

Abyssal A 281

Chapter 281 - 281: Demonstration Of Zone Stance

I had seen many geniuses in my time as the right hand of my Lord, Solaris the Sun God.

So many of them showed potential yet lacked the last step to reach the level of me and Arax. Had they shown more promise, my Lord would've given them his blessings.

Of course, he couldn't make them Apostles but their status would be akin to Nyer, Lord Commander of Ayr.

Which is why when I saw Alice, I thought she would be a genius befitting her spot next to the Queen.

Yet... all I feel is boredom and disappointment.

She wasn't weak by any means. But she couldn't quite be placed on the pedestal of a genius that deserved to be taught by Apostles of all people.

Her reaction speed is good but that's the only noticeable thing about her.

'Even the geniuses I've seen would've established a better boundary by now.'

Her range was limited, actions were slow and even her casting speed was far behind what could be used for defence.

I thought she would be a sword like Allura, the Executioner after I saw her strange attack. But she lacked an 'edge'. Instead, she was more like a dull edge.

When I saw her cast, I thought she would be a monster like Kaden who could master every cast with a single glance. But that was not the case either.

I could only feel disappointment growing in my heart.

'Is she hiding something? No... But it's not completely impossible either. They must know we will be reporting to our Gods on the results of the training.'

Narrowing my eyes at the Girl trying to master Passive Zone in the centre of the arena, I decided to go a little serious.

"!!!"

*CLANG!!!

I manifested four slashes close to her. There was no doubt, she saw them all! She even managed to parry two of them.

That was what I thought until her rhythm was thrown off and the other blades dug into her body.

'Sh*t, what was I thinking. Obviously she'll see them and react. It's panic.'

Shaking my head with a sigh, I toned down the training to what it was before. There were still quite a few hours to go and I'm going to be responsible for her the entire way through.

Arax can't help since he doesn't focus on Zone Stance. The oaf prides himself on his defences which Alice clearly didn't do. Their combat styles are incompatible.

Regardless, my opinions of her remain the same. She's talented but nothing to be proud of. And if she was being blunt, a complete waste of time to teach.

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Parrying more attacks, Alice swiped away the sweat as she sighed in relief.

Shiera's sudden attack had surprised her and the threat of death caused her to react out of instinct. She had to hold herself back from parrying all four before sending her own attack back.

If that were to happen, her act would be up.

'I guess that was her final test for me, to see if I'm truly weak or not.' Alice thought to herself.

After that incident, the attacks that Shiera sent were rather slow and unimpressive. Nothing that surprised Alice as she took her time to play out her act while refining the Zone under their noses.

The longer she spent focused on defence, the more she began to understand this boundary.

In order to maintain the best defence that she could, she had to rely on her instinct as well as hearing since her eyes could only do so much. She needed to hone into the senses that she's refined during her fights.

Whenever danger is closer, she would feel a pin prick like sensation near where the attack would land. If she were to focus on this, she'd be able to establish a net of absolute defence.

The Absolute Zone.

Taking a deep breath and breathing out, Alice continued to simulate what the fight should look like in her mind while taking it easy on the outside. In her mind, she continuously imagined the rapid slashes that Shiera released and how she should counter these attacks.

'For the ones that manifest near me, I should aim to parry them with my sword. I can create a wall of blood mist to parry those outside of my melee range. With this wall, making Void Fluxes are rather easy.' Alice thought to herself as she continued to refine her Zone.

Once again, she could feel herself entering a trance like state. The movements of Shiera replaying in her mind as she began to simulate how Shiera would deal with these attacks. The way she would adjust her posture through her footwork and how she would apply her energy mid-slash.

Alice's mind recorded it all.

She wanted to test out her theory already since it was going to be different to a simulation but doing so meant giving up her act. In the end, she could only hold herself back.

Time passed and Alice showed a slight but gradual improvement in her understanding of Zone. It was nothing remarkable in the eyes of Shiera and she couldn't wait to end this training but there was one thing that caught her attention.

Alice's sword.

Its durability was so unbelievably hard and any 'damage' it seemed to sustain would disappear upon drinking Alice's blood.

A weapon that could recover itself was rare even for Apostles. Granted, the weapons they used were usually manifestations of their own power rather than a physical weapon. But even so, seeing a rare weapon like this interested Shiera to a certain extent.

If it wasn't for the fact that Alice was under the care of Ayr, Shiera would've been tempted to rob the weapon from her.

"Alright, I think that's enough. Time's almost up." Shiera clapped her hands as the slashes disappeared.

Seeing that the training was over, Alice took a deep breath and calmed herself. Clenching her fist, Alice smiled inwardly at the progress she made towards the Zone Stance.

During the 10th hour, she had an idea. A way for her to refine her senses further to improve her Zone Stance.

The idea was to keep the Passive Zone activated at all times, regardless of her posture.

Doing so was exhausting and the success rate was low. But it allowed her to experiment without exposing her powers.

"Are there any questions you have? Take this time to ask them since I doubt we'll be talking after this." Shiera shrugged.

Once the promised training period is over, they'll go back to focusing on the current task at hand. That being tracking down the Will of the Abyss.

Thinking about it carefully for a moment, Alice opened her mouth.

"Are you able to show me the full potential of the Zone Stance? So a spar between you and sir Arax." She asked as Shiera contemplated it for a moment before nodding her head.

A quick exchange wasn't an issue and it's not like Alice was requesting to see their best skills. All she was asking was to see Shiera demonstrate Zone Stance to its full potential, or at least what she was capable of.

"Arax isn't exactly the best partner to demonstrate this but sure. Arax! Get over here, we're going to have a quick spar to demonstrate Zone Stance!" Shiera shouted over, waking up Arax from his nap as he yawned and scratched his hair.

"Didn't you show it to her when you started?"

"That was before, this is now. It's just a quick exchange to show her what a proper Zone Stance looks like in combat." Shiera shrugged, stepping into the centre of the arena and stabbing her blade down in front of her.

"Fine let's get this over and done with." Arax sighed as he placed his shield away for now and massaged his shoulders.

Seeing that the two were about to begin their spar, Alice took a few steps back before closing her left eye, leaving just the right eye open.

Activating Cayla at full power, she wanted to observe everything in full clarity and take in every movement that they made.

Picking up her blade, Shiera nodded to Arax as her aura flared up.

Immediately, Alice could feel herself being submerged in an overwhelming sense of hostility as Shiera deployed her boundary! The entire arena was now under her scrutiny as Arax simply yawned in response.

*BANG!!!

Punching the air in front of him, the air seemed to break apart as a shockwave rushed towards Shiera who 'cut' apart the attack using her Absolute Zone!

However, Arax wasn't intending on letting Shiera do whatever she wanted. The instant his attack was blocked, his body flickered out of sight. Despite his size and bulkiness, he was fast!

Appearing above Shiera, he slammed his fist down as she crouched down and unleashed a torrent of slashes towards him, shredding the aura around his hands.

Yet despite this power, her slashes failed to leave a single mark on his body.

Jumping back, Shiera narrowed her eyes and adjusted her grip. Increasing the frequency of her attack, countless slashes flickered in and out of existence as her movements couldn't be perceived by Alice, even with the help of Cayla.

As Arax continued to step towards Shiera in this maelstrom of slashes, his grin grew wider. Pulling his arm back, his muscles bulged as he slammed his fist forward.

But this was exactly what Shiera was looking for!

Jumping over the attack, she countered the aura released by the fist before swinging her blade towards Arax's head.

*CLANG!!!

Her blade was caught between his teeth!

Seeing this, Shiera sighed out in annoyance before signalling the end of this spar.

"Are you satisfied now? Honestly the Zone Stance is a horrible match up against Arax since this oaf just walks through every attack." She scratched her hair in annoyance as Alice nodded her head.

Giving her thanks to the two, she quickly left the arena, confusing Shiera as Alice seemed to be in a hurry.

However, that was because Alice couldn't contain this smile on her face!

She saw it! She saw a path towards the most offensive style of attack she could muster!

All that was left was to put it to the test but now was not the time. For now, she'll continue to refine this idea in her mind, gathering as many resources as she could to improve it further.

Chapter 282 - 282: Griselda And Nanna

Jumping out of the personal realm, Alice found herself back at Velouria's castle but she was nowhere to be seen.

Guessing that she must be busy, Alice took this moment to calm her emotions but the smile refused to fade from her face.

Right now, she had three benefits from Cayla. First, kinetic vision. Second, Energy Perception. And finally, Mimicry.

Mimicry allowed her to observe and copy her opponent's movement to some extent and make it her own. Such was the case for Void Flux and Void Flux – Cleave.

Using the knowledge she gained from Shiera regarding the Zone stance, her performance at the end and the benefits granted by Mimicry and Energy Perception, Alice could make a new type of Zone stance.

One that allowed her to break down the weaknesses of her opponent and even hijack their spell if done right!

'Sh*t I can't stop.' Alice thought with a laugh as she immediately summoned her obsidian blade and established a boundary around herself.

Narrowing her eyes, her second Sigil flared up as blood mist surrounded her.

In her current state, if any attack was to enter her zone, she had two choices. One was to negate them using her flames. Second was to hijack the controls!

She had this idea of hijacking controls ever since she got her first Sigil but it was finally time to bring the idea to fruition.

Of course, it was easier said than done and right now, Alice had two methods of going about this. First was to forcefully take over.

Using Void Flux – Cleave, she'll separate her opponent's energy from their attack before replacing it with her own. But doing so required her to understand how the attack worked and how she should channel the energy. On top of that, after hijacking, she won't be able to make any adjustments since she lacked the Sigil.

The exception being if she was to drink their blood. If that happens then hijacking will become far easier.

The Second method was to manipulate the space around her Boundary using either Void Flux or Nyer's Space Lock skill. Her mastery over Nyer's Space Lock was lacking but that'll come with practice.

Rather than Hijacking, the second method was closer to redirection more than anything.

If she was to complete her idea then her new Zone Stance would help her fix her defensive issue. Not only that, but it could also be used offensively since through observation and mimicry, she could understand the weaknesses in her opponent's movement!

Excitement filled her mind but she quickly calmed herself once she imagined what fighting Allura and Kaden would be like. Those that surpassed her greatly in speed such as Ria or people who targeted the soul.

It was strong but far from perfect, but it was a start.

