

Abyssal A 231

Chapter 231 - 231: Crimson Witch of Ruin

[Crimson Witch of Ruin - ◆◆◆◆◆◆]

Seeing the title above her head, Alice felt her pupils constrict in shock.

A beast! A beast was the principal of one of the best Academies in the Abyss, one that teaches people how to kill other beasts!

'What the hell is going on?' Alice frowned. She wanted to see if there was something wrong with her vision but it was perfectly normal. She wasn't hallucinating, the principal was indeed a beast and a powerful one at that.

"Alice... Did Allura ever mention she has a twin or something?" Ria whispered with a slight frown.

She too saw the similarities between the beast and Allura but that was it. She didn't know that she was actually looking at a beast.

"No. But she's not a Hunter. I see six stars above her head." Alice whispered back, making sure the others around her didn't overhear her.

Widening her eyes, Ria glanced back and forth between the principal and Alice. Seeing as how Alice wasn't joking around, Ria understood the severity of the matter.

"Six stars... Do you think she has a goal by acting as the principal? Was the real principal taken or has it been a beast all along?"

"Don't know. But she's something called a Crimson Witch of Ruin." Alice shook her head. Regardless of what they may discover thanks to Cayla, the truth was that she is the principal and they're simply examinees looking to enrol into her Academy.

There was probably a deeper reason as to why she looked like Allura but it's something Alice hoped to figure out later.

For now, she focused on the details of the exam.

The exam was split into three sections. First were the examinees who wanted to enrol. Second were the students who wanted to advance into the next classification and lastly, the qualified who desired to become Special classed Students.

"As you may know, Silverwind Academy is split into three major categories. Theory, Handicraft and Combat. All examinees will take on three separate examinations to determine your skill with the different subjects and see which area you are more suited towards. Of course, if you desire to study a different subject despite your talents, you may do so.

"But you'll need to prove yourself to our Heads of Department. Elara, Head of Theory, Xinbei, Head of Handicrafts and Garret, Head of Combat." The principal explained as she snapped her finger.

Beside her, the three Department Heads walked up all with serious expressions, even Xinbei. They all wore smart suits and stood side by side.

Feeling a gaze on her, Alice glanced up and noticed that it was the Head of Theory, Elara. But the gaze was brief and she looked away just as fast.

'Is it because of my hood?' Alice wondered to herself while the Principal explained the first test.

"The first exam of the day will be simple. You will undergo the examination while the current students, Department Heads and the Special class Students watch. Once you pass the first exam, you will take the second exam with existing students. Upon taking the second exam to determine your rank within this Academy, you will be considered to be officially enrolled.

The rules of each Exam will be explained by the Heads of Department. I wish all of you good luck and I hope to see you in the next round." The principal smiled as she snapped her finger and a wave of blood mist surrounded the entire courtyard.

Seeing the mist enveloping several hundred people all at once, Alice could see the movement of energy surging from all around them.

Even though she could see what was happening with Cayla, the process was too fast for her to react!

In an instant, everyone was enveloped in darkness as their surroundings began to change. The courtyard, teachers and the existing students disappeared, leaving only the new examinees behind.

"Hi~ Can I have your attention please~" Elara's voice rang out as everyone turned towards her. She was the only one who hadn't disappeared along with the others.

"The theory exam will be split into two sections. I'm not a fan of sitting down and writing on a piece of paper to determine your talent. Therefore, we shall proceed with a live demonstration!" She chuckled before clapping her hands together.

In front of every examinee, a table appeared with a single beast tied to the table. It was still alive and judging by the way their eyes looked, they seemed to be under some sort of narcotic.

"Your goal is simple~ I want you to extract blood of varying purity from each part of the beast. Harvest the organs that will be useful and write down their functions. You don't have to get everything right~ You just have to demonstrate what you know in the shortest time you can. Any questions?" Elara asked as tools appeared next to the beast.

One of the examinees raised their hand as Elara turned to them.

"What if I just want to take the Handicrafts exam? Do I still have to take this one?"

"Nope~ This is not mandatory at all~ But you have more chances of enrolling if you get some points from here. You can think of it as a backup plan~ Any other questions?" Elara explained.

While she was explaining, she continuously snuck glances towards Alice while her smile grew wider with each glance.

Alice felt a familiar chill down her spine but was confused by why she felt it from Elara.

All she did was glance at her occasionally.

'Runi did say the Department Head was interested in beasts and Abyss Blood. Maybe she's curious because of my crown?' Alice wondered to herself, pulling her hood down further.

The feeling she was getting from her was similar yet very different to the Scholars that experimented on her before.

It wasn't malicious or greed but something else entirely that Alice was unfamiliar with.

"Urg... maybe I should skip this exam." Ria groaned as she was only really good for Combat. Theory and Handicrafts were beyond her.

"You could if you want. But as the Department Head said, it's just extra points. And honestly, doesn't hurt to give it a try." Alice shrugged as she examined the tools in front of her.

It was the standard equipment that she used while helping Arunya with her experiments so Alice was pretty familiar.

"Are we allowed to use Sigil abilities or is it purely tools and knowledge?" Alice asked while raising her hand.

"Excellent question~ You are allowed to use anything and everything to attain the results you desire. Out in the field, there are no rules saying you can't use your Sigils after all~" Elara forced a smile while trying to keep herself composed.

'Ah~ Her voice is cute as expected~ Fufu, ask more questions, talk more, show me more~'

Feeling a shiver down her spine again, Alice was confused by her body's reaction.

'Did I drink too much yesterday? What the f*ck is going on with me today?' She frowned while taking deep breaths to calm her mind. Since Sigil abilities were allowed, Alice activated her third Sigil.

Blood and metal swirled around her as she set up the operating table to her liking.

The tools were strung by threads and dangled in front of her while the vials were placed neatly to the side. Grabbing the scalpel, Alice didn't hesitate and sliced into the beast with speed and precision.

Watching Alice dissect and extract the blood from the beast, Ria couldn't help but marvel at her technique. She knew that Alice had a knack for this but this was beyond what she had initially expected.

It felt as though she was watching a seasoned professional work their craft as Alice peeled back the layers of muscle and directly injected the extractor into their veins.

Deciding to try and emulate Alice's workflow, Ria grabbed the scalpel and cut into the beast.

Only...

It died on impact as she used too much strength and the beast was cut in half instead.

". . ." Looking at the beast in silence, Ria was speechless.

"You might want to extract the blood now. The purity is dropping already." Alice reminded.

If you desired high-purity blood, each second was precious.

While Alice was operating on the beast, she couldn't help but notice a few examinees who were showing far more talent than her in this field of work. Not only that, their Sigils were also selected to help them with experiments.

A girl with spectral hands puppeteering the beast's body to extract the blood, a guy who could put the beast into stasis using ice and another who relied only on his technique. Not only did he extract the blood the fastest, but he had also stitched up his incisions and the beast was relatively unharmed, free to be harvested later in the future.

Each of them had a different approach and each was far better than what Alice was capable of.

Of course, if she wanted to be competitive against them, she could try and replicate some of the harder techniques that were used on her. But she wasn't aiming for the Theory department, so this was enough.

As the first part of the Theory exam concluded, Alice estimated that she probably finished fourth. Just as how there was a gap between her and the top three who were aiming for a spot in the Theory Department, those beneath her faced a gap that couldn't be bridged easily without talent.

And that was raw experience. In her case, experience of being the one being operated on.

After the first part of the exam concluded, Elara wasted no time in beginning the second half. The first half tested technique, understanding and polish while the second tested practical application.

Chapter 232 - 232: Second Half Of The Theory Exam

Watching the exams with a smile on her face, the principal was silent while Garret and Xinbei sat beside her. It wasn't just the Department Heads either, the Special class Students were also here. In total, there were 5 of them.

Lothian – The Paladin. Special class Combat Student.

Hephas – The Forge. Special class Handicrafts Student.

Fynn – The Scholar. Special class Theory Student.

Fae – The Witch. Special class Combat Student.

Luke – The Warden. Special class Handicrafts Student.

Their titles weren't just nicknames that were given to them by the students. It was a representation of the weapons and relics granted to them as congratulations for becoming Special class Students.

"There are a few interesting ones in the Theory Department this time. The technique he used seemed to be from the Astram family. Only the Astram family uses the Stasis technique during an operation." Fynn yawned while leaning back in his seat.

"What rank do you think he's aiming for?" Fae asked with a smile.

"Who knows. If he's aiming for Special class then he'll need to defeat Arunya first." Fynn shrugged.

Arunya was the closest to becoming a Special class Student after him. Yet she still failed in the end. While it was partially due to bad luck, one couldn't blame everything on bad luck. Those with capabilities can push through even in the face of bad luck.

"Luke, where are the friends you mentioned will be taking this test? I want to see how they're faring." Hephias asked with a hearty laugh. As they're both part of the Handicrafts department, they often hang out with one another.

"Well... Ria killed her beast instantly ahaha. While Alice is the one next to her, the one with the hood." Luke chuckled while scratching his cheek. He had seen the way Ria handled that scalpel. Even though she tried to restrain her power, it was still too rough for an operation.

"If they're going for the Combat Department then there's no need to be good with a scalpel." Fae chimed in.

While the Special class Students were discussing with one another, Garret and Xinbei sneaked a peak towards the principal.

She maintained a mysterious smile on her face while humming a tune.

Neither of them knew why she changed the exams just for Alice but they didn't want to verbalise their questions. After all, she might just shrug them off like usual.

Ignoring these stares, the principal simply kept her eyes on Alice.

As an Abyss Beast, could sense a feeling of disgust and repulsion towards her. The way her blood smelled and the Sigils on her body invoked a primal hate from deep within.

This was the first time a human had caused her to feel this way. Even the Lords chosen by the Abyss could not invoke such reactions.

Yet a three Star girl had just done exactly that.

