

ABYSSAL AWAKENING

Chapter 1: The Desire To Live

Under the shadow of the moonlight phasing through panes of glass, a young woman sat on a plain white bed while gazing up towards the window. That was her only connection to the outside world. A single window where she could admire the radiance of the moon, the soft passing of the clouds and the gentle warmth of the sun.

Confined in a small room surrounded by walls of pure white with a heavy iron door blocking her exit, not a single spot of impurity existed in the room.

The girl's eyes were unfocused as she gazed at the window. The vestiges of her sanity lay hidden in the dream of a mesmerizing lake, of crystal-clear waters reflecting the world in breathtaking clarity, the gentle rays of the sun and the soft embrace of the clear white clouds. She heard laughter ring out in the spring breeze while a girl looked upon her family.

Soft smiles decorated their faces, their love boundless like the oceans.

They would've offered the world to her.

Yet much like the reflection upon the water, it was all but a trick of the light. A single droplet, a single realisation shattered the illusion with countless ripples.

The girl trembled ever-so-slightly. The feeling brought fear and joy in equal parts to her. Yet, she could not stop her mind from falling into the sickening maw of memories deep within.

It was her tenth birthday. The birthday of the youngest daughter belonging to the esteemed Zenia family, a household belonging to high nobility.

Gifts reached as far as the eye could see, words of praise filled the girl's head with flowers and pride... while political machinations brewed in the shadows.

All she could hear was the sound of panic, screams, and cries. She knew nothing of what happened back then. All she could see was that the love and adoration in the eyes of her family, servants, and guards had all but vanished.

The love was gone.

She was told flowery lies and forced into a room of tall figures dressed in white. Strangers that pinned her to the table, tore away at her body with metal blades, cutting her flesh apart, extracting her blood till she was faint in the head and decorated her body with countless needles and tubes.

Her cries of help, tears of fear and begging fell upon deaf ears. The kind smile of her father, warmth of her siblings affection, all unable to be found.

They watched on with cold indifference.

Confusion filled her mind. Why are they doing nothing? Why are they letting strange people cut her apart? Why are they no longer watching her with warmth? Why did she deserve all of this?

She cried until she lost her voice, silent screams and dried up tears. But they never stopped. When the experiment had finally ended, she was tossed into a white room. Her bandages soaked with her own blood, her body on the verge of breaking apart.

Pain, confusion and fear gnawed away at her mind with countless questions sending her through a labyrinth of insanity.

The sun set and the moon graced her room with light. Food was placed in her room yet she had no strength to move. She hoped it was all a nightmare, a hell of her own creation.

But it was reality. Day broke and the experiments continued. She punched, she kicked, she tried to run. Yet it was futile. The fear of the next experiment, the fear of the sharp knives cutting across her skin, the fear of her father watching her descend into madness without offering a single hand to help.

Tables, chairs, the bed even the walls. She tried to harm herself in rebellion just to escape the pain of the experiments. But she lived. Walls were changed to soft material, the tables adjusted and under the guise of protection, cuffs were secured around her wrists and ankles, stealing away her freedom.

As she delved further into insanity, she discovered the truth. It had been revealed to her in a bid to stop her self-harm and earn her cooperation.

She was a mutation.

In their society, there was one substance that revolutionised the world to a degree that even children was taught its allure.

The Abyss Blood.

A substance discovered in the bodies of beasts hailing from the Abyss, a realm mirroring their own like a reflection.

Each injection of the Abyss Blood granted the recipient inhuman abilities that transcended common knowledge. Some could make you jump higher than 2 story buildings, another could make you breath waves of fire. One could heal you from the brink of death and another make you a weapon of war, unable to be stopped with conventional weapons.

Medication, transportation, day to day life applications, the Abyss Blood allowed the civilization to bloom into a golden age.

Abyss Blood enhanced the body and flowed through the machineries that scatter through the cities. Their society was dependant on the substance.

But there are no such things as free food. With greater benefits came greater risks. There was always the chance that the Abyss would reclaim the boons it granted to the individual, consuming you and turn you into one of its many pawns.

Deformations in the body, changes to the mind and even the complete transformation into an Abyss Beast. Thus few would inject Abyss Blood of the untested variety, no matter how sweet the temptation was.

Yet it changed when her mutation was revealed on her birthday. There was an assassination attempt by a rival family. One that targeted Zenia's youngest daughter.

A vial of blood so potent that it would transform anyone into a blood hungry beast. When they least expected, it was injected into Alice and she tore away at the guests.

She had become a malformed chimera seeking to destroy all she could get her hands on. A beast of the Abyss fated to die by the hands of the Hunters.

But then she returned. Her body recovered and she reclaimed the form of a human.

An impossibility was witnessed.

