

Abyssal A 341

Chapter 341 - 341: Theron

It didn't take long for Ria to come back from the space that Kaden prepared but her expression didn't look well.

Her face was pale and she didn't want to talk just yet. She simply apologised to Alice before returning to her room, causing Alice to wonder about what Kaden even showed her for her to be like this.

Once she was sure that Ria was safe and back, Alice made her way out of the dorms and towards the campus.

Just as she stepped out of her room, she remembered a question she should've asked Kaden.

'I should've asked her what's up with the principal's appearance.' Alice sighed.

[If mine master wishes to know I can answer that for you.] Cayla spoke up.

Once again, Alice was reminded just how nice it was for Cayla to be awake. A lot of her questions that she couldn't get answers from could now be answered because she was here.

[The Crimson Witch of Ruin is a vampiric type of beast who can be considered to be the best at using Blood based powers below the level of Lord. They take attributes of whoever's blood they drink and the stronger their opponent is, the more potent this attribute becomes. For the principal, I can only assume she drank Allura's blood at some point when I was sleeping.

[Knowing what Allura is like and her powers, it's only natural that her appearance hasn't changed in years since none of the blood she drinks would've been potent enough to override the influence of Allura's power.] Cayla explained as she lay lazily on her bed.

'I see... So what happens if she drinks my blood then? Would she look like me since my blood is basically concentrated Abyss Blood?'

[She'll probably die.] Cayla replied bluntly.

With Alice's blood right now, having Abyss Lord souls mixed into her spiritual heart, anyone who comes into contact with her blood through ingestion would die in due time. Even without Sigil powers, her blood was akin to a poison with no antidote.

In essence, similar to Famine's power though Alice's blood can be forcefully expelled with enough power.

'Speaking of drinking your blood, what do you think happened to the b*tch that killed Lilia?' Alyss asked as Alice's expression turned dark.

During her fight against Gallard, she had poured her blood into the mouth of Bella, the one responsible for everything that happened to Ria. Gallard also got some blood but compared to what she fed Bella, it was nothing.

[I'm assuming her state wouldn't be good. But the potency of your blood only began to shine after your second Sigil. Before that, it's comparable to impure Abyss Blood so she's probably suffering from side effects but she's still alive to some degree.

[Plus I doubt Theron is someone who'll let his wife die to something like this.] Cayla recalled as Alice was surprised she knew them.

[Allura mentioned them when you were sleeping and I overheard. I know about Theron, he's an Abyss Lord of one of the central territories. His title is a bit unique even amongst Abyss Lords. When the Will grants a title to a Lord, it's usually their authority followed by the moniker of Abyss Lord. However, his title is simply [Slayer].

He's someone who reached the realm of Abyss Lord through martial arts and physical reinforcement and honestly, the worst match up for you.]

Hearing this, Alice furrowed her brows as her revenge seemed so close yet at the same time, so far. With Bella being guarded by an Abyss Lord, a physical fighter type at that, it's going to be hard for her to achieve her desired goal.

'Why did the Will even give him the title of Slayer? I thought it would've called him Abyss Lord of Slaughter or something.' Alyss folded her arms.

[Because he reached his current level by killing three Abyss Lords while he was at six Sigils.]

After fighting against Abyss Lords herself, Alyss knew what kind of danger they posed, especially if they didn't have the absurd ability of stealing powers and Sigils like her and Alice.

So for Theron to have killed three Abyss Lords and even for the Will to grant him the title of [Slayer] then it's not a revenge they can treat lightly.

Killing Bella means making an enemy out of Theron.

'Why hasn't he made a move yet then?' Alice asked curiously while taking the train towards the Research Department. She received several strange glances mixed with fear but she ignored that for now.

[Because of Allura and Gin. Theron is an old... acquaintance. They can't be considered friends but they've done jobs for each other. Theron knows that coming to kill you means incurring the wrath of both Allura and Gin, something he can't afford unless he's willing to die with everyone.]

[I'm guessing he's going to try to bargain with you if the two of you ever meet and you try to kill his wife.]

'I'll pass. I'm not letting Bella live.' Alice narrowed her eyes. She refused to let the killer of her first friend off like this.

Hearing this, Alyss grinned as she was of the same thought.

Stepping off the train, Alice could see the Research Department that she had visited since she was helping Arunya with her experiments.

Figuring that she could probably ask Arunya to introduce her to her head of Department, Alice made her way up to Arunya's labs.

Knocking on her door, Alice could hear the sounds of movement from behind as it was soon unlocked with a click and Arunya opened the door.

"Ah... It's you. Have you rested up after your incident in the Inverted World?" Arunya asked monotonously as usual but Alice could tell that she was worried.

"Yes I have. What about you? I know you were trying for the Special Class test right?" Alice asked as Arunya invited her into the labs.

"Don't remind me. Because of the incident with the Inverted World, the exams were postponed for now. Those that were going for the Special Class exams like me will be evaluated at another time."

Hearing this, Alice coughed awkwardly since she was the source of the abnormalities with the exam.

"Tea?" Arunya offered as Alice thought for a moment before nodding her head.

She could see that Arunya had just finished an experiment.

"So how may I help you today? Or are you here to borrow some equipment? I can see that you've undergone... some changes after going into the Inverted World. The crown's disappeared and your left eye has changed." Arunya asked.

Their contract was long fulfilled and there was no reason for Alice to be here today unless she needed something that Arunya could help with.

"Ah I'm not looking to borrow equipment today. I was wondering if you could introduce me to the Department Head of Theory. I had applied to the Combat Department before but after the Inverted World, I wanted to do more research regarding Abyss Blood as a focus rather than fighting." Alice scratched her cheek.

Even with her side effects preventing her from expressing her emotions and forcing her to speak in a monotonous tone, Arunya stared at Alice for a long minute before letting out a sigh.

"Are... You sure you wish to see the Department Head?" Arunya asked hesitantly.

"Is there an issue?" Alice tilted her head.

"She is in love with the Abyss, beasts and blood. By love, I don't mean as a hobby. She is a deviant when it comes to that kind of thing. Seeing as how your eye and crown changed, she'll be very interested in finding out about that."

Thinking about it, Alice figured that it shouldn't be too bad. It wasn't like she didn't see the Department Head of Theory during the exam and when she did, she seemed fine.

Seeing Alice's expression, Arunya sighed inwardly as it was probably better for her to see Elara for herself before judging.

"I don't mind introducing you to her, but I suggest you see her for yourself before making a decision. You can still borrow my equipment even if you go to the combat department so it's not like it's impossible."

Finishing her tea, the two left the labs while Arunya locked the doors behind her.

As per usual, she made her way to the food court to pick up some lunch for Elara so that she didn't starve, confusing Alice since Elara is a grown adult.

She should be able to take care of herself to some extent.

However, Arunya simply replied saying that Elara gets a little carried away when she finds something she likes and forgets to eat or sleep.

"It's not like she can't survive without food but it'll be a pain if she dies." That was her main reason.

Taking the train to Elara's Labs, Alice was surprised to see the Department Head living in this kind of space, detached and tucked away in the corner of the Academy grounds.

The same was true for Xinbei, making Alice wonder if this was the standard between all the Department Heads.

Knocking on the door, Arunya cleared her throat.

"Professor, I'm here. I've brought a guest so please make yourself presentable." Arunya shouted out.

"Ah! Send them away. I'm... Ah! A little busy right now." Elara shouted back as Arunya froze up, realising that Elara must be exploring her own body again.

Glancing back, she could see Alice looking clueless at what the sounds were and sighed inwardly.

"Sorry Alice, seems like she's... busy with experiments for now. I'll arrange another time for you okay?" Arunya sighed as Alice nodded her head, grateful that Arunya was willing to arrange a time.

*BANG!!!

"?!?!"

At that moment, the door was kicked open as Arunya jumped in surprise despite her neutral expression.

She could see Elara with her hastily put-on clothes and a flushed expression.

Upon seeing Alice, her legs trembled before she tried her best to compose herself.

"Ahem. Did I say I was busy? I mean sorry, give me a moment to clean up after my... experiments. I'll be right with you." She smiled before slamming the door closed.

At this moment, Arunya couldn't help but feel as though she sent Alice into the tiger's den.

The only reason for Elara to have this kind of reaction is...

Her pupils shrunk as she snapped her head towards Alice's direction.

'Oh f*ck.'

Chapter 342 - 342: Meeting Elara

While Elara was cleaning up her lab, Arunya quickly dragged Alice to the side.

"Hm? What's wrong?" Alice asked curiously, wondering why Arunya seemed panicked.

"I've made a mistake. You should go to the combat department instead. I'll do whatever I can to lend you the equipment so it's best you escape now." Arunya shook her head.

However, her reactions only served to confuse her further as she wasn't sure what invoked this kind of reaction.

"There's too much to explain but basically, the professor isn't... Normal. She's been-"

"Aww~ Runi, I hope you're not talking bad about me behind my back." Elara's voice rang out as Arunya froze up at the sound of her voice.