'Does she feel dangerous because she's been chosen by Kaden and Allura? Or is it something else?' She wondered to herself. She could sense Allura and Kaden's aura on her.

It was faint but unmistakable.

Regardless, she will see what Alice has to show during these exams. To invoke the curiosity of not just one but all three Head of Departments was quite the achievement.

Even the strongest graduate long ago had only attracted two of the Department Heads.

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Moving onto the second half of the Theory Exams, each examinee was expected to face off against an Abyss beast using nothing but the blood they extracted.

"The blood you've extracted is what we consider to be an extreme counter to the Bone Hound. With the right application and purity, even a single drop will be able to kill this beast. But, if you are to mess up,

it'll send the beast into a frenzy. Your task is to showcase your knowledge without using any of your Sigil abilities~" Elara explained before snapping her finger.

From her body, countless appendages appeared and embedded themselves into the ground.

One by one, walls began to encircle each of the contestants, locking them into a one-on-one fight with the Bone Hound.

Looking at the beast before her, Alice was silent.

She had several vials of the blood that she had extracted but she was not familiar with this beast nor was she familiar with the blood.

Scratching her chin, Alice wondered how she should approach this.

Meanwhile, the beast glared at the girl in front of it but dared not to take a single step. It was merely holding its ground out of desperation.

Within her eyes, it felt as though it was staring at the monster within. A beast that sent fear into the Bone Hound's heart.

"Oh well, let's just give it a go. Worse comes to worse I don't get that many points here." Alice shrugged since there was no use in worrying about it.

Picking up the vials she had extracted from the table, she took calm collected steps towards the beast.

Several blades hovered beside her, warning the beast. Should it take a single step, the blades will shoot out and sever its limbs!

But no matter how scared it was, a cornered beast would still bite back!

*CRACK!

Just as the beast jumped towards Alice, she twisted her body and slammed her heel into its jaw with a roundhouse kick.

The cracking of its bones was audible as those who were spectating Alice cringed while imagining the pain the beast felt.

Collapsing onto the ground, the beast was dizzy from the kick and was unable to react to Alice grabbing it by the throat.

"Shh~ That's a good beast." Alice smiled ominously. Lifting the beast up while maintaining her grip, she poured a vial of blood into its mouth.

Seeing red veins pulse through its body along with the flow of energy around it, Alice understood that it was undergoing a similar transformation as the Grimwater Wyrn.

One Sigil Resonance!

Shrugging her shoulders nonchalantly, she injected the other vials into the beast's body, hoping to find the right area but all it did was continuously increase the beast's strength.

As the beast recovered from the concussion it received from Alice's kick, it felt a piercing pain in its chest.

With a single stab of her hand, Alice punctured a hole in the beast's chest and destroyed the heart!

Tossing the beast aside, she smeared some powdered blood beads onto the blood and shook it off using her blood manipulation.

With her jacket now clean, Alice smiled in satisfaction.

Seeing as how she was one of the first one to finish considering her beast was rather docile and that she killed it in one hit, Alice used the operating table as a seat and leaned back while looking towards the Inverted World in the distance.

After a while, the walls disappeared and Elara concluded the Theory Exams.

There were examinees lamenting the difficulty of the exam while Alice could only tilt her head in confusion.

In her eyes, the exam wasn't that hard. The only hard part was potentially the blood extraction. What Alice didn't know was that the Bone Hound was known to be extremely ferocious and hostile. More so when it goes berserk due to the addition of a certain type of blood.

But between her and the beast, the beast was more afraid of her than she was towards the beast thus she felt the exam was far easier.

For the other contestants, the second half was truly the most difficult part.

As for Ria... Just like the first half, she killed her beast and shrugged it off since she wasn't aiming for the Theory Department.

"Can we not just skip these tests? I'm terrible with Theory and Handicrafts." Ria complained to Alice who could only shrug.

"I mean if you really don't want to do them you can just take the time to rest up and figure out what you want to do for the Combat test." Alice suggested.

Contemplating this for a moment, Ria made up her mind.

"Yep, that's exactly what I'm going to do. I'm made for punching things not reading them." She proclaimed.

With the Theory Exams done it was time for the Handicraft Exams.

Much like the Theory test, the Handicraft was split into three sections.

Abyss Blood Engineering, Blacksmithing and Tailoring.

The first two were by far the most popular out of the three but Tailoring serves a big purpose as well. Those who specialise in Tailoring are able to make Hunters Gear that are resistant to elemental Sigil Abilities.

Unlike her demonstration in the Theory test, Alice was completely clueless regarding these three subjects. Just like Ria, she skipped out on all three and noticed how Xinbei was a little disappointed she didn't have any hidden talents in Handicrafts.

Aside from fighting, drinking and knowledge around Abyss Blood, Alice didn't have many talents.

And finally, it was time for the Combat Exam. Upon the conclusion of the Handicraft exams, both Alice and Ria had a fire light up in their eyes as their interest was raised to the max.

Standing in front of everyone with his arms crossed, Garret swept his gaze over the crowd and focused momentarily on Alice and Ria.

The principle had asked him to be extra strict with those two to bring out their talents.

"I'm not a man of many words. I believe actions speak louder than words. Thus the first part of the exam will be how well you can cope with this pressure." Garret grinned as he tapped his finger.

In an instant, a heavy pressure descended upon the crowd as several examinees slammed against the ground, unable to pull themselves up.

"This is just the basic pressure you'll feel once you start going deeper into the Abyss. But this is a far cry from what you feel in the Inverted World. If you cannot handle this then you can forget about joining the Combat Department!" Garret shouted.

If the surface of the Abyss and their current pressure was described as level one, what he was having them experience was level two.

But most impressive of all, Alice and Ria looked unaffected despite him raising their pressure up to level three!

'Have they been deeper into the Abyss already?' He wondered to himself as he understood why the principal wanted him to be more serious with these two. It was to find out the depth of their power.

Narrowing his eyes, he accepted this challenge.

Chapter 233 - 233: Combat Exams

The goal of this test was to see how fast these young Hunters could adapt to this pressure and resume their usual activities.

Just because they crumbled under the pressure initially doesn't mean they were eliminated. Instead, it was a chance for them to experience this pain without the dangers of a beast lurking around the corner.

While the rest of the crowd got the standard test, Garret continuously raised the pressure for both Alice and Ria.

Watching them stand perfectly still, the only visible reaction was the two of them clenching their fist and keeping their eyes focused. Beads of sweat would drip from their heads, but they maintained their defiance against this pressure.

'These two are monsters...' Garret thought to himself in shock. At this point, he had already raised it to the point where five star Hunters would have difficulty against them! If he was to go any higher, it may pose a big danger yet the principal hasn't told him to stop here.

'She wants to test out their limits. Urg... Don't blame me if something bad happens.' He complained in his mind as he cranked up the pressure to a level worthy of six stars.

But despite this, the two of them stood their ground despite their body trembling from the pain. Neither of them wanted to back down which caused a few strange stares from their peers around them.

Neither Alice nor Ria dared to utter a sound in fear of breaking their concentration.

But the secret to their defiance against this pressure was simple. They faced this pressure in the past! And during that period, they were even tasked to fight back against the beast releasing this pressure.

It was at times like this where Alice and Ria felt extremely grateful towards Allura's methods. Had it not been for her choices, the two of them wouldn't be struggling on the ground by now. Even a slight increase back then resulted in them crawling on the ground.

Unable to increase the pressure further without impacting the people around them, Garret glanced towards the principal who gave him a silent nod, causing him to sigh in relief as it signified that she was happy with what she saw.

Raising his hand, he snapped his finger once and the pressure was lifted immediately.

Upon the release of this weight off their backs, all of the examinees stumbled over in fatigue. If just the initial test was this hard, they didn't want to imagine what the other tests were like!

Ignoring the groans of those around them, Alice sat down next to Ria as they rested with their backs facing one another.

"Just like Champion of Flames?" Ria asked with a forced smile. Even now, she barely had the strength to lift her arms.

"Just like the Champion of Flames." Alice nodded with a sigh.

"Seems like they're hell bent on testing us if we're the only ones who felt the six star pressure. Doesn't seem like the others felt it otherwise over half of them would've passed out by now." Ria chuckled while surveying the conditions of those around them.

"Xinbei did say they changed the tests for us. But this is probably just the welcoming show. A hint of what's to come since I doubt they'll let us off with just this much."

Nodding her head in agreement, Ria couldn't help but wonder what life would be like if they weren't trained by Allura.

She even contemplated the idea of maybe asking her to increase their training next time they reunite but the simple thought of doing so caused her body to tremble in fear.

'I want to get stronger but I'm not a masochist.' Ria shivered.

"Are you cold?" Alice raised an eyebrow in confusion.

"Oh don't worry, I was just thinking about training with Allura. She's monitoring us right? Well... Kind of by using the amulet." Ria asked as Alice nodded her head.

"Do you think she'll increase the difficulty of our training?"

". . ." Contemplating for a moment, Alice nodded her head with a serious smile.

"Knowing Allura, she might actually task us with trying to kill something that's almost a Lord if we get more Sigils."

"Urg... Please don't jinx it."

But the fact remained that if it was Allura, this was very much a possibility.

'Alice managed to kill a five Star Hunter because of her copying ability. If we were to fight against something on the boundary of becoming a Lord, could Alice simply drink its blood? Or would it be too much for her body to handle?' Ria thought to herself. Alice had mentioned a few times that her body was both her strong point and weak point.

Strong because it could adapt to the different blood she drinks and gain its power without side effects. Including human blood.

But the weak point came from the fact that her body was much weaker than those with three Sigils. After all, those with three Sigils has had their bodies enhanced and reinforced by Abyss Blood. A benefit she does not have.

Thinking about this, Ria understood that even if Alice was to get Sigils in the future, she would always be behind others when it came to physical reinforcement.

If a Hunter who solely focused on offensive potential was called a glass cannon then in Alice's case, she could be called a paper cannon.