Once Alice was calm and the smile disappeared, she pulled out the second Key. The key leading to her training session with Spirituality and Immortality.

'According to Kaden, they're casters but have always lost to him. Not sure what I can even learn from them but it's not like I'm losing anything.' Alice shrugged as she stabbed the key into the air and opened a new door.

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"Report." Solaris spoke coldly while glancing towards Shiera and Arax.

"Nothing of importance my Lord. Alice, the one we were requested to train, seems average and not to the calibre of Apostles. She doesn't seem to be hidden weapon nor does she display any remarkable traits aside from her reaction speed." Shiera replied while kneeling in front of Solaris.

"Hmm... Is that so? Arax, what about you?"

"Same here my Lord. Even though she showed an attack similar to that of the Executioner, it lacked any form of blessing. It can be surmised that she has not been chosen as a third Apostle."

"Then it's a false alarm. And here I thought she'd be someone special if Velouria was asking all the Apostles to help train her." Solaris massaged his eyes as he waved his hand and dismissed his Apostles.

Tapping his finger on the table, he formed a connection with Lumiria and Enris.

"I got the first report back. The brat doesn't seem special compared to Velouria's other subordinates." Solaris huffed.

"Hou~ Well I'm not surprised by that considering her soul age." Lumiria chuckled softly.

"You're hiding something aren't you, Lumi? Spill it already." Enris grinned.

"Her soul age is only 10. Now, if you were to take that into consideration, what do you think about her talent?" Lumiria smiled as Solaris paused for a moment.

"10? Are you serious?" Enris raised an eyebrow. Naturally, Solaris shared the same sentiment.

"That was what it looked like the last time I checked. Though it was a rough estimate. Compared to the other souls that I've seen, her's is maturing at a rapid pace. An increased growth if I had to put it into words. So perhaps Velouria wants to take advantage of this growth stage and help her learn as much as possible?" Lumiria theorised as the Gods became silent.

"Play along for now. It's not like a weak three Sigil brat can do anything in the first place, no matter how fast her growth may be." Enris shrugged. Of course, she had her own plans. If Alice was in a period of growth, then it was the perfect time to introduce outside influences.

Just thinking of the possibilities made Enris giggle with excitement as the other two sighed, knowing that the chaotic one was planning something again.

"I've already notified my Apostles to learn as much as they can regarding her soul and background. If things go well, we should have some information by the end of the day. For now, it's simply a case of waiting."

"Urg... More waiting. How do you two even stand it." Solaris clicked his tongue.

For Enris, she spent her free time planning out ways to disrupt the natural order.

As for Lumiria...

"Waiting is not so bad once you get used to it. The peace and quiet is nice Solaris. You should give it a try sometime." As the Goddess that focuses on longevity, embracing the act of waiting was part of the process.

All things fall apart with time, all she had to do was simply wait. Even for Velouria, Lumiria wasn't sure why these two were in such a hurry. If they simply watched and waited by the side, she'll die eventually. Such is the passage of time.

"You can enjoy your peace and quiet. I have no use for it." Solaris scoffed as he closed the connection.

He would never understand Lumiria's approach. But he doesn't have to understand it to get her help regarding Velouria.

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Unlike the arena that Shiera and Arax was in, the arena for Immortality and Spirituality was a strange cloud covered platform with countless large towers decorating the background.

Above them was the moon in its full glory, basking the realm in a cold blue hue.

"You've arrived." The puppet apostle bowed slightly as her mechanical joints rattled in this silence.

Next to her, the floating woman bowed in a similar manner.

With the improvement of Alice's senses, she couldn't help but notice what seemed to be 'strings' extending from the floating woman's body, reaching into nothingness.

Upon noticing Alice's stare, the floating woman flickered in front of Alice. Her eyes snapped open and bore deep into Alice's eyes.

"You can see it can't you?" She asked, her voice seemingly ringing out in Alice's mind.

Taking a step back out of surprise, Alice wasn't sure what the girl meant but she couldn't avert her eyes.

Her surroundings began to darken as though nothing else existed and all she could see was a pair of floating red orbs.

"Stop. What are you doing Nanna?" The puppet frowned as she covered Nanna's eyes with her hand.

"Sorry, I was surprised that this girl managed to see my 'strings'." Nanna replied as the puppet glanced over at Alice in mild surprise.

"You saw it? How surprising... Have you had interactions with the soul before?"

"A little. I had an incident where someone dragged my soul to a different realm. But that was about it." Alice nodded her head as her vision returned back to normal.

Cold sweat filled her back as she didn't know what would've happened if the puppet didn't interfere.

"How strange... well I'm sure your peculiarities will make themselves known later. Griselda, Apostle of Spirituality." Griselda introduced herself as Nanna adjusted her posture and closed her eyes.

"Nanna, Apostle of Immortality."

"Alice." Alice bowed back while wondering what they were doing to teach her.

"So Alice, what do you think is the relation between body and soul?" Griselda asked with a smile.

"I'm... not sure." Alice shook her head.

"There are many interpretations. The way you interact with the soul changes the relation but for most, the body and soul take the roles of puppet and puppeteer. Without the soul, the body 'dies'. Without the body, the soul continues on until it gains a new puppet.

"Now let me ask you this. What do you think is the link between casting abilities you gain from Sigils and the soul?"

Hearing this, Alice contemplated it for a moment.

The source of Sigil abilities come from the contract formed between the host and the Abyss. Through this contract, power is given to the Spiritual Heart which then transfers to the physical heart before manifesting as the ability.

"Are you talking about the Spiritual Heart?" Alice asked curiously. If they were planning on teaching her about the Spiritual Heart then it may give her some clues regarding her Violet Flames.

After all, this beast within, the source of her flames, was acting as her Spiritual Heart. Without these flames, she'll die.

"Exactly. You are smarter than you look. Now allow me to propose a third question young one." Griselda nodded with a satisfied smile.

"How potent do you think a cast can become if you combine multiple Spiritual Hearts?"

Chapter 283 - 283: Reflection Of The Core

"How potent do you think a cast can become if you combine multiple Spiritual Hearts?" Griselda asked with a cruel grin.

Hearing this, Alice felt a chill down her spine as she saw a familiar light in Griselda's eye.

A light of greed and insanity.

'She's not joking.' Alice thought while subconsciously taking a step back.

"Think about it. The output of a cast, while can be adjusted by the user, is still limited to one passage. That being the Spiritual Heart. There are people in the world who can target this connection, severing the tether momentarily or permanently. One being the Executioner, Allura.

"In the case where a person loses their connection to the Spiritual Heart, only two things can occur. If they are strong enough, they survive but lose the ability to cast or access their Sigil abilities. If they are not strong enough, they enter Spiritual Death. The body becomes a husk of its former self." Griselda explained with a laugh.

Taking a few steps from Alice, she flicked her hand and revealed her tether to the Spiritual Heart.

"So I ran a little test. To see if the output can be increased. And who knew, such beauty exists in this world." She muttered while raising her hand towards the malformed network of tethers extending from her body.

The shadows of those connected to Griselda, the Apostle of Spirituality. If Alice had seen their mournful expressions, she might have been annoyed. But that was not the case.

It was pure silence. No mournful screams, no hateful glares and no tears. Each face seemed 'peaceful'.

"Beautiful isn't it? The collective will to work towards a single goal of longevity. To become part of something greater and attain the perfection sought by all those bound by the chains of mortality." Griselda exclaimed while caressing one of the faces with her hand.

'She's bat sh*t insane.' Alice thought with a forced smile as she wanted nothing to do with the Church of the Moon anymore.

She finally understood why Allura hated these b*stards. Under the presence of longevity and perfection, they steal the lives of others to live as nothing but a slave to the Apostles.

"Hmm... Are you not impressed? I'd figured that someone of your calibre would understand the beauty of this. Especially when we're not so different." Griselda chuckled.

Snapping her finger, black inky tethers appeared from Alice's body.

While Griselda's tether reached to the high heavens, Alice's descended into the depths of the void.

Glancing back, Alice saw a familiar figure. The beast that served as her Spiritual Heart and the source of her Violet Flames.

Connected to that beast was what she had originally perceived as the void or emptiness. But that was incorrect. It was a densely packed network of countless tethers, numerous to the point it had become a sheet of darkness.

"How did you even manage to take so many Spiritual Hearts I wonder. Iya~ Gives me chills just looking at it. And here I thought I was alone in my pursuit of perfection with my Lady. Who knew I would find a kindred spirit." Griselda smiled happily while hugging Alice from behind.

Her cold mechanical arms wrapped around Alice's body.

"But it seems like quite the waste to leave this power untapped. Since you've already trained under Kaden, I'm sure you know the pathways in the body and how best to adjust the casts. So how about you learn my method of casting?" Griselda asked while Nanna of Immortality simply watched by the side.

While the two of them may share the same Master, they don't get along too well. Their friendship was only surface level.

To Nanna, Griselda's actions are distasteful. But they share the same discipline under the guidance of the Moon Goddess and thus could not reject her.

Griselda sought to use others as a foundation for something greater. To become part of an immortal being. As for her, she sought to free people from the bounds of mortality.

The body was nothing but a puppet to be piloted by the Soul, so long as the soul lives, the body can always be replaced. They retain their individuality while embracing the gifts of immortality. That was the most beautiful form of life for Nanna.

And considering her own past, she could see traces of herself in Alice.

"Griselda, stop pressuring her. Let her choose what she wants to do and don't get carried away. No matter what, she only possesses three Sigils, her body cannot withstand your method of casting." Nanna spoke out as Griselda paused and glanced back in annoyance.

There was no longer a smile on her face as her mood had been spoiled by Nanna.

"Fine. I will admit I got a little carried away." Griselda sighed after a long pause.

Meanwhile, Alice couldn't take her eyes off of the darkness that surrounded the beast bound by golden chains.

Through this darkness, she could see vague outlines and expressions of Abyss Beasts. Some she had never seen before, some she recognised.

"It's not exactly a casting method that's usable by everyone. Since you don't have the blessing given by my Lady, I doubt you can fully tap into this power. Of course, if you're thinking of switching allegiances, we're more than happy to welcome you with open arms." Griselda offered but Alice shook her head.

"Sorry, I'll have to pass."