Looking up, she could see Elara hanging from the rocks using her appendages with a soft smile on her face.

There was a glint in her eyes that Arunya was very familiar with. The uncontrollable smile on her face, the red on her cheeks and the way she would subtly lick her lips.

Elara was aroused as hell right now!

Descending from the rocks, she blocked the escape and gestured for them to enter her labs.

"I'm not going to do anything to your friend. I'm simply surprised that you brought... the one mentioned by Xinbei and Garret to me." Elara chuckled while narrowing her gaze at Alice who seemed clueless regarding what was happening.

Now that it's reached this stage, Arunya could only apologize to Alice in her mind.

Thankfully, Elara shouldn't do anything crazy. At least Arunya hoped she wouldn't. This was the first time in a long time that Elara's been this infatuated towards someone. With the last incident in mind, she'll be playing it safe.

*Sigh

Letting out a sigh, Arunya turned around and made her way into the Labs while Alice's gaze flickered between the two of them.

'Do you know what's going on?' Alice asked inwardly.

'Nope.' Alyss shook her head.

[I sense a great danger, but I can't quite pinpoint where this feeling originates from.] Cayla furrowed her brows.

With them unable to give her an answer, Alice simply shrugged before stepping into Elara's lab.

As she entered, she could see that the layout of the lab was rather simple with the living room being connected to the main lab, a kitchen, a toilet and what Alice could only assume to be Elara's room since it's the only one with a closed door.

Arunya placed the food she bought onto the table and looked around in mild surprise. She had expected there to be clothes thrown about yet it was surprisingly clean.

Running her fingers along the window sill, she noticed the lack of dust.

Though thinking about it more carefully, it made sense if Alice was the one whom she'd been infatuated with over the last few weeks.

For Elara to be this focused on someone for this long, Arunya doubted that Elara wanted to make a bad impression.

Meaning, if she doesn't hold herself back, Arunya could expose everything to Alice.

"Just sit anywhere you want. Except my room of course." Elara smiled, gesturing to the table while standing in front of her door.

"Now, what brings a cutie like you to my lab?" Elara asked, turning her appendages that extended from her lab coat into a seat and sat down.

"I wanted to ask if it was possible to change my selection when it came to which department I wanted to enter. I've registered for the Combat Department Special Class but after the Inverted World, I think it's better if I come to the Theory Department instead." Alice asked as Elara twitched momentarily upon hearing that Alice wanted to come to the Theory Department.

"Of course, I can make that happen no problems. Though are you looking to try to become a special class like Runi or a standard/advanced student?" Elara smiled.

The appendages of her 'seat' began to shuffle as she closed in on Alice and circled around her.

Alice was a little weirded out by this but tried her best to ignore it.

"As high as I can get. I assume there are benefits that I can only get if I'm of a certain rank."

"Indeed~ Runi wants to reach Special Class because you get a designated spot all to yourself on these grounds. A personal budget handed to you by the Academy and not tied to any department, access to all kinds of information support and ties to large families." Elara proclaimed while Arunya nodded her head by the side.

Right now, Elara was behaving herself so there was no need for Arunya to interrupt.

When she wasn't aroused, Elara took her job seriously since she enjoyed upholding her reputation as Head of Department.

Only her close students know what she's truly like once you look past her reputation and act. She's a woman who places Abyss Blood research and experimentation above all else.

If she could be summarised in one word, it would be the pursuit of knowledge.

"But just for you~ I can try help you take the Special Class exam for Theory even though you went for Combat. Your original participation got postponed due to the incident just like Runi here. I'm sure it'll be fine to change you from taking the Combat exam to the Theory one. What kind of research are you planning on conducting?" Elara asked curiously.

As much as she would love to do something else with Alice right now, she had to fulfil her basic duties as an educator first to make a good impression.

Even for her, she couldn't place someone in the Special Class for no reason at all. Alice needed a topic to research and results to back it up. Otherwise, she would be undeserving of that role.

When presented with this question, Alice recalled the secrets that she wished to uncover. While they were numerous, it all ties back to one topic.

"I want to research the relationship between the Abyss, the Sigil holders and Apostles." Alice replied with a light of determination in her eyes.

"A classic yet also a very difficult topic at that. Research in this field has stagnated quite a bit over the recent years and lots of people are thinking we're reaching a limit unless we explore deeper into the Abyss. What caused you to choose this topic?" Elara asked curiously.

Seeing as how the crown disappeared and that her left eye had changed, she assumed Alice would be studying the changes in side effects caused by the Abyss Blood.

"When I was in the Inverted World, I was sent back in history. I've watched people use Sigils in ways I never thought of before, methods to manipulating the energy that flows in our body that powers these Sigils. The connection between the Abyss and the people who wield its power and an Apostle that can latch a curse onto the Sigils.

"When I'm shown all of this, isn't it natural that I'd want to find out more about it?" Alice smiled as Elara's eyes flickered with an understanding light.

Rushing in front of Alice, she grabbed her by the hands.

"Exactly! Ah~ you get it don't you? When faced with a wall of mysteries, you just want to break it down and find out what's the truth behind the matter. Unfortunately, the research of our generation has stagnated.

"People are more focused on the Blood itself rather than the connections it makes. Those employed by large families are prone to looking for shortcuts rather than truth seeking. Especially for those blasted Zenia's, monopolising the current market and governing the discovery and creation of new usable Abyss Bloods." Elara complained.

"Their research has stagnated in the recent years and yet they continue to act as though they're the centre piece of the world. There's no denying their achievement but one cannot be arrogant forever. The young seedlings who tread onto the path of research needs a proper place to flourish!"

Nodding her head in agreement, Alice now gained a new piece of information. The Zenia's have stagnated!

'Seems like my body was the cornerstone of their research. Now that I disappeared, it would be hard for them to bring out new Bloods unless they begin killing mountains of people again.' Alice thought to herself.

Meanwhile, Arunya was baffled by Elara's reaction. The lewd Elara that she was used to seeing was nowhere in sight. Right now, all she could see was Elara being excited by the prospect that someone shares a similar perspective into research with her.

However, this thought was cut short once she noticed that her chair was moving strangely while she was still holding Alice's hand.

The way her body would subtly twitch as she continued talking to Alice caused Arunya's expression to turn dark.

"Professor, please compose yourself." Arunya interrupted as Elara glanced back.

Seeing the silent reminders, Elara coughed and let go of Alice's body while moving away. Understanding that this wasn't the right time to be this... excited just yet.

*Cough!

"Sorry about that. But yes, I can put in a word for you to change over to the Theory Department." Elara held back her smile as she nodded her head.

"Thank you. Is there anything I can do to thank you?" Alice offered while Arunya froze up in shock.

'Why would you give her this kind of offer?!'

As for Elara, her pupils shrunk while her body began to tremble. She swallowed her saliva repeatedly, imagining the kinds of favours Alice could do to thank her.

Understanding that this was approaching her limit of restraining herself, Arunya stood up.

"I think we'll stop here for now. Professor needs a bit of time to herself and I can help schedule a meeting for next time. Would that be okay?" She asked as Alice glanced over in confusion.

"Ah~ Mnm... Yes we can do that." Elara nodded as her shoulders trembled. If Arunya didn't step in, she might do something she'll come to regret since this was her limit of holding back.

Getting Elara's permission to leave for now, Arunya escorted Alice out of the labs while Elara locked the door behind them.

Stepping into her room, she could see the 'shrine' she created for Alice. The crystals that hold her recording, outfits that Alice had bought, weapons she's touched and so on. Elara had collected them all.

And now, adding to that collection is the chair Alice sat on.

Tossing her clothes aside, Elara jumped onto the bed, unable to hold herself back anymore.

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Upon leaving the house, Alice was suddenly assaulted by the feeling of invisible hands crawling up and down her skin, causing her to shiver before the feeling disappeared, confusing her further.

Chapter 343 - 343: Kale Grani

Once they were out and Elara was left on her own, Arunya let out a deep sigh.

"Are you alright?" Alice asked curiously while Arunya nodded her head.

"I'll be fine. Just a warning though, don't stay in the same room with the Professor alone. If you need to meet her, let me know. She can get carried away with her love of Abyss Blood and since your side effects are unique, it might trigger an... Unknown reaction from her like just now." Arunya warned as Alice blinked her eyes but nodded eventually.

Talking for a little longer, Arunya made her way back to her own lab to continue her experiment while Alice took this time to familiarise herself with the layout of the Theory Department.

She could occasionally see students walking around with crests attached to their outfits signifying which families they were from.

Aside from one or two that were connected to the Zenia's, Alice was unfamiliar with the overall hierarchy of noble families from the surface.

'Actually now that things have settled down a little, I can probably spend some time looking for the Zenia's.' She thought while narrowing her gaze. This was her original goal for coming to this academy in the first place.

'Where do you think they would be staying?' Alyss sat up as she too was interested in this. Both of them have a grudge against the Zenia's who tortured them for ten whole years.