The rest between rounds was short as Garret announced the next part of the exams. Stage one was resilience. Stage two was going to be a demonstration of skill.

"In the Abyss, there will often come a time where your weapons may break or a beast disarms you. Therefore, you must have the ability to think on the fly. Use anything and everything around you to your advantage. Think about the best path of survival whether that be to stall or to fight. The key is that you survive.

"For the second half of the test, you will be put into large groups and your only job is to survive as long as you can. Doesn't matter if you use your Sigils or not. Even if you are eliminated early, do not worry as we'll be reviewing your overall performance as well. So depending on your actions and demonstration, you have a chance to pass even if you don't 'survive'."

Each of them was assigned a random number for a group to join with Alice and Ria being placed into separate groups. Thankfully, they weren't fighting one another hence they don't need to worry about the elimination.

Once the groups were arranged, it was time to begin the second part of the test. The test of survival.

Their surroundings began to shift as Alice found herself sitting in the spectator stands with the rest of her group.

All of the different groups had their own spectator stand that floated within this void while a single arena could be seen in the centre.

Its overall layout was basic yet reminded Alice of the coliseums where she had to fight for her survival.

The numerous pillars that rose from the ground, countless weapons scattered through the arena along with various obstacles aimed to help the Hunters hide and juke their opponents.

And in the middle of this arena, a group of examinees stood.

"You will have one minute to grab whatever weapon you want from this arena. Once the time is up, it will become a free for all. This will continue until there are only 20 of you left in this arena." Garret grinned.

Clapping his hands, cages started to descend from above.

A wyvern could be seen locked within the confines of these cages. Its ghostly white body shimmering with a ghastly glow that seemed to defy the darkness surrounding it. With each movement that it made, black flames flickered from where its lower jaw should be.

Large flaming horns crown its head, down its spine and to the along its tail.

It possessed two sets of arms. The smaller pair nestled close to its body along with its legs. The second pair, gargantuan in size acted as the wings with the membrane being replaced by the same dark flames that adorned its jaw, head, spine and tail.

Within this dark inferno, tendrils of a pink flame could be seen within, twisting and writhing. These tendrils pulsed with malevolent energy with the same light being seen between each scale. It was as though these were the roots of the flames, latching onto this wyvern's body like a parasite.

[Ghost Flame Wyvern - ♦♦♦♦♦]

There were five cages in total and each one held one of these Wyverns. Giving one another a glance and a growl, they communicated with one other before laying their eyes upon the examinees.

Even though the examinees couldn't see the tag above their heads like Alice could, they felt a primal fear envelop their hearts and scrambled to find a weapon for protection. Even going as far as to fight each other.

Seeing them scramble with each other, Garret couldn't help but sigh at this display but avoided voicing his disappointment.

After waiting a minute, the cages swung open and all five wyverns jumped out without hesitation. The flames on their backs expended as darkness descended upon the area with each examinee being unable to see ahead of them.

Amidst this darkness, their ghastly white bodies could be seen circling the examinees.

Those with poor mental panicked and started to run around like headless chickens while those composed covered each other's backs and kept their eyes on the beasts.

"ARGG!!!"

Screams could be heard as those who panicked were swiped up by the beasts.

Hearing these screams, the examinees couldn't help but wonder if someone had died. It was an absurd thought but not impossible when beasts are involved!

But to the spectators, they could see the ones 'killed' by the beasts were teleported out of the arena to safety.

Seeing the panic and fear in their eyes, Alice couldn't help but wonder if they were teleported at the last possible moment in order to recreate the feeling of death.

'What a sadistic test.' She sighed, wondering if it was Garret's idea or if it was the principal's.

Chapter 234 - 234: Alice's Entrance To The Combat Exams

Within the cover of the shadows, it was hard to make out exactly what was happening aside from the rapid movements of the wyverns. Their ghastly white body made it easy to see just how fast and deadly they were.

For Alice, she had the bonus of seeing the tags above their heads and thus could estimate the chaos within.

Each swipe of their wing would 'cut' the examinees in half while the flames would burn another group. These wyverns aimed for the easy targets first, those who ran away, lost their composure and panicked while those who stayed in a group and kept their guard up were ignored for now.

As the stragglers continued to decrease, their screams haunted the survivors as they were blind to what was happening.

All that surrounded them was darkness.

Man's greatest fear is the fear of the unknown. In this hunting ground of the wyvern's creation, they were all prey.

Watching all of this happen, Alice had a frown on her face as the round was soon over and only 20 people were left in the arena. Even though they survived, their eyes expressed a level of fear they had not anticipated. Some of them even wondered if they should surrender now.

If this was what it was like deeper in the Abyss, could they truly survive?

'I suppose the goal of this test is not only to see their proficiencies in different weapons but also how well they fare against unknown enemies. How they react to a situation out of their control with the threat of death around the corner.' Alice mused.

Beside her, there were a few in her group who were boasting about their potential success. Now that they know they won't truly die in the arena, it'll be easier to react.

Giving them a side glance, Alice only scoffed inwardly in disdain.

There is knowing that something is about to happen and then there is experiencing that said thing.

Just because someone said they'll punch you in the face doesn't mean you won't flinch when they do. That was the same with the threat of death.

When you are truly under threat, even though you know you won't die, your mind will play games on you. The threat of the unknown, of you being the exception to this rule and the fear of the pain and coldness that comes with death.

'They'll probably 'die' first.' Alice thought to herself as the next group entered the arena.

Since their group number was rather high, it'll take a while before it gets to their turn. It was a great chance to analyse the test and see what could work and what wouldn't.

There were a few examinees who voiced their complaints about how those who are coming later than them will have it easier. They only lost because they didn't know what was happening while the ones coming later do.

Countless excuses and complaints were shouted but the principal, Department Heads and Special class students all ignored it.

After all, with each passing round, the beasts become more ferocious and hold back less. It was actually far worse if you start the test later!

Little by little, people started to notice this and those who were boasting beside her had become pale.

Seeing this, a smile crept up on Alice's before turning her gaze back to the arena.

During the time that the other groups had taken the exam, she had already analysed most of what she's seen. The wyverns were far more dangerous than she originally expected.

They had roughly five powers in total that she'd seen them demonstrate.

First was the black flames on their body. Judging by the flow of energy and the amplification shown while they were in the shadows, this flame grants them heightened physical attributes in darkness and consumes light to increase this further.

Second, they are able to amplify their speed to the extreme in one swift burst. The trade of being the flames dull and their movement slows down for a while.

Third, they can use these flames as ranged attacks but they've rarely demonstrated this.

Fourth, they can change switch between flame form and physical form when needed. Parts of their body will transform to avoid attacks but there were certain restrictions around this.

Thus far, Alice noticed that as long as the flames don't bisect their body in half, they can 'absorb' the attack with the fire. Meaning, if she were to do a horizontal cut with enough speed, she could hit them.

The issue with this is that it'll require both speed and power, both of which she lacked dearly if she wished to harm a five star beast.

The last power she observed them use was the one Sigil resonance. In this state, spikes protrude from their body and they enter a berserk state, lunging at the closest target. No more than 3 of the wyverns will enter this state while the other two would protect them.

However, they've only used this state briefly and the movement was so fast that even Alice lost track of them for a moment.

'If I want to survive that attack, I'll need to set up some defences around me. Traps that'll let me know of their location... If I do it well enough, it should give me just about enough time to react.' She sighed inwardly.

Even though she loves a challenge, this was becoming far more difficult than she expected.

'Knowing how the previous tests have been, there will probably be an increase in difficulty for me and Ria. We might become their main targets rather than fulfilling certain conditions.'

Those that ran were attacked first. Those who stood their ground were tested and if they were found lacking, eliminated.

That was the basic conditions for the wyvern's attack pattern.

As the current group of examinees finished their test, Alice could feel a wave of energy envelop their group's spectator stands.

Understanding that this was their time to shine, she took a deep breath and mentally prepared herself.

Shadows enveloped her body as she was transported into the arena.

Immediately, Alice felt a chill down her spine as several eyes locked onto her body.

Without wasting any time, she made a cut on her arm and mapped the arena with her blood.

She needed to get a general idea of where she was right now while also taking into account of who was where.

'The wyverns are circling around the edges right now. I'm not far from the centre. There are two parties near me who have already grouped up. One is panicking already, and the other is barely composed. Seems to be a stash of weapons in the middle.' Alice thought to herself as she turned around and dashed towards the centre.

In a situation like this, information was her greatest asset. Without information, she won't be able to react to the movement of the beasts.

Her senses were warning her of the impending danger. If she did not act fast and prepare her own hunting ground, she'd be eliminated in a heartbeat!

Arriving at the centre of the arena, Alice noticed that two others had the same idea as her. They both had their own methods of mapping around the arena in search of information.

One is a girl who was using a multi coloured band of light that wrapped around her arms, the other is a guy who was using ice.

Countless snowflakes were falling from the sky as Alice guessed that his method was mapping the arena based on what his snowflakes touched.

"I'm taking the spears. I don't need anything else. You two can have the rest." Alice spoke first.

She didn't want to use her bloodflame blade as she wasn't sure how well it could handle itself against five star beasts that were blood lusted right now. To avoid an accident where her sword snapped in half, she was going to use the spears as disposable weapons.

Her goal was not to kill the beasts but to survive.

Naturally, she could make weapons using her third Sigil but the amount of metal she could conjure up was limited. If she were to make too many weapons, she won't be able to make footholds for herself. The beasts will easily break through her defences if they're just made from blood, hence she was going to mix it with the metal. It's not a huge improvement but far better than just blood alone.

"Shall we group up? The beasts are more likely to attack those that are solo." The girl asked but Alice shook her head.

"I'll pass. You two should get a group as far away from me as possible if you want to survive."

She had two options, sabotage other groups so she could get to the end as fast as possible.

Or alternatively, she could face the challenge head on and get out with her own skills and experiences.

As Allura's student, she wasn't going to back down from something like this.