It was then discovered her mutation allowed her to resist the effects of the Abyss Blood. No matter what they tested, no matter what side effects, she would recover. She who was strangely resistant to the Abyss Blood, could not experience the permanent lasting effects. Regardless of good or bad.

And so they tested without restraint. With authority granted by the head of the family, Alice's father, they were allowed to tear away at her flesh so long as she lived.

She was a blessing to the Zenia family. Her mutation allowed them to blossom into a noble family famed for their Abyss Blood research. They innovated, brought light to hidden effects and offered medicine to the Church of the Moon.

Alice was a gift of knowledge, a pathway to understanding the Abyss Blood's secrets. She was a gift from the unseen gods overlooking this world.

She realised she would forever be trapped in a cycle where her body is torn apart for their sake.

They tried to convince her, how one's suffering benefitted the world. But why her? Why did it have to be her? She never asked for any of this.

But the experiments never stopped and she grew to loath her life. She couldn't harm the people who cut her apart, she couldn't harm her father or her siblings that would watch on in coldness. So she decided to end it all. If she ended it all, she wouldn't have to suffer. No more pain, no more fear.

No more empty stares and glares of hatred from her family. She would be free.

A shot of pain, a flood of vitality.

Her eyes snapped open, she was still in this room. She had failed to take her life and in response to her actions, a collar was placed around her neck. A device engineered through Abyss Blood designed to keep her alive.

Should she no longer have a pulse, a shot of healing Abyss Blood would bring her back to life. No matter how much she harmed herself, no matter what method she used, she would always be brought back alive.

10 winters. That's how long she had spent her life within this room.

10 years of love, 10 years of hatred.

Rubbing her hand across her collar, flashes of nightmarish scenes flickered through her mind. Times where her flesh had been parted to reveal her bones

and veins. Moments where she would watch in horror and pain when they would remove her organs one by one to test the effectiveness of the healing Abyss Blood.

The sensation of having one's eyes gouged out and left blinded for several weeks. Her sibling's hatred as they punched away at her, the moment their anger became pleasure from seeing her suffer.

For 10 long years has she fostered her anger and hatred, for a moment when she finally escape this room. It had been her only reason to press on.

With death now out of her grasp, she could only turn to the faint hope of vengeance to keep her will alive. All the pain she felt, all her torment, she would return it all. But she was at her limit, with no end in sight, how was she going to fight back?

Every time she felt numb, felt her flames of vengeance diminishing, she would end it all just to feel the breath of life once more. Her life would reignite and so would her desire to hunt and kill.

The sound of metal scraping against itself rang out in the empty confines of her room. The door sealing her exit opened, yet she had no thoughts of freedom and curiosity. Believing the guest to be one of her siblings looking to vent their anger on her, Alice sat motionless on the bed.

"The hell is all this." A voice rang out with annoyance in his tone.

It was unfamiliar.

Finally turning her gaze towards the door, she could see a tall, strange man wearing a jacket with raven feathers. He kicked aside the heavy iron door as though it was nothing.

Upon his entrance, shadows swirled around him with each and every step he took. They seemed to stretch out towards him, as if to embrace his figure in reverence. Beneath his jacket, he wore a plain black outfit to match. He wore a pair of gloves dripping in fresh blood, staining the floor in a shade of red Alice felt oddly attracted to. His sharp eyes scanned the room before landing on her.

"Hou? What do we have here." His voice held a mixture of curiosity and amusement.

Stepping out of the door frame, he revealed himself to Alice. Long black hair that swayed with every step, wild and unruly like his demeanor. A pair of cold black eyes scanned her up and down before looking at her neck, where a collar lay, clasped tightly around her fragile skin.

"Aren't you a strange one. I had seen guards surrounding this place, barring my entry so I thought they were hiding some form of treasure. Instead, for all the trouble I had to go through to find this place, all I find is a brat collared and sealed in a room. Who the hell uses that many guards and defences for a simple brat?!" He complained while scratching his head in annoyance.

Narrowing his eyes at Alice, he wondered why she was locked up in such a place.

Alice wanted to ask who the man was, but her voice failed to escape her throat. She felt like she was stared down by a being that struck a primal sense of fear in her heart.

Noticing something strange, the man frowned before leaning closer to her.

Slowly, a smile crept up on his face. He saw something deep in her eyes.

"Seems like you don't want to stay in this place. Do you dream of the outside world?" He asked. His voice filled with allure and temptation.

His words made her freeze up. For a second, sanity was forgotten and insanity welcomed itself into her heart. An odd feeling welled up within her. It felt suffocating and muddy, like bile stuck in the throat. It burned her.

"So..." He asked. "Do you want to leave this hell, and trade it for another?"

She nodded.

The fire of vengeance burned bright within her heart.