Shrugging her shoulders, Griselda didn't press the issue further. If Alice doesn't want to embark on the path of longevity then there's nothing she can do. When she's at her wit's end, she'll come to realise the beauty.

"That's fine. Either way, we have 24 hours to teach you something new. How about letting you understand more about your Spiritual Body? You can also say it's training for you to understand and interact with your soul."

Seeing Alice's hesitation, Nanna decided to step in.

"There are two ways of interacting with your soul. They don't interrupt the connection you have with your physical body if that's what you're worried about. It's merely looking at the reflection."

Even though they may be detached from their physical body, it's not a state that can be easily achieved.

Even those within the Church needed plenty of time and resources to attain this state.

So for beginners and Alice, the first step is to observe and understand one's soul.

"Griselda has shown you one of the ways and that's to observe the soul through the tether connecting your body and your Spiritual body together. The second method is one that I use and that's to observe your own reflection." Nanna explained.

"Observe my reflection?"

Alice had encountered something similar before. The times she saw a reflection of Velouria within her. Times when she saw the beast sealed within and sometimes the 'hunger' she demonstrates in a battle.

There were many reflections that Alice has seen with only two coming from unknown origins. For Velouria, Alice could assume that a part of her was attached to Cayla.

But the beast and her 'hunger'? She had no idea.

"A reflection is... the truest part of your soul in the moment. The human mind hides behind facades and experiences but the soul reveals your core. Your true self. Through observing your soul using the reflection, you create a harmony between body and soul, increasing the potency of your casts.

"That's to say, some may dislike the 'core' of their soul and their potency only decreases. So it's up to you what you want to do. Just remember that using Sigil powers through casting is deeply rooted with the understanding of one's soul." Nanna warned.

Taking her warning to heart, Alice considered her options.

"Is it rude if I say I want to see my reflection alone?" Alice asked hesitantly.

She knew the peculiarities within her body and even though Griselda has seen the numerous Spiritual Hearts linked to her, she still didn't want them to see her 'core'.

"The process of observing one's soul is done alone do not worry. While we may be here, we cannot see the core of your being unless you reveal it to us and thus, we cannot interfere. What Griselda had done earlier was simply observing the connections rather than the details. A silhouette for a lack of a better word.

"And if you still doubt, I do not mind making a Law of Agreement. The soul is a delicate issue and we do not force our interference to those still attached to their body. Only when you are truly ready to join us will we begin to modify the core." Nanna explained.

Creating a contract with her hand, it stated that neither Nanna nor Griselda would be able to see the core of Alice's soul unless Alice expresses permission with no outside interference.

Reading through the contract several times, Alice didn't see any issues and agreed.

With the agreement now in place, both Nanna and Griselda took a few steps back, allowing Alice some space to face her reflection.

Waving her finger, Nanna created a split down the centre of the arena, reflecting everything on their side.

Standing in front of this mirror, all Alice saw was a murky cloud of darkness that constantly exuded black mist. As for Nanna and Griselda, she could see their 'outlines'.

Griselda was followed along by a mass of Spiritual Hearts gained from others while Nanna had the shadow of a larger being watching over her, puppeteering her body.

Taking a deep breath, Alice calmed her mind and stepped closer to the reflection. To observe her core.

'Yo~ Don't you just look pathetic.' Her reflection let out a laugh while clutching her stomach.

'Honestly, I can't believe this is how you dolled yourself up for the outside world. So... Boring.' 'Alice' sighed as her piercing purple eyes bore into Alice.

Her reflection's voice echoed in her mind yet she didn't reply. Stepping closer, the details hidden by this cloud of darkness became clear.

Chapter 284 - 284: Third Door

Seeing the reflection, Alice couldn't help but frown. It was familiar but she couldn't believe this was the core of her being.

Her reflection looked exactly the same as the current her with the exception of having full black hair and normal eyes. If Velouria was full white with Cayla in each eye then 'Alice' would be the complete opposite.

Not only that but also the way she carried herself. The aura around her was all too familiar with Alice.

'You're my 'hunger' aren't you?' Alice thought in her mind hesitantly.

'Hunger? Hmm... I wouldn't say hunger. More so... Desire.' 'Alice' shrugged nonchalantly while peeking over Alice's shoulders to look at the other two.

'Say, what do you think would happen if we ate a piece of their soul? You know that we take souls when we drink someone's blood. If we were to drink Griselda's blood, I wonder how many souls we'll be able to obtain.' 'Alice' narrowed her eyes before licking her lips.

'Stop that. You know we won't be able to.'

'What's the harm in trying? Who knows they might say yes.' 'Alice' scratched her hair before looking back at Alice.

Just looking at her face caused 'Alice' to frown in displeasure.

'You are simply disgusting to look at.'

'What do you mean by that? We have the same face.' Alice furrowed her brows while the other Alice leaned forward.

'I mean that smile of yours. That passive nature. Take charge dammit. All you do is listen and act to what the others say around you rather than taking the lead. Think about it, Velouria has made you her successor. Cayla has given you her power and Allura and Kaden are trying their best to train you.

'Yet all you do is be passive and let the current take you. Is that not disgusting or what?' She sneered, glaring at Alice.

'So what do you want me to do about it? Or are you just here to talk sh*t to me. Nanna said this was to observe and understand my core but you're just here to mock me.' Alice didn't retreat and glared back.

Silence ensued between the two as 'Alice' slowly curled her mouth up into a grin.

'That's more like it. Why can't you show a little more aggressiveness normally? Why does it always have to be in battle.'

'Just seems exhausting no?' Alice shrugged. There's been moments where she's 'displayed' her hunger outwardly but afterwards, she would always feel exhausted.

'That's because you're not accepting who you are. Of course it'll be exhausting to keep up the act. Heck even I'm exhausted just looking at you. Anyways, what I'm saying is that maybe, just maybe, you should listen to this hunger inside you more often.' 'Alice' snickered as she tapped her finger towards Alice's chest.

'It's the truest part of you. You know it, I know it. Your father and brother certainly know it with great familiarity and hate.' Giving Alice one final mocking grin, she disappeared.

All that remained was Alice's reflection that showed a cloud of darkness and nothing more.

'Tsk.' Clicking her tongue in annoyance, Alice couldn't help but contemplate the meaning behind her last words.

The truest part of her, her 'hunger', a side that her family knows with familiarity and hatred.

Scratching her hair, Alice sighed.

As annoying as it was, she had to admit that her reflection was right. She has been holding back.

Her excitement after training with Shiera and Arax was a sign. The way her excitement burst forth, preventing her from keeping a neutral expression that she was used to keeping. She could feel herself wanting to let loose, to try out new ideas and be praised for her progress.

Especially by Allura and Kaden.

Subconsciously, her hand began reaching for her neck.

Back in the Zenia prison, the more reactions she showed, the more aggressive the experiments became. So long as she kept a neutral expression, they would lose their original fervour.

Not only that, but after years of monotonous experiments and torture, there was no need for her to display any emotion that would incite more pain.

Thinking up to this point, a small smile appeared on Alice's face.

After meeting Allura, she was exposed to a myriad of experiences and invoked emotions she thought was long dead inside.

From happiness and excitement to annoyance and anger. Each day she spent outside brought forth more reactions.

Perhaps she was scared of these feelings to some extent. A deep rooted fear that feeling these would cause more pain to befall her. But no more.

Her reflection wasn't wrong, perhaps it was time to be true to herself and the thoughts within. To accept that this 'hunger' was not only a by product of the beast within but also a reflection of her own desires.

To let loose and no longer restrain herself. To enjoy the freedom she's been given fully.

'The least I could've done was be honest with myself. Why did she have to keep insulting me.' Alice sighed with a helpless smile.

Turning around, she saw a hint of surprise in Griselda's gaze while Nanna had a smile on her face.

"Seems like you've reaped quite a reward from seeing the reflection of your core."

"You could say that." Alice admitted while scratching her cheek.

"Say, why don't you reconsider my offer of joining the Church of the Moon. Not many undergo a change like this on their first interaction with their core." Griselda smirked while crossing her arms.

"Once again I'll pass. Sorry to say but my allegiance lies with Ayr and its Queen."

"So be it. Nanna, I think you're more suited in training her." Griselda shrugged before turning to Nanna who nodded her head.

"Understood. But I don't think there's much I can do." Nanna glanced over at Alice.

If she went by her original plan, they would've taken this entire period to help Alice understand her core yet she's already made quite the considerable progress alone.

Even though she may not show it, as Apostles who are deeply connected to concept of souls, they could tell the change that occurred within.

They risked going against the orders of their Goddess if they attempted to teach more.

Realising that she must've progressed too fast, Alice coughed awkwardly. It was a silent understanding between them that the Apostles can't teach too much. They will however, offer a little guidance and that's exactly what they've achieved.

"It's fine, you've helped me understand my core and that's more than enough. I still need time to digest this knowledge otherwise I wouldn't get the full benefit." Alice shook her head, leaving out the fact that she could also sense the tether connected to her Spiritual Heart now.

Once she's accepted that the hunger was part of her own desires, it seems like a new channel was opened and she became aware of the connection between the beast, her Spiritual Heart and her physical body.

If she could refine this understanding in her own time, operating the Violet Flames will become far easier than before.

A tacit understanding formed between the three of them as Alice bid them farewell and took the initiative to leave the training realm.

Once Alice left, Griselda frowned and let out a sigh before scratching her hair.

"She's a freak isn't she?"

"Agreed." Nanna nodded her head.

After signing the Law of Agreement, they let Alice know that they couldn't see her core.

However, that wasn't the case for the general outline and actions. During the time that Alice was talking to her own core, a second sentience glared back at them. Its gaze locking them in place as it didn't look towards physical forms but rather their spiritual side.

For Griselda, this second sentience managed to locate the true core of her being despite being surrounded by countless Spiritual Hearts that acted as a decoy. Nanna on the other hand, could feel the gaze locking onto her being that floated in an invisible realm.

For the first time ever, except for their Goddess, someone managed to locate their true self.

A deep frown formed on their faces as there was far more to Alice than they originally expected.

They hoped it was just a case of Alice being gifted in towards the Soul but on the chance that it wasn't, they may have to take care of her early.

"Our Lady is correct as always. Even though her soul is so young, its far more menacing than even the souls of the other Apostles." Griselda narrowed her eyes. It would've made their job easier if Alice had agreed to join the Church of the Moon.