Picking up three spears, Alice turned around and left without wasting another moment.

She had already picked out a prime location in mind, a spot between four pillars that was empty right now. It was the perfect spot for her to prepare her hunting ground.

###

As the round started, both Lothian and Fae focused up as they were curious about how Alice would perform.

"She's already mapped out the arena and found a suitable spot. What were her Sigils again?" Fae asked as Lothian opened his mouth.

"Physical reinforcement, flame control, blood and metal control. Please read the documents carefully next time if you're curious."

"I know~ But you remind me all the time so it's easier this way. How well do you think she'll handle the wyverns that are going to go after her with no restraints?" Fae chuckled.

As Special class students, they knew that Alice was behind the matter of the Hall of Champions which only increased their curiosity.

"Who knows. But she might have some trouble since the beasts are genuine five star beasts. They won't hold back unlike the Hall of Champions." He replied while keeping his eyes on Alice.

He wanted to see just how someone who cleared the Hall would fight and study her thought process behind her techniques.

Chapter 235 - 235: Alice Vs Ghost Flame Wyverns

With four pillars surrounding her, Alice immediately created a network of blood threads as well as several platforms to stand on.

Once she was satisfied with her hunting ground, Alice sat on the tallest thread and closed her eyes.

Snapping her finger, she created a wave of blood mist that permeated the area.

'The minute timer should be up now. People are 'dying' before they can even scream.'

A silent death is the scariest of all. No sound, only the brief shuffle in this darkness.

The wyverns have already begun their hunt and the Examinees are none the wiser.

'Three are on the move. Two are circling around my area. Seems like they've locked onto me.' Opening her eyes slightly, Alice stood up and took a deep breath.

They're waiting for a moment to strike, the moment she lets her guard down.

'They don't know my strength, but I have an idea of theirs. They're cautious, these beasts don't want to jump into my hunting ground blindly.'

Alice was going to keep the situation like this for as long as possible.

The longer she stalled like this, the more strength she could save when all hell broke loose.

Bloodlust started to emanate from her body as she waited silently for the beasts to fall into her trap.

###

"She's warning them." Fae raised an eyebrow in surprise as she didn't think a three star Hunter would dare to warn a five star beast.

"Seems to be the case." Luke nodded.

'As expected of Allura's student. They probably went through quite a lot of danger when training with her.' He mused while noticing the mist that was still expanding around her.

Along with the threads and platforms that Alice had set up, there were also puddles of blood surrounding the hunting ground.

It was safe to say that this had become her territory even with the lack of light due to the Wyvern's power.

Staring at Alice, Lothian was silent and chose not to comment before the fight was over.

"Well, there's only so much you can do to warn these beasts. If they judge you as a danger all five will go after you." Fae smiled ominously.

###

Furrowing her brows, Alice noticed a significant decrease in attacks around the arena. The beasts who went after stragglers were now circling the area almost as though they were scouting out the dangers.

As for the two that she was warning, they simply stood and watched her in silence.

'What are they planning?' Alice thought with a frown.

She wasn't familiar with these beasts and her knowledge was simply based on what she had seen thus far.

'Well if they're not attacking then that's fine too. I doubt the principal and the Department Head of Combat would just watch the round get stalled out.' Alice shrugged to herself.

But the moment her attention fluctuated for a brief moment, she felt killing intent explode towards her.

"!!!"

Widening her eyes, she sensed all five beasts lunge towards her direction at absurd speeds.

Even though she could sense it coming through her blood mist and threads, her body was slow to move!

'Above!'

Focusing on the closest attack, Alice bent her body back as the beast crashed down from the area above her.

'One to the right, one below and one behind.'

Calming her mind, Alice sharpened her senses and calculated the best move to make in this situation.

Wrapping her disposable spears with her blood, she jumped up and left them behind.

Once the beasts were close enough, she snapped her finger.

A sea of flames roared out, engulfing the area. But she couldn't rest easily. Even though her flames could cancel out the abilities of the Abyss, it needed to be able to latch onto these beasts first.

However, due to the nature of these beasts and how they could turn parts of their body into their own fire, it was hard for the flames to reach the main body.

'If it latches on they'll just separate that part of them huh? Tsk.' Clicking her tongue, Alice frowned as a pair of jaws appeared behind her.

Gritting her teeth, she created a spear with her third Sigil and lodged it into its maw.

Taking this chance, another beast lunged towards her from behind while she was focused on the first beast.

Its claws were inches away from hitting her when she twisted her body around and spat out a mouthful of blood.

Flames erupted in front of her as the beast was forced to jump back in fear.

Taking this chance to stabilize the situation, Alice slammed her hand down and all of the threads around her combusted into a sea of violet that warded the beasts off.

Cold sweat dripped down her head as she bit off a portion of her tongue in order to drive the beast back.

She wasn't going to use her healing blood just yet since the only injury she received was on her tongue.

'These b*stards are faster than I expected. If it wasn't for Cayla, I wouldn't even be able to see them coming.' Alice thought to herself while trying to catch her breath.

The benefit of being able to see the world in slow motion helped her formulate counterattacks and plans against these beasts.

Massaging her neck, Alice narrowed her eyes and sensed the beasts through her blood.

While the flames were burning through the blood she had set up around the area, they were circling around her like a pack of hungry wolves, waiting for the chance to strike.

In the instant she dropped her focus, they attacked with deadly precision.

'They're really going for me huh? They're not going after the others... Tsk, I can't stall this out if they refuse to fight the others.' Alice frowned when an idea popped into her mind.

Since they didn't want to attack the others, that was fine as well. She'll drag the beasts to them and kill them as collateral. Naturally, it didn't mean that she was giving up on this challenge.

It was actually the opposite.

She was going to take this chance to kill one of them if not more!

Focusing her mind to sense who was still panicking, Alice planned a route in her mind as she immediately turned around and dashed towards their general direction.

The beasts followed suit with 3 of them catching up instantly.

Pivoting on her right foot, Alice leaned down to avoid a horizontal swipe before cleaving up with her blood flame blade.

As expected, the cut was healed instantly thanks to their special property.

Creating a spear between her and the beasts, she used it as a platform to kick herself away to create more space.

Upon arriving at the first group, Alice's smile grew wider as they turned towards her in shock.

"Yahoo~ Please enjoy this little gift of mine." Alice laughed. Snapping her finger, she blended herself into the crowd and ran away.

"Huh? What gift?"

"What is she on about?"

"Did you guys hear- ARG!!!"

"The b*tch brought the beasts here!"

"F*ck get into formation!"

"The front line is dead jackass!"

"S-Sh*t! RUN!"

"What do you mean run! It'll go after us if we run!"

"Well if you don't want to die then ru- ARGGG!"

Hearing the chaos behind her, Alice simply laughed before turning her body.

Narrowing her eyes towards one of the beasts, she aimed her index and middle finger towards it as flames converged towards her location.

She didn't want to go full power with her Void Flux. For now, she'll use roughly 10% of her power.

*BANG!!!!

Detonating a Void Flux right above the beast, Alice watched as it cried out in pain as it wasn't able to turn itself into flames fast enough.

'It'll work!' Alice grinned as she immediately sensed killing intent aimed towards her.

Three of the beasts activated their berserk modes as they instantly manifested next to her.

But Alice was prepared.

Snapping her finger, strands of blood pierced up from the ground, forming a network of flaming wires.

The beasts who tried to brute force through this trap found themselves whimpering in pain as the flames latched onto their body once they dropped their guard.

Dashing out, Alice set her eyes on the next group before creating some distance between her and the beasts.

Those who heard the cries earlier realised that someone was dragging the beasts to them!

All of them huddled together and pointed their weapons outwards. Their grip, trembling from fear.

"Yahoo~ Allow me to give you a gift!" Alice laughed as she appeared before them.

"F*ck! I don't want your gift!"

"No refunds~"

Grabbing onto his shoulder, Alice flipped herself over their heads as they looked up at her in panic.

Right behind her, the jaws of the beast appeared from the shadows.

"SH*T!!!"

"ARGGG!!!"

"Every man for himself! ARGGG!"

###

Watching the chaos unfold before them, the Special class students were speechless while Luke couldn't help but laugh.

'She's such an asshole.' He grinned.

He understood that Alice knew she was the target hence she dragged the others into her fight. But it was far easier said than done.

With the speed of the beasts, it was practically impossible to outrun them. But through her Sigils and the use of meat shields, she was able to constantly create the space needed for her to retaliate with her skill.

It may seem cheap to others but for Luke, he could see the philosophy from Allura's training in her movements.

Glancing behind him, he couldn't help but notice the principal's expression twitch for the first time since he had seen her.

For someone who was always composed and mysterious, this was a first.

'Did... Did she just use Nova Core? No... It's different. But how can she use it? She's not even four Sigils! How did Allura pass on her skill?' Countless questions flowed through the principal's mind as seeing Allura's skill was not something she had expected to see today.

She expected Allura's fire techniques, combat techniques and even her advanced techniques. But her ultimate skill was not one of them!

'What kind of monster did Allura even train?' She sighed inwardly, wondering what else there was to discover.

If Alice could already use Allura's ultimate skill, what else could she do?

Chapter 236 - 236: Alice Vs Ghost Flame Wyverns Part 2

Within the cover of darkness, screams of panic rang out.

Cries of terror that echoed one after another.

"Sh*t! It's the crazy b*tch! Run!"

"Don't let her drop the beasts on you!"

"Get the f*ck away from me!"

Wherever Alice ran, screams would follow.

The entire arena was notified on her existence while those watching from above couldn't help but pale at the sight of Alice.

Even those from other groups feared her.

As for Ria, she simply laughed.

Meanwhile, despite her enjoyment of dragging others into the death trap, the smile on her face faltered after seeing the beasts shrug off attack after attack.

Their regeneration and resilience were simply on another level and she could feel her fatigue catching up on her.

