

ABYSSAL AWAKENING

Chapter 14: Lilia's Family

Once their drink break was over, both Alice and Lilia returned to work.

Even though she understood the technique, the second round of work became much harder as her muscles screamed out in pain. Every swing she took towards the plate would cause her skin to split apart.

However, Alice didn't notice the blood that was slowly dripping from her hands and onto the pickaxe.

It wasn't until Lilia stopped her did Alice see what had happened. Using some of the bandages on her body, she cleaned her wound as quick as she could before the Supervisor could scream at her and got back to work.

"Just take it slow for now. You don't want to get splinters in your hands." Lilia whispered as Alice nodded her head after a short pause.

". . . Okay, I slow down." Alice whispered back. She understood that she couldn't force her body to keep working at the same pace as she did at the start.

Even if she could hold on through sheer will power, her body could not keep up. The mind was willing but the body lacked.

Repeating the cycle of working, drink break and working again, Alice could barely feel her body anymore. Even raising her hand was difficult as Lilia was in the same situation especially since she took on some of Alice's burdens.

Thankfully, their work shift was over as the Supervisor instructed everyone to leave so the next batch can work without them taking up all the space.

"Follow me! If any of you tries to run just remember what's waiting above. And if you are caught, I can guarantee that you'll be branded like those b*stards over there." The Supervisor shouted out while scratching his beard. Leading the way down the steps, he made his way into the building next to the steps.

It was the same building where the previous man had given Alice and Lilia their equipment.

Following the group down, Alice noticed that Lilia was clenching her fists tightly. There was a faint trail of green oozing from the side, causing Alice to frown slightly.

"Bleeding. You shouldn't take my work." Alice sighed.

"Oh don't worry about it. Even if I didn't do the extra work, it wouldn't matter." Lilia shook her head.

"Don't feel guilty. I'm taking your part of the work because I want to."

Hearing this, Alice's gaze fluctuated for a moment as she was unsure as to why Lilia was like this. Why was she being so nice to her? Why was she going out of way to take extra work so that she could have it easier?

She didn't know if she could trust the help that Lilia was giving her as doubts surfaced in her heart.

"Oh don't look at me like that. I'm doing it because you remind me of my younger sisterahaha. We got sold to our old owner at the same time but she couldn't make it. I wasn't able to do enough for her when she was around so I'm just making up for that." Lilia reassured as she could see the doubts in Alice's eyes.

"Even so... Lilia is too kind." Alice sighed.

"I'm not that kind. Like I said, I'm only doing it because you remind me of my sister. Now stop thinking too much." Lilia reassured while giving Alice's head a gentle knock with her hand.

Following the group to the building, Alice saw that there were several staircases leading down. On the surface, this building was rather unimpressive but that was only because it's built into the stone platform they were on.

Steel braziers could be seen lighting up the interior with an orange hue. Cells decorated each side of the hallway, each fitted with two beds each. Though calling it a 'bed' was putting it lightly as it was simply a stone block and a thin sheet of fabric.

Assigning cells to the slaves in pairs, Alice and Lilia were put together in a cell one floor down.

Laying on the stone bed, Alice glanced towards Lilia and hesitated.

'Why do I remind her of her sister? Is that really enough for her to do so much for me?'

"You know, usually people would talk if they have a question." Lilia sighed seeing Alice stare at her so intently.

"I've noticed that you don't speak unless necessary. But even for me, it gets a little hard to talk to myself you know? Especially when you have questions. Sadly I didn't learn how to mind read." Lilia joked.

"Sorry, not used to talking a lot. Spent long time alone. People that come only hurt so I don't talk to them." Alice replied as she tried her best to find the correct words.

"Well that's fine. So long as you take the time you have now to improve. I don't know what your situation is before but at least now, you have a chance to find a good buyer."

"Mnm... Can you tell about your sister? Why me and her similar." Alice asked, causing Lilia to pause as memories flooded into her mind.

Clutching her arms, Lilia sighed and laid down on the bed and looked at the ceiling.

"Sure why not. We got a few hours to sleep before going back to work. Hmm lets see... I suppose I should explain my family first." Lilia smiled softly.

"I don't remember much about my mother and father since I've been a slave since I was young. The only people I remember clearly are my little sister and

little brother. My brother was the hyperactive type, always looking for ways to spend his energy. He loved to fight and would protect me and our little sister if we ever got picked on..." Lilia explained remembering the fond memories with her brother.

"As for my little sister, she was quiet like you. Not because of what happened in her life but naturally quiet. She didn't like to bring attention to herself. She was a curious kid though, always loved to run around and finding new things to play with. The three of us were always sold as a batch since we were pretty cheap." She chuckled.

"My brother was considered a free guard while they paid mostly for me and my sister. As for what happened later... Well my brother was sent to the arenas to fight."

Upon saying this, Lilia bit her lip as she was forced to remember the sight of her brother being torn apart by beasts.

"After that it was just me and my sister. You can guess what happened to her since I'm here alone now. She passed away too and now it's just me. Since there's a chance to make up for the time I lost with her, I took it. Though it's just me soothing my own heart I suppose." Lilia smiled bitterly as Alice was silent.

"But what about yourself? I told you about my family maybe you should tell me a little about what happened before you came here. But don't feel pressured if you're uncomfortable. Just take things at your own pace."

Hearing this, Alice was silent. She felt the collar around her throat gently as she remembered her 10 years of torment.

"My family locked me away alone for 10 winters. Collar kept me alive even when I wanted to die. Didn't know why they hated me. Then strange man arrived at my prison, sent me to this place. And that's when you saw me in cage." Alice confessed slowly as she hid parts of the truth.

Even though she somewhat trusted Lilia, having a body that was resistant to the adverse effects of Abyss Blood wasn't something she could reveal lightly. Not when she could see that Lilia was suffering from Vampire Lily.

"I see... that's why you panicked when you saw the collar on the first day..."
Lilia muttered feeling pity for Alice.

While she has been a slave for longer, she couldn't fathom the pain of 10 years in solitude. Not only that, it was a state where she couldn't even die if she wanted to. With the freedom of death taken from her, she had to suffer every agonising moment throughout the decade.

Clenching her fist, Lilia made up her mind.

"We only have a few more days to stay here. Since we've been sponsored, there's a high chance we'll be picked. We definitely need to help you recover some of the ten years that you missed." Lilia smiled.

Hearing this, Alice's eyes flickered as a warm feeling entered her heart. The thought of exploring the world after leaving this place gave her a feeling she had never felt within her time at the prison.

"I want to look for story shop. One that told story of Hunters."

Her response took Lilia by surprise as she didn't think Alice was interested in children books. But thinking back to how she said she was imprisoned for 10 years, she must've been quite young at the time of her capture.

"Alright, a story shop it is. Honestly, I thought you would be interested in other things but this is fine." Lilia laughed.

"What shop do you like?" Alice asked curiously.

"Hmm... Probably just some clothing shops. I want to find some really cute dresses."

Talking between themselves for a little longer, the two fell asleep.