'Knowing what the Zenias are like, I doubt they'll be staying somewhere shabby. Probably an expensive Inn or something along those lines.'

[O' master mine, have you considered that perhaps the principal has eyes all over the Academy and wouldn't let you murder the Zenia's? on Academy grounds?] Cayla added as both Alice and Alyss went silent.

A short moment passed before a grin appeared on both of their faces.

'Are you thinking what I'm thinking?' Alice asked while Alyss laughed.

'I don't know, I can't read your mind. But are YOU thinking what I'm thinking?'

'Who knows. Cayla, you said that the principal is watching right?' Alice asked as Cayla nodded her head.

'Then it's simple, I just need to disguise myself and murder them 'outside' of Academy grounds. Then it's an issue for the port city rather than the Academy no?' Alice smiled happily at the mention of murdering the Zenia's.

'We can replace some of our Sigils so it can't be traced back to us. Who would think someone can just change their powers on the fly?' Alyss laughed.

If they were to change their appearance using either Abyss Blood or a Sigil ability and then change their powers, it'd be near impossible to track them down.

For Abyss Blood, the side effects would wear off and for Sigil Abilities, no one would link it back to her.

Seeing the two begin to plan a murder, Cayla was speechless but considering their grievances with the Zenia family, it's only natural for them to be like this.

Then as the voice of reason, Cayla had to remind the two that they can't just kill everyone and anyone.

[O' master mine, please at least confirm that they've done something horrible before killing them. Sometimes good people join bad places out of necessity.] Cayla sighed. She didn't plan on stopping them so long as they have reasons for this slaughter.

If they don't, it'll be no different to what the Eclipse was doing.

'Mnm... That's a fair point.' Alice furrowed her brows before agreeing. It wasn't as though every person in the Zenia was evil. In fact, the only ones she knows of are her own father, brothers and the Scholars. Most of the Zenia members didn't even know this was happening in the shadows.

'So what? Some of them might've joined out of necessity but they're still lending a hand in this. Spectators are just as guilty.' Alyss frowned.

'No no, Cayla's got a point. Do you have an interrogate type Sigil at your disposal? If we can dig up some dirt we'll be able to kill them without any consequences. Well... relatively speaking.' Alice shook her head.

'I got a few. But you're still just a four Sigil user at the end of the day. Replace too much and you won't be able to kill them.'

'What if we ask the Underground for help? They're good at collecting information. If we can find them, get the information we need and form a kill list.' Alice suggested as it'll save them the effort of actually needing to hunt them down and finding out the information.

'I still think it's easier for us to just kill every Zenia we come across but sure, whatever floats your boat.' Alyss shrugged, losing interest.

'Leave me out of the boring stuff, as long as I can snap the neck of a Zenia b*stard I'll be happy.'

Seeing this, both Alice and Cayla smiled helplessly but they understood why Alyss was like this.

[Using the Underground is a good idea but you need to be careful when dealing with them. You can get a lot of information back but at the same time, they'll track information about you. I wouldn't be surprised if they already have a page detailing all of your information, appearance, abilities and movements. That's the kind of organisation the Underground is.] Cayla warned.

'I know. Do you think they realised that I'm a Zenia?' Alice asked curiously.

[. . . Unlikely unless they have an informant within the Zenia's that was involved with your experiments. And even then, if they did, they would've noticed your 'value' and sought to free you from the Zenia's so they can monopolise you themselves.] Cayla shook her head.

Hearing this, Alice's expression turned cloudy as once again, she was reminded of the value behind her body. It was quite the miracle for her to run into people like Ria and Allura who didn't care about this.

'Either way, let's change my appearance and see what kind of information they can give me.'

'Which Sigil do you want me to swap out?' Alyss asked while glancing back.

'Change my first one.'

Raising her hand, Alyss snapped her finger as Alice could feel a slight burning sensation on the back of her hand.

'Mirror Jester, you can take the appearance data of everyone you've seen thus far and either replicate it or make a new identity all together. If you choose to replicate someone's appearance, based on what you know of them, you'll instinctively understand what you should or shouldn't say.' Alyss explained while Alice thanked her.

Opening her eyes, she returned back to reality and made her way down to the docks.

But just as she left the Academy grounds, she realised a big issue regarding buying information.

Money.

"F*ck... I'm broke."

Ria was looking after most of their money while Alice only carried around 10 gold pieces on her own body.

With this, she could only buy the most basic package for information. More since she wasn't going with her identity of Alice Agnelia but rather someone made up.

Scratching her hair, Alice figured it was probably best if she earns some money first.

In the end, she decided to go to the gambling arena. Getting Alyss to swap all of her Sigils to weapon based abilities, Alice registered herself as Kale Grani and fought as many opponents as she could before getting kicked out.

Her second Sigil was switched out for Tiamat's Sigil, boosting her attack power and giving all of her attacks a signature red hue that drained the world of colour briefly.

Her third was changed to Asur, the Abyss Lord of Corrosion.

And finally, her fourth Sigil was changed to Allura. Specifically, her sixth Sigil of instant slashes.

With this combination of abilities and a spare weapon rather than Void Fang since it could be tracked back to her, Alice broke 3 weapons per battle but managed to win them all with relative ease.

While she was fighting, she could hear the murmurs of the spectators, wondering who she was and when she appeared in this city since no one had seen her before.

Her new form consisted of long blonde hair and crimson eyes.

Regarding her outfit, the Mirror Jester took care of that as well. She wore a black jacket with large sleeves. A black peaked cap, a turtleneck collar with belts and buckles across the jacket and a pair of black shorts. She wore a simple pair of shoes, exposing her delicate legs.

With this identity, she managed to earn 50 gold since she was fighting those with 4 Sigils and 5 despite only revealing 3 abilities and never more. Even those with resonance lost to her which was to be expected. After all, she had three Abyss Lord level abilities!

Shaking the coin purse with a cheerful smile on her face, Alice skipped out of the gambling arena while the owners were furious.

'50 gold should be enough for a level 3 package. Level 2 was rather stingy with information last time I bought it so level 3 should be exactly what I need.' She mused to herself.

Looking towards the docks, she could see another ship landing and wondered if it was a new batch of students or perhaps visitors.

With her current identity, curiosity and free spirited acted as her base and thus she was inclined to checking out what was happening. The more she acted, the more convincing it'll be for when she visited the Underground.

As she approached the docks, she saw that it was mostly young Hunters who had a look of awe on their face when looking at the inverted world.

'Seems like they're new students. I'm guessing the news of having the Exams postponed allowed more people to come and give it a try.'

Since it was nothing interesting, Alice turned around and prepared to leave when she caught sight of a certain crest.

The Zenia Crest!

Chapter 344 - 344: Erick Zenia

'The Zenia Crest!!!'

Widening her eyes, Alice's hand clenched tightly as killing intent seeped from her body. Just thinking about them made her blood boil but she closed her eyes and bit her lip.

She had to calm down.

If she's too hasty, she'll never be able to achieve her goal.

Killing them on sight is good and all but what truly mattered to her was rooting out every last piece of scum within the family. Be that her father, brothers, scholars or even the chef. The Zenia family will be no more once she was done with them.

Taking a deep breath, Alice calmed her mind and approached the port, wanting to see who it was.

In her mind, she could hear Alyss complaining that they should go kill them all immediately, but Alice ignored it for now.

Leaning against the wall near the entrance of the port, she peeked over and saw a group consisting of seven members.

During her time locked up, she was able to familiarise herself with certain ranks of the family.

Guards, researchers and core members.

These were the names they gave them since she never found out about their real names. However, based on their uniform, their reactions during certain incidents she caused and their reaction towards the ranks, Alice summarised them into these categories.

'Four guards, two researchers and seems like one core member.' Alice narrowed her eyes.

Unfortunately, she didn't recognise any of them which was a slight shame but she could never give up on an opportunity to kill a Zenia.

'Three of the guards have six Sigils while the one in the middle has five. Researchers are both on three and the core is four. Killing them should be doable if I take advantage of the current situation.'

Narrowing her eyes, she began to walk towards their direction.

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Looking towards the 'Eye' of the Inverted World, I am once again reminded of how surreal the Abyss was.

A whole new world within this Realm, a world where it lets us travel back in time and witness history being made.

There was an incident recently that caused quite an issue with the Academy but it's also this same incident that allowed us to better barter with the principal.

Finally, us Zenia researchers can explore the inverted world without the hindrance of the Academy.

Of course, I wasn't the only one who was in awe of the Inverted World. My colleague whom followed me on this journey only recently joined the Zenia research department.

"Melissa, let's focus up. Remember what we're here for and it's certainly not a holiday." I cleared my throat and hid my excitement.

"Oh you can't expect me not to be excited seeing this can you? It's a peek into history Michael! History!" Melissa shouted excitedly as I couldn't help but smile and nod in agreement.

Indeed, when else are you going to get a chance like this?

The formation of an 'Inverted World' was an extremely rare occurrence that can only happen if an Abyss Lord dies. Not only that, but they have to die in a peculiar manner that allows for the Abyss to form a gateway to the network of information.

