

Abyssal A 261

Chapter 261 - 261: Void Flux Variant

Seeing Kaden mimic the cast for Void Flux so quickly, Alice couldn't help but widen her eyes in shock. It wasn't as though she hadn't thought of it before but trying to complete all of the steps at once increased the chances of failure.

But perhaps that's the risk she needed to take in order to reduce the cast time.

"Of course, there are also benefits to removing the cast action despite the increase in cast time. You can take people by surprise and it's a tactic used by people with more Sigils since their control of energy has increased." Kaden explained as he placed his hands into his pockets.

Without any action, a mimicry of Void Flux appeared on the wall and detonated.

"This is why I said you're already doing it. By linking your casting process with your actions such as converging it above your finger, you've already shortened the cast time. By having an action linked to the cast, you subconsciously pivot your brain into refining that cast. The stronger the impression of the skill within your mind, the faster this process becomes.

"Since you're already using actions to cast, if you want to reduce the cast time it's simply a case of refining your understanding and impression of the skill. Once you've done that, the casting should become more efficient to the point you only need one action to complete the sequence and sometimes, you can even blend it in with your movements."

Seeing Alice contemplate his words, Kaden nodded his head and made his way back to his seat.

Repeating Kaden's words in her mind, Alice looked towards the wall and recalled the steps of her skill.

Four steps were what she required. It could be reduced to three if she eliminated the need to fire the attack. But that risks impacting her as she'll be inside the blast radius. Meaning she needed to somehow merge Manifesting and Condensing.

To condense her blood the instant she summoned it... How?

She saw Kaden's mimicry but even then, it was akin to freezing boiling water the moment it was poured from the cup.

The energy required to condense her blood into one point the moment she conjured it up would be insane. But that was the cost of having high power and fast casting speed. The efficiency of the attack would plummet.

'I need to visualise a better way of summoning the blood.'

That was the conclusion Alice landed on. If she could change the way she was summoning the blood, converging and condensing the blood would become far easier.

The key to condensing the blood was focusing everything on a single point. And to do that, the best method would be that of a spiral.

'If I summon the blood in a spiral towards my finger, I should be able to merge the two steps together. Then all that's left is to ignite then fire.'

Taking a deep breath, Alice decided to put her theory to the test.

But it was easier said than done.

Raising her finger, Alice could conjure the blood in a spiralling motion but it refused to be condensed. In fact, the spiralling motion worked against it as Alice wasn't able to condense the blood fast enough, causing it to scatter.

While Alice was attempting her new method of casting Void Flux, Allura and Kaden were discussing ways to help Alice.

"Her first Sigil, physical boost and hallucinations. That can probably have the output increased if she trains her body a little. Her body is... surprisingly weak for a three Sigil user." Allura frowned. She noticed it during the first day when she tossed Alice into a tree.

Even though she had gone a little overboard, it shouldn't have been enough to knock out a three Sigil user. Yet Alice was incapacitated in an instant.

"It's only natural. The only reinforcement she's getting is from the Sigils. She can't get any benefits from her blood. You need to treat her like a glass cannon but well... made out of paper instead of glass." Kaden shrugged.

"Isn't there anything we can do about that physique of hers? She can't keep going like this. There's only so much her Sigils can help. Later down the line, she'll hit a wall she can't overcome and that's the speed and raw physical power high Sigil bearers hold thanks to Abyss Blood." Allura frowned.

While Alice had the benefit of being unaffected by the Abyss, it came with the drawback of her never being on the same playing field as the others. She'll always be weaker physically even with her Sigil reinforcing her physical power.

"There are three methods that I can think of. First, Resonance. Resonance would be the easiest way of getting a physical boost enough for her to compete against the others. But that'll require her to take specific Sigils for this to work. And even then, it's a gamble.

"Second, there's taking reinforcement type Sigils similar to her first one. A Sigil that'll boost her physical traits. Honestly, this is a bit of a waste as well since she'll be losing out on a powerful Sigil ability just to catch up on physical power." Kaden sighed. Even for the two of them, this was a problem they had never anticipated before.

"And the third option?"

"Asking an Old Abyss Lord for a favour."

Hearing this, Allura furrowed her brows.

"You know those old timers don't listen to anyone, not even Master."

"I know. But you also know that they'll be ecstatic to see someone physically reject the Abyss in the way that Alice is. If anything, they'll be glad to help her get the power to kill more of us." Kaden reminded.

The Old Abyss Lords brought about a peaceful age when everyone was a beast. But at the same time, they were essentially Tyrants in their own land, refusing to let others intrude. It wasn't until their Master was born as a human were their rule threatened.

"And what if they're not cooperative and attack Alice instead."

"And that's why we'll be nearby to help. But in the end, it's still up to Alice if she wants to take that risk or not." Kaden sighed while looking over to Alice.

If she could successfully persuade the Old Abyss Lords to help her, then she'd be able to get their method of enhancing their bodies.

While the Old Abyss Lords could get power through consumption, it wasn't efficient. They had a different method that the citizens of Ayr didn't know about, one that allowed them to become practically indestructible unless you had peak Abyss Lord power or an authority like the two of them.

And surprisingly, the method was not connected to the Abyss. Even after using her Authority, Allura found out that their defences were still insane. Meaning it was a method that came from them rather than the Abyss.

She had to adjust her fighting technique in order to defeat the Old Abyss Lords.

On the off chance that Alice was able to persuade them using her strange traits, she could gain a power beyond that of drinking Abyss Blood. A power to compensate for her weakness.

"Do we even have time to take her to the old b*stards? Master only gave us a day to train her. Who knows if the surface Gods will arrive on the second day or the third." Allura asked with a frown.

"It depends but at least we don't have to worry about travel time." Kaden shrugged before reaching into his shadows to pull out a second plate of cake since Allura had finished the first batch.

*BANG!!!!

Just as he turned his gaze away, he heard an explosion near Alice as both of him and Allura stood up in shock. Meanwhile, Alice was hidden by the smoke and rubble.

'Rubble?' Kaden frowned before realising what that meant.

Widening his eyes, he flicked his finger, dispersing the smoke and saw Alice on the floor with her eyes widened.

"Above her, a hole had been drilled through the ceiling of the training room with a ray of light shining down through the gaps.

"What the f*ck?" Kaden looked up in shock as he didn't expect her to have the power to break through the material of the wall.

"What did you do?" Allura asked curiously while Alice glanced over.

"Is... Is that bad?"

"Don't worry about the ceiling. More importantly, what did you even do?" Kaden shook his head while looking at the hole she opened.

"Erm... I followed your tip of shortening the cast action and merged some steps together." Alice scratched her hair while Kaden's smile twitched.

If it was that simple, this training room wouldn't have survived till now!

Hesitation for a moment, he opened his mouth.

"Can you give me a demonstration of what you did?"

"But the wall?"

"It's fine, I just need to see what you did." Kaden reassured as Alice nodded her head.

Taking a deep breath, she aimed her finger at the wall opposite her.

During the time that Kaden was talking to Allura, Alice had focused on the spiral motion to condense the blood as soon as possible. But it was during this that she made a new discovery.

With this motion, she was able to merge the ignition and firing stage into one!

The key lies in firing the orb the moment it reached the bare minimum and conjuring blood around the orb while it was travelling.

Snapping her finger, her Sigil flared as blood converged towards her finger in one swift movement.

Before it could even reach the size of a fingertip, the orb was fired without hesitation.

Flames and blood gathered towards the spiral, consuming the ambient energy to fuel itself using the properties of the violet flame and just before it reached the wall, it detonated into a chaotic spiral of energy.

Void Flux!

*BANG!!!!!!

Colliding against the wall, a hole was created once more as the new variant of Void Flux was akin to a blender, shredding anything and everything in its path with increased intensity.

If Alice's original Void Flux was an attack focused on power, this variant was one that focused on penetrating defence!

Chapter 262 - 262: Sealed Lords

While Kaden was stunned by the demonstration of Alice's new power, Allura was able to see clearly how it functioned on a basic level.

The 'drill' used the power gained from its surroundings and the energy of the target in order to achieve maximum penetration. Meaning, this attack scaled off how strong the target was!

While the speed may be questionable for now, if she was to allow that attack to hit her, Allura figured she might have a little issue in dealing with it. And for a three Sigil bearer to achieve this...

"You're quite the freak of nature huh? Not in a bad way. Just your combat talent is way too insane." Allura laughed as she patted Alice's head.

"Eh? Really?" Alice blinked her eyes in surprise.

"Mnm, really. But don't let it get to your head okay? Talent is merely a representation of your starting line. Without hard work, you will never reach the finish line. But setting that aside for now, I think we'll need to take a break from the training room while Kaden gets someone to repair it." Allura chuckled, pointing to the pillars that have now lost their glow.

Alice had broken the training room!

Coughing awkwardly, Alice glanced away. If she didn't see the damage, it didn't exist. Plus, it's not like it's her fault in the first place. Kaden was the one who wanted her to demonstrate. If anything, it was technically his fault for letting her do so in the first place.

"How does the whole training room break from two holes though? They're not connected to the tree no?" Alice asked curiously. She couldn't imagine two attacks from her would cripple this place.

"Think of it like this. The entire room is essentially an elaborate network of materials and energy paths. Breaking off a piece of it and in your case, two pieces of it would cause the whole network to shut down." Kaden sighed, finally recovering from seeing Alice break the training room.

"So what do we do now?"

"There are two options. First, I'll take you elsewhere and have someone come fix this room. In the meantime, we'll train you in ways to use your blood Sigil and your flames. Hopefully, this training should raise your offensive capabilities and increase your efficiency." Kaden explained, holding two fingers up.

"And the second option?"

"How do you feel about meeting an Old Abyss Lord?" Kaden smiled.

Hearing a term she hadn't heard since her conversation with Nalem back in Zadash, Alice paused for a moment in surprise.

"Seems like you know of them." Kaden raised an eyebrow upon seeing Alice's reaction.

"Kind of? Are they the big beasts sealed underground in certain places?"

"Ohya? So you do know of them. Then that makes things far easier for me. Yes, the goal is to see if we can find a way to help you make up for your main weakness. Your physical body." Kaden nodded with a smile.