Sensing danger behind her, she rolled to the side just in time to see a flaming claw miss her head.

Twisting her body, she gritted her teeth and slashed up with the blood flame blade.

*CLANG!!!

Widening her eyes, she was shocked to see the beast tank her hit head on without transforming her both.

'Sh*t.'

Adjusting her grip on the blade to enter a parrying stance, Alice braced herself for impact as the beast's tail slammed into her body.

*BANG!!!

Her body was flung away as she rolled violently on the ground. Pushing herself back on her feet, Alice frowned. Her left side was stinging from the hit and her arm was injured. Even with her blood control being able to stop the bleeding, it didn't heal the damage done to her body.

Flipping backwards, Alice dodged another attack by the beast when another appeared behind her.

Widening her eyes, she turned around and fired a Void Flux.

But it was a bait!

Alice's attack missed as the beast dodged her counter and opened its mouth.

A torrent of flames exploded out and engulfed Alice.

Crashing to the ground, flames continued to burn as some of the spectators frowned.

The flames should've killed her and thus teleported out yet she was still in the arena unmoving!

Whispers of doubt and worry started to spread through the crowd. A few looked towards the principal and Special class Students but they weren't saying anything.

Back in the arena, the beasts started to circle Alice with two aiming for other students.

Three of the beasts slowly approached her in a mix of confusion and wariness.

But just as they took a step towards her, Alice snapped into action!

Lunging forward, she readied her blade.

An insane smile appeared on Alice's face as her eyes focused on the beast before her. Sigils flared across her body as a single image appeared in her mind.

The sight of Gin's slash. A demonstration of a Lord's power.

If it was him, he'd be able to cut through these beasts even with their strange physical properties.

Using the knowledge she gained from mastering Void Flux and the movement of energy, Alice coated her blade with a layer of blood before detonating it with her flames.

Void Flux is a skill that collapses the space surrounding the flame she creates. If she was to use the skill she stole from the swordswoman she met while hunting her third Sigil then it could work!

Through the combination of these two skills, she'll be able to replicate Gin's slash.

Her breathing calmed, her mind focused and then, she struck!

Putting her theory into action, the flames began to twist and turn across her blade.

As the flame sliced through the air, the air around the blade started to distort. The purple and red flames flared out before transforming into countless white sparks, warping the space around her slash.

Cleaving into the beast, it was as though a vacuum was opened up. A torrent of flames and sparks rushed into the beast before detonating!

*BANG!!!

Shredding through the beast, the slash tore apart the shadows that permeated this arena, revealing the devastation of her attack.

In the silence of the spectators, a single blade cleaved a five star beast in half. Its eyes widened with fear, shock and disbelief as the two halves collapsed on the floor.

Panting heavily, Alice looked at her blade with a bitter smile.

A single crack formed across the body before the blade shattered into countless shards. It was unable to contain the power behind it and thus broke as a result.

'Sorry, I got too eager.' Alice apologised in her mind.

Sighing deeply, she threw aside her jacket. When the wyverns had set her on fire, she had created a layer of protective violet flames to feed on the attack.

It allowed her to take them by surprise.

But just as she turned around, she saw the principal standing in front of the two wyverns who were glaring at Alice with unrelenting blood lust and hate.

"Calm yourselves. I'll bring him back, it was just an accident. She didn't know." The principal tried to calm the beasts down while Alice felt a chill down her spine.

She could tell that these beasts wanted her dead and this time they didn't care if the principal was protecting her!

"I think you've done enough today. Go relax yourself." The principal glanced back before snapping her finger.

Blood mist enveloped Alice's body as she was teleported back to the spectator stands.

As for the beast that Alice killed, the principal simply teleported it away along with the other wyverns in the arena.

Meanwhile, those who were familiar with the recent rumours were frozen in shock.

After Alice threw her jacket away, they could see her defining details and understood she was the one who cleared the Hall of Champions.

First came anger towards her making the test harder but then came helplessness. She had just killed a five star beast! What could they do against her?

"The test will continue but we will be adjusting the rules." The principal called out after teleporting the wyverns away.

Enveloping the beasts and herself in a layer of blood, she teleported away while Garret took over.

###

In an undisclosed location, the principal bit down on her wrist and poured out blood for the dead wyvern.

Little by little, the blood started to reconstruct its body as light returned to its eyes.

"Sorry, it was my choices that led to this." She apologized once more as the beasts rubbed their heads against her.

Patting them on the head, there was a serious expression on her face.

The techniques she demonstrated definitely, without question, originated from Abyss Lords. Which then begs the question of how she even learned them.

'The techniques of an Abyss Lord aren't something that can be passed on easily. It's a culmination of their understanding and control over their powers. And knowing Allura, she wouldn't teach someone her Nova Core skill until they're ready. The burden is simply too much on the body.

'Then there's her slash... It's not perfect but it shows signs of understanding that only an Abyss Lord would know...' Her frown deepened.

She simply didn't know how Alice was able to replicate these attacks.

Even for her, she found it difficult to achieve. Not only that, she was also like a blank canvas.

She didn't know if Alice knew it or not but her last trick of covering her body with flames to protect herself was the same method of these Wyverns only modified to suit herself.

'Is she simply a genius? Or does it have something to do with her Sigils? Her records state that she has physical boost, poison blood, blood and metal control and finally, flame control... There's nothing there that will suggest that she can copy skills.' Massaging her eyes, she sighed.

At first, she found this interesting but now it was tiring. If she could help it, she would avoid getting involved if possible.

But now that Alice was enrolling, it was unavoidable.

"Where's Allura when you need her." She sighed.

###

Back at the arena, the people in Alice's group looked at her with a mix of fear and anger as she was the cause of their elimination. But the power she demonstrated sent chills down their spine.

Meanwhile, Alice simply sat alone and crossed her legs, not caring that they were staring at her.

She looked down at the blade once more and sighed.

'Until I can control that slash, I don't think I can buy a sword that can withstand that attack.' Alice thought with a frown.

It was essentially a different form of Void Flux but made to mimic Gin's attack.

Sheathing her broken blade in its sheath and tying it with some thread to prevent it from falling out, Alice glanced at her obsidian bracelet.

Perhaps only this blade would be able to withstand that attack, but she didn't want to risk it until she's gained more understanding.

For now, she decided to give the attack a name.

Void Flux – Cleave.

With a new skill in her arsenal of attacks, Alice turned her focus back on the arena.

It was now Ria's turn and with the incident of the last exam, the details were changed. Instead of survival against a beast, Garret had changed it into a survival of the fittest. It was a free for all until only 20 examinees remain. Those that 'die' will be teleported out of the arena as per usual.

With this rule in place, everyone began to look at one another with hostility while Ria simple glanced around her with a relaxed smile.

After seeing Alice replicate her grandfather's attack, her blood was now pumping. She wanted to show off skills of her own and she had a perfect candidate for this.

During her training with Kaden, he had explained to her some theories behind a few ranged attacks she could do with lightning. But at the time, she wasn't able to achieve any success with them.

This time, she'll take this moment to practice.

Massaging her neck, lightning started to crackle across her body as excitement rushed through her veins.

Chapter 237 - 237: Ria's Demonstration Of Power

As the round began, countless Sigil abilities were thrown around the arena as Ria threw a bolt of lightning to the sky.

Swapping places with the bolt, she looked down at the arena and smiled.

Without holding anything back, Ria activated her resonance.

The crackle and rumble of lightning roared out as a set of armour materialised around her. The Sigils engraved upon her body lit up with radiance as dark clouds gathered above her.

Within this cloud, countless orbs of lightning descended as the examinees were confused by the set up.

Some reacted quickly and aimed their attacks at Ria but she simply teleported around while static electricity started to build up around the area.

An overwhelming dread filled their hearts as restrictive abilities targeted Ria.

Watching the chains rush towards her, Ria flicked her finger as streaks of lightning crashed into the attacks, shattering them.

"Your fate was sealed the moment I stepped into this arena. Survive if you can." Ria grinned.

Suddenly, a man appeared beside her as he pulled back with his greatsword and cleaved towards her.

But Ria expected this as she had essentially made herself the biggest target in the arena.

Remembering Kaden's words, she couldn't help but laugh.

"When they find joy in closing the gap after thinking you're a ranged fighter, hit them with everything you got. Don't hold anything back as their reaction will be dulled by their misconception of you."

Side-stepping his slash, Ria grabbed his arm with her left hand before pulling back her right.

Three marks appeared on her arm as lightning crackled around her fist.

Three coils of lightning formed above them as Ria held her breath and punched him as hard as she could.

***BANG!!!!**

A giant bolt of lightning crashed down at the same time as her punch, forming a cross on her location as the man was sent out of the arena!

He died in one punch!

Floating in the air with lightning crackling around her along with a mad smile, Ria looked like the manifestation of a lightning god.

Looking up at the clouds, Ria laughed as she raised her hand and manifested a lightning bow before aiming it at the arena.

Drawing back the bowstring, the air hummed with electricity before gathering into a single arrow.

Once again, coils of lightning manifested but this time in front of her bow.

It took 3 to kill the man from earlier but this time she had six in total!

Narrowing her eyes, Ria released the arrow.

A bolt of lightning shot towards the arena as the ground trembled from its might. With the departure of the arrow, the clouds above parted with a deafening roar, revealing an array of countless lightning bolts that descended beside the arrow.

Each bolt crackled and sizzled with lightning energy, ready to obliterate anyone who got in the way of its path!

As the fury of countless lightning bolts descended into the arena a mass of examinees found themselves teleported outside of the arena before they could react!

"Well, would you look at that? A few survived while some got lucky." Ria chuckled as she landed on the ground.

Narrowing her eyes, she created a thunderstorm of lightning bolts as her figure flashed across the arena.

Appearing in front of a girl holding a staff while a protective dome was around her, Ria pressed her left hand against the barrier and pulled back her right arm.

"You wouldn't..." The girl forced a smile out of fear.

"I would." Ria grinned.