After that, someone needs to be close enough and powerful enough to seal this gateway to preserve the passage.

All of these conditions had to be achieved for the formation of an Inverted World and yet we were standing in front of such a miracle.

"Let's not attract any more attention. You'll have plenty of chances to explore the Inverted World if we can reach a deal with the Academy." Erick Zenia smiled towards Melissa.

He had a fancy towards my colleague and it was clear as day. The fact that he brought her to this kind of important talk because she wanted to see the Inverted World was a clear indication.

"Alright~ I guess shopping and exploring can come later." Melissa sighed.

Just as we were about to continue onwards, I heard a collision near us as one of the Hunters had bumped into the guards on accident.

"Watch where you're walking dammit! Don't you have eyes?!" The Guard shouted with an annoyed expression.

*Sigh... Not again.

We've had people bump into us several times during this journey, sometimes they were trying to rob us because we seemed rich, and sometimes they'd try to lure us somewhere. I could only assume it was another one of these situations.

But when I glanced over, I was stunned by the person who was rubbing their nose with tears in her eyes.

That long blonde hair and naïve red eyes, the way she smacked her sleeve against the guard's leg, it was hard not to pause and observe her.

"I'm sorry, does this road belong to you? Can't you see you're blocking the way to the schedule board?!" She pouted in annoyance while standing up.

I could hear the murmuring of the crowd around us, whispers of amongst them saying that the guard was done for.

I couldn't quite understand it but from their words, it seems like she was a newcomer to the gambling arena who made a name for herself in just one day.

But seeing her raise her small fist, I couldn't imagine someone like her being able to make a name for herself arena.

The guard looked infuriated by her gesture as he reached for his weapon but Erick interfered.

"Now now, let's not fight. We're new to this city so we're a little unfamiliar with the placement of things. Please, we don't want any trouble." He apologised while gesturing for the Guards to step back.

The girl leaned towards Erick and scrutinised him before scratching her cheek.

"Well... I got a little heated too. Sorry about that." She glanced to the side with a small blush on her face.

Clearing her throat, she adjusted her posture and folded her arms.

"I'm Kale. Kale Grani." She introduced herself with a wide grin.

"Erick. Erick Zenia."

Hearing this, she paused and blinked her eyes.

"Wait for real?" She asked, scanning her eyes across all of us before looking back to Erick.

Seems like she was someone who didn't think she'd bump into a Zenia which was to be expected. As the prime family involved in Abyss Blood, it'd be stranger for people not to know about us.

"Yes, for real." Erick chuckled while Kale smiled awkwardly.

"You're really a Zenia? In this place? Really? You're not trying to scam people with the Zenia name, are you? If you're really a Zenia I'll treat you all to a meal in the best restaurant here hmph!"

The guards looked at one another with a laugh as Erick pointed towards his chest where the crest of the Zenia family could be seen.

"Here's the authentic crest. You might not know but anyone impersonating the Zenias are dealt with rather seriously." Erick warned.

Seeing the crest, she began to sweat as she poked her fingers together.

"Erm... I'll be honest I didn't think you were a real Zeniaahaha... Sorry! I'm kind of broke!" She apologised while sticking out her tongue playfully.

She was like a child who was caught doing something bad and tried to make an excuse, only for it to be exposed immediately.

Seeing my reaction towards Kale, Melissa jabbed me in the ribs causing me to buckle over.

"Don't tell me she caught your eye too?" Melissa pouted while I could only laugh awkwardly.

But this could work in my favour since it solves the headache of Erick being interested in Melissa.

If I could have him get interested in this Kale instead, it'll make things easier for us.

"You are? Well what a shame since I'm indeed a Zenia. What to do what to do~" Erick teased while scratching his chin as though thinking about an alternative solution.

"Erm... I'm broke but I'm strong! Don't look down on me just because I have three Sigils! I can knock down Hunters with five Sigils ya know?!" Kale flexed her feeble arms proudly.

"Tell you what, if you go to the Inverted World I can act as a guard for you." She grinned.

The guards that were laughing earlier stopped laughing as it seemed like she was looking down on them.

"What did you say you brat?!" The guard that bumped into her earlier frowned.

"Exactly what I said gorilla. If you don't like it why don't we take this into the arena? I can hand you a can of whoop ass and earn a bit of money while I'm there." Kale taunted while giving him the middle finger.

Seeing that things were about to erupt between the guard and the girl, I cleared my throat.

"Sir, we're still waiting for the Academy to arrange a meeting time and we had a long journey as well. I'm sure a quick detour to the arena shouldn't be an issue." I whispered towards Erick who nodded his head in agreement.

"Plus, she's been sneaking a few glances at you. Seems to me that she wants to impress you." I made sure that it was only audible to Erick.

Knowing him for a long time, this was bound to spur him on and it wasn't like it was a lie either. She had indeed been sneaking glances at him even before realising that he was a Zenia. Perhaps it was because he looked handsome but this was enough for him to agree to the arena spar.

###

'F*ck f*ck f*ck! Gross gross gross!' Alice cursed in her mind repeatedly as she had to act sweet towards a Zenia of all people. However, the more they interacted the better it was for her since she could leave a mark on them to track them down later.

She had thrown on the arena suggestion seeing if they would bite the bait or not but it was unlikely. Yet one of the researchers actually inadvertently helped her and at the same time, grossed her out.

She was looking at him thinking of ways to butcher him, when it did become looks of wanting to impress the b*stard???

Meanwhile, Alyss was laughing hysterically at Alice's pain during acting while Cayla simply relaxed on her bed.

But now that he had agreed to her suggestion of going to the arena, things would become a lot easier for her. And all she needed to do was defeat this gorilla in front of her.

After facing Abyss Lords? This was a piece of cake for her. In fact, he'll be her punching bag to vent all her grievances.

Just thinking of this caused her to shiver with excitement while the Guard felt a random chill that confused him.

Chapter 345 - 345: Fighting Jyn

Standing in the arena, Alice twirled the greatsword in hand as though it was nothing.

Since she was hiding her identity, she wanted to make sure her fighting style was different to her usual habits to avoid suspicion. Therefore, she decided to use a greatsword bigger than herself.

Using Tiamat's Sigil, she was able to supplement her lack of physical prowess through using the ambient energy to empower her own physical body. In theory, it worked exactly like using Tiamat's power in an attack.

Only this time, her body was the weapon. Of course, the greatsword wasn't her only weapon. Along with the spear, she had also used a scythe.

During all of her fights, she had asked permission to plant several weapons around the arena in and in exchange, she is not allowed to use Resonance or more than three Sigils.

Naturally, her opponents agreed not realising that using her Resonance would expose who she is and that having more weapons is beneficial for her.

These second rate weapons couldn't withstand the power of Abyss Lord level Sigils so their best use was to act as explosive devices that burst upon contact.

*BANG!!!

Stabbing the greatsword into the ground, Alice leaned against the handle with a smug smile on her face.

"Are you ready gorilla? I hope you don't make this too boring for me~ I'm just a wittle three Sigil Hunter, the bwig stwong tuff guy with six Sigils won't go all out right? Alice teased as each word only served to annoy the guard further.

"You f*cking brat." He gritted his teeth before taking a deep breath to calm himself down.

'Would you look at that, seems like he's not going to be an easy opponent after all. I suppose a guard hired by one of the most influential families from the surface won't be a joke.' Alice narrowed her eyes as she waited for the referee to announce the start of the battle.

###

While Alice and the guard were eyeing each other up, trying to gauge what kind of opponent they had, the Zenia Researchers and Erick were observing from the VIP suit.

Erick sat on a cushioned seat while the waiter brought him a tray of snacks and wines.

The guards stood by the door with the exception of the five Sigil guard who stood right next to him, guarding him from danger.

"Selen, how do you think Kale would fair against Jyn?" Erick asked curiously while swirling his glass.

"Not enough information. But based on what I could gather from the crowd, it seems like she'll be a worthy match up even if she only has three Sigils. However, there is still a gap between the power of a

three Sigil user and a six. I believe if nothing abnormal occurs, Jyn should win with relative ease." Selen replied seriously without taking her eyes off the arena.

Her gaze was locked onto Alice as there was a strange sense of unease emanating from her.

"Hou~ Sounds like you expect her to turn things around." Erick chuckled.

"Shall we have a bet?" He offered, gesturing for Melissa and Michael to come over.

"Who do you think will win this battle?"

Contemplating for a moment, even with the exception of her being stronger, Jyn is still a guard hand-picked by the Zenia family.

He couldn't be compared to the Hunters that fight in the arena who lost to someone with only three Sigils.

In the end, both Michael and Melissa placed their bets on Jyn while Erick said the same.

"You've yet to give your opinion Selen."

"As I said, if nothing abnormal happens, I believe Jyn should win. However... that girl is not simple. Even without the rumours coming from the crowd... She feels dangerous." Selen replied seriously.

One shouldn't judge a person based on how many Sigils they possess, no matter how wide the difference in strength may seem.