"My physical body? How? I can't drink Abyss Blood to change it and I doubt the blood of Old Abyss Lords would change that."

However, Kaden simply shook his head.

"We're not going for their blood but rather their method of reinforcing their body. You see, Old Abyss Lords while chosen by the Abyss, have far more freedom compared to the Abyss Lords of today. Even with Lua's power of Severance, their physical bodies resisted some of her attacks."

"!!!" Widening her eyes, Alice glanced over to Allura who shrugged and didn't deny the claim.

'If Old Abyss Lords could still block her attacks after being cut with Severance... That means their physical power doesn't come from the Abyss! Severance cuts off the energy reinforcing the body as well meaning she essentially fights them as though they have the defences of a no Sigil bearer.

'That means they have a different source when it comes to reinforcing their body. One that doesn't rely on the Abyss. Meaning... I can possibly learn it!' Alice concluded in her mind.

Her Violet Flames worked outside of the Abyss even though it uses it as a portion of its power source. If she could combine this with the physical traits of the Old Abyss Lords, she would essentially become the ultimate Anti Abyss Hunter!

Flames that consume the power of the Abyss and a body that can withstand attacks despite severing the connection to the Abyss.

"How do we get their help?" Alice asked, feeling excited about the prospect of reinforcing her body without drinking Abyss Blood.

"We? No no, if 'we' went with you that'll simply decrease your chances of getting their help. They hate us." Kaden chuckled while Alice stared at him with a blank expression.

"And what makes you think I can convince an Old Abyss Lord to help me?"

"Because of how your blood works. They hate the Abyss and I can only assume that seeing your blood reject the Abyss may give them happiness, enough to lend you a hand." Kaden shrugged while Alice's smile twitched.

"So we're just leaving this up to chance? What if they attack?"

"You die. Well, me and Lua will be there to help you so you'll be fine." He dismissed with a wave of his hand.

"So which one would you pick? First option or second?"

Hearing this, Alice could only sigh.

Training was something she could get in the future with Allura and Kaden but getting help from an Old Abyss Lord? Hard to come by. Especially when all of the Old Abyss Lords that she's seen thus far looked dormant or in the process of dying.

Just thinking back to the colossal being beneath the land of the Slaughter Docks sent a chill down her spine once more.

She had imagined what it'd be like to drink its blood but now that she had a chance to get its help? Alice couldn't pass up the opportunity.

"Since you two are guarding me, it should be okay. Let's go with the second option." Alice replied while scratching her hair.

"Perfect, hang tight then. I'll be taking us to the entrance of one of these prisons. Lua, who was the most reasonable Old Abyss Lord?" Kaden turned to Allura.

"Reasonable? All of the old b*stards are unreasonable in their own right. Each of them a pain in the ass to deal with." Allura clicked her tongue in annoyance.

"But if we're talking about the most reasonable to Alice... Then probably Tiamat. She hates the Abyss and she'll probably be willing to talk to Alice if she reveals the flames."

"Tiamat huh? You're not wrong." Kaden nodded his head.

As one of the most violent Old Abyss Lords, Tiamat indeed fit the description of what they were looking for. She was wilful and showed favour to anyone and everyone who displayed a true hate towards the Abyss.

While Alice herself may not hate the Abyss, her sentient flames would probably hit it off rather nicely with the Old Abyss Lord.

"Oh and since we're looking for Tiamat, you probably shouldn't call her an Old Abyss Lord. It's a title the victors of the war gave the losers and Tiamat absolutely detests it. If you want to call her by anything, call her by her title she had while she was free.

"Dragon Queen of Apocalypse." Kaden warned as Alice swallowed her saliva and nodded her head.

Snapping his fingers, shadows began to surround them as Kaden teleported them away from the training hall.

Little by little, the pressure exerted by the Abyss began to increase while Alice furrowed her brows. But before she could complain or try to adjust to this pressure, Allura placed her hand around Alice and the pressure subsided.

"We're going to Terminus since that's where Tiamat is sealed. Anything weaker and it wouldn't hold for her." Allura explained.

"I see... Speaking of which, why seal the Old Abyss Lords if they lost the war? Wouldn't it be better to kill them?"

"It's not like we didn't try. The Abyss didn't let us. It's prolonging their punishment and we can't do anything about it." Kaden smiled bitterly.

There were cases where the Old Abyss Lords managed to escape confinement and cause quite a lot of casualties but even when that happened, Velouria still couldn't convince the Abyss to let her kill these Old Lords.

"Now, I wish you luck. Me and Lua would be nearby but it'll still be up to you to convince Tiamat."

Snapping his finger, Alice was expelled from the protection of the shadows.

"Eh?"

Before she could recover, Alice found herself falling through the sky.

Widening her eyes, she quickly adjusted her falling posture as she saw a land of fire, blood and ice. Countless colossal chains hung from the sky while a deep crimson moon radiated an ominous luminance upon the land, dyeing the ground in red.

Located near where she was aiming to land was a deep crevice where giant statues of malformed beasts stood guard.

A chaotic network of energy sprawled across the entire area, revealing the countless beasts that roamed freely within this prison layer.

Since she had experienced this kind of fall many times now, Alice was already prepared for what she needed to do to make a safe landing!

Especially after her brief training, she now knew how to manipulate her Sigils further.

Closing her eyes, Alice visualised the pathways within her body.

Third Sigil, maximum output, minimum power!

An ocean of blood erupted around her as Alice used this to slow down her movement while making platforms to stabilise herself.

Landing on the ground without any issues this time, she couldn't help but curse Kaden in her mind while looking at the world hidden within the crevice in front of her.

A pit of malevolent energy so thick to the point it manifested as a layer of fog. Despite this, she could still see the flickering shadows beneath while chains rattled from the movement.

"It stinks of the Executioner's protection..." A low growl echoed out from the pit.

*BANG!!!!

At that moment, a burst of energy rushed forth, slamming into Alice and shattering Allura's protection. The full brunt of Terminus' pressure rushed towards her as Alice began to bleed from her orifices.

Coughing up a mouthful of blood, she slammed against the ground while violet flames burst forth in an attempt to protect her body. An action of self preservation done by the flame itself.

From the fog, a single draconic head revealed itself.

[Tiamat – Dragon Queen of the Apocalypse: ♦♦♦♦♦♦]

Chapter 263 - 263: Tiamat

Feeling the overbearing pressure crashing down on her, Alice found herself unable to move. Even with the help of her violet flames, her limbs were stuck against the ground and no amount of strength could lift them.

Meanwhile, Tiamat observed Alice silently while her low growls shook the earth beneath Alice.

Looking up at the sealed Lord, Alice could see two demonic horns crowned on the dragon's head, spiralling towards the sky. Each horn, cracked and damaged, revealing a flow of crimson energy hidden by the first layer.

Along the ridges of Tiamat's neck was rows upon rows of jagged black spikes that transitioned to a luminescent red on the tips.

A pair of malevolent eyes stared down at Alice. Each eye held the intensity of the sun as Alice felt like she was going to die just from the glare alone.

"Why did the Executioner and the Shadow send you here?" Tiamat narrowed her eyes as she looked at the weak human in front of her.

Her aura stank of Allura and Kaden's tampering, especially that protective barrier earlier. That was most definitely the work of Allura, the Executioner.

Even now, Tiamat could remember the battle where she lost.

Killing intent oozed from her as her head approached Alice.

"Well? Speak. Or do you wish to become my snack?"

Gritting her teeth, Alice clenched her fist and dragged herself onto one knee. Determination burned bright in her eyes as her flames roared out in defiance.

Each flicker of the flame gave her more power to resist the pressure emanating from Terminus and the Abyss Lord in front of her.

Cracks and tears appeared across Alice's skin while her outfit became soaked with her blood but that didn't bother her. Right now, she needed to stand up and speak her purpose here.

Seeing a weak human like Alice fight against the pressure of Terminus, Tiamat couldn't help but be intrigued. A normal human would've been crushed to paste by this pressure already but her? No, she was still fighting. Surviving.

Wounds continuously appeared across her skin yet as strange as it was, her flesh would bridge the gap between these wounds and repair itself. A constant cycle of injury and rejuvenation.

And then there was that flame around Alice. So familiar yet so foreign. Tiamat couldn't quite remember where this feeling originated from which is why she held off on killing Alice immediately on sight.

"I..." Alice squeezed out between gritted teeth while trying her best to stand upright.

"Came... Seeking... Help."

"Help? Hah! Help from a sealed Lord? What makes you think I'll help you when I can't even help myself?" Tiamat laughed. With each howl of laughter, the realm trembled, causing Alice to stumble but she stopped herself from falling.

It has been many years since the war had ended and it was the first time anyone had come to her for help of all things. Those who managed to sneak into Terminus sought to either free the beasts or take their power for themselves through Sigils or rituals.

This was the first time anyone was asking for help.

"In the first place, what kind of help are you even looking for, kid?" Tiamat asked, deciding to humour Alice a little since there was nothing else to do in Terminus. After all this time, she was bored out of her mind!

"My... Body. Abyss Blood doesn't work on me... So I'm weak. I heard... You have a method to... improve the body." Alice answered as she forced herself to take a step towards the beast.

However, Tiamat wasn't concerned with her issue. Rather, the only thing that caught her attention was 6 words.

Abyss blood doesn't work on me.

Looking down at Alice silently, there was a hint of doubt in her eyes. While she may hate the Abyss, she knew how far stretching its authority was. Everyone was affected by the Abyss and even those that claim they weren't simply haven't found their limit yet.

"Lies." She spoke coldly while Alice shook her head.

"I spent... 10 years. People always injecting me... With tainted blood. But I always return to human. Even when... I should become a beast, I return."

"Do you dare stake your life on this claim?" Tiamat asked with a wide grin.

Closing her eyes, Alice knew that this was her only chance at fixing her body. A chance that was given to her by Allura and Kaden.

She knew that Terminus was sealed off thanks to the gate she found. Getting back here was practically impossible unless she became a Lord herself but by that point, would she still be alive with her current body?

