

ABYSSAL AWAKENING

Chapter 3: New Prison

A myriad of whispers filled her mind like tiny ants crawling within her ear. The cries of the Abyss and the howls of those who lost their life.

As though she was hearing the history of every victim claimed by the Abyss Waters, their haunting melodies clinging to her mind and body, Alice writhed in agony.

"!!!"

Jolting upright out of panic, Alice panted heavily as she quickly checked her body. The last thing she remembered was succumbing to the effects of the Abyss Waters. Without anything to heal her, she should have died before her body could purge the effects.

But she was alive. Joy filled her heart as her eyes glimmered with the shine of a thousand stars. Then she noticed the cuffs and a suffocating feeling clawed through her heart. It tore away the joy and bared its fangs at her throat, sinking them deep in her flesh.

Panic and anxiety crashed against her mind as she slowly raised her hand and placed it against the cold metal collar next to her throat.

Panting heavily, she could feel her heart attempting to burst out of her chest while a deafening ringing sound echoed against her ear, blocking out all noise.

Gritting her teeth, she tore away at the collar, trying her best to take it off.

The clashing sound of metal filled the room as Alice slammed her body against the metal bars of her cage.

'Was all of it a dream? Was the hope that I finally felt after all those years a lie?' She asked herself while going mad from rage.

Biting her lip, Alice continued to slam her hands against her collar in a vain attempt to free herself. The metal refused to budge.

A blinding flash of light obscured her vision as the taste of iron flooded her mouth. She felt as though the world crashed against the side of her face as blood rushed towards the impact point.

The impact caused Alice to relinquish all forms of control she had over her body, slamming against the metal bars. Her vision became blurred and a certain numbness settled within her mind.

Blinking her eyes in confusion, she failed to understand what just happened. All she could see was blood dripping against the rusted iron floor of her cage.

From the numbness and heat, pain flashed through her consciousness. It was then Alice realised she was hit by something against the side of her head.

The pain knocked Alice out of her panic attack. She was now able to calm herself to a certain degree in spite of being injured. It allowed Alice to reassess her situation. While there was indeed a collar around her neck, the girl understood that this was not the prison she grew up in.

After all, the one who had just punched her did not look like he belonged to a big family.

Countless, haphazard stitches stretched across his body with patches of skin belonging to different bodies covering the surface. She could only describe him as a towering monstrosity with malformed muscles. It looked like the muscles were expressly needed to lift the sheer weight of the cuffs and chains around his wrists.

A large, rusted iron helmet welded together from scrap metal dug into his flesh as gaping wounds bled open on the thing's neck. Despite it all, the wounds didn't seem to inconvenience the behemoth.

Seeing the dent in her cage, she realised that he tried to punch her. The iron bars saved her life. If not for them, she wouldn't be left off with just a bleeding wound.

With Alice now no longer making a scene by trying to get the collar off her neck, the giant sat down and slumped over. Soon, rhythmic breathing sounds reached Alice's ears.

Looking around her, Alice noticed she wasn't the only one locked up. Tens, if not hundreds of deformed captives were in a similar situation to her, their limbs bound to the cage.

Some of the captives had more deformities than the others, looking neither man nor beast — a side effect of Abyss Blood usage. The degree of some mutations made Alice wonder if the captors were using illegal, experimental Abyss Blood.

The worst case she could see within this room was a man firmly attached to the wooden walls with roots growing out of his body. He was in the late stages of transforming into a plant-based Abyss Beast. A familiar variety at that.

He had iridescent purple flowers created from his flayed flesh blossoming across his back and body. A glowing stamen within the centre of the flower dripped with his blood as emerald vines weaved through his skin like thread on fabric. Bloodied roots took hold of his wounds as the man took care not to move from his spot.

Even the smallest movement caused the roots to split, making the man wince from the pain.

All of this pointed to one Beast in particular, one whose blood Alice experienced first hand during her time within the Zenia prison.

During those days, the head scientist leading the experiments would document the Abyss Blood administered, the different types used in combination and those without, including the part the blood came from, the Beast it came from and the results. Alice took care to memorise as much as possible since it was the only other form of 'entertainment' she could occupy herself with.

'Blood Lily, a carnivorous flower that lay traps for its prey with poisoned thorns and can keep itself alive through blood. When their 'blood' is extracted, the properties you'll gain is increased healing through coming into contact with any kind of blood. It can even go as far as regrowing lost limbs...' Alice thought to herself before glancing back at the man.

'Side effects include flowers slowly blooming on the body of the person the more they use this blood. And so, they had their name changed to Vampire Lily and deemed unusable for the general public.'