Sometimes, even the first Sigil could be potent enough to kill a seasoned veteran.

She was a good example of this, she was made the captain of this squad when she had four Sigils despite it being a squad of six Sigil users. Simply because she had the strength!

"Captain! Really? You think Jyn will lose?" One of the guards spoke up in surprise as Selen shook her head.

"I'm not saying Jyn would lose but rather he shouldn't look down on that Girl. If he does, he'll suffer for it." Refusing to comment further, Selen simply observed and allowed the two Hunters to prove their worth.

###

Pulling out the greatsword, Alice balanced the black on her shoulder and allowed it to rest against the ground. She crouched down and entered an offensive stance as she licked her lips in anticipation.

Jyn stood in front of her, silent and focused. Despite all of her provocation, he remained steadfast.

The blade in his hand had a rather strange design as instead of a guard, there was a circular ring with a hole in the middle, big enough to fit the width of an arm. The handle was attached on one end while the emerald blade was on the other.

"Begin!"

With the shout of the referee, Alice immediately burst into action with speed surpassing that of an ordinary three Sigil user!

Those who weren't prepared for this explosiveness could only gasp in shock as Alice was soon in front of Jyn.

Holding her breath, she twisted her body and launched an upwards cleave with her greatsword!

*BANG!!!

Parrying her attack to the side with relative ease, Jyn narrowed his eyes and the blade in his hand began to spin!

Grabbing it by the ring, he twisted his body and swung the blade towards Alice who bent her body back.

The blade grazed her hair as she revealed an interested smile.

Flipping back and standing on her hands, she released a couple of kicks towards Jyn's head who took a step back while parrying her attack with his blade.

Grabbing the greatsword on her way down, she landed on her feet and threw the weapon towards him!

Seeing Alice immediately discard her weapon, Jyn frowned and slammed his blade into the face of the greatsword, shattering it in an instant but Alice was behind the blade.

The colours of the world drained into a single orb as Alice slammed the attack against his chest.

*BANG!!!

As the orb detonated, a cloud of dust erupted between them but Alice didn't feel the contact of the attack.

She had missed in point blank!

Without hesitation, she slammed her hand down and created a field of corrosion as pink strands of energy began to weave into a field around her.

Jyn who wanted to use this opportunity, noticed the properties of this field and immediately backed off. All of his senses were warning him of regarding the potency of this attack as he began to reevaluate the opponent in front of him.

He had planned on beating her without the use of his Sigils to showcase the strength of a Zenia guard but continuing to do so would be looking down on his opponent too much. It could even lead to his defeat!

Breathing out, a hiss of air could be heard as his teeth began to change. From the normal human teeth, they turned sharp like a beast while sparks of fire could be seen from his breath. Spinning the emerald blade in his hand, the signature green colour started to shift into a bright crimson.

His immediate shift in focus sent a chill down Alice's spine as it felt as though she had finally become the prey that was being hunted down by a dragon.

But compared to Tiamat, this was nothing!

Dashing towards Jyn, she grabbed a scythe that was stuck into the ground and jumped up into the air. Twisting her body, pink energy overlapped the blade as she activated Allura's Sigil!

Instant Slashes!

*CRACK!

The scythe shattered into countless pieces as it couldn't withstand the power of Allura's Sigil but it's achieved the effect that Alice had desired.

The shards of metal that shot towards Jyn were all infused by the power of corrosion and the speed behind Instant Slashes!

Seeing this, Jyn twisted his body as he spun his blade around him, blocked the shards and deflecting them to the side. He made sure to minimize the contact his weapon had to this strange energy as prolonged contact would cause damage to his beloved weapon.

Taking a deep breath, he breathed out a torrent of flames that overlapped his blade before slamming it against the ground.

*BANG!!!

The arena split apart, disrupting Alice's footwork as pillars of flames lunged out from the cracks, surprising her momentarily as she narrowed her eyes.

Activating Tiamat's power, she focused it around her fingers before overlaying Allura's Sigil.

Slashing down with her finger, a vacuum began to form within the flames as Tiamat's power began absorbing the energy around them while Allura's Sigil reshaped the attack into a slash.

From these pillars of flames, several invisible slashes shot towards Jyn who had to quickly lean to the side as these blades bore into the pillars, creating deep crevices.

"Alright, I'll take that back gorilla. You're not half bad, I'll upgrade you from gorilla to lizard." Alice smiled, grabbing the nearest greatsword to her and hoisted it onto her back. She stood with one foot on a raised rock while she gathered energy using Tiamat's Sigil with her left hand.

However, her praise was unneeded as Jyn didn't care about what she called him.

What annoyed him the most was that he's actually unable to find a way to win despite beginning to use his Sigils! After countless battles as the guard of the Zenia family, he could instinctively tell when things begin to turn sour.

And the winds weren't turning in his favour at all!

Without hesitation, he activated his third Sigil into his fourth then fifth, overlaying them to enhance his first Resonance.

A spiral of flames erupted around his body, hiding his form from Alice as she simply watched with a smile.

"Seems like we're pulling out the big guns for this fight." Alice let out a low laugh.

Focusing her mind, she dragged the entire arena into her Absolute Zone!

Chapter 346 - 346: Alice's Counterattack

The instant that Alice expanded her zone, all of the Zenia guards felt a chill down their spine.

Subconsciously, they reached for their swords before pausing in realisation.

"You've got to be kidding..." One of the guards muttered in disbelief, realising that her range had extended this far. If they were her target, she'd be able to attack them from down there!!!

As for Selen, this reaffirmed her belief that Alice was abnormal and that Jyn needed to take this seriously.

'But for her to be able to use zone... at this magnitude as well... Either she's been trained by someone experienced or she's just that talented.'

Even though she wanted to do a background check on Alice immediately, their business with the Underground has been... Complicated for a lack of a better term and using their services right now would prove to be difficult.

"Caen, help me run a quick background check on her if you can. See where she came from and if she's affiliated with anyone we may know of." Selen ordered as one of the Guards saluted before leaving the room.

"Is she worrying you?" Erick asked, keeping his eyes on the fight.

"Her talents are worrying me. Someone of this calibre shouldn't be staying in a place like this. Either she's only begun to make a name for herself or someone sent her here."

"Any clues on who that may be? Or just a hunch for now?"

Hearing this question, Selen paused before shaking her head with a sigh.

"Just a hunch for now. I'll keep a close eye on her and see what she plans to do."

"I'll be counting on you for that." Erick chuckled as the fight resumed.

###

Jumping out of the flames, Jyn revealed his first Resonance form. He now had long wild hair, a pair of draconic pupils and tattered clothing hiding the black plated armour beneath.

In his hands, he wielded the same strange blade but this time, he paired it with a spear seemingly made from the flames he breathed from his mouth. Behind him, a serpentine wyrm coiled around him with hints of metal making up the core of its body.

All of her senses warned her of danger as Alice halted her attack and focused on defence.

Stabbing the greatsword into the ground, she activated both Tiamat and Allura's Sigils simultaneously to create a vacuum wall that shredded anything that came into contact with it, allowing her to back off momentarily.

However, Jyn wasn't about to let her get away easily. Taking a deep breath, he spat out three flaming bullets.

Widening her eyes, Alice bent her body back to dodge the first, coated her fist with Tiamat's power to destroy the second and slashed down with her finger to get rid of the third.

Cold sweat covered her back as she lost sight of Jyn who appeared behind her.

*BANG!!!

Thrusting his spear forward, he watched as Alice managed to dodge his strike even from this distance.

While he may be impressed, he wasn't going to go easy on her!

The ground began to rumble as tens of flaming spears erupted from the ground while Alice defended herself with corrosive energy, forming a swirling barrier that melted these spears.

"Your Sigils are more potent than I had imagined. If you have a fourth or a fifth Sigil, I'll give you time to reveal them now so that we can fight evenly." Jyn narrowed his eyes while Alice shrugged her shoulders.

"Unfortunately, a little girl like me only has three Sigils." Alice laughed, picking up another greatsword next to her.

Taking a deep breath, she gritted her teeth and twisted her body, throwing the blade at him!

Ducking down to avoid the projectile, he noticed that Alice had attached the power of Tiamat and Corrosion onto the blade as it shattered into countless pieces above him.

Quickly wrapping himself with his flaming wyrm, he managed to avoid the brunt of the attack but the power of corrosion began to penetrate through his shield.

Noticing Alice approaching while he was occupied with the blade, Jyn slammed his hand into the ground.

***BANG!!! CRACK!!!**

A wave of jagged rocks pushed out with Jyn in the centre while flames burst through the cracks. All of the weapons that Alice had placed early were now being melted in these flames as her smile twitched.

"Oi lizard! That's not fair!" She complained, grabbing another greatsword and scythe before she ran out of weapons.

Once again, Jyn ignored her as he coated his ring blade in flames and lunged towards Alice.

His blade began to spin, creating a flaming disk that was gathering the flames he had conjured from the arena.