Regardless, they had to make the report.

###

Upon leaving the realm, Alice sighed in relief. Due to Griselda's and Nanna's authority regarding souls, it was very hard to hide much from them. Had it not been for the Law of Agreement, Alice doubted whether or not she would be willing to go through with the training.

"Then again... I suppose calling it training is a little far fetched." She muttered.

All she did was observe the core of her being and have a small talk. Compared to trying to learn Zone Stance, this was rather easy.

"Only took an hour too."

Pulling out the third key, Alice wondered what kind of training awaited her with the Apostles chosen by Eclipse.

Knowing how the Eclipse Cult operated and their mentality, she guessed it would probably just be a standard spar.

'The Eclipse God mentioned that their fighting style was honed during battle... Unless there's something special about the way they perceive things, they probably won't show me new things.'

Shaking her head, Alice stopped delaying and stabbed the key into the air.

A new door opened and even though she hadn't stepped through, her body was already on full alert. Every fibre of her being was calling for her to run!

A fight or flight response just from seeing the door.

Swallowing her saliva nervously, Alice hesitated for a moment before opening the door.

Stepping through, she saw a lone figure standing in the middle and a forced smile appeared on her face.

"You've gotta be kidding me..." Alice muttered in disbelief.

While the other Gods had sent their Apostles to 'train' Alice, the Eclipse God chose a different approach.

She decided to see what Alice was about personally!

Chapter 285 - 285: Alice Vs Enris

"Hiya~ You're here a lot earlier than expected. Did you get kicked out from Lumi's side or did you pick me second?" Enris grinned.

In a single blink, Enris was already in front of Alice as cold sweat filled her back.

"Aww~ Don't be so nervous little one. I'm not going to eat you... Or will I? It's not often I partake in eating humans but the last time I tried one it tasted rancid. Maybe a cutie pie like you would change that." Enris narrowed her eyes as she revealed a set of sharp teeth and a long tongue that licked her lips.

"Nah who am I kidding. If I did Velouria would go ape sh*t and attack me. I'm not ready for that... Yet." She laughed, taking a few steps away.

"But I am here to take a look at you for myself. Why did Velouria decide to dump so many resources into you."

At that moment, a malevolent aura burst forth from Enris as Alice was speechless. Her third tutor was the God herself!

"So try your best and impress me okay? If I get too bored I might take things a little overboard and kill you." Enris laughed as she conjured a sword in front of her.

Grabbing the handle, she swung it towards the ground and the blade broke itself into countless segments, transforming into a bladed whip.

As for Alice, she nervously brought out her obsidian blade as she could tell Enris was serious! Each of her words was laced with killing intent. If she didn't amuse the God, she would die.

Just as she was wondering if she could leave through the door, Enris waved her hand and enveloped this entire area in a seal.

'Well there goes my escape route.' Alice smiled bitterly as she took a deep breath.

She could try to talk her way out of this but considering that her opponent is the God of the Eclipse, it was unlikely that she'll let her go with a talk.

In that case...

She'll take the offence and end this quick!

At that moment, Alice deployed her full boundary. The size of which encompassed the entire arena and charged towards Enris.

*Whistle~

"I knew it. You were bluffing to the Sun b*stard's Apostles." Enris grinned. Flicking her wrist, the whip cracked towards Alice like a serpent but before it could reach her, its path of attack was interrupted by a Void Flux!

*BANG!!!

Activating her Partial Bloodline Release, an aura of violet flames manifested around her, boosting her physical strength to the limit.

The instant Enris entered her optimal range for melee, Alice gritted her teeth and swung her blade.

Void Flux – Cleave!

Seeing Alice appear beside her, Enris was uninterested since the speed wasn't impressive. However, the changes that occurred to Alice's blade surprised her!

"Wow~ Did the Executioner teach you that? I didn't think this could be achieved without Velouria's blessing. Though it lacks a little compared to the real Executioner's Blade." Enris smiled, blocking Alice's strike with the guard of her whip.

But Alice wasn't done. With her Void Flux – Cleave blocked, she adjusted her posture and sent a kick towards Enris' head.

Engaging in hand to hand combat, Alice frowned after seeing the God dodge everything she could throw at her.

She was like a fallen leaf, avoiding every attack.

'Don't use the violet flames. What I need to do is to impress her with my other attacks. If I use my violet flame directly more trouble will arise.'

Stepping back to make some distance between them, Alice quickly jumped up into the air as she narrowly dodged the whip aiming for her ankles.

"And here I thought they said you only knew the basics of Zone Stance." Enris grinned.

Flicking her wrist, the whip transformed into a spear as she breached Alice's Zone.

*BANG!!!

Slamming the shaft against Alice's blade, Enris launched Alice to the opposite side of the arena.

"Common~ Do your best~ Put some effort behind your attacks. You might fool the Sun b*stard's Apostles but you can't fool me. I can tell if someone is serious or not. After seeing countless die to my blade, it's pretty easy to see if they're truly desperate." She laughed, jumping up into the air.

Twisting her body, she launched the spear at Alice who glared back and transformed the obsidian blade into a gauntlet!

Grabbing the spear just as it passed her, Alice pivoted on her foot to dispel the moment and seized the weapon from Enris.

"That's quite the weapon you got there. Did Velouria get it made for you?" Enris clapped her hand.

Taking a single step forward, she flickered next to Alice.

"But don't you know you shouldn't take from a God? You might piss them off."

Grabbing the spear, she threw Alice into the air without any issue.

Just as she was about to kick Alice on her way down, Alice managed to twist her body in mid air and landed on Enris' leg.

Blinking her eyes in surprise, Enris watched Alice's blade travel closer to her face.

"Nice reactions." She praised while leaning back but that was exactly what Alice hoped she would do!

Behind her, a cluster of Void Fluxes manifested without any casting action from Alice!

Widening her eyes in surprise, Enris didn't think Alice reached the stage of casting without actions. After all, the speed and power of this cast was nothing to joke at.

'Kaden huh?' Enris thought with a grin.

Tapping her finger in the air, a baleful red aura exploded from her back, erasing the attack with ease!

Jumping back with a frown on her face, Alice transformed her gauntlet back to a blade before entering a defensive stance, reestablishing the boundary of her Zone.

"What a sneaky b*tch. Hiding a monster like you without any of us knowing." Enris sighed while massaging her neck.

"You've mimicked the Executioner's attack, reached Kaden's level of casting, understood how to establish a zone. Then there's the potency of your attacks... It's not something a sh*tty three Sigil brat should have. You must've reaped quite the rewards from the Moon Apostles right?"

Sensing Enris' gaze, Alice bit her lip before sighing and letting out a cry of annoyance.

"F*ck!" She cursed while clicking her tongue.

"Yea I did. Why the hell does it have to be you who's my third tutor." Alice scratched her hair.

"Pft! What a tone~ Well I couldn't help it. I got curious. So far you're a little interesting. Just a little. But it's not quite enough to let Velouria go out of her way like this.

Either you have a bigger identity or you're still hiding powers..."

Pausing for a moment, Enris curled her lips into a grin.

"I think it's both. What do you say girlie?"

"Who knows, you're not gonna take my word for it anyways." Alice shrugged.

Killing intent exploded from her body as she activated her Resonance!

"Bingo~ I'm liking you more and more now. Alright, show me what you can do, if you surprise me enough, I'll even reward you." Enris winked.

***BANG!!!!**

Transforming her sword into a spear, Alice launched it with all her might!

***CLANG!!!**

Parrying the spear and throwing it aside, Enris raised an eyebrow after noticing that Alice was no longer in her position. Instead, she appeared in the air and caught the spear that was parried!

Twisting her body, she transformed the spear into a blade and slashed towards Enris.

Just before her blade could be blocked by Enris, it shrunk into a dagger!

Wanting to tilt her head in order to dodge the strike, Enris widened her eyes in surprise.

Space Lock!

A trademark of Nyer.

Watching the blade approach closer and closer to her face, Enris let out a crafty smile.

Taking a page from Alice's book, her form began to shift and she shrunk down to the size of a child!

"What the f*ck???" Alice blurted out as Enris slammed her leg into Alice's stomach.

*BANG!!!!

Crashing into the wall of the arena, Alice coughed up a mouthful of blood and collapsed onto her knees.

"Even the ability of Nyer huh? Aren't a gift that keeps on giving." Enris praised as her form returned to normal.

Gathering the blood back into her body, Alice took a deep breath and glared at Enris.

Even though she couldn't hear her Core, she could practically imagine what she was going to say.

'What a pathetic sight. So scared to use your own power against her? If you keep this up she'll kill you~ Show some backbone coward.'

Her annoying tone couldn't be forgotten as Alice revealed a bitter smile.

"A gift that keeps on giving huh? You're not wrong. Say, God of the Eclipse, do you mind answering a question for me?" Alice asked as she forced herself to stand up.

Reaching into her pouch, she drank some healing blood.

"I am a benevolent God. Go for it." Enris nodded.

"Why do you sow so much chaos? All of your followers perform rituals in your name and sacrifice to earn your blessing. But what goal do you lead your people?"

"Ohya? Quite the serious question you're asking there. Hmm... For funsies. Honestly, it's too boring sitting around doing nothing so I let them do whatever they want. Sometimes they surprise me with their cruelty, sometimes I get bored. Either way, as long as it's interesting, I'll give them a few rewards." Enris laughed with a nonchalant shrug.

"For funsies huh?" Alice closed her eyes.

All of the suffering that Ria had to go through was simply for 'funsies'. The hatred in Ria's heart was as deep as her own for the Zenia family. Yet her target for this hatred did everything on a whim.

If Ria found out about this, how would she react?

Alice didn't know the answer but she knew one thing. She needed to get a good hit in for Ria!

"Now let me return that question to you girlie. For what reason do you wake up in the morning? For what reason do you struggle and train?" Enris asked, readying her spear by her side.

"I just don't want to be restrained anymore."

Reaching into her pouch once more, Alice pulled out a flask and drank its contents. Letting out a satisfied shout, she threw the flask back into her pouch.

"That's the sh*t! Alright God of the Eclipse, are you f*cking ready?" Alice laughed as violet flames burst out from her.

Since Enris wanted to see something interesting, Alice will show her just that!

