving Amber, as if she were both the prize and the punishment.

A large incense burner materialized in the center of the arena. Instead of releasing calming smoke, it burned violently like a bonfire, roaring with urgency. The countdown had begun.

"You have only this incense of time," Tyler's voice echoed again, calm and terrifying. "Find the real Amber. If you try to save one, the others will detonate. If you can't choose before time runs out... they'll all be reduced to ash. So try to choose the real one."

The Clown stared blankly at the burning incense. Each second that passed was another nail hammered into his sanity.

"HAHAHAHA..." he forced a laugh, but his eyes were void of joy. "I'm the one who organized games for others. I built deathtraps, puzzles, and illusions. And now... I'm the show."

With trembling steps, he moved toward the nearest Amber.

She looked perfect—her skin pale, warm lips. He knelt, brushing her cheek with a gloved hand.

"Amber..." he murmured.

But his gaze flicked back to the burning incense. No time to pause.

He bolted through the castle corridors, finding room after room filled with more Ambers. Some were lying on silk beds, others locked behind golden bars, each one serene, their beauty haunting.

"This one... no, this one... maybe that one—" he whispered to himself, his words unraveling into madness.

And then... they spoke. Atleast in his point of view,

"Choose me..."

"I'm the real one..."

"No, save me... I'm your Amber..."

The voices didn't come from their lips, but echoed in his head—whispers, pleas, desperate cries.

Hallucinations. But for him everything was real.

It was as if all the Ambers were reaching their arms twisting, demanding.

The Clown collapsed to his knees, clutching his head as he screamed. His mind was fracturing. The girl he loved, the girl he obsessed over, was everywhere... and nowhere. Each Amber was real. Each Amber was fake. He could no longer tell the difference.

"Time's up," Tyler's voice cut through the air, cruel and final.

"W-wait!" the Clown choked, scrambling toward one of the Ambers.

But it was too late.

With a blinding flash, the Ambers began to turn to ash.

One by one, like delicate paper sculptures caught in a blaze, they disintegrated. Silent. Beautiful. Horrifying.

And In clown's point of view,

As they vanished, their ghostly glares lingered. The Clown could feel their eyes on him, feel their pain, hear their judgment.

"You didn't save me."

"You let me die."

"You failed me."

He tried to scream, but no sound escaped.

And then, finally, the world around him caught fire.

Unbeknownst to him, Tyler had triggered the final act. All around the circus, hidden explosive charms ignited in succession. All floors lit up like a funeral pyre. The entire circus, once full of color and madness, was now engulfed in flames.

The arena trembled. The painted floor cracked. The seats collapsed inward like a mouth swallowing itself.

The Tent is Burning.

Chapter 404: ERROR

Tyler's PoV:

Alright. Everything is going according to plan.

To be more specific—everything is going exactly the way I made the Clown dance in the palm of my hand.

I always joke that I'm no good guy nor a bad guy — I'm just a rich guy. But the way I've handled this whole circus thingy? Yeah... if someone else did this, I'd probably label them a villain. And maybe I am also a Bad Guy now.

But there was no other way. Not against him.

Unlike his freakshow crew, the Clown is a Divine Seeker Realm cultivator. That's an entirely different realm. I'm not stupid—hell, even though I've fought people of that level before in the Abyss, I only pulled through with help from others. This time, it's just me... and my crew.

I can't let Su Fei use her full power, She might turn against me.

And I'm not planning to gamble on a direct fight.

I got my hands on his diary. Not some basic journal with childhood doodles, no—this thing is a spiritual log. Some Immortal Practitioners like him loves to write Diary, just like mortals. But this one can store living memory directly into enchanted pages. It records emotion, visual, sound—everything. Just like a mortal writes in a daily diary, except this records things.

And what I saw in that diary?

It was like Entering through the pages of madness.

The Clown's mind? It's a carnival of chaos. Twisted logic. Hallucinations parading as memories. The guy's not just crazy—he's disturbingly creative with his insanity.

His dad is an Undertaker, Not a dead man, the one who buries the Dead man and woman and whatever the Gender there are —simple, honest job. But the pay? Since there is no dead in the village he got nothing. So what does our young clown do to help his old man?

He starts murdering people to "bring customers" to the family business.

Yes. He created supply and demand.

He monetized murder.

The guy invented a serial-killing business model.

And that's not even the worst part.

He had a brother. And his brother had a lover—Amber.

Things got ugly. Real ugly.

He ended up killing both of them. But instead of accepting what he'd done, the clown... broke.

He created an array to preserve their corpse. But here's where it gets more tragic than sick—he convinced himself they were still alive.

When his brother's body began to rot, he actually thought his brother was dying—again. He wept. He panicked. He screamed at fate. He believed it was all real.