Judging by his physical state, Alice understood that just one more dose of the blood would kill the man.

She couldn't help but think back to the head scientist who constantly preached about how her body was a gift from the unseen gods, a path for humanity to discover the uses of Abyss Blood.

He showered her with news on what the latest product had done for the world. His fanaticism with the cursed blood that runs through the depths of the Abyss reached heights Alice couldn't even imagine, with her body the perfect toy for him to use. He would talk about how, if one person's suffering could cure the world, it was that person's job to offer themselves up.

Alice shivered.

Shaking her head, she tried her best to ignore the past. She needed to find out about her location. The strange man told her to search for a woman called Allura, but he didn't mention what she looked like nor what her full name was. How was Alice supposed to find a woman just based on the first name?

Standing up, she instantly felt a wave of lethargy kick in from the head trauma as she tripped over her own feet.

"Unless you want the Bruiser to punch through that cage and kill you, I suggest you don't move around too much and just sleep." A voice whispered as Alice glanced over.

The voice belonged to a sickly woman with short grey hair that looked as if it had the colour sucked out of them. She had a single golden pupil, the other having disappeared into a flower. Similar to the man in the late stages of Vampire Lily abuse, the woman's eye was turned into a Vampire Lily. She wore a tattered burlap sack with the same cuffs and chains as Alice.

"Okay. Erm... here, where?" Alice asked after a short pause, trying to find the words in her mind. After being thrown into the prison with nothing but experiments to look forward to, her family didn't really place education high on the list of things to do.

"That's a weird way of talking, but okay. I'm not too sure either since I've been recently resold to this place after my last owner got fed up with me. They said

this place was like a fighting arena or something. That's all I know, sorry." She apologised with a small smile.

"I'm guessing we'll find out tomorrow so just rest for now. Plus, you got this guy sitting in front of our cage. It's best we stop talking and just sleep." The woman pointed at the Bruiser twitching and showing signs of waking up once more.

Nodding her head slowly, Alice laid down and stared at the metal roof of her cage. Countless thoughts crossed her mind but she only had one goal. To get out of this place and find the woman who would apparently help her get her revenge.

She was skeptical of the strange man's lofty promises but for someone like her, this was probably the best chance she's got to get back some semblance of life.

'Please don't let this be a dream... I don't want to go back. I can handle being collared like this... At least I can die if I want to...' Alice thought to herself as she rubbed her finger against her choker once more. She didn't fear death. For her, she had been living side by side with death for 10 long years. What she feared was a life worse than death, one where she couldn't end it even if she desired.

Suppressing the anxiety within her mind, she allowed herself to rest on the stack of straw in her cage. Even though this cage couldn't compare to the room Alice's family gave her, she felt more relaxed here.

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Standing in the empty white room while holding a mangled collar, a man stood in deafening silence. Wearing a decorative red coat that hung off his shoulders, adorned with golden markings, the man wore a black and gold nobleman's attire beneath the jacket with an ornate sword hanging off his waist. Despite his age, he still had a head of dark brown hair swept back along with a full beard.

Behind him was a corridor filled with countless patches of blood and hundreds of bodies. They were some of the finest guards in the Zenia family, yet all of them met the same fate.

Known by the name Luthor Zenia, head of the Zenia family, he was Alice's father. The one who ordered she be imprisoned after her physique was discovered.

He could remember the creature he kept in this room, the one who used to be his daughter.

Clenching his fists, he shattered the collar without any issues.

Bitter memories from Alice's birthday filled his mind, a time where his world was cut in two.

"Assign people to find out what has happened here. Get our trackers to hunt down any traces. I want to know exactly what the hell happened in this room. If the subject is alive, she cannot be allowed into the hands of another family. Capture her at all costs." He ordered through gritted teeth.

"If you can't capture her..."

"Kill her."

His eyes blazed with a cold flame.

The light in the corridor flickered as a few dozen shadows appeared for a moment, coalescing into monstrous figures, before disappearing into nothingness.

Once alone, he pulled out a locket. Opening it, he gazed at the picture of a beautiful woman. She had dark purple hair tied into a low ponytail. Wearing a silver dress, the woman carried a small child in her arms while two boys stood beside her.

"Sienna..." He muttered before taking a deep breath and putting the locket away.

"Concerned about the monster we kept in here, dear husband?" A feminine voice rang out behind him as Luthor shook his head.

"Do not worry about it. A monster like her has nowhere to go." Luthor reassured while leaving the white room without looking back.