Patterns stretched across her body as she spoke a single familiar line.

[Feast o' flames of mine.]

Chapter 286 - 286: God Of The Eclipse - Enris

Realising that Alice was establishing a ritual, Enris couldn't help but wonder who the target was.

With her seal, no connection to the outside was allowed to happen. Thus even if Alice wanted to try to form a ritual with Velouria, it was impossible!

But against her expectations, she watched as an array of vibrant array of flames converged into one before the sounds of shackles breaking reverberated through the arena.

The aura surrounding them began to grow as Enris subconsciously took a step back.

"What the hell is that thing..." She muttered, watching a draconic beast manifest itself through Alice's flames.

A chimera of bestial auras of different Abyss Beasts and a swirling vortex filled with an insatiable hunger.

Unfurling its wings, the beast revealed an amalgamation of limbs hidden across its body as it glanced down at Alice and gave her a grin.

Widening her eyes, Enris immediately entered the offensive with giant spears erupting from the ground!

*BANG!!!

Colliding against an invisible force in the air, the beast let out a roar before opening its jaw.

Coiling around the spears, it shattered the weapons with ease and began to absorb them into its body. The sounds of metal being torn to shreds echoed out while Enris was silent.

But soon, a smile appeared on her face as a shrill laughter rang out.

"Alright! You are simply sublime girlie! What the hell is this thing?! Hahaha! Who knew Velouria was hiding this kind of monstrosity in a little girl!" Enris shouted out as her body began to crack and twist.

Black thorns and chains erupted from where she stood as a mass of red energy enveloped her body.

*BANG!!!

Breaking out of this cocoon of energy, Enris revealed her new form. Broken pieces of armour and tattered cloth could be seen around her body as her face was hidden by a black and red mask. Red cracks stretched across her entire body as chains, swords and spears could be seen protruding from her back.

Slamming her hand down, their surroundings changed in an instant. From the arena, they were transported to a realm of crimson.

Clouds stained with the colour of blood filled the sky while the edges of this realm descended into darkness.

In the centre of the sky, a single orb could be seen. The brilliant flames of the sun and the cold encompassing glow of the moon. As the two approached one another, darkness manifested across the surface, slowly creeping in until a single dark orb was created from the union of darkness and light.

A celestial body of void contrasted by a ring of absolute light.

Staying silent, Enris charged towards the draconic beast as countless limbs erupted from its body.

Reaching behind her, Enris yanked out a single blood soaked spear and tore the limbs apart! Twirling the spear around her hand, she created a boundary where none of the beast's attack could penetrate.

But before she could take another step closer, an array manifested around her. Towering violet flames erupted into the sky as a cage was formed. Countless variants of Void Flux – Cleave bore down on Enris but she didn't panic.

Stabbing her spear into the ground, a battlefield of broken weapons erupted around her, blocking the attacks. Beneath the beast, a single spearhead could be seen before bursting out from the ground, piercing into its body!

Black chains manifested from the shaft of the spear in an attempt to constrain the beast but after the last experience from the obnoxious golden chains that sealed it away, the beast was prepared.

A rib cage of broken bones burst forth, stabbing into the chain links and preventing the chains from tightening around it. From these bones, teeth began to manifest as it attempted to consume the chains!

Feeling that something was wrong, Enris flicked her finger and the chains disappeared.

"You can keep up? How surprising. I thought that the power of a six Sigil being would be enough of a challenge to keep you at bay but you keep giving me surprise after surprise.

"A beast that seeks to consume anything and everything. An owner who can mimic the abilities of the Apostles of the Abyss despite not having Velouria's blessing. What a duo." Enris praised as she tossed the spear aside.

"And thus, I grant you the privilege of witnessing the might of a God."

Jumping into the air, Enris looked down at both Alice and the beast before grinning behind her mask.

Truly, this girl has brought her too many surprises. It was only natural for her to return her kindness.

Aiming her hand towards the beast, Enris snapped her finger.

*BANG!!!

The space around the realm tore apart as a mass of malevolent energy rushed forth!

Through habit, Alice turned her gaze upwards in an attempt to understand what was about to attack them. However, as though her mind rejected the very existence and presence of this being, light was robbed from her eyes.

"ARG!!!" Letting out a cry of pain, Alice could feel blood dripping from her eyes as she hastily turned her gaze away and closed her eyes.

Following her cry, Alice could sense the beast being erased without a chance of letting out a shout of retaliation.

The manifestation of the being that shared her Spiritual Heart was killed in an instant!

Collapsing on her knee, Alice could feel a stabbing pain from the core of her body. A pain that refused to go away no matter what she tried. As though her very being was on the verge of being torn apart.

Thankfully, the pain soon disappeared as she panted heavily with sweat dripping from her head.

Focusing her mind, she could still feel the connection with her Spiritual Heart. The manifestation was destroyed but the beast was still there, simply injured from the encounter.

"Seems like the ritual you established was one that brought out its power and not the full being. But what a strange connection, I've never seen something like this before."

Enris squatted in front of Alice and tapped her finger on Alice's head, healing her injuries.

Blinking her eyes in confusion, Alice glanced up and saw Enris' amused smile.

"So that was the big secret huh? A beast that can consume anything used by the target and even try to take a piece of their soul. What a beautyahaha~ I'm more than satisfied with you girlie. Say, how about you join my cult instead? I can make you into a second God of the Eclipse if you want." Enris offered.

Pausing in shock, Alice stared at Enris in confusion.

"You're not joking are you?" Alice forced a smile as Enris shook her head.

"Nope. You seem like you could cause a lot of chaos if I make you into an Eclipse God like me. More chaos than what my Apostles are capable of causing." Enris grinned.

"So what do you say, want to join me?"

Without even thinking about this offer, Alice shook her head.

"Sorry. I will never join any of the three religions, I'm staying with Velouria." Alice rejected as Enris let out a sigh of disappointment.

"Ah oh well~ Can't say I didn't try. But I think I'll end things here. You should take this time to prepare yourself." She laughed before standing up. Not everyone dared to reject the offer of a God but Alice did just that. Thankfully for Alice, Enris didn't mind.

Creating a portal back to her own domain, Enris glanced back and gave Alice one last look. An amused smile appeared on her face as she left.

Stepping through the portal, Enris was greeted by her two Apostles.

""Welcome back Master.""

"Mnm, let Kaden or Allura know that I'll be looking for Velouria." Enris nodded while the two Apostles looked at one another in surprise.

Understanding their Master's mood, they knew that Alice must've proven herself to be interesting enough for her.

"Understood." War bowed before leaving the room.

Following behind Enris, Famine couldn't help but wonder what a three Sigil brat could show his Master for her to have this kind of reaction.

"Do you know what I desire the most in this world?" Enris suddenly spoke as Famine replied without hesitation.

"Chaos."

"Exactly. Chaos is exactly what I desire. Only through the chaos of everything will this world be stripped of falsehoods and lies. In the chaos where everyone is desperate for survival, no one will have time to worry about other things." Enris nodded with a satisfied smile.

"Ridding the Abyss of its Goddess would bring about chaos. Helping the Sun and Moon invade the Abyss would bring about chaos. But you know what would cause the greatest amount of chaos?" She asked rhetorically while looking up at the Eclipse that hung above her realm.

"Flipping the world order on its head! The moment when everything they've taken as fact turns out to be nothing but sh*tty lies. Ahh~ The chaos that would sow~" Enris laughed while spreading out her arms.

"The little girlie is someone whose very existence goes against the laws of our world. The disgusting amalgamation of a soul, the properties of the beast sealed within and the way she can continuously grow, stealing pieces of souls to enhance herself.

"She even tried to take a piece of my soul! Hah! Who knew she would greed for so much but I like it! This is the kind of desire I long for in my perfect world. So I say let chaos take its hold. The original agreement was to deal with Velouria.

But what do you think the Sun and Moon would think if I was to turn my back on them instead? Turning it from a 3 vs 1 to a 2 vs 2?

"But that'll be too boring. Let's turn it into a free for all instead~ I'll help little girlie Alice feed the beast within, allow it to grow and when everyone's guard is down, allow it to burst forth with my blessings. I can't wait~" Enris narrowed her eyes as she revealed an insane grin.

With the death of a God as its signal, she'll bring about an age of chaos.

Chapter 287 - 287: Void Fang

After Enris disappeared from the realm, Alice was forcefully expelled as her body was thrown out.

Rolling across the floor of Velouria's castle, she groaned in pain before going limp.

"Gods are no joke... F*cking hell." Alice muttered.

One half assed move with the power of a God was all Enris needed to obliterate the beast she viewed as unstoppable.

Taking a deep breath, she sighed out as her fingers pressed against her eyelids.

She didn't know what that... 'thing' was that Enris used to attack her. But the moment she laid her eyes on it, her entire being rejected its existence.

'I suppose I have to thank my 'hunger'. Without it, Enris wouldn't be interested enough to leave me alive.' Alice thought to herself.

Reaching into her pouch, she grabbed her flask and poured some mead into her mouth to relax herself.

"Aw drinking alone? Was the first training that bad?" Velouria's head popped into Alice's view as she had returned from whatever she was doing.

"Not the first one. The third one." Alice grumbled, putting the flask away.

"Wait, third?"

"Mnm. Second one got cut short since I progressed too fast. As for the third... F*cking Enris was my tutor. Literally fighting for my life before getting thrown out from the realm." Alice complained.

Hearing this, Velouria frowned before sitting down next to Alice.

"Can you tell me about what happened in the second and third training sessions?"

Nodding her head, Alice began to recount everything that had happened.

How Nanna helped her see her core and the countless attachments she saw connected to her Spiritual Heart. How her core claimed that she was the truest part of Alice.

She explained the fight she had with Enris, how she had to find a way to amuse Enris or else she would've died. Finally ending with the moment she established a ritual with the beast inside and how Enris killed it in one go.

"Not only that, the moment I laid my eyes on whatever she summoned, I lost my sight and almost died just by looking at it. What even was that thing?" Alice asked with a frown.

"What she used was her true form. A God's true form isn't something mortals can fully accept. It's no wonder your body began to break down the moment you laid eyes on it. In fact, I would even count you lucky that nothing serious occurred." Velouria explained as she stood up.

"I should've expected that Enri would pull something like this, sorry." Velouria apologised but Alice quickly shook her head.