Alice had been using different methods to keep up with the physical demands but even she knew that the gap would only grow wider as time passed. No amount of reinforcement from her first Sigil would bridge this.

"Yes." Alice replied after opening her eyes.

"Then prove it. The Blood of an Abyss Lord contains the essence of the Abyss. One sip of this and there's no coming back, even if you are an Abyss Lord yourself. Drink my blood and prove to me that you are indeed free of its hold. Hah, even those foolhardy people of the past have died or become beasts upon consuming the blood of a Lord.

What makes you any different?" Tiamat taunted as she reared her head back.

Cracking open her mouth to reveal a second jaw, blood began to pool from between her cracks and flowed towards Alice.

The blood formed a strange floating orb, reflecting the hellscape that is Terminus.

Understanding that there was no backing out of this, Alice took a deep breath.

It was risky. An all or nothing gamble based on how good her resistance towards the Abyss was.

Alice knew that based on the conclusion drawn up by Kaden and Velouria, the more she allowed the Abyss to taint her, the clearer her outline became. And once she allowed that, side effects would become permanent like the crown above her head.

Usually, this would be a deterrent but in fact, it only served to convince Alice further. After all, this was the best time for her to gamble!

If the blood of a Lord contains the essence of the Abyss, then consuming it while her resistance was at its strongest would give her the highest chance of survival.

With this in mind, Alice took a step forward and scooped up a handful of blood from the pool.

Tiamat watched silently as she could already see Alice's skin burning from coming into contact with her blood.

The power held within a Lord's body was not something anyone could just touch.

'This should scare her off.' She thought to herself, knowing that humans would value self-preservation above all else when there is nothing at stake except their life.

But contrary to her belief, Alice tilted her head back and poured the blood into her mouth.

'Foolish.'

Losing interest, Tiamat prepared to descend back into her prison as there was no need to watch a human being consumed by the Abyss. It was a sight she had seen far too often.

But to her surprise, she didn't hear any screams.

Confused, she glanced back and saw Alice standing in place and looking up at the sky.

The wounds on her body were mending at a visible pace while the flames that surrounded her body flared in excitement.

A smile appeared on her face as her eyes glossed over with a sheen of madness, excitement and ecstasy. Reaching towards the pool of blood, she continued to drink as her aura flared out, shocking Tiamat.

'She's... She's adapting to my blood?!'

Scales began to manifest themselves on Alice's body while horns protruded from her head.

Behind her, two sets of draconic wings unfurled and a tail slammed against the ground.

"More..." Alice muttered as violet flames wrapped around her hand.

The obsidian bracelet transformed itself into a blade coated by the flames as Alice let out a laugh and looked towards Tiamat.

Licking her lips, she revealed a set of sharp teeth.

Widening her eyes, Tiamat could see that Alice hadn't lost herself to the side effects. No... Alice had taken a piece of her soul!

'This power... This reaction...'

A theory appeared in her mind, but Tiamat refused its possibility. But reality couldn't be denied and Alice had indeed taken a part of Sealed Abyss Lord into herself. Adapting to the power of the blood along with the pressure of Terminus.

Slamming her hand down, draconic markings manifested across her body as flames engulfed Alice's body. Behind her, the visage of a multiheaded, multi winged beast could be seen as Tiamat gritted her teeth and let out a roar to push Alice back.

To her shock, Alice was unaffected as she disappeared and reappeared above the Abyss Lord's head.

"More!" Pulling her arm back, energy converged towards her blade as countless sparks crackled amidst the violet flames.

Void Flux – Cleave!

Swinging the sword, a wave of energy rushed towards Tiamat as she recognised this to the attack of the Executioner now paired with the power of an Abyss Lord of old!

If she wasn't sealed, she would deal with this brat in an instant since she doesn't know how to use the power properly but the reality was that she could not use even 5% of her power in her current state.

'Crazy b*tch!' Tiamat roared out in her mind as her aura soared. Even if she can't use more than 5% of her power, she refused to get done in by a brat of this calibre! She is an Abyss Lord, feared by all!

The Dragon Queen of the Apocalypse!

She will show the brat hell!

Chapter 264 - 264: Tiamat Vs Alice

"Should... Should we interfere?" Allura asked with a frown.

She hadn't expected things to go south immediately. When Tiamat presented the blood of Alice to drink, she was about to make a move, but Alice drank it before she could.

And once she did, her aura began to fluctuate.

"Alice chose this. Let's just watch for now and make sure she's not killed. The longer we don't interfere, the more likely it is for things to succeed." Kaden shook his head.

What Alice needed to do now was to prove to Tiamat that the Abyss had no hold over her. And the best way to do that was to reveal the power she gains from drinking blood then going back to normal.

Watching the situation carefully, Kaden was prepared to teleport in to save her.

But he believed in Alice.

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*BANG!!!

Knocking Alice's Void Flux – Cleave aside using spectral dragons, Tiamat released a roar as a blue and red aura flickered around her body. Red lightning crackled while illusionary dragon heads appeared around her.

Sending them towards Alice, Tiamat watched as Alice copied her movements and did the same. Behind her, dragon heads also appeared and clashed against the heads sent by Tiamat.

'What is this freak of nature!?' Tiamat gritted her teeth as patterns appeared on her body.

Around them, dark clouds gathered while meteorites descended from the skies, dyeing the realm of Terminus in an ominous red.

Looking up at the flaming rocks without fear, Alice closed her eyes before activating her Resonance!

Energy converged towards her location as a new outfit manifested around her body. Her aura soared thanks to the addition of Tiamat's blood and she aimed her finger towards the meteors.

*Click

With a single snap of her finger, Void Fluxes detonated next to the meteors, consuming them in a storm of violet flames.

The echoes of Alice's laugh could be heard across Terminus as she shot towards Tiamat with sword in hand.

*CLANG!!!!

Clashing her blade against a claw, Alice paused in surprise seeing the woman in front of her.

Wild long red hair that was swept to the side and hid one of her eyes. A pair of familiar draconic horns and a Sigil like marking running up the side of her face. Like Alice, she had a set of sharp teeth.

The woman in front of her wore a sleeveless elegant black dress that reached her ankle with a slit on the side to reveal her legs that wore a pair of thigh high boots and tights.

Even in this form, there were cuffs and chains around her neck, wrists and ankle. Most noticeably, a crystal stake through the centre of her chest.

Unfurling her wings behind her, Tiamat glared at Alice.

"Enough of this farce brat. Just because you drank my blood you think you can surpass the original?" Tiamat asked with a grin. She couldn't travel far from this crevice due to her seal but she refused to let Alice hit her senselessly!

Twisting her body, she slammed her foot into Alice's stomach, sending her crashing through the air before chasing after her.

Appearing behind Alice, red lightning and fire manifested around her body as she condensed energy into a single orb. The world seemed to lose its colour as everything was absorbed into the orb.

*BANG!!!!

Slamming it into Alice's back, Tiamat watched as Alice crashed into the ground with a loud bang. Even through the smoke, she could see a large wound completely shredding a large portion of Alice's stomach and ribs.

But just when she thought it was over, Alice began to stand up. A maniacal laughter haunted her ears as she watched the flesh stitch itself together while flames burned around her wound, revealing the flawless body beneath after being healed.

Tiamat's smile twitched.

Even at her current power, her attack was not something anyone could just shrug off like that. And more importantly, that was not regeneration that belonged to her powers!

Stabbing her sword into the ground, Alice looked up at Tiamat before muttering something under her breath.

At that moment, Tiamat felt a chill down her back as countless sparks manifested around her.

Widening her eyes, she noticed the familiar gathering of power.

"You b*tch..." She muttered, realising that Alice had copied her attack the moment she demonstrated it.

Countless variants of her attack manifested itself as the world was drained of colour once more.

*BANG!!!!

Shielding herself with a red and black aura, Tiamat frowned while looking towards Alice's location only to see that she was missing.

'Behind!'

Sensing danger behind her, she managed to knock aside a Void Flux – Cleave that was aimed at her neck while Alice flickered beneath her.

The obsidian blade travelled upwards while Tiamat leaned back to dodge the strike.

Flipping her body back, she kicked Alice in the jaw to send her up before gathering her energy, manifesting a ring behind her.

Since Alice was copying everything she did, she needed to take her out in one go!

Black and red energy erupted from her body as dragon heads shot out from around her, each one holding the ferocity of an Abyss Lord!

*CRACK!!!

Snapping their jaws on Alice's limbs, they tore off pieces of her with ease. Seeing this Tiamat was about to turn away when Alice's laughter continued to ring out.

'She's f*cking crazy...' Tiamat thought to herself as Alice began to fight back within this horde of dragon heads.

Blood, flesh, tendons and bones all began to regenerate as Alice grabbed one of the dragon heads that approached her and grinned.

Opening her mouth, she began to consume the attack as her aura began to spike once more.

With each limb they tore off, she'll regenerate and grab another dragon's head to consume. A constant cycle of consumption and regeneration.

Flinching from each bite, Tiamat understood that Alice was using the connection between her and the attack to reach for her soul!

"Freak!" Tiamat shouted in anger as she retracted her attack.

At this rate, the longer they fought, the stronger Alice will get! Each time she consumed a piece of her, the bigger her 'reserves' became and the longer she could maintain the power of an Abyss Lord.

Tiamat couldn't believe what she was thinking but right now, with her powers sealed, the best way to win this fight was to stall Alice until she ran out of power!

But to force the Dragon Queen of the Apocalypse to run?

Tiamat loathed the thought. But her arrogance did not blind her to the risks of fighting this freak of nature in front of her.

Even though their exchange had been short, she could already feel her output of power dropping.

If she was fighting with 3% of her power earlier, thanks to Alice, she was now dropping to 1%!

'If I lose any more pieces of my soul, the seal may as well just knock me into a coma!' Tiamat thought to herself.

Glancing up at Alice, Tiamat noticed a taunting stare in her eyes as she wiped her mouth and licked her lips.

"Delicious... Can I have some more?" Alice smiled.

*PUCHI!

Feeling as though a vein was about to burst, Tiamat could barely contain herself.

It had been a long time since she had felt this insulted during a fight. The last time was against Allura the Executioner.