Furrowing her brows, Alice jumped back and threw the scythe towards him.

*CLANG!!!

Parrying the scythe to the side, Jyn watched as Alice grabbed the greatsword with both her hands and entered a defensive stance.

Absolute Zone!

Compressing her focus to a small circle around her, Alice needed to block this onslaught in order to find an opportunity for a counterattack!

Twisting his body, Jyn slashed horizontally in an attempt to break Alice's weapon but she was prepared.

Now that she had condensed her Absolute Zone to a small circle around her and paired with Cayla, every single movement he did was captured by her vision, allowing her to react accordingly.

Jumping up, she adjusted her greatsword to redirect his attack into the ground.

*BANG!!!

Taking this moment, Alice spun her body around and gathered as much force as she could, swinging the greatsword down towards Jyn who was surprised she had the reaction to dodge his blade.

With Alice stepping on his arm right now, it was difficult for him to use his blade and thus he decided to discard it for now.

Pulling his arm back, he punched the face of Alice's greatsword, shattering it into pieces but this didn't stop her assault!

Revealing a grin, Alice grabbed Jyn's ring blade!

Mimicry!

Recalling all of Jyn's movements that he's performed thus far, Alice twisted her body and embedded Tiamat's power into the blade before slashing towards Jyn who jumped back with crimson wings unfurling on his back.

Sliding across the ground, he looked up in surprise as he watched Alice twirl his blade around as though she'd been used to using it for many years.

"Yiya~ This is quite the weird weapon lizard. A bit annoying to control but it's pretty fun." Alice laughed, spinning the blade around her body before narrowing her eyes.

Releasing a downward cleave, an invisible blade shot out towards Jyn who created two flaming spears and parried the attack.

Deflecting the attack upwards, Jyn gritted his teeth and lunged towards Alice, wanting to get his weapon back.

Designating her as the target with his finger, the flaming wyrm jumped from his back and tried to drag Alice into the air but she simply laughed.

Jumping to the side, Alice spun the ring blade a few more times, releasing a multitude of slashes that tore the wyrm apart, revealing the metal skeleton beneath the flames.

While her attention was taken by the wyrm, Jyn appeared behind her before she noticed and reached for the blade.

Alice's eyes darted back, she wasn't able to pull the blade away in time. The two of them were now locked in a tug of war for the weapon but Alice took the initiative to let go.

Climbing up his arm with ease, she wrapped her leg around his neck, putting him into a leg lock while corrosive energy burst out from her body. Even with his defences, his armour began to melt.

"ARG!!!" Letting out a shout, Jyn tried to pry Alice off from his back but she would create pockets of energy using Tiamat's power to disrupt his stance, making it harder for him to exert power.

Seeing this, the wyrm reignited and shot towards the duo.

Since Jyn was unaffected by his own power, the only one in danger would be Alice!

"Tch." Clicking her tongue, Alice kicked off Jyn's back and created an orb of power using Tiamat's Sigil.

*BANG!!!

Throwing the orb at the wrym, she watched as it transformed into a spiral of flames that obscured her vision. But despite this, her senses were warning her of danger!

Jumping through the flames, Jyn's blade was mere moments away from colliding with her as Alice widened her eyes.

What she needed now wasn't a full body enhancement using Tiamat's power.

No, she needed the fastest way to counter this attack!

Tiamat + Allura!

Funnelling the power into her legs, she pivoted on her left foot and slammed her heel into the face of the blade.

*BANG!!!

Stomping the blade into the ground with her left foot, she followed up with a roundhouse kick into Jyn's jaw as his vision flickered while a wave of dizziness assaulted his mind.

Redirecting all of her energy into her arms, she slammed her palms into Jyn's chest, shattering the armour from the impact!

Before his mind could even register the pain, Jyn slammed into the wall of the arena and collapsed on his knees.

Taking rapid deep breaths, Alice blinked her eyes as she didn't think Allura's Sigil could be applied in this manner.

The instant slashes when paired with Tiamat's Sigil, allowed her explosive short-term speed that surpassed even Ria's top speed!

To others, all they saw was Jyn jump from the spiral of flames before being launched back into the wall.

But those with more Sigils noticed that Alice had released three movements! A sweep to knock the blade to the ground and use it as a foothold, a kick to disorientate Jyn's vision and finally, a double palm strike with an orb of energy to the chest, launching him out of the arena.

Watching all of this happen, Selen was silent as was all the other guards.

Erick had an amused glint in his eyes while the two researchers couldn't believe a three Sigil Hunter actually defeated a six Sigil Zenia Guard!

Chapter 347 - 347: Zahak

It took the referee a moment to announce the winner as he didn't fully register what had happened.

But once he did, the arena was filled with a mixture of joyous laughs from those who bet on Alice, screams of anger from those who bet on Jyn and even those who claimed the fight was rigged.

However, Alice didn't pay it any attention as she walked up to Jyn to make sure he was okay.

Holding her hands behind her back, she leaned down and saw his eyelids twitch.

"Yahoo~ Wakey wakey~" Alice called out as Jyn let out a groan.

As he shifted his body, the armour on his body broke apart and landed on the ground with a deep thud.

"Seems like I lost." Jyn muttered with a slight frown, sitting up and leaning against the wall to support himself.

"Seems so." Alice chuckled with a nod.

"I apologise for looking down on you. Seems like I couldn't let go of my initial judgement and underestimated you even when I wasn't trying to." Jyn let out a hearty laugh as he wanted to stand up but the injuries sustained by that last hit stopped him.

He didn't think Alice would've been able to react in such a manner, the time when his defence was at its lowest as well.

"What did you even kill to get this kind of power?" Jyn asked curiously while Alice tapped her chin before smiling.

"Secret." She replied, sticking her tongue out before offering her hand to help him up.

Accepting her help, he got back onto his feet before looking down at the armour that was broken from this exchange.

"I don't have to pay for that right? I'm pretty broke."

"I'll cover for it myself, don't worry." Jyn reassured.

Stepping out of the arena, he made his way back to the VIP suite while drinking some healing blood to heal himself from the damage. Meanwhile, Alice took a moment for herself before meeting up with everyone again.

After all, she had placed a bet on herself before the fight!

###

Stepping into the VIP suite, Jyn kneeled towards Selen and Erick who watched the clean-up of the arena.

"I'm sorry." Jyn apologised as there was nothing else he could say.

There were so many ifs and whats, but the reality was that he lost. He dropped his guard because his opponent only had three Sigil.

"Why didn't you use everything you got from the beginning? I believe you had enough information to help you win in the first exchange." Selen asked with a neutral tone.

Even though she had foreseen this to some extent, it coming to pass was a different feeling entirely. She couldn't help but wonder what if it was her down in the arena, what would've happened?

"I... Looked down on my opponent. I will follow squad rules and reflect upon this once we return to the Surface." Jyn looked down with a slight sigh.

"Forget it. She's an abnormality that none of us foresaw. Take this loss and improve yourself using the things you learned. But now that you lost, it seems like we'll have to honour our agreement to her." Selen shook her head before turning to Erick who finished his wine and stood up.

"I don't see any issue with that. Make the necessary preparations for this trip after we talk with the principal. Give her a way to contact us and a way for us to contact her. Even if it wasn't for her suggestion of helping out in the Inverted World, having someone of her calibre be our ally is beneficial for us." Erick chuckled.

Just as he left the room, he saw Alice skipping towards their general direction while holding a bag of gold.

"Oh! Are you leaving already?" Alice asked while blinking her eyes before storing her pouch away.

"We have a meeting with someone rather important. Let's visit the Inverted World another day." Erick smiled while Alice paused momentarily.

Looking down, she kicked her leg with a sigh before nodding.

"Fine. . . How long are you staying here?"

"It's undecided yet." Glancing over to Selen, Erick gestured with his finger as she nodded and took out a badge.

"You can use this to contact me and likewise, I can use this to contact you. I'll let you know once we're ready to enter the inverted World and I'll hire you for your services." He explained, giving her the badge of the Zenia family.

Taking it, Alice had to suppress her innate disgust and put it into her pouch before nodding with a 'happy' smile.

"It's a promise okay? Don't forget to contact me!"

Not wanting to stay a moment longer, she jogged away while Erick simply chuckled, not knowing what kind of person Alice was.

###

Leaving the arena, Alice made her way back to the academy. Once she was sure there were no eyes on her, she dismissed her disguise.

'Disgusting.' She thought with a frown.

Thankfully, it seems like there were no tracking Sigils attached to the crest otherwise she would've needed to stay in this disguise for much longer.

'You don't say. Seeing you act sweet with them is giving me goosebumps.' Alyss smirked while lying on her own bed.

During the time that Alice was gaining the Zenia's favour, she had Cayla teach her the gimmick of making this space comfortable.

'I can't exactly avoid it. If I want to do this properly, I need to find out what they're here for, what they've done and if they're scumbags like my father and brothers.' Alice shook her head while giving her body a stretch.

She needed a break before going to the underground or else she'd feel like throwing up.