"It's fine, I should've trusted my instincts the moment I saw that door. So what's the plan now then? She seems to be planning something, even going as far as to ask if I want to join them and make me a God."

"Well knowing what she's like, she's probably thinking about how she can turn us Gods against one another. It's no secret that she's only amiable to a certain extent on the surface. Beneath that, she's one who wishes we just start killing each other." Velouria massaged her eyes.

"And speaking of that, she wasn't joking when she said she'll make you a God. If it suits her mood at the moment, she'll do anything. In this regard, you can consider her to be someone that's 100% true to their desires."

"I figured. The way she looked at me gave me the shivers." Alice sighed, transforming her bracelet into a dagger before twirling it across her fingers.

"You'll get used to it when you meet her more often. But enough about Enri. Let's talk about you. That heart to heart talk with your Core has really helped huh? You're more open now." Velouria chuckled as Alice shrugged.

"*Sigh~ I should've teased you more when you were shy and quiet. What a wasted chance." She lamented while Alice scratched her hair.

"But... Have you seen Nyer or Cayla? After helping you I haven't been able to find them anywhere." Velouria asked as Alice blinked her eyes in confusion.

"They're not back yet? Maybe they're doing something in Hell Gate then. Nyer did send me ahead on my own since he needed to talk to Cayla." Alice rubbed her chin as Velouria nodded her head.

"Well I'm sure they'll report sooner or later. Since you came back earlier than expected, would you like to train with Lua and Kaden some more?" Velouria offered.

Contemplating for a moment, Alice nodded her head.

"Hmm... Sure. I need to properly refine my usage of Zone stance. The better I get at using this sword of mine the easier it'll be."

Turning the dagger into a blade, Alice allowed it to sip her blood as a crimson edge slowly manifested itself.

"Do you want me to bless that sword for you? It's made from a pretty sturdy material and even though I'm a memory, I can do something as simple as blessing weapons." Velouria asked curiously while tapping her finger against the blade.

"Wait, really?"

"Who do you take me for? I'm a memory but I'm still a Goddess." Velouria acted hurt as she opened her hand, gesturing for Alice to hand over the blade for now.

Handing Velouria the obsidian blade, she watched as the Goddess examined the weapon before closing her eyes.

A strange power began to emanate from her body as dark tendrils reached up from her shadow, taking hold of the blade before dragging it away into the darkness.

Purple motes of light appeared around Velouria as they began to move, slowly drawing out the pattern for what seemed to be a ritual circle.

Unknown words echoed from Velouria's mouth as Alice couldn't understand it at all but she could see the strands of energy converging towards their location.

Clenching her fist, Velouria squeezed out a single drop of her blood and allowed it to fall into her shadow.

Little by little, briar thorns began to crawl out of her shadow as a handle was slowly constructed.

Watching the blade pull itself out from the darkness, Alice could feel an aura of lethality that was never there before. Just seeing the blade sent a chill down her spine as Velouria grabbed it by the handle and played around with the sword.

Feeling satisfied by the blessing, she handed it back to Alice.

"I've blessed and modified the sword a little so that it works better with your Sigils. Functionalities are still the same but it's now sharper and acts as a better catalyst for your fire. And just in case you lose the weapon or get disarmed, the blessing I gave it was one that allowed it to return to your hand." Velouria explained while Alice nodded her head absentmindedly.

She was infatuated by the shimmering pattern of the black metal that contrasted the silver edge. Before, the blade was rather plain. But now that Velouria has blessed the blade, the crest of Ayr could be seen on the base of the blade while the guard was now briar thorns wrapped into the shape of a cross guard.

Down the centre of the blade seemed to be a mimicry of the pathways inside of a person's body.

Considering that Velouria said that she modified it to help with her flames, Alice took a few steps back before channelling the familiar power.

***BOOM!!!**

Erupting with a brilliant array of violet flames, Alice held the blade in front of her, shocked by the efficiency. She used a negligible amount of energy for the flames to come out!

"Seems like you like it." Velouria chuckled as Alice's eyes sparkled like a child who got a new toy.

Nodding her head enthusiastically, Alice wanted to test it out immediately. Now that it was modified to be focused around her flames, it wasn't quite the same weapon as it was before.

Thinking about it for a moment, Alice decided to give it a new name.

Since her main attacks are Void Flux and Void Flux – Cleave, this new weapon that will act as the medium for her attack will henceforth be known as Void Fang.

Transforming Void Fang into a bracelet, she noticed that it now had a flower decoration on the surface.

"Thank you." Alice smiled happily as she jogged over to Velouria and pulled her into a hug.

Surprised by Alice's sudden display of affection, Velouria chuckled before patting her on the head.

"Alright alright, keep hugging and I'll drag you away to try out new clothes. Kaden and Lua are still at their house since I've given them a small holiday."

Not wanting to subject herself to the torture of trying out countless clothing for Velouria, Alice waved her hand before leaping from the building.

"What a handful." Velouria smiled helplessly before looking down at her hand.

Allura and Kaden were given a holiday, Nyer and Cayla were missing, Sun and Moon were not so subtle with their plotting and Eclipse had sent her Apostle to let her know that she was coming over for a quick meeting.

Through all of this, seeing Alice being enthusiastic and happy about progress was a nice change of pace but she couldn't keep avoiding her responsibilities.

"Solaris and Lumi will find a way to catch you soon you know? Or are you so dedicated to the script that you don't care what happens?" Velouria muttered as an eye opened partially before closing again.

"You don't care huh? How like you to respond like that." Velouria smiled helplessly.

The Will of the Abyss knew what Nyer and Cayla were doing yet it refused to tell her. In fact, it was even getting in the way of her finding out.

With each passing moment, the potential paths and choices she can take decreases until there is only one path left.

The path determined by the Will and the path towards her grave.

"Since you don't care it's fine even if we go a little off script right?" Seeing no response from the Will, Velouria took that silence as a yes.

It was a silent declaration saying that nothing she does would change the overall outcome. Death will come whether she struggles or embraces it.

But perhaps with enough chaos, it might push aside the falsehoods and reveal the truth. And for Alice, the truth is what she seeks.

Therefore, Velouria will speak to Enris alone.

Chapter 288 - 288: Velouria And Enris

Sitting in the garden while drinking some tea, Velouria didn't say anything. In front of her, Enris sat in a relaxed posture with her leg on the chair and a grin on her face.

*Sigh

"What do you want Enri." Velouria frowned. She was still feeling annoyed about the fact that Enris almost killed Alice by interfering with their agreement.

"Aw~ Don't be like that Vel. I just wanted to see Alice for myself ya know? Everyone's putting so much focus on her yet we know very little. And I'm glad I did since she's quite a treasure trove of secrets isn't she?" Enris laughed while playing with a small dagger.

"How long were you going to hide her from the others? I'm sure Lumi has a rough idea of what she's like, especially after having her soul briefly examined. The only one in the dark is Solaris but that's to be expected, he's a dumb b*stard after all." She shrugged, taking joy in mocking the other Gods.

"Enough beating around the bush. Just tell me what you want, I'm losing my patience with all the things happening right now." Velouria glared.

She wasn't feeling good enough to go along with Enris' shenanigans.

"Alright alright~ Jeez so hostile. So how about it? Shall we team up? We can give Solaris and Lumi quite a bit of trouble." Enris shrugged before offering her cooperation.

"Why would we need to team up? Don't act like the four of us don't know what's going on. And knowing you, you probably want to turn against them and then turn against me right? So there's no need for us to team up. Just do what you're good at." Velouria waved her hand as Enris blinked in surprise.

She knew that Velouria had an idea of what was going to happen but she didn't think she would react like this.

"Oh my. Are you giving me the green light to cause chaos? Even in your domain?" Enris asked as Velouria nodded her head.

"Just leave Ayr out of it. I don't care what you do elsewhere. Solaris wants me dead, Lumi doesn't care and would rather watch everything happen from the side. You... Don't care what happens as long as it's amusing for you. Whether I live or die doesn't matter, the most enjoyable outcome is what's important. Am I wrong?"

Letting out a laugh, Enris didn't think Velouria had this side of her. After all their years of knowing one another, this was a first.

"You are not wrong indeed. And right now, the most interesting outcome would be for me to turn against Solaris and Lumi even though we've been planning this for a while." Enris snickered as Velouria sighed.

"Thought so. So instead of us teaming up, how about I ask you for a little favour? I guarantee that once it's complete, you'll get the chaos you desire so much." Velouria narrowed her eyes.

Seeing that Velouria was serious, Enris adjusted her sitting posture.

"Go on."

Curling her lips into a smile, Velouria began to explain her offer to Enris.

As she listened to the entire plan, Enris' expression turned dire. Even for a God of Chaos, Velouria's plan was diabolical.

"Do you not care about what happens to the world anymore? Even for me, I still want a place for the chaos to occur. But this... This is insane." Enris asked as Velouria laughed out loud.

"You're the last one I expected to judge someone else as insane considering your own actions. But yes, I don't care anymore. What was it that you always say... Let chaos reign? So why don't you help me throw the realms into chaos." Velouria asked with a light chuckle.

Furrowing her brows at Velouria's offer, Enris leaned back before scratching her hair.

"Alright, you've got my full cooperation. Who knew that out of the four of us, the God known for chaos wasn't even the f*cking insane one? It's you all along." Enris forced a smile as Velouria simply shrugged.

"I'll let you know if I get any information from Solaris and Lumi but for now, you should watch your back. Traps are being laid around you and one wrong step will equal an early death. Once that happens, my promised chaos won't come and I'll be rather upset ya know?" She laughed while giving Velouria a wave.

Watching Enris leave, Velouria didn't say anything. After all, she's used to playing this kind of game. Constant traps and the act of navigating through this minefield.

"Being chosen by the Will is such a pain." Velouria sighed as she left the garden as well.

###

Arriving at Allura and Kaden's house, Alice wondered if she should barge in or not. The last time she was sent in without warning, she seemed to have interrupted something that annoyed Allura.

"Maybe I should knock..." Alice muttered with uncertainty.

If she knocked, it should give them enough time to prepare.

With her mind made up, she walked up to the door and knocked. But before she could give it a second knock, she heard Allura's panicked cry from just behind the door.