And Amber? He started carrying her corpse with him everywhere. Talking to her. Feeding her. Whispering sweet nothings to a lifeless body. He also had many intimate moments with a dead body.

Only few people in The crew knew. But no one dared say a word.

Because if thoss who did are not alive.

And now here we are.

He's in my trap. And he doesn't even know how deep the hole goes.

The plan is simple. Elegant, even.

Use his twisted love for Amber—his delusion that she's still alive—as a leash.

I've set the stage. I made him run from room to room, desperate.

I already made many Copies of Amber Bodies. And even blown them before his eyes.

Now? Now he's broken.

Now I make my move.

The real Amber's body — I am gonna use it to make him submit.

I'm going to threaten him and make him wear the slave collar to supress his Realm. The only way to use this slave collar is only when they are unconscious or let them wear themselves.

After that, I won't need to fight.

I'll just whisper a command—and watch him die.

Cruel?

Maybe.

But I've seen his diary.

I've seen the towns he wiped out just for laughs. The children he used as "game arena". The families that got humiliated. Many people who died because of his madness.

This clown?

He's not just a madman.

He's a monster in greasepaint.

So yeah. Maybe today I'm not a good guy. Maybe today I'm playing the villain.

Panic swept across Fun Streak Island.

From nearly every corner of the island, people could see thick black smoke rising into the sky. Flames danced violently at the center—right where the massive circus tent once stood.

The Big Top was burning.

At the same time, the White Pearl returned to the island's docks.

Gang Leader Darla and her daughter, Alna, rushed to the ship the moment it anchored. Their faces were tight with concern.

Lily stepped forward immediately, voice calm but commanding. "Don't panic," she said. "We need control, not chaos."

She quickly relayed her instructions. "Call in all the gangs. I don't care how many—just get them moving. I'll pay, and you know how rich my captain is."

That promise was more than enough.

Within minutes, the gangs of Fun Streak Island were mobilizing, forming lines and patrols to push back the spreading panic.

"The circus is under attack," Lily continued, addressing Darla directly. "But we're not going to let anyone use this as an excuse to loot or riot. Got it? You and your people focus on crowd control."

Darla gave a sharp nod and disappeared with Alna into the chaos.

Once they were out of earshot, Mathilda tilted her head. "Was all that really necessary?"

Lily glanced at her sideways, smirking. "Think about it. Tyler said he has a way to take down the Clown."

She leaned in, her eyes glinting with confidence.

"And when that happens... who do you think this entire island will belong to?"

Mathilda blinked—then her eyes lit up in realization.

"Oh," she said, a wicked grin spreading across her face.

Back at the center of the island—where the Circus Tent once proudly stood—there was nothing but chaos and rubble.

The grand Big Top was no more. Reduced to smoking ruins, its vibrant banners and colorful structures now lay scattered and burning, consumed by the explosive aftermath.

Most of the circus crew had been caught off guard. Many were dead. The rest, injured and struggling to comprehend what had just happened, lay scattered among the wreckage.

At the heart of the destruction, amidst the carnage and ash, sat the Clown.

He wasn't laughing anymore.

His painted face was smeared with soot and blood. His once vibrant outfit now hung in tatters. And in the middle of it all, standing atop the wreckage like a god descending from chaos, was the one responsible.

Tyler White.

The Clown lifted his head slowly, eyes locking onto the figure before him. Tyler stood tall, his body radiating heat, covered in gleaming red dragon scales. His eyes glowed with the fierce brilliance of molten gold, and in his hand, he held a weapon that pulsed with ominous energy—a black Abyssal Trident, crackling with dark power.

Just like in the vision.

The Clown's voice was quiet, nearly swallowed by the crackle of flames and crumbling debris. "Tyler White..."

Tyler exhaled sharply and deactivated his transformation, the dragon scales receding as his appearance returned to normal. He had barely escaped the blast himself and had been forced to activate Mode Dragon to survive.

He stepped forward, tossing something at the Clown's feet with a dull clank—it was a slave collar, glinting menacingly under the glow of firelight.

Then Tyler reached into his pocket dimension and pulled out a body.

Amber.

"Good news, Clown," Tyler said, voice low and deliberate. "Guess what? Your Amber is still safe. Here's the deal—wear that collar, and I'll give her back to you. I swear it."

For a brief second, the Clown's eyes widened, a flicker of emotion returning to his hollow expression. But just as quickly, his gaze went flat again—lifeless, distant.

Then, he laughed.

It wasn't his usual manic cackle. It was bitter. Empty. The kind of laugh that makes your skin crawl.

Tyler narrowed his eyes, cautious. Something felt off. Still, he remained patient. He needed the Clown to wear the collar. The moment he did, his powers would be sealed—and Tyler could strike the finishing blow.