###

Looking at the group of people leaving her office, Rosalyn furrowed her brows and waited until they had left.

Snapping her fingers, she sealed off the room before a crimson aura erupted from her body.

"ARGGGG!!!!" Letting out a cry of anger, she threw the chair towards the wall as Kaden stepped out of the shadows and caught it.

"Seems like you're rather displeased about their suggestion." Kaden smirked while Rosalyn scratched her hair before sighing.

"They're a bunch of bandits that's what they are. F*cking Zenia's, always looking for ways to monopolise the sh*t in the Abyss. Just because of one incident, they think it's alright to parade into MY academy and ask for access to the Inverted World I've guarded all this time?

They can on f*ck themselves if they think I'm going to accept this sh*t!" The principal raged as she couldn't believe the audacity of these people from the Zenia.

However, because of the influence they hold behind their name and the connections they've made, she couldn't outright reject them either. She could only delay things for now by telling them to give her some time.

Biting her nails, Rosalyn paced back and forth around her office while Kaden placed the chair down.

He noticed the traces of Alice's blood attached to their body, it was very faint but noticeable if you're familiar with Alice's power.

'Seems like the kid is trying to get some revenge early on.' Kaden mused to herself as he knew she hated the Zenias with every fibre of her being. The fact that they've decided to show up now was rather good for her.

Of course, if she was to kill them, it would only prove to become even more of a headache for Rosalyn.

"I'd suggest you deal with them as soon as possible. Or even scrub your hands clean of them since they might be dead soon." Kaden advised as he closed one of his eyes and searched for Alice's whereabouts.

"Eh? What do you mean they might die soon? If they going to die, f*cking die elsewhere! Why does it have to be here???" Rosalyn blinked her eyes as colour drained from her face.

If they truly died here, it wouldn't end with just one visit from the Zenia family, it'll become an entire headache for her!

Especially since Erick was close to the main Zenia family!

"I'm just giving you a warning. Regardless, it's got nothing to do with me." Kaden laughed, taking a step back into the shadows.

"Wait! Sh*t don't leave me with this headache!!!" Rosalyn cried out but Kaden had long left the room.

Gritting her teeth, she let out another shout before throwing the table to the opposite side of the room.

Not only does she need to find a way to settle things nicely with the Zenia family, but now there's also a ticking timebomb of not knowing when they're going to die!

"I swear to the Gods if I get my hands on whoever's trying to kill them." Rosalyn clenched her fist in anger.

As long as they die away from the Academy, Rosalyn wouldn't care. But if they die while discussing the Inverted World? She'll be the prime suspect!!!

"I can't leave things like this!"

Dismissing the seal, she stepped out of the room and called for a meeting with every department. They need to keep the Zenia group safe no matter what.

###

*ACHOO!!!

Rubbing her nose in annoyance, Alice finished the mead to wash out the spicy taste in her mouth.

Since Alyss could only watch, Alice decided to apologize via spicy skewers.

Now that both of them were satisfied, she made her way towards the docks once more.

Looking around for the Underground sign, she found it to be relatively close to the arena and made her way down. Surprisingly, it seemed like they were expecting her as she was welcomed in without any hassle.

Walking down the steps, she soon entered a large cavern beneath the surface as several ribcages supported the ceiling of this space.

Situated in the middle of this cavity within the earth was an assortment of buildings but that wasn't what caught her eye.

What caught her attention was the platform detached from the buildings and suspended above a pit of crimson.

A spider like creature with large metal stakes pierced through its body was pinned against the platform.

[Zahak – Sealed Lord of Venom: ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦]

An eight star Sealed Abyss Lord!

Chapter 348 - 348: Silverwind Valley Underground Branch Manager

[Hou... Seems like the layers of the Abyss have shifted more than I remember if Zahak has been sealed here now.] Cayla muttered to herself, surprising both Alice and Alyss.

'What do you mean?' Alice asked curiously.

She thought that all, if not most of the old Abyss Lords were sealed in Terminus. But going by what Cayla said, it seems like there's a chance that the Lords in Terminus had been moved closer to the surface!

[Zahak was a rather... formidable Abyss Lord whose ability worked similarly to Famine from certain perspectives.

[During the war that resulted in the sealing of the Old Abyss Lords, Zahak was someone that neither Kaden nor Allura could take lightly. Even though he is the Lord of Venom, his methods of escape are more annoying than most. And every time he escaped, he would leave behind an uninhabitable zone that couldn't be recovered.

[It wasn't until later that the research department managed to find a combination of Sigils that helped offset the effects to some extent which allowed the land to be recultivated, but it still took years to achieve.] Cayla explained as she crossed her arms.

[While he wasn't sealed in Terminus, he wasn't far off and was in fact placed in the layer just above it. Yet for him to be this close to the surface now... I can only assume that Terminus may be filled with the worst of the worst while other residents have been pushed out.]

Furrowing her brows, Alice understood that this meant Tiamat could possibly be residing within the middle layers now.

While she may have a somewhat good relationship with Tiamat in the Inverted World, they were nothing but strangers in reality. Hell, if she approached Tiamat, she'd be more surprised if she wasn't killed on sight!

'Do you think... we could possibly drink his blood?' Alyss asked as Cayla mused for a moment before shrugging.

[I'm not sure how much power you can even extract from a sealed Lord but it wouldn't hurt to try. The main obstacle is whether or not the Underground would let you attempt such a feat in the first place. Plus, who is to say they don't already know your real identity? Don't underestimate the information gathering capabilities of this organization.] Cayla warned as Alice nodded her head in agreement.

Using a Sigil to hide her identity was a risky move as there could be Hunters that could see through this kind of disguise.

But it was either this or using Abyss Blood and buying blood would be traced back to her easily.

Maintaining her act of being a curious girl, Alice asked the escort questions about the sealed Abyss Lord but he didn't reply at all. It was mostly just Alice talking to herself but she didn't mind it.

She just needed to reinforce this 'act'.

The more Alice asked questions, the more annoyed the escort seemed as she could see the veins bulging on his neck but he refused to reply to her.

Once they reached the bottom where someone else was waiting for them, he didn't hesitate to give his job to someone else and practically ran away.

"Boo~ what a bad sport. Didn't even reply to my questions either, isn't that rude?" Alice sighed, glancing towards the new guy.

"He's not a very talkative person Ms Grani, I'll apologize in his stead. But please, follow me. The branch leader has been waiting for your arrival considering you've been saving money to buy information from us. You even made quite the name for yourself while you were at it too."

Hearing this, Alice narrowed her eyes before resting her hands behind her head.

"Well aren't y'all quite the stalkers. I haven't even been here for a day and you're already keeping an eye on me. I'm gonna blush ya know?"

"Haha, surely you jest. As someone who's appeared out of nowhere, literally, and made such a commotion, it's hard not to keep an eye on such a variable. Am I wrong?" The escort chuckled before gesturing for her to follow him.

"Which begs the question of how much you know." Alice smiled, following him through the assortment of buildings scattered through this cavern.

Staying silent at her question, he simply did his job and led her towards the cliff edge facing the platform above the sea of crimson.

Upon approaching the edge, obsidian rock protruded from the sea of crimson, forming a bridge towards the centre platform.

'Seems like they're using the body of a sealed Lord to hide the entrance. Not very stealthy considering there are probably people wanting to check out the body in the first place.' Alice raised an eyebrow while Cayla couldn't help but agree.

Perhaps they did this in order to make an impression on the people that approached this area.

Regardless, it seems like the rest of the journey was meant for Alice alone as the escort waited by the door, not wanting to proceed.

Shrugging her shoulders, Alice descended the stairs as she instinctively activated her Absolute Zone to ensure she wasn't going to get surprise attacked.

"You don't have to be so on guard. We're simply here to do a transaction, nothing more, nothing less."

A voice interrupted her thoughts, causing her to frown.

In this darkness, a single source of light existed above an altar where a woman could be seen. She pulled books out of the darkness and browsed through the contents before placing it back and pulling out a new book.

Her serpentine eyes locked onto Alice, constricting her before gazing away.

"So what brings you to my humble branch?" She asked, placing the book down on the altar and crossing her legs.

She wore an elegant golden headpiece that chimed softly with each movement she made. Dark purple hair and piercing red eyes. She wore a black cheongsam with golden decorations and red tassels.

"For information like everyone else. But does every new comer get to see the big boss of this place? You must be quite the busy body." Alice chuckled, her eyes fully locked onto the Sigils above her head as cold sweat dripped down her back.

A seven Sigil Abyss Lord!!!

'What the f*ck is a Lord doing as a branch manager for the Underground??? Aren't Lords supposed to be top of the food chain!?' Alice shouted in her mind. Her appearance may seem composed but her mind was in turmoil.

Naturally, Cayla was just as confused, wondering why a Lord would stoop to the level of branch manager.

"Not everyone gets to meet me. I simply wish to observe those of interest with my very own eyes. Kale Grani, first appearance was 5 hours ago in this city. Seen just outside of Academy territory, wandering around for a short while before earning money and fame at the gambling arena.