"The f*ck?" Blinking her eyes in confusion, Alice took a step back and waited for Allura to open the door.

"Ah! You're back." Allura opened the door hastily as she smiled awkwardly.

Tilting her head, Alice could see Kaden sitting on the stairs with a forced smile on his face.

"What happened to the training? I thought you'd be gone for another day." Allura asked curiously while making sure her face wasn't red or anything like that.

"Accidents happened and the training got cut short. I still learned stuff and Velouria told me to get more training from you two. Though... seems like you were busy yourself. What were you doing?"

"Err nothing much. Give me a second, let me grab some stuff upstairs then I'll take a look at how you've improved." Allura coughed before running upstairs.

Standing up, Kaden waited by the door with Alice.

"You really know when to intrude huh?" He let out a bitter laugh.

"What did I do?" Alice pouted, feeling wronged. All she did was knock on the door and last time, she had no control over her teleportation. If anything, he should blame Nyer or Velouria for their timing of sending her back.

"Nothing. Sometimes I wonder if you have a radar for this kind of sh*t. But setting this aside, how was the training? Did you get anything good out of it?" Kaden shook his head.

"Hmm... yeah I would say so. I learned how to use Zone but that's about it. My casting potency got increased a little since I interacted with my 'Core' and the last one was simply me getting my ass kicked by Enris." Alice sighed while leaning against the door frame.

"Pardon? Sorry I think I heard a name I wasn't supposed to hear in there. What do you mean by Enris?" Kaden froze up upon the mention of a certain God.

"She took over the third training session. I was supposed to be training with War and Famine, but she decided to introduce herself instead. Said something along the lines of not minding the consequences of killing me if I didn't interest her enough.

Thankfully I managed to satisfy her otherwise I would be dead." Alice grumbled while Kaden could feel himself sweating at her nonchalant attitude towards fighting a God.

Massaging his eyes, Kaden let out a deep exhausted sigh.

"Something wrong?" Allura blinked her eyes in confusion after coming down from upstairs.

"Nothing. Just hearing about Alice's training session." Kaden shook his head as this piqued Allura's curiosity.

"Oh? Did something happen?"

Recounting what happened through all three of her training sessions, Alice watched as Allura's smile began to twitch. She glanced over to Kaden who only shrugged helplessly.

Having the same reaction as Kaden, Allura massaged her eyes before letting out a tired sigh.

"I don't even know what to say to you. It's not like you're seeking out these dangers either. Let's... Just see how much you've improved."

Nodding her head, Alice took the initiative to jump through the portal that Kaden created while the two looked at one another before sighing once more.

"Who knew looking after a kid like Alice was so exhausting." She complained, causing Kaden to laugh.

"What are you laughing for?" Allura pouted, punching Kaden in the shoulder.

"Nothing, don't worry about it." He grinned in response. After all, she was going to be her adoptive mother in the future.

"Well now you've made me curious about it. Come on, spill it."

"Maybe later." Escaping through the portal, Kaden ran after Alice while Allura could only kick her leg in frustration.

###

The location that Kaden brought them to was in between a valley, flanked on both sides by large cliffs. A waterfall could be seen in the distance that flowed with Abyss Water.

Both Alice and Allura faced one another as Alice transformed Void Fang into a blade and held it by her side in a drawing stance.

Understanding that Alice was eager to test out her new techniques, Allura didn't waste any time and snapped her finger.

Flames gathered into a single spark and fired towards Alice.

Nova Core!

'She'll probably parry it using her Void Flux. Let's see how potent her casts are.' Allura thought to herself as she prepared to dash towards Alice.

However, Alice didn't fire a Void Flux in response.

Expanding the boundary of her Zone, she took a deep breath and focused her mind. Since her blade now acted as an optimal medium for her flame, it meant that she could use Void Flux – Cleave more often!

When paired with her Zone Stance, it became a ruthless wall of slashes and fire that refused anything to bypass the boundary.

*BANG!!!

Just like when she fired a Void Flux towards Shiera, the Apostle of Preservation, Allura's Nova Core was shredded to oblivion with the flames consuming the leftovers.

Seeing this, Allura paused mid-step as a grin appeared on her face. Even though she held back, Alice still blocked her Nova Core perfectly!

"Since that's the case, let's increase the difficulty level!"

Wrapping herself in an aura of flames, Allura rushed towards Alice!

Chapter 289 - 289: Seizing Control

Breaching Alice's Absolute Zone in an instant, Allura used her flames to guard herself against Alice's attack.

"Tch!"

"Too soft!" Allura grinned, forcing Alice into retreat.

Even though Alice's zone was impressive and her defensive capabilities had increased by several fold, it was still lacking when it came to stopping someone who focuses on physical power. Against casters like Kaden, she may have the upper hand.

But a physical fighter? A horrible matchup.

"Just because you can wield a sword and swing it, doesn't make you a good close ranged fighter! Figure out your advantages and use them!" Allura shouted out, slamming her fist into the ground.

*CRACK!!!!

Cracking the ground apart, Alice stumbled momentarily as she lost her footing.

"My first and second Sigils focuses on controlling the fire around me. My third, lets me concentrate the flame in order to increase my firepower." Taking a deep breath, Allura pulled back her hand as the air began to crackle with sparks.

The fire around her fist started to flicker and roar before erupting with a radiant white flame.

Watching Allura punch towards her direction, Alice widened her eyes as all of her senses were warning her to dodge!

'I'm too slow!' Realising her predicament, Alice could only force herself to block the attack head on.

'Do you really think you can block it? Hah! Blocking it means death. So what do you think you should do right now goody two shoes?' [Alice's] voice rang out in her mind as Alice bit her lip.

However, her distress soon disappeared as she curled her lips into a grin.

'There's only one choice. Eat it!'

Adjusting the grip of her sword, Alice swung down as violet flames roared out, colliding with Allura's punch!

But it wasn't enough. Activating her Partial Bloodline Release, the manifestation of her hunger appeared behind her as a sea of violet flames enveloped the attack and compressed it into a single point before extinguishing it.

"Thanks for the meal." Alice wiped her mouth as the flames across her body began to flicker. Within the array of violet, sparks of white could be seen as Allura let out a laugh.

"What a cheeky brat. Since you like it so much why not have a second serving!" Letting out a shout, the flames around Allura grew in intensity as Kaden sighed.

Flicking his finger, a barrier of shadows enveloped the entire area, preventing destruction from spreading out.

With the explosive growth of her flames, Allura looked like a flaming demon from the pits of the Abyss. Her hair flared up from the aura as she snapped her finger.

Taking a page from Alice's book, multiple Nova Cores manifested around Alice but she continued to grin.

A trail of violet flames escaped her mouth as she surrounded herself in a wall of slashes, destroying the attacks in an instant.

Breathing out a mouthful of air, Alice synchronised herself with her flames. Everything the fire destroyed, she 'ate', and her aura spiked due to it.

Crouching down, she activated her Resonance as the Crown of the Abyss manifested above her head.

Surprisingly, her transformation was different to usual. Instead of the violet hue that her hair usually took due to her flames, it remained as a split between black and white like in her normal state. Only this time, it favoured the black side with a few strands of white scattered across her hair.

*BANG!!!

Charging forward, Alice absorbed a portion of Allura's physical prowess from consuming the flames!

The speed had surprised even Alice, but she managed to react in time thanks to Cayla.

Twisting her body, she unleashed a Void Flux – Cleave towards Allura.

"Weak!" Catching the blade between her fingers, Allura shrugged off the attack as Alice noticed a fourth Sigil manifesting on Allura's body!

Sensing that something was wrong, Alice wanted to back off but a wound appeared on her left arm.

Widening her eyes, Alice watched as her blood was thrown into the air from the attack, unsure as to where it even came from.

"Fourth Sigil, Rupture." Allura grinned as Alice jumped back.

Recalling her blood, her wound began to heal thanks to the effects of her Resonance.

Focusing her eyes, she could see the energy belonging to invisible blades hovering around Allura.

'Rupture... Seems like she creates invisible blades to strike at her opponent. While people are too distracted by her head on fighting, they'll have no time to react to the blades beside her.

"It's nothing complicated. Rupture simply allows me to 'record' my sword style and have it fight alongside me. The downside is that it can't react to changes easily unless I overwrite the recording. As

for the second function, once it leaves a 'mark' on you, you can't heal it even with Abyss Blood." Allura narrowed her eyes.

With a single flick of her finger, the wound reopened!

Rushing towards Alice while the invisible blades floated beside her, Allura coated herself in flames once more, making it hard for Alice to strike back.

"What happened to that earlier attitude? Thought you enjoyed the meal?" Allura taunted while Alice was forced on the defensive.

Recalling Siera's footwork when defending against attacks, Alice began to mimic her movements while parrying the invisible blades using Zone Stance.

She needed to make sure she didn't get hit by a single blade or else the wound was there to stay!

'Are you still asleep? Do you really think you can match Allura while holding back? Where's the drive, the hunger, the intense desire to kill even if you're wounded? Don't just throw me out there, use me properly sh*tty host.'

This moment of distraction caused one of the blades to cut Alice across the shoulder as she quickly backed off but Allura continued to press on.

'You keep talking sh*t but you're just here to take over aren't you?' Alice scoffed inwardly while attempting to consume one of Allura's invisible blades, but she was prepared and dismissed it before the flames could reach.

'Take over? I think you've got the wrong idea here roomie. We're both owners here. Do you think I'm not making a move because I can't? I'll admit that Velouria's seal is surprisingly sturdy but to wrestle control isn't hard.' [Alice] laughed.

And to prove her point, she stole control from Alice!

Golden chains burst forth, surprising Allura as she jumped back to create some distance.

Despite the golden chain that wrapped around her limbs, [Alice] simply grinned as she stretched her body.

Killing intent burst forth from her body as she overlayed all of her physical augments in one go at full blast! Partial Bloodline Release, Resonance, First Sigil and Allura's strength from her flames!

*BANG!!!

Appeared next to Allura, [Alice] revealed an insane grin before cleaving down with her blade. As expected, Allura was able to react but that was never [Alice's] main goal.

A foreign marking began to spread across her arm as horns appeared on her head along with a pair of draconic wings on her back!

Red lightning and flames burst forth, fusing with her violet flames.

"Tiamat!" Allura inadvertently shouted out in surprise.