Even now, she could still remember that fight.

"Oi oi oi~ Stinky dragon, do you even take a bath?"

"Pft hahaha! All this aura and yet you can't even land a hit? Do you need a few more years to train? Should I let you hit me?"

"So if you're the Dragon Queen, is there a Dragon King? Does he give you some love on a Saturday night? Or are you single but don't want to mingle? I only hear about your name in this land of yours and never a husband after all."

Just thinking about Allura's taunts infuriated Tiamat.

"Fine. Since you had her protection, it means you're connected to her right? Then it's a perfect chance for me to vent my frustrations. You wanted more, didn't you? See if you can eat this you brat!"

*BANG!!!!

Tiamat's aura exploded outwards as her constraints erupted with a golden sheen but Tiamat ignored the pain.

Her aura continued to climb while Alice simply looked at her with a pair of expectant and hungry eyes. She drooled in anticipation of the meal she was about to receive while Tiamat gathered her energy into a single orb about her palm.

Shooting it up into the air, the space around them began to crack and shatter.

Second Resonance!

Abyss Realm – A World's Finale.

The world around them began to distort as Alice found herself being dragged into Tiamat's personal realm. A realm balanced on the edge of life and destruction. The final moments of life before the end.

Standing as its ruler, Tiamat looked down at Alice and narrowed her eyes.

In a single blink, Alice found herself surrounded by countless black and red blades and serpentine dragons that locked her in place. She was unable to move any of her limbs as these attacks only served to prevent her escape!

Giant chains wrapped around the world and Alice soon found herself sealed within this orb resting above Tiamat's hand.

"Disappear along with this world." Tiamat narrowed her gaze and clenched her fist.

*BANG CRACK!!!

The skies shattered as the realm was crushed into nothingness while Alice was sealed within.

Collapsing onto one knee, Tiamat coughed up a mouthful of blood as the seal around her body burned against her skin.

Seeing the restraints around her neck and limbs glowing with a stronger light, Tiamat knew that she couldn't fight anymore. In fact, she might be forced into a slumber if she wasn't careful.

*Crrr

"Hm?" Furrowing her brows, Tiamat didn't dare to turn around as she could hear the fabric of space tearing apart behind her.

A pair of torn and blood soaked hands clawed open the realm!

Widening her eyes, Tiamat jumped back in horror as she watched Alice claw herself from the rift between realms. Insanity lingered in her eyes while blood continued to pour from her body. There was not a single part of her that wasn't injured yet she continued to push forth, ripping a path back to Terminus.

Tiamat began to fear.

Chapter 265 - 265: Null

"!!!" Sitting up in a panic, Alice looked around her in bewilderment.

'What the hell happened?' She frowned.

The last thing she could barely remember was clawing through the rift to reach Terminus once more after Tiamat sealed her in the personal realm. After that, everything had turned dark.

Looking down at her hands, she noticed that her outfit was practically in tatters, but she was not wounded at all.

In fact, she felt as though the fight was simply a dream had it not been for the painful ache that permeated throughout her body. Even the slightest movement would send her body twitching and jolting in pain.

Trying her best to ignore this, Alice looked around to get a feel of where she was.

Right now, she was lying on a rocky platform surrounded by tall walls of stone and chains. A strange red glow emanated from below but strangely, she didn't feel any pressure on her body. It was as though she was no longer in Terminus.

Standing up, she made her way to the edge of the platform and glanced up to see if there was a way out but the top was blocked by a thick layer of mist that she couldn't see through.

Looking down, she was greeted by another layer of mist.

With no clues as to where she was, Alice could only sigh and scratch her hair.

"How do you have so much energy already." A groan rang out behind her as Alice recognised it to be Tiamat.

Widening her eyes, she entered a defensive stance while reaching for her bracelet in preparation to turn it into a blade.

Watching a figure jump up from the mist and land on the platform, Alice saw Tiamat looking annoyed with a frown on her face.

"You young'uns always got so much energy after a beating it's actually impressive. Just take this time to rest, I'm not going to kill you." Tiamat scoffed in annoyance while making herself a throne.

Sitting down and crossing her legs, she observed Alice silently. Her face didn't betray any of her internal emotions but inwardly, she was once again shocked by Alice's recovery.

While Alice had indeed proved that the Abyss had no control over her, that wasn't what drew Tiamat's attention. No, it was the insane regeneration and adaptability displayed by Alice during their fight.

Thinking back, Tiamat was glad she didn't give Alice a higher purity sample of her blood. If she did, the fight would've lasted much longer.

In the final moment when Alice had clawed her way out of the rift between realms, she had exhausted all of the power left in her body and passed out. Yet her regeneration still kicked in and saved her. Meaning the regeneration did not come from the blood but rather, from Alice herself.

"So will you help me?" Alice asked after a brief pause. She had proven her resistance against the Abyss, all that was left was for Tiamat to make a decision.

"Ha? Help you with what exactly?" Tiamat frowned.

"Weak physical body."

"PFT! Oi brat, who do you think you're fooling? Does a weak physical body withstand the burden placed by Abyss Lord Blood? Does a weak body regenerate lost limbs torn off by my Dragon Heads? I'll give you a hint, my ability severely limits regeneration." Tiamat spat out in annoyance. This was the reason why she was shocked by Alice's regeneration.

The attacks she used to attack Alice all possess the Corrosion effect, an effect that constantly eats away at the flesh and makes it impossible for them to regenerate quickly. But despite all of that, Alice still regrew limbs without any issue.

"But isn't that from your blood?" Alice tilted her head.

Seeing that Alice wasn't joking and indeed had no clue about this, Tiamat was speechless.

Furrowing her brow, she let out a deep sigh.

"Listen here young'un. If I had regeneration like yours back then, I wouldn't have lost against the f*cking Executioner. If you were Abyss Lord level, the regeneration that you displayed outclassed anything I've seen. With the exceptions of weirdos who only focused on regeneration and survival over power." Tiamat shrugged.

"Wait... That was from me? But I don't usually regenerate like that though." Alice pointed at herself.

"Don't ask me, it's not like I know what the hell is up with your body. But answer me this, why do you have the power of Null?" Tiamat asked curiously.

"Null?"

This was the first time Alice had heard anyone put a name on her ability.

"You don't know? Hmm... How much do you know about your own power? I'm talking about the power to copy abilities if you drink the blood." Tiamat asked, fishing to see how much knowledge Alice had on her own power.

"A little bit but not a lot. Abyss Blood doesn't seem to work on me long term, I can copy Sigil abilities if I drink the blood and apparently each time I do, I take a piece of their soul with me." Alice scratched her hair while Tiamat could only sigh in annoyance.

"Young'un. Do you want to enter a ritual with me?" Tiamat asked while Alice paused in a mixture of surprise, bewilderment and cautiousness.

"What's in it for you?" Alice frowned. Rituals followed the rule of give and take. To get something from her target, she needed to offer something of her own.

"Power." Tiamat chuckled while Alice was confused. What kind of power could she even give to Tiamat?

But regardless, if an Old Abyss Lord wanted power, it was most likely used to break out of her prison. She wasn't sure of the consequences of establishing a ritual with someone from the memory but knowing the Abyss, she wouldn't rule out the likelihood that the real Tiamat may receive the benefits of this contract.

And if she did, it would cause chaos in the Abyss.

"I'll pass. It's more suspicious for you to want power from a weakling like me." Alice shook her head while looking for a way out.

If Tiamat doesn't plan on helping her then there's no reason for her to stay.

"Why are you young'uns so anxious? Have some patience. You haven't even heard my explanation yet." Tiamat rolled her eyes.

"When I say power, I meant the power you stole from eating my soul. The seal placed onto us losers from the old war by the Abyss is one that constantly drains us. Leave us like this for long enough and we enter a comatose state.

"Thanks to our little fight and your stunt of eating MY SOUL, I'm a little fatigued. Tiamat explained.

Since Alice had no control or understanding over her power, the best way she could 'reclaim' pieces of her soul would be to exchange it through a ritual.

Usually, this wouldn't be an issue but thanks to the seal placed on both her physical and spiritual body, losing a piece of her soul equates to entering a vegetative state if she doesn't do anything soon.

And as the Dragon Queen, that was a fate she refused to subject herself to. She'd rather die than live in a vegetative state under the seal of the Abyss.

"In exchange, I'll give you the help you want. You want the method to reinforce your body without Abyss Blood right? And as an added bonus, I'll tell you a bit about Null." Tiamat offered with a grin on her face.

Information was a small price to pay for getting parts of her soul back. Not to mention, after seeing Alice's crazed state, she could already imagine the chaos she'd cause in the Abyss if she were to run rampant.

'Allura seemed to value this kid. With how crazy she is... If she goes out and causes some chaos, Allura probably won't kill her. Meaning this cycle will just keep repeating. Oh I wish I could see the expression on that b*tch's face when that happens.' Tiamat thought to herself.

Alice in her crazed state was a monster that not even her, the Dragon Queen wanted to deal with. The more you send to restrain her, the stronger she'll get. The more souls she consumes, the more abilities she'll adapt to.

She was a weapon of war in the shape of a girl.

"I'll accept it on one condition." Alice narrowed her eyes.

"Stingy brat. Fine, speak your condition." Tiamat's smile twitched.

No one had dared to speak about conditions in front of her yet this brat was doing just that. The only exceptions before were other Abyss Lords but now she's listening to a three Sigil kid who hasn't even unleashed their second Resonance.

"You will only take pieces of your own soul back. Nothing more, nothing less. There will be no permanent connections between us, no tethers, no tracking, no bindings no nothing. You take your soul, I get the information and help I need. There will be nothing more after this." Alice narrowed her eyes as she didn't want to risk having a permanent connection to Tiamat.

"Tsk so cautious. But sure, I don't want anything more to do with a monster like you anyways. I will take only my soul and nothing more. There will be no ties between us." Tiamat shrugged.

"Satisfied?"

"Mnm. How will we do this ritual then?" Alice nodded.

"Simple."

Snapping her finger, blood began to ooze from her finger tip as Tiamat drew out a ritual circle between the two of them. Ambient energy began to funnel towards this circle as conditions manifested before the two of them.