But then, the Clown did something unexpected.

He snapped the collar in half.

Tyler's body tensed.

"No..." he muttered.

Before Tyler could react, the Clown reached into his sleeve and pulled out a single playing card. He flicked it—not at Tyler, but at Amber's body.

The card plunged into her chest.

It was the Queen of Hearts.

A soft flicker of red light pulsed from the card—then exploded.

Tyler barely had time to act. He threw Amber's body away just as the bomb went off.

The shockwave knocked him back.

As the smoke cleared, the Clown stood there, smiling like a madman again.

"Hahaha... It's also fake. But also real. I don't even know anymore!" He spun around like a dancer in a storm. "I'll destroy all of my Ambers until I find the real one!"

Tyler groaned, as he pulled himself upright.

"Oh sh!t," he muttered, "looks like I messed up his already-messy mind a little too much."

This wasn't part of the plan. Not even the worst-case simulations covered this reaction.

There was an error.

A big one.

Chapter 405: Torture

Tyler tried to run.

But before he could take another step, the sky above him bled crimson.

The world around him warped, vanishing into a sea of red mist and silence. The trees, rubble, and even the distant sounds of fire and screams—all gone.

"Domain... huh..." Tyler muttered under his breath.

His hand instinctively tapped the side of his watch, activating his portable Waypoint Terminal. One press, and he'd be out. He could escape any time—but not without finishing this.

He couldn't let the Clown live.

If he let a maniac like the Clown live and went further into the Northern Seas, it would only be a matter of time before the madman would come hunting him—and worse, his crew.

He needed to end it now.

With a deep breath, Tyler activated his own Domain.

The two Domains clashed for a moment—his logical and ordered, the Clown's chaotic and deranged—but soon, Tyler's influence manifested below: a large chessboard spread across the cracked ground, a familiar structure of strategy and rules.

He looked up.

The Clown's Domain was unlike anything he'd ever seen. It resembled a circus—but stripped of joy and laughter. There were no vibrant colors or playful music, only a blood-drenched arena with a red sky looming overhead. The tent poles were bones, and the laughter echoing in the air was twisted, broken.

Then came the first attack.

A giant wooden Trojan horse materialized from the mist, its hooves thundering as it charged straight toward him.

"Chariot," Tyler whispered, and with a flash, he moved horizontally across the board, dodging just in time.

But there was no time to rest.

From the other side, a monstrous Ferris wheel spun toward him. It didn't have compartments or seats—only rotating blades, sharp and gleaming like guillotine edges.

It was faster than the horse. Tyler braced for impact.

The wheel slammed into him—only for his body to explode into shards of ice.

The real Tyler reappeared crouching behind a nearby cupboard, hidden in the shadows. He clenched his fists, breathing quietly.

"You can run... but you can't hide," came the Clown's voice, echoing from all directions. It sounded closer this time—almost gleeful.

Then, in an instant, Tyler found himself inside the cupboard.

His surroundings shifted without warning.

The doors slammed shut.

A buzzing sound grew louder as the Clown approached, dragging a long, rusty saw.

Tyler tried to escape again—but it didn't work instantly.

The saw screeched through the wood, slicing the cupboard in two.

The Clown lifted the top half to reveal—

Shattered ice.

"Damn... this annoying ability," the Clown muttered, throwing the saw aside.

Far away, Tyler reappeared in another corner of the domain, crouched and clutching his stomach.

His breathing was ragged. His eyes filled with pain.

Even though he had used his ice escape art, he hadn't managed to escape the moment the saw struck. The pain had still hit him—like being torn in half.

His whole body trembled.

"Hahahaha... You won't die in my Domain," the Clown's voice whispered again, "but you'll feel every... single... pain."

Suddenly, the ground beneath Tyler gave way.

He plummeted into a rectangular pit.

Before he could react, a massive metal press descended from above—like a trapdoor from hell.

He couldn't fly immediately and got trapped. Everything happened in a blink of an eye.

The press crushed him.

The Clown skipped gleefully to the edge, humming a carnival tune. He removed the press and looked below.

All he found was shattered ice.

Meanwhile, Tyler lay hidden under a pile of rubble. His body twitched uncontrollably.

The pain hadn't faded.

His muscles spasmed. Every cell in his body felt like it had been torn apart and sewn back together with fire.

He opened his eyes.

Hovering above him—another threat.

A giant stone pillar floated in midair. It pulsed with energy. Then, without warning, it dropped.

"Chariot!" Tyler shouted, using his domain's rule-based movement to sidestep it at the last second.

But just as he steadied himself, a second pillar slammed toward him from the side.

Boom.

The world exploded in dust and stone.

The rubble shifted.

A figure slowly rose, shaking off debris.

Tyler stood up, his entire body now covered in glowing crimson scales.