Stomping down with her foot, she twisted her body and punched the barrier.

***BANG!!! SHATTER!**

Breaking the barrier in an instant, lightning rushed forth and crashed into the girl, teleporting her out of the arena in an instant.

Another death by one punch!

Massaging her neck, Ria jumped on the spot a few times before disappearing from her location.

"S-SH*T! This one's another abnormal one!"

"F*ck! Everyone! Focus on eliminating her!"

Cries of panic rang out as Ria teleported around the arena, focusing on 'killing' those who were able to defend against her initial barrage of attacks.

No matter what kind of defensive measure they used, she would simply stack up the number of marks on her arm to increase her power.

With each punch, a lightning cross would manifest as the clouds above struck down on her target. Each cross signified a death as the numbers began to dwindle.

Seeing Ria appear in front of him, one of the examinees paled as he gritted his teeth and decided to face her head on!

He wasn't going to let himself be eliminated without even fighting back.

Golden energy wrapped around his arms as he formed four golden lances around him. Lunging forward, he stabbed towards Ria's punch with a lance as the others followed.

*CRACK!!!

Just as his lance collided with Ria's fists, it was shattered apart from the impact.

Watching the fist get closer and closer to his face, he felt as though he was seeing his life flash before his eyes.

Closing his eyes, he braced for the punch that was about to 'kill' him when he noticed the pain never arrived.

Opening one of his eyes barely, he saw that she had stopped her punch while looking back at Garret who declared the end of the test.

One of the other groups had eliminated a few people beside them. Their idea was that if they couldn't fight Ria, they may as well eliminate the weaker ones to the test ended faster!

Flicking her wrist, Ria disabled her resonance as the clouds above disappeared.

She stretched her body and looked at the destruction around her before smiling in satisfaction. It was safe to say that she had proven herself quite spectacularly just like Alice did.

Watching all of this happen, Garret scratched his chin.

Even though he should be happy that there were strong candidates for his Combat Department, he couldn't help but feel as though a headache was on its way towards him.

'What's wrong with this generation? Why are there two abnormal monsters suddenly?!' He sighed inwardly.

The power behind her punches were something that far exceeded what could be achieved by her peers.

After declaring the conclusion of the enrolment Exams, the next step would be the Student Exams.

First, there was going to be a lunch break while they sort out the list of those who passed and those who failed. The results will be announced once the break was over.

Concluding his announcement, Garret clapped his hand and dismissed the arena around them.

Finding themselves back at the courtyard, all of the contestants stood far away from both Alice and Ria.

"Look at what you've done. You've scared them." Alice laughed as she glanced around them.

"Says you! Who was it that decided to cut one of those wyverns in half?!" Ria rolled her eyes.

She was basically the pot calling the kettle black!

"I mean~ My target is a beast. Look at those poor Hunters, your punch practically traumatized them." Alice shrugged while pointing at the Hunters who looked at Ria in fear having experienced death at her hand.

"It's not like they died since they got teleported out. Either way, let's get some food. I'm starving." Ria smiled while Alice followed behind her.

"Do you think they'll have mead?"

"At an Academy? Hell no."

While the two were joking around with one another, they didn't realise that their infamy were now well known amongst the student body with a few even giving them nicknames.

Most of the nicknames were variations of 'Crazy B*tch' for Alice and for Ria, it was 'One Punch Woman'.

As for Luke... He simply smiled silently after seeing Ria's performance.

The way she punched the examinees to death in one go sent a chill down his spine as he wondered if he should tone down his teasing of her. But it was a risk he was willing to take or else he wouldn't have kept doing it for years.

###

"How are the results?" The principal asked as she teleported to the Heads of Department along with the Special class Students.

Listening to the run down of the situation, she couldn't help but raise an eyebrow at the mention of Ria's attack and how she performed.

'This strategy and logic... Don't tell me...'

"Xinbei, can you show me a replay?"

"Sure thing boss." Xinbei replied while scratching his hair.

Gathering ink into his palm, an orb slowly materialised itself as a recording of the fight was placed in front of the principal.

Watching the playback silently, she took a deep breath and sighed.

'So... Allura and someone else is teaching Alice while Kaden is teaching Ria. What are they even planning? Or have they broke neutrality and began to make a move?' She thought silently as her fingers tapped against the arm rest.

The Heads of Department waited as they didn't want to break the silence.

"Alright. We'll make some further adjustments. Garret, I want you to find a suitable location in the Inverted World and set up a beacon. Here are a list of locations that might suit the test. Xinbei, I want you to lead the Student grading exams. Elara, come with me.

I need you to make some vials of blood." She smiled as Xinbei and Garret nodded.

"Ehhh... Do I have to go? Can't I get Runi to do it?" Elara groaned as she wanted to keep watching Alice do the exams.

"Didn't you want to make something from my blood for a while now? I'm giving you a chance." She smirked as Elara paused and a grin appeared on her face.

"Well of course~ Why didn't you say so earlier? It's a shame that I can't see the exams but I can have Xinbei record it for me. Isn't that right?" Elara smiled, turning to Xinbei who only sighed and nodded his head.

He was essentially recording p*rn for her right now. But he owed her and couldn't exactly say no.

With the tasks handed out, they split up as Xinbei made his way to the courtyard to announce the results and the next stage of the exams.

Chapter 238 - 238: Exam In The Inverted World

Once everyone was gathered in the courtyard once more, Xinbei cleared his throat before snapping his fingers.

Behind him, several ink banners manifested as names could be seen on the surface.

"If you see your name on the list, you have passed the initial exams. Those who can't find their names, I must ask you to leave the Academy as we prepare for the next stage of the exams."

After this announcement, he waited as everyone looked for their names.

Naturally, Alice and Ria found their name pretty quickly as it'll be more confusing if they didn't pass.

Next to their name, it also showed them their scores for different tests. For Alice, she received full marks on the combat, 80% on the Theory and a fat 0 for the handicrafts.

Ria on the other hand had full marks on Combat, a fat 0 for Theory and 0 for Handicrafts.

Little by little, people started to filter out from the courtyard as they had failed. Countless angry glares were shot towards Alice and Ria who simply smiled it off. It wasn't like it was their fault to begin with.

Though that was debatable considering it was their appearance that caused the spike in difficulty.

There were a few who tried to sneak past but they were promptly escorted out.

Once there were only those that passed remaining, Xinbei stepped up once more.

"We now move onto the Student Exams. As you may know, our students are split into several classifications. From the bottom, we have Basic Students, Normal Students, Advanced Students and at the very top, Special class Students.

"For those that have successfully enrolled just now, you will be given all of the tests with the exception of Special class to see where you will be placed. For Students, you will be given a task belonging to the next grade up.

"Due to certain circumstances of this year's exam, we will be making further adjustments. Everyone will be split into groups of our choosing and explore a different part of the Inverted World.

"Each group will be given a main task to complete as a team for more points towards your evaluation and personal tasks that determine whether you rank up or not." Xinbei explained as a diagram appeared on the ink behind him.

The rules of the second exam were simple. Each group had to raid a certain location in the Inverted World. Within the Inverted World, there were certain 'relics' and treasures you can obtain. Whether they be replicas of weapons in the past or certain Abyss Bloods that were extremely hard to obtain now, each treasure you recover will give you extra points.

Thinking to herself, Alice remembered what Xinbei said when they first met. That the Inverted World was like another pathway into the Abyss. Not only that, certain knowledge that only Abyss Lords should be privy too were potentially open to them.

After explaining the rules, he began to distribute the groups.

Alice and Ria were split up into different groups since they both were going to take the Special class Exams.

Looking up at the Inverted World, Alice couldn't help but feel a wave of excitement and anticipation in her heart. She had been interested in this ever since she stepped foot into this city and now, it was time for her to enter.

Her group consisted of 5 people including her.

They looked at Alice with worry and wariness as she simply held up her hands.

"We're working as a group right? Don't worry I'm not going to drag the beasts your way." She reassured with a smile.

"Right... I suppose we need self introductions since we'll be working with one another. I'm Matheo and I'm primarily a front liner. I have 3 Sigils, Anti Beast resonance and I focus on locking down beasts in a one vs one." Matheo introduced himself.

He was tall and bulky with rugged features and a stubble. He had chestnut coloured hair and wore a set of plated armour along with a greatsword.

"Selena, controller. Three Sigils, Anti Beast resonance. I focus on making beasts fight one another."

Selena has short purple hair, a black and white dress along with a large umbrella. She was using the umbrella as a cover of sorts, hiding her face from the others, especially Alice.

"Luna. Handicrafts student. Three Sigils but they're not great for combat. Instead, I'll be supporting you with my tools that I've made."

Luna has blonde hair, blue eyes and wore a pair of goggles on her head. She wore a Handicraft uniform adorned with several pouches and belts that held her gadgets. On her back was a large backpack that was filled to the brim.

"Frode. Theory student. I can be the alchemist of the group. Four Sigils, Anti Hunter Resonance."

Similar to Elara, Frode had stitches across his body, but he kept it covered using a large cloak and a face mask. It was hard to tell what was beneath his cloak and Alice wasn't that interested in prying it open.

After they introduced one another, it was Alice's turn.

"Alice. Frontliner and controller. Three Sigils, Anti Hunter Resonance. I focus on using blood, metal and flames. Of course, I can also be ranged support if you wish." Alice chuckled.

"So we have two frontliners, a controller, ranged support and an alchemist. Would you be okay with being flexible? Swapping between frontline and ranged support when needed?" Matheo asked curiously as Alice made an okay sign with her fingers.

"Of course."

Once they sorted out their formation, they could see Xinbei and Elara approaching them.

"Here is your main task. After entering the Inverted World, there will be someone there to give you a map of the location. Your goal is to go south bound and venture into the heart of the Shadow Gorge. There will be a relic held within the deepest crevices of the gorge. A scythe made from the fang of Dragon.