Dragon Queen of Apocalypse, Tiamat, will offer Knowledge and a Method of reinforcing the body.

In exchange, Alice Agnelia will return pieces of Tiamat's soul.

A simple ritual contract of exchange. No bindings or connections.

"I accept these terms." Tiamat smiled, gesturing for Alice to do the same.

"I accept these terms."

The moment both parties accepted the terms, Alice could feel a foreign wisp of power digging into her body, pulling out strands of a black and red energy from her chest. The aura of which resembled that of Tiamat who reached out with her hand and absorbed the energy.

*BANG!!!

Her aura flared out as she took a deep breath in satisfaction, feeling whole once more.

"Now then, shall I tell you about Null?"

Chapter 266 - 266: Soul Beast Null

"Soul Beast Null, that's what some of us sealed ones would like to call him. He's... A strange one. You see, he's not exactly powerful but rather annoying." Tiamat recalled as she closed her eyes.

"Null is a beast that specifically targets the soul but that wasn't what made him unique. What made him unique was that he could continuously take other's skills and powers for himself. A perfect mirror that can stack countless reflections within itself.

"But copying has its limits and he was never able to reach the level of an Abyss Lord. There was never a second version of him either. Well... until now that is." Tiamat shrugged, looking at Alice since she had aspects of Null.

"He died during the first war but the chaos he caused isn't one that can be forgotten easily. He became a beast far bigger than any of us sealed ones and all who approached would have their soul stolen and assimilated.

"When I say you have the power of Null, I'm specifically talking about that soul stealing and copying part of your abilities. But unlike him, yours doesn't seem to be permanent nor does it have drawbacks." Tiamat narrowed her eyes.

Thinking about her next words carefully, she recalled everything that Alice had revealed.

"In a way, your version of Null's power seemed to have taken the benefits while ignoring the drawbacks. The only reason why he couldn't reach Abyss Lord level was because all of his power was stolen. He couldn't have an ability of his own so unless he killed Lord Level beings, he would never become a Lord."

Hearing this, Alice was silent.

According to Tiamat's words, her situation was similar to Abyss Blood when it came to copying power. It wasn't permanent.

"Wait... But I stole part of your soul when I used my power didn't I? Wouldn't that be classed as permanent?" Alice asked but Tiamat shook her head.

"Kind of but not really. From what I've seen, you have two stages of your abilities of Null. First, you drink blood to form a connection. Second, you use that connection through the blood to copy someone's power and while doing so, taking a piece of their soul.

"I don't know what you need the soul for when just forming the connection gave you power, but Null needed to take the soul to get the power. You're a step ahead of him in this aspect." She shrugged.

'So Null is the power to copy, it's not the reason I'm not affected by the Abyss. Since Allura and Kaden both talked about how Resonance is a mix of everything you have already but enhanced... Where does my Regeneration come from???' Alice frowned. She knew that entering Resonance heightened her Regeneration but even to this point, she didn't know the source.

Her original theory was that it was part of her flames since in her Resonance, her flames would mend her wounds.

"So Null isn't responsible for me being able to burn away Abyss powers?" Alice asked, conjuring a ball of violet flames.

"Not really. The thing with Null is, after he eats enough of your soul, you'll lose your contract to the Abyss while he becomes the recipient. Meaning he gets all of your power while you lose everything. I suppose burning away powers of the Abyss is similar? But not quite. If I'm going to be brutally honest, to me, you're like a weird hybrid of all kinds of beasts.

Freak of nature? You have stupidly high regeneration, Null's power, Executioner's power and during the moment you had my blood within you, you were able to use everything I revealed." Tiamat sighed.

Even Null needed time to adapt to the Abilities he gained yet Alice was able to use them instantly after seeing the original.

And if her memory served right, Null would always be a step behind the original unless he conducts heavy research. The stronger the target, the more he would need to understand his target in order to use the abilities fully.

It was akin to the original knowing that $1 + 1$ is equal to 2 but Null only sees the result. He doesn't know the process while Alice is a mirror, a direct reflection of their history and understanding while adding her own experiences to the reflection.

Hence being a freak of nature in Tiamat's words.

"Eh? But what you showed wasn't THAT advanced was it?" Alice tilted her head.

*PUCHI!!!!

Feeling as though a vein was about to burst, Tiamat held back her anger while glaring at Alice.

"Do you even know the concepts my attack encompassed?" She forced a smile.

"Mnm. Isn't it gathering all of the ambient energy into one orb and creating a vacuum in the surroundings? Since you removed the energy, by planting that orb inside someone, it'll force itself to burst out and fill the void. It's kind of like Allura's Executioner's blade to breach defence but her's cuts the connection." Alice explained while holding out her palm to the side.

Recalling the sensation she felt when using Tiamat's abilities, she activated her second Sigil.

At that moment, flames erupted in front of her before detonating into a spark. A similar process to her Void Flux but this time, a strong suction force was generated at the epicentre.

Once again, the world lost its colour as Alice fired the orb into the side of the cliff.

*BANG!!!!!!

Surprisingly, even though it collided against the cliff, the surface was unharmed.

"Oh... That's a pretty sturdy cliff." Alice muttered, surprised that the location was unharmed.

Meanwhile, Tiamat slumped on her throne while massaging her eyes.

'She's just a freak of nature. If she can copy the Executioner's blade then it only makes sense for her to be able to copy my ability of manipulating the energy in the surroundings, right? Right?!' She cried out in her mind.

It wasn't her main ability but still! It was something she had refined over the years with her knowledge as an Abyss Lord and the brat just copied it like that!?!?!

Why don't she start copying the abilities of every Abyss Lord she lays her damn eyes on!!!

###

Outside the Inverted World...

"!!!"

"What's wrong Gin?"

". . . Nothing. I just had a feeling that someone felt my kind of pain."

"Huh?"

"Mental torture." Gin shook his head.

"???"

"Never mind, you wouldn't get it."

###

"So is there any reason why Null's power is inside my body?" Alice asked while shuffling closer to Tiamat.

"Don't know. When did you first discover this power? Null has been dead for a long time so I'm not sure how you got your hands on it." Tiamat asked curiously while Alice had an awkward smile.

She couldn't exactly say that she was from the future.

"Not sure but it's always been with me. Same with my weird resistances and stuff." Alice shrugged.

"Sit still then. Let me check something."

Nodding her head, Alice sat still while Tiamat covered one of her eyes before moving aside her fingers.

Her eye was now covered with a radiant glow as she observed Alice silently.

"Hmm... Yeah your body is still a mystery to me. To put it simply, it doesn't make any sense like I can't even begin to comprehend it." She sighed with a helpless shrug.

Hearing this, Alice felt a little disheartened since neither the Goddess of the Abyss nor the Old Abyss Lord knew what was going on with her body. Which only makes her wonder what the hell the Zenia's did to her during the 10 year experimentation.

Was it a side effect of the experiments? Did they modify her without her knowing? Or was her body always a mess like this?

So many questions and Alice had none of the answers.

"Now that I've told you what I know, I'll fulfil the second half of my contract." Tiamat added after seeing Alice look as though someone had just kicked a puppy in front of her.

She couldn't stand having the mood of her prison being brought down by a brat like this.

"First of all, how much do you know about the physiology of us Sealed Lords?" Tiamat asked as Alice shook her head.

"Don't know anything."

"Hmm... That makes it more annoying then. I suppose to explain how us Sealed Lords work, it'll be best to compare it to the current Lords urg... The current Abyss Lords are recipients of the Abyss's favour.

"People chosen after performing certain actions that impress the Abyss enough to grant them a title of Abyss Lord. While current Lords are like workers, the Sealed Lords paved their own path to Lordship.

"There are two methods of becoming a Lord. The beast method and then the Contract method. The most commonly used method is the Contract method. Make a contract with the Abyss and hunt down your quarry. Easy as that." Tiamat explained while holding up two fingers.

"But the beast method is far harder. Beasts find it hard to accept the Sigils granted by the Abyss so instead of forming contracts, we reinforce our blood instead.

"Through consumption, hunting and targeting specific types of Heart Blood, we enhance our own bloodline to reinforce our body."

Hearing this, Alice furrowed her brow and opened her mouth.

"You know Abyss Blood doesn't work on me right? I can't enhance my own bloodline through consumption."

"Tsk, let me finish young'un. I swear if you interrupt me again I'll fight you and this time, you won't be able to drink my blood." Tiamat clicked her tongue while Alice sat up straight and stopped talking.

"As I was saying, in order to release the power of our bloodline, we burn the blood within our body. I don't mean literally burn but more so converting it into energy that permeate our body. You didn't realise but you actually managed to activate it during our fight. The key sign of bloodline release is this."

Standing up, Tiamat took a step back before taking a deep breath.

At that moment, a monstrous aura erupted from her body as scales manifested across the surface of her skin. Her aura mimicked the movement of fire as a spectral monster, her beast form, manifested behind her.

The power commanded by the Dragon Queen's blood burned to release the highest output possible. The peak of the Old Abyss Lord's power.

Chapter 267 - 267: Bloodline Release

Looking at the manifestation of Tiamat's beast form that was recreated by her aura, Alice held her breath.

The pressure exuded by Tiamat at this moment seemed to freeze the air around them as even the slightest movement was difficult to commit. Now that she no longer had the blood of an Abyss Lord running through her veins, she found herself helpless against this pressure.

"When activating the Bloodline Release, we'll be placed on a timer. The longer you fight, the more energy this form will consume. For strong beasts, this isn't an issue since we pair this ability with regeneration. But if you're not careful, the cost of this will surpass regeneration." Tiamat explained as she snapped her finger and dismissed her aura.

"This is what allows us Abyss Lords to reinforce our body without the help of the Abyss. I know you mentioned that consumption doesn't work for you but you're wrong.

"When I say consumption, hunting and targeting specific Heart Blood, I was talking about the spiritual bodies connected to the physical form. Us beasts are able to reshape our own souls to a certain extent through hunting and eating.

"You may not be able to use the same method but you have something far more efficient." Tiamat grinned as Alice realised what she was talking about.

"Null."