He had activated Mode Dragon at the very last second.

"HAHAHAHAHAHA!" the Clown cackled from everywhere at once. "This is just the beginning. I'm not gonna kill ya... not yet. I'm just gonna hurt ya... really, really bad."

A razor-sharp card—bladed at the edges—came flying out of nowhere.

It stabbed straight into Tyler's chest.

So fast. So precise.

Tyler's eyes widened in shock.

Smoke rose in the distance.

Through the haze walked a tall, elegant figure—another version of the Clown. He shuffled his deck slowly, smiling.

Tyler gritted his teeth.

Then, with a shimmer, his body turned to ice and shattered.

The real Tyler was already somewhere else—sitting low against a pile of rubble, breathing heavily.

He winced, looking down.

A deep cut slashed across his chest. It hadn't vanished.

"So... his Domain's attacks won't kill me. Won't even leave lasting wounds," Tyler muttered through clenched teeth. "But his cards... they're different."

He pulled a small tube from his coat. The label read: Mender – made by Mathilda.

Tyler scoffed. "Our alchemist really has a terrible naming sense."

He uncapped it and poured the fine powder onto his wound.

It fizzed and bubbled. He grunted in pain as the powder burned against his skin.

Then it began to itch.

But a moment later, the cut sealed itself, the skin stitching back together rapidly.

Tyler exhaled. "Alright, you psycho... round two."

He tightened his grip on the Abyssal Trident, its shaft pulsing with eerie, crackling energy from the Abyss.

The Giant Wheel returned, screeching across the sky like a spinning death trap.

Without hesitation, Tyler hurled the Trident.

It didn't leave his hand.

Instead, a projection—a spectral spear of pure Abyssal energy—shot forward and impaled the Giant Wheel mid-spin. The massive construct twisted and bent unnaturally, gears sparking and shrieking before collapsing into a pile of mangled iron.

He turned just in time to see a Trojan horse again galloping toward him, the clown perched on its back like a twisted general.

This time, Tyler threw the real Trident.

The weapon pierced through the wooden horse and skewered the clown atop it—only for the body to deflate with a hiss. It was just an oversized doll.

Then came another pillar, crashing down from the sky like a judgment from above.

Tyler reached out and made a grabbing motion toward the empty space in front of him.

The world blurred for a moment—his vision swam, his mind teetered.

Then, in the blink of an eye, he stood beside his embedded Trident, hand already gripping its handle.

"Fudge... this ability is too dangerous," Tyler muttered through gritted teeth.

This was one of the new abilities the Trident gained after being baptized in the Abyss. It allowed the wielder to instantly teleport to the Trident's current location after throwing it. But it has drawback. It consumed an enormous amount of mental energy.

He swayed on his feet, head pounding, the edges of his vision darkening.

His spiritual consciousness was nearly depleted.

Desperately, he pulled a small bottle "Mathilda's Sparkling Water – Totes Not Sus" was scribbled on the label in sparkly ink.

He popped the cap and chugged it.

The refreshing liquid coursed through him like lightning. Within seconds, clarity returned, and his mind buzzed with revitalized energy.

Before he could react further, the ground shifted beneath his feet.

Now he was riding a unicycle.

Balanced precariously on a thin rope.

Below him? A bed of razor-sharp thorns, glinting like teeth in the crimson light. On the far side of the rope—his Trident.

He couldn't fly. Couldn't jump. Couldn't use his hands. Only his legs were free to pedal.

Across the gap stood the Clown, giggling madly beside the Trident.

"HAHAHA! Come now, Tyler," the Clown mocked. "If you want your toy back, ride fast! Or enjoy being skewered like a roasted pig!"

Tyler stared him down but didn't move. The unicycle wobbled dangerously on the narrow rope.

"Oh? Frozen in fear?" The Clown tilted his head, then grinned. "Let's make it interesting... Countdown time!"

"Ten! Nine! Eight! Seven!"

Tyler remained perfectly still, eyes half-lidded, focused.

"Four! Three! HAHAHA! What's wrong? Paralyzed by despair?"

"Two!"

Tyler's foot twitched.

"One! Time's up—"

"Chariot," Tyler whispered.

In a flash, the unicycle shot forward like a bolt on a track. The rope blurred beneath him.

Before the Clown could blink, Tyler launched off the end of the platform.

The unicycle vanished, and his hand closed around the Abyssal Trident in midair.

He twisted his body and slashed.

The Clown barely had time to react as the glowing edge of the weapon collided with his chest.

He was launched backward, laughing maniacally as he crashed into a floating wall of mirrors.

"HAHAHAHA!"

Then the platform beneath Tyler vanished.

He plummeted.

Right into the field of thorns.

"FUCCCCC—"

Pain exploded across his body.