Raising her guard out of instinct, Allura felt Alice's punch collide with her arm as a surprising amount of force slammed into her body, forcing her to slide back but [Alice] wasn't done yet.

Flicking her finger, the space around Allura was sealed as she was halted mid movement while the air above her erupted with Void Fluxes. From these orbs, Void Flux – Cleaves descended upon Allura, forcing her to retreat.

"Not yet!" [Alice] shouted out with a laugh. Slamming her hand down, black appendages with teeth erupted from the ground. The very same appendages that could be seen on the manifestation of Alice's hunger!

*KRRR!!!

An array of slashes erupted from the centre of this bombardment as Allura was forced to use her fifth Sigil!

"Berserker's Flame. The closer I get to death, the stronger these flames burn and the stronger I become. It boosts the potency of all of my Sigils." Allura explained as the invisible blades carved away all of the attacks that [Alice] had launched.

"Is that so? Let me get a little serious as well then. One must dress to the occasion if they're dining at a fine restaurant. And you are simply divine." [Alice] grinned while aiming her sword at Allura.

Blood escaped from her arm as it was drawn into the blade. Twisting her body, she cleaved the air in front of her, rupturing the space and revealing a landscape of crimson flowers.

With this slash, another foreign marking appeared on her body.

But before she could continue, the golden chains tightened around her body. From the void, another chain shot towards her neck, forcing her on her knee.

"Tch! Spoiling the fun! F*ck you Velouria!" [Alice] shouted out in annoyance as her power began to fade.

With her control slipping, the ruptured space began to repair itself before disappearing.

Regaining control of her own body, Alice panted heavily as she could feel the pathways inside her body screaming out in pain.

As though a thousand needles were stabbed into her and then subsequently dragged across her skin, she barely mustered the strength to stand up properly.

'How the hell did the other me withstand this pain.' Alice gritted her teeth while narrowing her eyes at Allura.

Even though her hunger was now restrained, she could still remember the sensations of conjuring these abilities. How [Alice] would tap into one of the many connections tethered to the Spiritual Heart in order to bring out its ability.

But it wasn't a simple case of manifestation. No. To use the powers, it was an act of exchange. To manifest the ability, she had to temporarily 'replace' one of her Sigils with the new one.

In essence, reconstructing her body and the contracts mid fight!

Right now, [Alice] had replaced her first Sigil with Tiamat and the third Sigil with a beast known as Blood Blossom Demon.

Naturally, she couldn't keep overwriting her contract since her body could only take so much, even with her insane regeneration.

But it was enough to keep up with Allura!

Chapter 290 - 290: Modifying Contracts

Tiamat's power could be split into 3 parts when transformed into a Sigil.

First was simple, an enhancement to her physical power. The horns and the wings were simply byproducts of having the Sigil activated.

Second effect was the red lightning and flames.

As for the third, that'll be the ability to condense the ambient energy around them into a single attack. It was a rather simple ability, but the important fact was that it drew energy from the surroundings rather than Alice herself!

Meaning, so long as the surroundings contain a sufficient level of energy, she could create an attack that rivalled Lords without needing a body to withstand that power.

'I don't know what my other self was trying to do with the Blood Blossom Demon. But if I just rely on Tiamat's power and my second Sigil, it should be sufficient.' Alice thought to herself. This was the first time she heard the name, Blood Blossom Demon.

As for its abilities, unless her other self explained, she wouldn't know what it did and it's too risky to experiment with it mid fight with no knowledge.

However, just using the powers individually wouldn't be good enough either. That kind of thinking was too restrictive.

Instead, she should be thinking outside the box, finding ways of combining her powers to achieve the best result.

It was the first lesson that Allura taught her.

Thinking about this, a smile crept up on Alice's face as she looked at Allura who was slowly approaching her.

"Have you finished thinking about what you need to do?" Allura asked while massaging her shoulders.

"Mnm, I have. Now I can't help but wonder if I can force you to use your sixth Sigil." Alice grinned.

"Don't get too overconfident now kiddo. Making me use my fifth is impressive enough as it is. Making me use my sixth is asking to get an ass whooping." Allura laughed as her figure flickered from her spot and shot towards Alice at full speed!

Invisible blades shot towards her in an attempt to grab her attention while flames concentrated around Allura's body.

White sparks flickered as she prepared her strike once more.

"Gotcha." Alice grinned.

Sucking in a sharp breath of air, she cleaved towards Allura with her blade as all the colour in the world seemed to disappear with the exception of her violet flame dancing on her body and blade!

The energy gathered towards Allura was forcefully pulled away with the violet flames 'cutting' the tether. Once that was cut, Tiamat's ability served to gather the ambient energy into Alice's blade for a slash!

Void Flux – Cleave!

Seeing her flames and invisible blades being extinguished, Allura bent her body back and narrowly dodged Alice's slash.

Beneath her, red lightning converged as Allura slammed her elbow into the ground to push herself to the side, dodging the attack.

Her eyes darted around the area, trying to locate Alice but to no avail. Sliding across the ground, Allura readied her fist as Void Fluxes manifested around her.

Slamming her fist down, she was about to create a wall of flames when a surge of violet flames rushed towards her from behind.

If she were to use her fire, the violet flames would consume her ability and let Alice grow stronger. If she focused on the flames, the Void Fluxes would signify her loss. It would be unfair to Alice if she were to ignore the Void Fluxes just because they did no damage to her.

A proud smile appeared on her face as Allura closed her eyes.

*BANG!!!

Flames exploded forth from Allura's body as it transitioned from the standard orange flame to a sparking white. But that wasn't the end.

From these sparks, a blue fire began to take over.

The existence of this flame began to distort reality as the ground beneath her started to bubble from the heat!

Releasing a punch on either side of her, the space began to rupture as Alice's violet flames and Void Fluxes were forcefully overpowered in an instant!

Before the destruction could expand, Kaden intervened and forcefully suppressed the damage using a veil of shadows.

"These are the strongest flames that I can muster. Congrats." Allura praised with a smile.

"Which is why we'll end things here. If I was to fight you with these, you'll probably die."

Dismissing her flames, Allura disappeared from her spot before appearing behind Alice and grabbing her by the back of her jacket.

"Ah..."

Seeing herself lifted off the ground, Alice glanced down and wiggled her legs a little before sighing in defeat.

"Are the blue flames hard to control?" She asked curiously since Allura wouldn't stop a spar for no reason.

"Control is... a broad term. They only operate on full power. If I use less than full power, it'll revert back to the white flames." Allura shrugged.

Since that was the case, it meant that getting hit by those flames would equal to taking the full brunt of Allura's attack without holding back!

Just thinking of this caused a shiver down Alice's spine as no amount of regeneration would help if there's nothing left to regenerate!

"But you should be proud of the fact that you made me use my blue flames, only peak six Sigil beasts or Lords have ever forced me to this stage you know?" Allura grinned, patting Alice on the head.

Naturally, she was still holding onto Alice from the back of her jacket.

A happy smile appeared on Alice's face as she deactivated her Resonance while a wave of lethargy washed over her, causing her to go limp.

"So how did you even get Tiamat's power? Did you have a spare vial of her blood on you or something?"

"My contract got overwritten temporarily. Instead of my first Sigil that let me create hallucinations and boost my physical power, it got replaced with Tiamat since some of her soul got left over and couldn't be returned. I'm not sure though since it's something my other self did, I don't have control over it." Alice shook her head.

Even now, she was in the dark about how her Core managed to modify the contract temporarily. Just because she saw her Core do this, it didn't mean she could understand the process and recreate it.

"So if you took a part of me with you, you'll be able to replace one of your Sigils with my power?" Allura raised her eyebrow as this was the first time she heard about the possibility of Sigils being replaced.

"I'm not sure. But it's possible." She wanted to ask her Core about this but she was unresponsive. Most likely due to the fact that her enjoyment was cut off thanks to Velouria's chains.

"Speaking of possibilities, do you think maybe you can give me a heads up next time you want to use the blue flames? Would be nice to not have to panic about you destroying this valley." Kaden sighed as he finally finished suppressing those flames.

"Ahahah sorry sorry~" Allura apologised while sticking her tongue out.

Shaking his head, he created a portal back to the house.

"It'll be easier to talk over some food. I'm sure both of you are hungry, especially Alice."

Teleporting back to their home, Kaden brought out some cake for the two of them while getting some mead on the side just for Alice.

Once she ate some cake, Allura began discussing the spar.

"First thing I think we need to address is your perception of range and how you should respond. You need to understand what kind of fighter you desire to be. Do you want to be a close ranged fighter? Or do you want to be long ranged?"

"Your abilities, skills and Sigils suggest long ranged yet you choose to enter close quarters combat constantly. Knowing what you want to focus on will be your first step."

Leaning back a little, Alice nodded her head as this has been an issue for a while now.

"Of course, there is still the option of being a hybrid fighter but I don't suggest it. Focusing on too many things will only cause it to be half assed. Though... That was before I realise that you can modify your contract." Allura shrugged.

"What do you think is better for me?" Alice asked while playing around with a fork.

"That's something you need to decide. Do you prefer to be a close ranged fighter or long ranged?" Kaden chuckled while Alice furrowed her brows and contemplated her choices.

If it was before, she'd lean towards being long ranged since she didn't have the body to keep up.

But after learning Bloodline Release, she managed to fix that to a certain extent. Now was just a matter of mastering this ability.

In all of her fights, she always defaulted to one style and that was close to mid ranged fighter who would supplement her fighting with casts.

Thinking about it for a moment, Alice opened her mouth and expressed her desire to remain true to this vision.

"Then your next goal is to figure out how you can best achieve that desire. You need more methods that just your standard slash such as stabs, feints, footwork and counters."

Before Allura could continue, they heard a knock on the door as Kaden got up.

He didn't think they would be getting so many guests in one day.

Upon opening the door, he saw a familiar figure and welcomed him in.

Wearing messy clothes and unkempt hair, Nalem yawned.

"It took a while, but I think I got some decent results from the experiments. Practicality is still questionable, but I think it's something you'll like." Nalem smiled as Alice sat up in surprise.

She still remembered the question she had asked the last time they talked.

"Can I blur their outline to make them immune to the effects of the Abyss?"

Clenching her fist, Alice waited with bated breath to hear the results of Nalem's research.