"Exactly. If you consume enough using Null, you'll be able to enhance your bloodline and therefore activate a much stronger Bloodline Release. Now turn around, I'll help you familiarise yourself with the process." Tiamat ordered as she approached Alice.

Understanding that Tiamat probably wanted to get the contract over and done with as soon as possible, Alice turned her body around.

"Close your eyes and try to feel the energy in your body."

Pressing her hand against Alice's back, Tiamat took a deep breath and allowed her energy to flow into Alice's body.

It was at this moment that she realised Alice had barely taken a step into having four paths unlocked. Three Sigils and one Resonance.

'Jeez... What a monstrous brat.' She thought to herself as she began to connect the four pathways together.

"Unlike the normal Resonance used by humans, Bloodline Release requires you to synchronise everything. Meaning you have to form a connection between all of your Sigils and Resonances. Once the main pathway is connected, you need to make sure it's sturdy enough that it doesn't collapse."

Wrapping Alice's energy in a coating of her own, Tiamat began to manipulate the flow inside Alice, slowly directing it towards her chest and into her heart.

"Once the main pathway is established and secure, you need to link it to your Spiritual Heart. The harmony between the physical and the spiritual is what will allow your Bloodline Release to activate and thus reshape your body temporarily."

Gritting her teeth, Alice could feel her energy breaching through a veil within her.

A familiar sensation washed over her as Alice recognised it to be the same sensation she felt when they were dragged into the soul realm. The moment when she could only use her violet flames.

A moment when her soul or 'lack thereof' was revealed.

*BANG!!!

A burst of flames erupted from Alice's body, forcing Tiamat to stumble back in shock.

She didn't think that tapping into Alice's Spiritual body would cause such a large reaction from her flames!

Widening her eyes, Tiamat watched as the flames roared out, covering the sky and dyeing her prison in a purple hue.

Just as the beast was about to manifest behind Alice...

*CRACK!!!

The manifestation shattered apart as Alice panted heavily from the fatigue.

Furrowing her brows, Tiamat ran over and checked on Alice's body to see what had gone wrong. A quick inspection told her all she needed to know.

"Something is blocking the formation of the link. Try establishing it again." Tiamat ordered as she was going to make sure she watched the entire process this time.

Nodding her head, Alice took a deep breath and controlled her energy. She could still remember the method Tiamat showed her.

A flow connecting all of her currently opened pathways with one another, coat it in a protective barrier then direct it to her chest and towards the Spiritual Heart.

Once more, flames manifested around Alice as she attempted to form a connection with her spiritual self.

*CRRRRR

Golden chains manifested from the depths, colliding with the channel, shattering the connection.

Seeing this, Tiamat frowned and sighed.

"No wonder. Did the damn Goddess put a restriction on your Spiritual Heart?" Tiamat asked while scratching her hair.

Tilting her head at this question, Alice recalled that Velouria had indeed placed a restriction. It was to prevent her flames from going out of control.

"Seems like you have an idea. She probably put it there for a good reason. If you ever want to fully establish the link to your Spiritual Heart then you'll need to undo that restriction." Tiamat shrugged, making her way back to her throne.

Alice contemplated the words silently.

If she wanted to use the Bloodline Release method to enhance her body, she'd need to undo the restriction. But at the same time, that means her flames would no longer be restrained and holding herself back would be much harder.

'I should probably head back and ask about this, Allura and Kaden should still be around.'

Standing up, Alice glanced at Tiamat who had already closed her eyes and refused to look at her.

"Thank you."

Since they fulfilled both sides of their contract, there was nothing else to be done. Tiamat can't do more since Velouria has restricted her flames thus the contract could still be deemed as complete. Looking up at the cliff face that surrounded this prison, Alice activated her third Sigil and began to make platforms to climb out of this pit.

*BANG!!!

Widening her eyes, Alice launched herself into the air with far greater force than what she had originally planned.

"Careful young'un. Even though I've taken my soul back, you still digested a small percent of it thanks to Null. The potency of all of your Sigils and physical traits should have increased passively thanks to it.

"With Null acting as a part of your foundation, you'll be able to gain benefits the more you kill and consume. But a warning from someone who's seen the downfall of Null, be careful of what you 'eat' and don't lose yourself to the power. Use the power rather than being used by the power." Tiamat's voice rang out as she gave Alice one final advice.

Compensation for not being able to fully show her Bloodline Release.

Nodding her head, Alice familiarised herself with her new physical power and climbed out of the prison.

Once Tiamat was sure that Alice had gone out of earshot, she sighed out in annoyance and glared at the space in front of her.

"Get the f*ck out here. You're not invited to my home."

Stepping out of the void, both Allura and Kaden appeared while Tiamat spat in disgust seeing Allura.

"Is that how you greet an old friend stinky dragon?" Allura grinned.

"Tsk, who the f*ck is your friend you cake b*tch. So are you happy now? I showed that brat what you wanted her to learn." Tiamat clicked her tongue while Allura nodded her head.

"Thank you." Kaden smiled.

"Don't thank me. If you want to thank me why don't you free me from this f*cking place. Do you even know how boring this sh*t is?"

"Sorry no can do." He shook his head but Tiamat expected this answer. Not even the Goddess can undo these bindings since the Abyss was the one who set it up.

"So what the f*ck is wrong with that brat you sent down here? I didn't get a clear look but her outline is seriously freaky." Tiamat asked curiously. She assumed that Kaden should know since he has the power to see the outline.

"You could see the details?" Kaden paused in surprise while Tiamat nodded.

"What? You can't?"

Seeing Kaden nod his head, Tiamat frowned.

"I guess that's because her outline resembles that of a beast rather than a human."

"How so?"

"And what makes you think I'll tell you? Just get out of here before your brat gets eaten by the guardians roaming around Terminus." Tiamat waved her hand dismissively.

She couldn't stand seeing Allura's smug face for another second while Kaden could only nod and teleport them out of prison.

Left on her own, Tiamat thought back to what she saw within Alice's spiritual self.

A mass of darkness that contained countless fragments of beasts. Harrowed cries and a desire to break free. Most importantly, a sealed beast, secured by the Golden Chains of the Goddess and a burning hate for the Abyss.

It was the first time Tiamat had seen a 'beast' like the one within Alice. But calling it a beast was far too generous. It may be in the shape of a beast but that... 'Thing' was not a beast. Even being associated with such a being sent a chill down Tiamat's back.

'What the f*ck was inside her...'

The sensation of laying her eyes on the 'thing' had invoked a primal sense of unease and discomfort. Akin to staring into something that she knows should NOT exist in this world. An entity that goes against the very laws that make up their world and the order maintained by the Gods.

"What a mess... Thankfully I'm not the one who needs to deal with this sh*t." Tiamat sighed in relief.

Of course, on the off chance that Alice upturns the rules set by the Abyss then... The bindings placed upon them by the Abyss would disappear. And once that happens, the Sealed Lords will return.

Curling her lips into a grin, Tiamat looked forward to that day.

Chapter 268 - 268: Leaving Terminus

After climbing out of Tiamat's prison, Alice once again found herself in the barren hellscape of the Terminus. Only this time, she no longer felt the pressure exuded by this realm.

In fact, it even felt comfortable for her. Like a fish in the great ocean, she knew this pressure hadn't magically disappeared but rather, she simply adapted to the new environment.

Moving her body to get used to the new power welling up within her, Alice wondered if she should try and fight something to test out her new strength. But remembering where she was and the beasts that reside here, she abandoned that idea immediately.

She is crazy but she's not THAT crazy to try and annoy every Abyss Lord level beast she came across.

However, it wasn't as though there wasn't something she wanted to try out immediately. And since she was in Terminus, all the more reason to try.

Taking a deep breath, she closed her eyes and focused her mind. She summoned the obsidian blade and entered a low drawing stance.

This would be the culmination of everything she has studied thus far in the Inverted World. A showcase of all of the concepts and theories she's been taught or experienced.

Snapping her eyes open, Alice took a step forward.

The world began to lose its colour as energy gathered towards her blade before erupting with a burst of energy!

Gritting her teeth, all three of her Sigils flared into life as the fourth pathway opened, unleashing her resonance.

Crackles of purple energy crashed around her blade, her aura soared and a faint manifestation appeared behind her, not clear enough to reveal the beast yet just enough to boost her physical capabilities temporarily.

Void Flux – Cleave!

*KRRRRR!!!!

Watching the crackling vertical wave of energy rush through the landscape, Alice felt the energy drain from her body.

"What the f*ck."

Hearing a void behind her, Alice turned around in surprise and saw Allura and Kaden standing there in disbelief.

"Ah! I didn't notice you sorry. How was the attack? Was it better than before?" Alice asked, wanting some feedback from them.

Turning to Alice, Allura could practically see the words 'praise me' written all over her face as she let out a laugh.

"Pft of course it was better than before. The fact that you can even leave a mark in Terminus proves it." Allura patted Alice's head with a grin and pointed towards the destruction she caused.

While it wasn't deep, there was a visible cut through the ground of Terminus. One that crackled with energy while traces of her violet flames could be seen along the edges.

Hearing Allura's praise, Alice smiled happily since it meant she was one step closer to reaching her goal.

"Honestly, I think you should begin working on your blade techniques now. You have two attacks that you can focus on, that slash just now and the spark one you fire usually. But your close quarters combat is still lacking."

"We could ask Nyer though since he's probably the best when it comes to swordsmanship." Kaden suggested while Alice flinched at the mention of Nyer.

"Ah actually, that might be a bad idea." Allura coughed awkwardly while Kaden tilted his head in confusion.

"I don't know why but Alice doesn't seem comfortable around the commander. Either way, I don't think we should force her to train with Nyer if it can be helped." She scratched her cheek while Kaden nodded his head.

"Alright, I can find an alternative for you then." He smiled towards Alice who nodded her head in gratitude.

"Though I think that'll have to wait. It's been a whole day since we sent you down to Terminus and the Gods have already arrived in the Abyss."

Hearing this, Alice froze up as she had spent most of the time sleeping!

"We need to get you dressed up for the meeting while we still have time." Kaden grinned while snapping his finger.