"That will be your main task. Here is a checklist of your personal tasks. You don't have to do all of them as we will be taking your performance into consideration while you're in the Inverted World." Xinbei explained while handing out a slip of paper to each of them.

Receiving her sheet, Alice raised an eyebrow after seeing the objectives.

[Special Class Personal Tasks – Alice Agnelia]

Kill [Blood Song Lich]

Kill [Void Witch]

Kill [Umbral Chain Siren]

Prove your might against the Church of the Moon and retrieve [Starfall Scepter]

Four tasks for the title of Special class Student. The fourth being one to go against the Church of the Moon within the Inverted World.

"How strong are these beasts?" Alice asked curiously while Xinbei simply smiled.

"You will find out when you gather data about them during your stay in the Inverted World. Everything you do while completing your task will be observed."

Nodding her head, Alice glanced to Elara who had been staring at her non-stop.

"Don't... Don't mind her. She's here to distribute the blood you will be needing for this exam." Xinbei coughed before nudging Elara with his elbow. Even though the others couldn't see it, he noticed her appendages being busy beneath her lab coat.

"Okay..." Furrowing her brows, Alice shrugged.

Once they were done with familiarizing themselves with their tasks, Elara handed them each a vial of blood while Xinbei gave them a small black orb.

When Elara had given Alice the vial of blood, she didn't do anything strange which surprised Xinbei considering her previous actions.

"The blood will protect you while the orb while record everything that happens. Good luck in the Inverted World."

Leaving the group to themselves, the two made their way to the next group.

Giving Elara a glance, Xinbei noticed that she would occasionally look back.

"I know what you're thinking Xinbei, you don't have to make it obvious by keep staring at me. I'll get shy." Elara shrugged.

"Have you ever met a celebrity by your standards? Seeing her up close made my head go pew. I didn't want to scare her."

Hearing this, Xinbei nodded his head in understanding.

"So basically, you got cold feet." He laughed as she jabbed him in the ribs with an appendage.

"Please tell me that wasn't used." He frowned.

". . . I'm not that shameless."

"But you're shameless enough to touch yourself while on the job." Xinbei raised an eyebrow while Elara simply grinned with a blush.

"The threat of being discovered is half the fun."

"Perv."

After distributing all of the tasks along with the protective measures of the blood and orbs, Xinbei lead everyone to the Combat Department that was located directly beneath the Inverted World.

In the main hall, there was a platform that was similar to what Alice and Ria saw in the special sparring rooms. Ritualistic carvings surrounded the walls as Xinbei stood in the centre with Elara.

While he was doing his speech, Alice felt as though something was off.

She wasn't sure if it was something wrong with her or the room itself. It felt as though she was underwater, the sounds around her were dampened while energy pulsed around the crystalline orb above them that represented the Inverted World.

A soft rhythm thumped in her ear.

*Ba-dum... Ba-dum... Ba-dum...

'A heartbeat?' Alice thought to herself.

She wondered if it was her own as she had heard the same thing when getting hit across the head.

The blood that rushed to impact zone while her heartbeat rang against her ear.

But this was something different.

Almost eerie.

As Xinbei concluded his final speech and wished the Examinees a successful exam, the carvings around the room lit up with an ethereal glow.

Energy converged towards her as she noticed something strange.

The ink orb and blood that Xinbei had given him started to bubble and crack before breaking completely.

Before she could react and ask about this abnormality, her body was teleported away.

###

Sitting on her chair with a pale face, the principal was recovering from losing so much blood and power for the students when she felt something pulse out from the Inverted World.

A pulse that resonated with her on a far deeper level than anything she had ever expected.

Sitting up, her face paled as she remembered this sensation.

"Sh*t!"

For the first time, her calm and mysterious aura broke apart completely as there was pure panic in her face.

###

Sitting up, Kaden widened his eyes before snapping his fingers.

The raven he had left in Alice's shadow was killed.

"Sh*t..."

Chapter 239 - 239: Heartbeat

In the depths of the Abyss, a flickering trail of fire battled against a giant demonic beast.

Large obsidian horns, a pair of wings that dwarfed the area, countless spiked scales across its body and a large red crystal in its chest with a tail that slammed the ground behind it.

Jumping into the air, Allura glared at the beast as she snapped her finger and created two sparks of light in front of her.

Firing them towards the beast, she watched as it batted the attack away with its wings before cracking open its jaw.

Crimson lightning rushed up from the ground and sky as an orb of destruction formed.

*BANG!!!

Watching the torrent of energy fire towards her, Allura twisted her hand as another spark appeared before her. Within that instant, the spark detonated into a kaleidoscope of colours that erased the torrent of energy.

Taking several deep breaths, sweat dripped from Allura's head as she reached into her jacket and pulled out a cigarette.

With trembling hands, she brought it to her mouth before flames erupted from her body.

"Taranis, enough of this sh*t." Allura snapped as she glared at the beast in front of her.

Flames raged around her body as her anger skyrocketed.

"For you maybe. But you've grown weak Allura. Feeble even. Where is the might you boasted in the old era? Where is the might you were so proud of? Executioner of the Abyss?" Taranis let out a deep laugh as lightning coursed through its body.

Hearing this, Allura's smile twitched as she glanced back into the distance.

Gin was currently engaged in his own fight as his Avatar of Death raged above the crimson skies, tearing apart the space and letting down a black mist that enveloped the lands.

"Maybe I'm just taking pity on you. We're old acquaintances after all." Allura forced a laugh as she adjusted her posture.

"Spare me your bravado. Since we're old acquaintances, I'll let you live if you hand me that dying Authority." Taranis grinned. The beast could tell Allura was far weaker than her prime.

"At the end of everything, you're just like the others. Greedy for this Authority." Allura sighed as she pulled her hair back and took another drag of her cigarette.

"After today, the Abyss shall lose one more Lord." She narrowed her eyes.

The flames around her flared out before transforming into a pure white flame.

As her aura continued to climb, the Abyss started to tremble from her presence.

The perpetual crimson skies above faded as light descended around the battlefield.

Raising her hand, she gritted her teeth and punched the space in front of her.

*CRACK!!!!

From the depths of the fracture, she reached in with her hand before pulling out a single blade.

The blade gleamed with an otherworldly radiance as its edge was forged from the very fabric of space. Engraved along its length were intricate ritualistic markings that pulsed with foreign energy that Taranis was unfamiliar with.

Pulling out the blade in its entirety, the sword hummed with power, resonating with Allura as flames coalesced into black and silver armour that wrapped around her body. A black and white dress could be seen beneath the armour as a single crest was visible upon its surface.

The crest of Ayr, a black moon surrounded by a spiked halo.

A ball of flames enveloped Allura's head as a spiked headpiece revealed itself, covering the upper half of her face.

Her black hair faded into a pristine white, pure and untainted like the moon.

Behind her, a spectral halo and six pairs of silver wings unfurled themselves as she aimed the blade towards Taranis.

Anti Beast Resonance!

Taranis wanted to interrupt but a suffocating aura restrained her in place. Invisible chains hindered her movements while the Abyss itself hailed the arrival of the Executioner.

"You say I've grown weak. But the reality is that you're just not strong enough for me to go all out. Before me, all defences shall be rendered null!" Allura shouted as she snapped her finger.

A pulse of energy erupted out from around her as the space around them froze.

White and black energy flared around Allura's blade as she took a step forward and cleaved up with her blade.

*CRACK!!!

A single slash exploded forth, shattering the space and obliterating everything that met the strike.

But Taranis refused to be ended like this.

Sacrificing its wing to dodge the strike, the beast hissed in pain before punching down with its fist.

Lightning exploded out as Allura was dragged into the beast's personal realm.

Upon reaching six Sigils for Humans or six Stars for beasts, they become blessed by the Abyss with a Second Resonance.

A personal realm where their powers are enhanced to the limit!

For Gin, he chose to do the opposite. He would bring out his avatar rather than drag people into his realm.

For Taranis, it wanted to drag Allura in so she lost the blessings of the Abyss!

Looking up at the sky, Allura could see a pair of wings crafted from pure lightning as Taranis hovered beneath its light.

Taranis' Second Resonance was a realm forever ravaged by lightning and in this realm, it ruled as Sovereign.

There was no need for anymore words.

Without hesitation, Taranis struck towards Allura but her expression didn't even flinch.

Snapping her finger, a familiar energy pulsed out, halting the attack as she twisted her body and let out another slash.

After the first, came the second slash. Then the third, then the forth. The number of slashes continued to climb as Taranis widened its eyes at the sheer number of slashes that Allura was releasing, each one with the power to break the space apart.

"I have to thank you. If you didn't drag me in here I might actually have to be worried about the damages." Allura called out in a monotone voice as she pulled her hand back for a final strike.

The edge of her blade flickered with the same spark of her Nova Core as she disappeared from her spot before reappearing in front of Taranis!

Executioner's Blade!

As her final strike descended, the space was no longer paused as all of her strikes crashed towards Taranis.

Unable to defend itself, the beast's realm was shattered as countless slashes tore into its body.

Before it could even let out a roar of defiance, Allura's final strike tore through all of its defences and burned through its essence. A spark detonated within the epicentre of her strike as the realm collapsed inwards, destroying all evidence of Taranis' existence.

Glancing back at the singularity that was created from her strike, she could see the realm reflected upon its mirror like surface.

Snapping her finger, the space repaired itself as her first Resonance disappeared.

Her hair returned to normal and her armour faded.

Landing on the ground heavily, she stumbled over to a large bolder and collapsed with her back against it.

*COUGH!!

Coughing up a mouthful of blood into her hand, she simply sighed before pulling out a cigarette.

Watching the fight in the distance, she could see that Gin will eventually win the fight but he'll fail to kill the Abyss Lord he was against.

"Let me give you some help." She chuckled as she aimed her finger towards the direction of the battle.

Narrowing her eyes, the space above them shattered apart to reveal a single white spark that shot towards the enemy Lord who paled at the sight and immediately retreated.