Teleporting the three of them back to Ayr, Terminus regained its silence once more.

Arriving at the top of the castle, Alice saw Velouria drinking some tea while sitting next to a mannequin with an outfit on it.

"Welcome back~ How was the training?" Velouria smiled, turning towards the three.

"Rather fruitful. Though we needed to get some help from Tiamat since Alice broke the training room." Kaden chuckled.

"No matter. The training room was made to be used anyway. But I'm surprised you went to Tiamat, was it to fix her issue with the body?"

Nodding her head, Alice opened her mouth.

"Erm... The restriction inside me. Tiamat mentioned that if I wanted to fully utilize Bloodline Release, I'll need to undo the restriction. Is there a key for it? So I can undo and redo the restriction." Alice asked while Velouria thought to herself for a moment.

"Hmm, it's not impossible. But there's a risk involved. You see, the restriction I placed on you is the strongest one I can manage. In a sense, it's not unlike the restriction placed upon the Old Abyss Lords by the Abyss. Just a little weaker.

"If I was to help you undo the restriction, even if it's just temporarily, it'll weaken the overall structure and eventually, the flames will break out on its own. Alternatively, I can give you a way to adjust the output." Velouria offered.

"Adjust the output?"

"It's a more permanent change. Right now, you have about let's say 10% access to the flames. Adjusting the output means you can increase it but never decrease. It's safer than the first option but you cannot undo your choices." She explained while Alice contemplated for a moment.

Using a key means there's a chance the entire restriction would be destroyed at once. While changing output means she can't take back her choices.

To Alice, there was only one choice and that was to choose the second option.

"Can I adjust the output then?"

"Of course. Give me your hand." Velouria nodded with a smile.

Grabbing Alice's hand, she placed her palm against Alice's arm and golden chain markings began to appear on the surface of her skin.

"This'll let you adjust your output. I've put a failsafe on it just in case but I doubt you'll need it. To undo parts of the restriction, you need to establish a contract of sorts. Think of it as a secondary check to make sure you indeed want to go through with it okay?" Velouria explained with a smile.

"Thank you."

"It's fine. But now that we've dealt with that, shall we get on with trying out your new outfit? I personally made it for you based on what you told me. It should help you function as 'Hunter' gear as well as your fighting methods." Velouria grinned as her hand clamped down on Alice's arm, preventing her from running.

Snapping her finger, the space behind the mannequin opened up to reveal an assortment of outfits, each different from one another.

'I let my guard down!' Alice cried out in her mind.

She thought she was safe since there was only one outfit but turns out she was hiding the rest in her personal space!

Unable to escape, Alice was dragged away by Velouria while Kaden watched with Allura.

"We should also get changed. It'll be rude to the Gods if we show up in our standard work clothes." Kaden suggested while Allura nodded her head.

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In the end, the outfit they settled on was a sleeveless black and white dress with purple details and a large turtle neck collar. An off shoulder jacket with large sleeves and a pair of boots. On the chest of the dress was the emblem of Ayr.

Along her waist, Alice wore a silver belt with a pouch on the back that allowed her to store vials of blood and most important of all, the bag was crafted using spatial powers so the inside was far bigger than what it seemed.

Even if she were to land on the pouch after being thrown by Allura, the vials inside still wouldn't break.

"Fufu~ Cute as expected. The material should help you withstand quite a lot of damage without breaking. Though there are some secret features I'll let you find out on your own." Velouria winked while Alice gave herself a spin to see how the outfit felt.

It was certainly lighter than the other outfits she'd bought before. In fact, it was so light it felt as though she was wearing nothing at all which only served to make her feel embarrassed.

"By the way, wouldn't the other Gods get suspicious about the crown above my head?" Alice asked, pointing at the floating Crown of the Abyss.

"Hmm... that's true. Which is why let's turn it into a headband to match your outfit." Velouria chuckled.

Snapping her finger, the Crown began to resonate with Velouria's power before turning into a black headband. The design of which resembled the outline of the crown but was simplified.

"I only changed its form so nothing has changed except it's a headband now. It'll revert to looking like the crown again until Cayla fully wakes up in your body since the Crown is connected to her. Once she's woken up, she should be able to help you.

"Now then my dear successor, it is time for you to meet the other Gods."

Clapping her hand, Velouria enveloped the two of them in a strange energy that flickered between countless colours. But once this veil disappeared, Alice found themselves in the centre of a large hall.

Statues could be seen surrounding them while she noticed Allura and Kaden wearing a new attire along with Nyer who stood next to them. Behind them, the statue of Velouria could be seen.

Meaning...

The other statues belonged to the other Gods.

God of the Sun.

God of the Eclipse.

And Goddess of the Moon.

Chapter 269 - 269: Gods And Goddesses

Realising that she was about to see the other Gods, Alice couldn't help but feel nervous. What if she annoys them just by standing still? Would they kill her over trivial details?

She was meeting divine beings after all. Velouria was a unique case since they were connected to one another as she was her successor.

Just as she was worrying about meeting the Gods, Velouria patted her on the back.

"Don't feel pressured, okay? They won't harm you since this is my domain, just relax and enjoy the meeting." Velouria reassured as Alice nodded her head.

But even if Velouria tells her to relax, it was akin to telling a normal citizen to be relaxed in front of an Abyss Lord!

*Krrrrr

The sound of crackling lightning rang out as three portals manifested themselves in the room. A swirling mass of energy and a pressure invading from within.

Just as Velouria was about to use her own pressure to counteract this to keep Alice safe, she noticed that Alice didn't have a reaction.

'Ohya? Seems like meeting Tiamat has given her more than what she expected.' She mused to herself with a smile while turning her attention to the gates.

The first one to step out is the God of the Sun, Solaris.

A hulking man taller than even Allura. Although he didn't wield a spear, Alice recognised him to be the same man depicted by the statues she saw in Blackrock City.

He wore a loose-fitting white robe with a few pieces of golden armour around his chest, shoulders, waist and legs. Red markings around the edges of his eyes and the crest of the Sun God on his forehead.

His long hair fluttered behind him like an untamed flame while two guests stood behind him, the Apostles of the Sun God, Preservation and Protection.

One was an armoured woman wearing white and gold while a golden halo floated behind her. The other was a man with a large shield on his back. Just like the woman, he wore white and gold armour.

'The man is probably Protection since he has the shield. The woman is probably Preservation.' Alice thought to herself.

Of course, she had the option of using Cayla to try and see above their heads but using it may cause suspicion towards her. She didn't know if using Cayla would cause some reaction from them but it wasn't something she was willing to risk.

"Hou~ Seems like you've gathered more people this time. Who's she?" Solaris asked while glancing at Alice briefly. He knew about Nyer since he was Velouria's protector. He knew about the left and right hands of the Goddess, Allura and Kaden.

But this new girl with the split hair? He had no information about her.

"I wonder~ This is my home after all, it's not so strange for me to have a guest of my own around." Velouria chuckled softly while gesturing for him to sit down.

"Very well. So, what's her name? Or have you finally decided to get some slaves?" Solaris laughed while sitting down on the seat in front of his statue. He leaned back and crossed his legs on the table.

"You know we don't do slaves in Ayr. Stop teasing her." Velouria shook her head with a smile but there was a warning in her tone of voice.

Raising his hands in surrender, he sat up properly without saying anything else and simply waited for the next guest.

The next one to arrive came with an air of elegance. Her arrival immediately caused the room to dim down while soft flickers of light appeared in the air.

The woman that arrived at long blonde hair with the insides being a kaleidoscope of soft midnight hues and stars. Strands of hair flowed down the middle, between her half opened eyes and down to her chest before curling at the edges.

A soft smile hung on her lips.

She wore a gentle white dress adorned with silver and purple accessories while a pair of spectral veils and wings could be seen behind her, representing the night sky. Luminescent blue and purple flowers bloomed along her dress.

"I've only just arrived and there's already an air of hostility. We're all old friends here, let us not fight." The Goddess of the Moon smiled while sitting down on her seat.

Behind her, her two attendants followed closely, each one seemingly fading away yet still attached to the mortal realm.

The first was a woman with short white hair wearing a dress with a large skirt that covered her legs along with a pair of large sleeves. She hovered above the ground and didn't say anything while keeping her eyes closed.

The second, wore a similar outfit slightly different. Instead of a large skirt, she wore a shorter variant with arm length gloves rather than sleeves. Blue and purple ribbons adorned her dress, matching her long purple hair. The underside of her hair was a prismatic array of pearl, pinks, light purple, blues and yellows. An aurora of colours.

Her right eye was hidden by what seemed to be a dove wing while a halo and wings could be seen behind her.

But what was most noticeable of all was that she was not human. She was a doll! Mechanical joints could be seen yet her face was humanlike aside from the wing hiding her eye.

Unlike the ones that followed the Sun God, Alice found it much harder to guess which was which.

Regardless, Alice knew these two were the Apostles of Immortality and Spirituality.

"But Solaris is not wrong. I understand Nyer, Allura and Kaden being here. But I have no recollection regarding the young guest by your side." The Goddess placed her finger on her chin while trying to recall if she had seen Alice before.

"Not you too Lumi. But fine~ You can think of her as my family." Velouria sighed and shrugged her shoulder.

The Moon Goddess Lumiria was someone who liked to remember as much as she could about the world. The people she's seen, the things she's experienced. To her, part of longevity is to be remembered and by remembering everything she's seen, heard or felt, it was to give her target a blessing of longevity.

"Then may I know the name of your family member?" Lumiria smiled while Velouria glanced towards Alice.

Understanding that this was Velouria's sign to introduce herself, Alice took a step forward and did a slight bow.

"Alice."

She didn't want to introduce herself as Zenia as she has long left that name behind. But at the same time, she didn't want to introduce herself as Agnelia since that would only make Allura ask countless questions.

"Alice... What a nice name. Alice, do you know the importance of time?" Lumiria asked while keeping her eyes on Alice.

"I'm not sure."

"Time is a recording, a documentation of history and the flow of progression. To me, I believe the representation of time is an important matter. Which makes me wonder why a young being like you takes this form. How old are you Alice? Or rather, how old do you perceive yourself to be?" Lumiria asked curiously, once again, confusing Alice with her question.

Glancing towards Velouria, Alice wanted to get some help while Velouria simply smiled and let Alice answer however she saw fit.

"I should be 20 years old. Though I've forgotten my birthday so I don't know if I'm 20 or 21." Alice replied while Lumiria simply observed Alice without saying anything and stopped asking questions.

However, there was a strange smile on her face as she waited for their last guest.

With a single step through the portal, the room was enveloped in a bloodthirsty aura, dispelling the soothing atmosphere that Lumiria brought with her.

An oppressive pressure exploded out as the God of the Eclipse revealed himself. Stepping out of the portal, a tall man with black and red hair swept his blood red eyes across everyone with a grin.

He wore a large black cloak adorned with chains and his outfit consisted of bandages, chains and other ritualistic items across his body.

"*Sigh~ Elly, were you in the middle of a ritual? Is that why you're later than the others?" Velouria sighed.

"Ah sorry sorry. Let me get changed then, you know how it is, I need to keep up appearances after all."

Snapping his fingers, darkness seemed to wrap around him before cracking open with a burst of crimson light.

From within this cocoon, a woman with long black and red hair revealed herself. All of the ritualistic accessories disappeared and were replaced by black armour.

Clearing her throat, she slumped down into her seat and crossed her legs while her Apostles stood behind her.

Both were clad from head to toe in ritualistic armour and clothing so Alice couldn't see their appearances.

"Better?" Enris laughed while taking a rather relaxed posture on her seat.

"Yep. Much better." Velouria nodded with a smile while Solaris groaned.

"Why must you keep changing your gender every time we have one of these meetings? Pick one. It's annoying to see you look different every time we gather."

"Tsk tsk tsk, I change according to my environment Soli. If there are more cuties, I join them. If there are more hunks, I become one. Who cares which side I take, I just want to have fun." Enris grinned.

God/Goddess of the Eclipse, the most chaotic out of the four. She would wage war out of boredom, invade territories on a whim and destroy civilizations belonging to the other Gods.

No one could change that.

The three were simply thankful that she kept herself in check, sometimes, making sure not to attack the most prized possessions of each God.

For Velouria, that would be Ayr.

Now that all of the guests have arrived, the meeting shall begin.

Chapter 270 - 270: Meeting Between Divines

"The first topic we're going to discuss is introducing the world to our Apostles. After all, they're extensions of our Authority. I'm sure you've noticed it as well, the more we act around the world, the harder it becomes for normal humans to survive.

"Our very nature tilts the balance in our favour and the world counteracts it. However, Apostles don't have this kind of effect on the world since they're essentially Abyss Lords with some blessings. Any thoughts?" Velouria began the meeting off.

The world was constantly in a balancing act and it wasn't just the Abyss either, this counted for the surface. After the pathway between the two realms had been opened, they were never able to close it again.

Thus they adapted and allowed travel between the two layers and people gained power.

However, if the Gods intervene too much, the world becomes unstable and more pathways open up.

But that wasn't the main issue.

"I agree. Normal humans find it hard to survive in our presence in the first place, they pass out with a single look." Solaris sighed with a shrug.

"But wouldn't it be easier for us to get followers if we revealed ourselves more often?" Lumiria tilted her head while Enris agreed.

Enris gained the most followers when she wrought destruction upon a battlefield after all. Seeing is believing and seeing the power of a God first hand is the best way to prove their might.

"That's why we'll be changing to introducing our Apostles instead. I believe all of you have also noticed the weakening of the world barrier. After the pathway was created between my realm and the surface, there have been signs of breaking elsewhere.

"You've already seen the chaos caused by the Abyss linking with the surface, I'm unsure if it's wise to allow a third realm to be connected." Velouria reminded.

Outer Gods. That's what she was worried about. Beings outside of the Abyss and the Surface. Even though they hadn't managed to invade their world just yet, a single look outside of their domain had already sent shivers down Velouria's back.

It was faint but there's no denying their existence.

"But chaos is the best though~ Are you worried about the Outer Gods?" Enris asked with a grin while relaxing herself on the seat.

"The more the merrier. If more Gods appear then that means there's more for me to fight. It's gotten a bit boring fighting you three after all this time." She narrowed her eyes towards Solaris and Lumiria who frowned in displeasure.

Enris attacked their territories the most since she couldn't easily attack the Abyss. And the result of her doing so was fear amongst their believers and a common hatred towards the Eclipse Cult.

Her followers are just as insane as she is!

"Now now, let's not fight. We're all Gods here, no reason to harm one another." Velouria sighed since they fight all the time. If anything, it reminded her of siblings who constantly argue with one another.

"I'm not fighting, just stating what I think. That's what this meeting is about right?" Enris laughed.

Solaris didn't say anything and simply crossed his arms.

"Alright. So who agrees to go forward with this proposal?" Velouria asked as both Solaris and Lumiria raised their hands slightly while Enris could only shrug.

"Then we shall go forward with this. From now on, we will be limiting our activities amongst mortals and our Apostles will act as our proxies. Furthermore, I suggest we retreat to the rift between realms to reduce our impact on the world and observe the changes."

"Velouria, what about you? We know what your connection with the Abyss is like. It'll be hard for you to retreat to the rift." Solaris opened one of his eyes and glanced to the host of this meeting.

"Mnm, naturally I'll keep myself to the top of the castle. I've already made preparations to reduce my impact on the world." Velouria explained.

Naturally, she wasn't going to reveal that she was basically confined there. Doing so would be exposing herself to danger.

Even though they may seem amicable right now, all of them had hidden daggers pointing at one another. Even the other Apostles are ready to make a move the moment a fight breaks out.

"If you say so." Solaris nodded.

"If we're going to introduce our Apostles to the world, their names should reflect their Authority should it not? For me, I've given my Apostles the authority of Immortality and Spirituality. Henceforth they shall be known as the Apostle of Immortality and the Apostle of Spirituality." Lumiria smiled while gesturing to her Apostles.

"Mine are Protection and Preservation." Solaris added.

"War and Famine." Enris grinned.

"Severance and Corruption."

With the first agenda agreed upon, they moved to the second topic for the meeting.

As the meeting continued, Alice found herself struggling to keep up with the conversation. They mostly talked about the state of their cities, how their religion is going and what their believers were like.

Some miscellaneous affairs and troublesome situations caused by the Abyss.

But it was during this topic that all focus was placed on Velouria.

"Say I couldn't help but notice the Abyss seemed to have grown more active recently. Even if we ignore the pathways that are being open, since they're unavoidable, the beasts seemed to have grown more aggressive." Solaris couldn't help but mention while narrowing his eyes at Velouria.

Hearing this, Velouria's smile twitched but she kept herself composed.

"Are you suggesting that I'm behind it?"

"No no, don't get me wrong. I'm not pointing fingers here, merely asking what's going on." Solaris smiled.

"It's only natural for us to be concerned Velouria. You see, we have full dominion over our powers and Authority. But you... You share it with the Abyss so it's only right to be concerned if you're doing okay or not." Lumiria sighed while Velouria narrowed her eyes.

This was probably their main goal for the meeting.

"And what's your reason for asking this?" Velouria asked while Kaden, Allura and Nyer began to show hostility.

"As hard as it is to believe, we're not here to pick a fight." Enris held her hands up in surrender with a grin on her face.

"We just want to ask if you can truly be considered a Goddess. We divine beings are the pinnacle of power, we govern laws and create rules. Yet you share your power with the Abyss. Hell, even the Old

Abyss Lords sealed beneath the layers and in the pits of Terminus. It was the Abyss's doing not yours and you can't interfere with it, can you?" Enris stood up.

"So the question we want to ask is... Can you prove you can truly be considered a Goddess?"

At that moment, thick killing intent soaked with the blood of war erupted out from Enris's body, dyeing the entire room in a deep red while Allura drew her blade but Velouria stopped her.

"Is this the general consensus? Or is it simply Elly being Elly?" Velouria faked a smile while looking at Solaris and Lumiria.

Seeing that they weren't saying anything, Velouria understood that her authority was being questioned.

She wasn't a violent person but that doesn't mean she was a pushover either. She simply hated to force her power onto others.

"You've made three wrong assumptions." Velouria held up three fingers.

Seeing this, Kaden pulled Alice back next to them with a worried expression on his face.

'Is Kaden worried about the collateral damage?' Alice wondered to herself. She knew that she had no place in this fight as she was just a three star Hunter.

But he couldn't answer her question as the Gods were about to make their moves.

"First of all, you three were the ones who declared me as a Goddess. At the start, I've never considered myself a divine being but simply pushed into the role.

"Second of all, you speak as though you believe me and the Abyss are in a Master Servant relationship where it can interfere with my work while I cannot interfere with it. That is wrong. It's a mutual agreement despite the Will of the Abyss having its own whims.

There's a good reason why it granted me power to become what I am." After saying this, Velouria only had one finger up and a cold chill flooded the room, overwhelming Enris' killing intent.

"And last of all, I don't need to prove anything. I've taken the stance that so long as you don't invade Ayr, I will not make a move. But a show of hostility will not go ignored. So dear Elly, can you handle my wrath?"

Tapping her finger down, the realm seemed to collapse into itself as all of them were transported into the rift between worlds. At that moment, countless eyes opened up in the sky while an overbearing pressure crashed down onto the room.

Velouria's hair flared up as stars gathered around her, manifesting as a crown above her head.

Snapping her finger, a heartbeat could be heard while the air cracked apart. Dark liquid poured into the realm as golden chains jumped out from the ground and wrapped around Enris' limbs and neck, locking her in place.

The world darkened as Velouria took a step towards Enris.

Both Solaris and Lumiria wanted to stand up but found themselves stared down by several silhouettes of Abyss Beasts radiating power close to that of the Apostles.

They were unafraid of death! For their Goddess, they will gladly offer their lives!

"As surface Gods, you share your divinity with one another, taking turns through the cycles. There are three Gods to share the Surface yet only one Goddess in the Abyss. Now let me ask you.

"If I do not qualify as a Goddess..." Velouria curled her lips into a cruel smile.

"Do you think you can qualify as a God?"