With her interference, Gin was able to leave a lasting wound on the Lord which burned with the power of death.

"You've become sloppy Gin. Not much of a Lord of Death if your opponent walks away after a fight." Allura laughed, seeing Gin sit down next to her. He was covered with wounds while gesturing her to give him a cigarette as well.

"Shut up. I'm not as young as I once was." Gin groaned while glancing at her wounds.

"You pushed yourself again didn't you?"

Staying silent, Allura shrugged her shoulders.

"So where are we going next? With you killing Taranis, the war in this area should settle down somewhat. They'll be too preoccupied with recovering from the loss of an Abyss Lord."

"Let's go up a layer. You're in no shape to follow me down, it'll be better if we focus our efforts above for now." Allura replied as the two of them watched the battle in the distance.

A war between those who have yet to achieve the rank of Lord.

"As you wish. But with just the two of us, especially you in this state, it's not going to be easy. The more you fight, the more the others will realise." Gin frowned.

"So be it. It's not like I'll die to a random Lord that shows up." Allura laughed.

Just as Gin was about to retort, he paused.

*Ba-dum!... Ba-dum!!... Ba-dum!!!

Standing up, he furrowed his brows as he looked around in confusion.

The heartbeat continued to beat as it resonated with something deep within.

An unknown emotion surged forth while confusion filled his mind.

Surprise, happiness, anticipation.

A myriad of emotions assaulted his mind.

"What the hell?" He looked towards Allura for answers.

She had dropped her cigarette as her pupils shrunk in shock.

"Sh*t... I should've known." She muttered while forcing herself to stand up.

"Change of plans Gin. We NEED to divert all of their attention to us, no more holding back."

"What's going on Allura?" Gin frowned as he hadn't seen Allura be this anxious before.

"Every single Lord, whether they be in the Abyss or on the Surface has felt that. The issue is that the Lords belonging to the Churches felt it too, no exceptions." Allura scratched her hair as this was a miscalculation on her part.

She knew that since Alice and Ria were looking for Luke, they'll find the Inverted World. What she didn't expect was for Cayla to have such a big reaction.

It simply meant that she was a lot closer to waking up than what she had originally anticipated.

If they don't divert the attention of the Churches towards them, the Churches will spare no effort in tracking down Cayla. And by extension, Alice.

"Alice?" Gin asked as Allura nodded.

*Sigh...

"Alright, but we need to get some healing first. No matter how dire this is, you won't be able to do much if you continue to fight in this state."

Agreeing with Gin, the two disappeared from the battlefield.

Chapter 240 - 240: Strange City In The Inverted World

After being teleported away, Alice felt as though she was falling through a mass of shadows. A sensation not unlike what she felt when she was sent into the Abyss by Kaden.

She could feel countless stares examining her body, the origin of these stares was unknown but they sent a chill down her spine.

A sense of weightlessness overwhelmed her mind as she realised that she was now falling through the sky!

'S-Sh*t!'

Looking around her, she noticed a city in the distance.

Despite the darkness that surrounded the Abyss, this city stood bathed in radiant light. Throughout the city, hues of white and gold decorated the houses while a band of celestial blue light flowed through the streets like a silken banner.

At the centre of the city stood a grand castle, its architecture resembling that of a sacred cathedral with a single crest carved into the centre. The crest of a moon surrounded by a halo of spikes or rather in this case, the glow from the moon.

Its walls, crafted from pristine white stone seemed to radiate a divine aura while overlooking the city below.

Looking at this city, a sense of nostalgia, longing and sadness overwhelmed her heart as tears flowed from the corner of her eyes.

"Dammit! This is no time to think about this crap!" The biggest danger right now was that she was about to fall to her death!

Making a cut on her arm, she tried to manipulate the blood around her but something seemed to interfere with her control of the Sigil.

Widening her eyes, Alice realised that she couldn't use her powers to save herself!

With the ground coming closer and closer, Alice gritted her teeth and looked at her gloves.

'F*ck it! If it breaks then it breaks!'

Installing the thread as fast as possible, she flicked her wrist and sent the hoot towards a tree that was quite far from her landing spot.

Her goal was to reel herself in and redirect her movement from falling to swinging horizontally!

As the mechanism pulled the thread back, Alice could hear the stress being put into the device but there was no time to worry about that.

Holding onto the gloves with her spare hand in order to distribute the force to her arms and shoulder rather than just her right shoulder, Alice held her breath and pulled as hard as she could.

*BANG!!!!

Swinging herself using the thread, she crashed against the ground at a diagonal angle and rolled across the dirt. The mechanism in the gloves could not handle the sudden force and broke apart while Alice tried her best to reduce the injuries she would sustain.

Once she slowed down, she lay in the pit of her own making. The dirt crumbled around her and fell onto her outfit.

Spitting out some stray dirt that landed in her mouth, Alice looked up at the sky and let out a deep sigh.

"First Kaden threw me into the gods dammed Abyss Waters and now Xinbei's teleporter sent me into the sky where I can't even use my Sigils. No wonder people don't like to use the teleporters." Alice complained in annoyance.

Reaching into her pouch, she wanted to see how many vials of blood were still intact from her fall. Since she needed the healing vials, she made sure to protect the pouch to avoid the vials shattering.

Out of her stock of 10, only 6 remained. 3 vials of healing, 1 vial of berserk and one vial of her own blood. But considering what happened during the fall, she wasn't sure if her own blood was still useful in this regard.

Shaking her head, she grabbed one of the healing vials and drank the contents in one go.

However, contrary to what she expected, the blood stopped working after a brief moment. It wasn't her body acting up either, the effects simply disappeared.

'Is there something blocking the Abyss here?' Alice thought with a frown.

Reaching into her jacket, Alice paused after remembering the orb and vial of blood Xinbei had given her broke apart just before she teleported.

Meaning she was stranded here.

None of her group members were around her, she was on her own.

Climbing out of the pit she created, Alice glanced back and looked at the trail of destruction caused by her landing.

Seeing the ground being dug up from her impact, her smile twitched.

She was grateful that each Sigil would passively reinforce her body without her needing to drink vials of Abyss Blood. After all, if she tried to survive that fall with her feeble physique from before she got her Sigils, even if she swung herself at the last moment, she would be a blood smear on the ground.

Dusting off the dirt on her dress, Alice needed to figure out where she was right now and how she could leave the Inverted World.

'Xinbei said that this is a reflection of the past. A passageway. If that's the case then there are probably people around here as well. I doubt they'll take it kindly if I told them they're a fragment of the past.' Alice mused to herself.

Climbing up a tree, Alice could see the strange city in the distance. To her right was a river, to her left were plains and some small villages while behind her was a main road that connected everything together.

So far, she hadn't seen anyone walk by.

Without her hood, she looked somewhat like an aristocrat, if you ignored the dirt on her body. Frilled white shirt, a bow tie, a black skirt, stockings and shoes.

In the end, she decided to go to the river for now and clean some of the dirt from her body. She couldn't do much about her outfit but she could at least keep herself clean.

While she was making her way to the river, Alice wanted to see what was skill possible and what wasn't.

Her first Sigil and third Sigil were 'sealed'. Same with her blood control.

However, her flames were still available.

'Is it because my flames go against the Abyss? That would explain why I can use the flames but not the blood control my second Sigil also provides.' Alice thought to herself.

Looking at the gloves and broken sword, a bitter smile formed on her face.

"Seems like it's just us two again." She muttered while holding up her obsidian bracelet.

Seeing this bracelet, a thought came to her mind as she immediately rummaged through her jacket and found Kaden's feather along with Allura's amulet. But both of these items felt lifeless and lacked the energy from before.

'Urg... It's not that easy huh?' Alice had thought that she could've found an easy way out using their help.

Looking at her reflection, everything seemed to be normal. Cayla inhabited her right eye socket while her left was same as usual. Split hair and the crown that floated above her head that refused to disappear.

It was a little conspicuous but there was nothing she could do about it.

After giving herself a quick wash, experimented with her flames and how she could use it.

Just like before, her flames manifested from her body and blood. While she couldn't use her blood control, her blood beads and vials of blood could still act as a catalyst for her fire.

Not only that, but the obsidian blade could still drink her blood and combust into a blade of flames.

'At least I can defend myself to some extent if things get rough.'

Since her flames could still be used, it meant that she could activate her Void Flux and void Flux – Cleave. In the case of Void Flux, she'll be using her beads as bombs since she would rather not detonate something this dangerous right next to her.

Once she was happy with the tools available to her for now, Alice glanced towards the city in the distance. If she wanted to figure out where she was, her best bet would be the city ahead of her.

###

"Lua, can you help me order the knights? Something dropped down around half a day's journey away from the city." A man asked while sitting behind a desk.

Kaden was currently writing some documents allocating some resources around the city.

"Again? How many times has it been now urg..." Allura replied with a groan. She laid on the sofa while pushing all of her work to Kaden.

"If you want to make it go faster there is always the option of checking out the situation yourself."

Hearing this, Allura sat up and shook her head.

"Nope. I'll go let the knights know. Which squad should we send?"

"Just send the scouting squad. We don't know what it is yet and strangely, I can't make out its form. It's like a weird mist is covering their body."

"Wait... Even with your authority you can't make out its form?" Allura widened her eyes in surprise while the Kaden simply nodded.

"Just send the scouting party for now. Don't let them engage in a fight unless it can be avoided. If you want to watch, you can. Try not to cause a mess." He smiled softly while looking at Allura who nodded her head and gave him a salute.

"Roger~ Can you make me some cake when I come back then? I need to replenish my nutrients."

"From walking?" Kaden raised his eyebrow.

"Effort is effort. I'll go deal with this quickly, be right back~" Allura chuckled while hopping out of the room.

Seeing this, Kaden simply shook his head and looked at the pile of documents left to him.

If he wanted to make her the cake she wanted then he'll need to hurry up and finish all of this.