"Upon winning enough gold, you left only to 'coincidentally' bump into the Zenia delegation, causing a small conflict before coming to an agreement of a fight. Should you win, you'll 'guard' them through the Inverted World.

"Your showcase of your abilities are rather impressive and the power it holds far surpassed that of an average Sigil obtained early on by Hunters. With this kind of... resume, wouldn't anyone be interested?

"So, I ask again, what brings you to my humble branch? Young Hunter." The branch manager asked again as Alice composed herself.

"Information on the Zenia's. The ones I'm talking to in particular. As the branch manger of the Underground, I believe you should know the darkness of the Zenia family despite their social standing." Alice smiled happily, acting as though she didn't know the branch manager is an Abyss Lord.

"I do, but as you know, information comes at a price. For this piece of knowledge in particular, extra expensive." She grinned, rubbing her index and thumb together, the gesture for coin.

"Do you not use the concept of packages? I figured the Underground does things through a systemic approach do you not?"

'Stingy b*tch!' She shouted in her mind.

"Of course we do. But only a few branches use the specific wording of... Packages. And the only branch within travelling distance that uses those words is... Eldoria Branch." The Branch Master revealed a sly grin, sending shivers down Alice's back.

Through their conversation, she was trying to figure out Alice's identity!

Taking a step back out of caution, Alice narrowed her eyes at the woman.

"A small warning for the young and fearless. If you weren't such an interesting figure that appeared out of nowhere, we wouldn't have tolerated the act of hiding your identity and refused you entry. But there are always exceptions and some branches may not like it as much as I do." She waved her hand dismissively, throwing a book towards Alice.

A quick glance was enough to tell her that these were all the passengers that arrived in Silverwind Valley via airship from the general direction of Eldoria.

Meaning if given enough time, they could probably pinpoint her identity no matter how careful she was being.

"I'll take these words to heart." Alice forced a smile.

"Good. Now that the warning is out of the way, let's do business. The Zenia family is complicated and I'd rather not having anything to do with them. Not having to do business with them was the best piece of news I've gotten in a while yet here you are, wanting to dig out some dirt about them. But...

"I suggest you give it up."

"Why?" Alice narrowed her eyes.

Just when she looked like she was about to reveal the answer, she paused and grinned.

"10 gold."

'Stingy b*tch!' Alice shouted in her mind but threw over 10 gold.

"So shiny and beautiful, the materialisation of the 'trust' between two individuals. And in response for this 'trust', allow me to continue. Going after the Zenia's right now would place you not only as their enemy but also the enemy of the Academy.

"They are here as representatives of the family with the Academy guaranteeing their safety within their grounds. Target them and the Academy won't stay still since it's far more troublesome to have the Zenia's come to this island.

"But most importantly is what they plan to 'recover' from the Inverted World."

Chapter 349 - 349: Michael And Melissa's Research

"But most importantly is what they plan to 'recover' from the Inverted World." The branch manager grinned as she snapped her finger.

Behind her, a series of images showing the Zenia group leaving the academy could be seen as Alice furrowed her brows, realising she had eyes everywhere, watching every move.

'Though... Seems like she can't see inside the Academy. Is the principal holding her back?' Alice couldn't help but wonder to herself.

"Now, I'm no fan of giving out unconfirmed information, as they are mere speculations. Any knowledge based on unconfirmed information is prone to backfire and this is no exception. However, speculation can become the first step to finding out the truth.

"According to my sources, it seems like the Zenia's are trying to collect samples of Sealed Lords. Lords similar to the one we're beneath right now. Since the stronger Lords are... Hard to access the deeper you go into the Abyss, they could attempt to claim the remains from the Inverted World." She chuckled as Alice furrowed her brows.

"They're not strong enough." Even when sealed, the Lords aren't something anyone could just approach.

"Oh I know they're not." The branch manager let out a laugh.

"But they're not the main force after all. While Abyss Lords are strong, moving around the Surface and Abyss is... Complicated. If an Abyss Lord is seen moving into the territory of another Lord, it could be seen as a declaration of hostility. Therefore, they can't be moving around unless it's been agreed upon beforehand.

"Since the Zenia's have only arrived with the core member, guards and two researchers, I don't believe they've received permission to have a Lord act as an escort for them. However, that's only what's visible to the public eye. I'm sure they have a method to call a Lord to their assistance if things turn sour."

Furrowing her brows, Alice began to wonder how many Lords the Zenia's have. Since they are the most important family when it comes to Abyss Blood, there's no doubt that they hold a lot of sway over things. Not only could they cultivate their own Abyss Lords but Lords could even owe them favours for the blood.

She was confident but fighting Lords was still a dangerous endeavour that Alice would rather not take unless she's gotten six Sigils.

"Anything else you can tell me?" Alice asked but the woman shook her head and opened her palm.

"Tsk." Clicking her tongue, Alice gave her another 10 gold but she didn't say anything and kept her palm open.

"Stingy." Alice frowned.

"Business is business."

Receiving another 10 gold, bringing it up to 20 gold, the branch manager smiled happily before storing it away.

"Both of the researchers they brought with them are rather... Looked upon within the family. There have already been rumours saying that they're geniuses in the making when it comes to Abyss Blood. The man, Michael, is said to be doing research on Angel type Blood. A new type of blood that's recently been discovered and is said to be a great defence against Abyss abilities.

It's still a rather new discovery so not much is known but they say he's even modified his own body to adapt to this new blood.

"Melissa, on the other hand, focuses her research on blood based rituals. Similar to that of the Eclipse but at the same time, different. She's researching how to overwrite the changes brought upon the body by the Abyss, how the Sigils modify your form and so on.

She theorises that with the right direction in research, it's not impossible to make alterations to a Sigil even after it's been grafted onto the body.

"With these two prized researchers coming to the Abyss with seemingly only a handful of guards, it seems quite impossible doesn't it?" The branch manager smiled while Alice was silent.

If this is true then it's indeed strange for them to only have six Sigil Hunters acting as guards.

But at the same time, she didn't see any energy fluctuations in space signifying that someone was following them in the Void.

'Could it be that they have another method of calling for help?' Alice frowned before glancing up.

"Do you have more information on everyone the Zenias sent here?"

Raising her eyebrow, the branch manager revealed a business smile.

"Of course we do. What kind of information are you wanting? Scandalous ones, what they eat, when they sleep, which sock they put on first? I'm sure I can satisfy your desire for the right price." She rubbed her fingers.

"Find some evidence to see if they're scum or not. Research comes with a price, what do they experiment on, how do they experiment and if they drag anyone innocent into it. Find me evidence to see if they're 'human'." Alice narrowed her eyes.

"Ohya? That's quite the desire you have there. Sure, I can fulfil that. But the price of such knowledge is... Expensive. The Zenia's keep a tight lid on everything they do. If you were asking for information on the main family then I'd say it's impossible since even the main branches of the Underground struggle with that.

"But if it's just these members that's appeared today, it's achievable."

"How much?" Alice didn't want to beat around the bush as this swindler in front of her wanted nothing but money.

"1 Platina."

Hearing this, Alice's smile twitched as she realised that she had fallen into her trap. That's everything she's earned today from her fights! 1 Platina and 30 gold pieces!

Her goal from the beginning was to take every single piece of Gold Alice had left.

"Tsk, take it." Throwing her coin pouch at the branch manager, Alice wanted to avoid her as much as she could in the future. Talking to someone who has all the information they could gather on you was rather annoying and if she had appeared here as Alice Agnelia then it might've been even more troublesome.

Which made her wonder if this woman could even guess she used to be the only daughter of the Zenia family head. The forgotten member that's been locked away for 10 years.

"Fufu~ Pleasure doing business my dear. Take this and I will let you know when I've obtained the information you desire." She smiled, giving Alice a golden coin, different to the coins in circulation as it had the mark of the Underground stamped on the face.

"Manifestation of trust between two individuals huh?" Alice narrowed her gaze while accepting the coin.

"Indeed, the coin is my favourite thing in the world after all. With the right price, I'm willing to do anything." She shrugged her shoulder.

"Is that so, regardless, I think we should call it even now. I've hidden my identity and you've tried to pry my privacy open. Let's keep business as business, okay?" Raising her finger, Alice made a slashing motion towards the coin, overlapping both Tiamat's power and Allura's slash.

Flicking the coin into the air, Alice caught it before waving her hand and left the room while the branch manager narrowed her gaze at Alice's departing back.

She had attached an 'eye' and tracker to that coin yet Alice was able to notice it and sever the connection.

It only made her even more curious about this 'Kale Grani' that appeared out of nowhere. Regardless, she's been commissioned and to assure her service was worth the price, she immediately got to work.

What the branch manager didn't notice was a pair of raven eyes observing her from the shadows before closing.

Sitting on the roof of the building hiding the Underground, Kaden gave his body a stretch before leaning back.

He had kept an eye on the meeting in case the branch manager tried to pull a fast one other Alice but it seemed like he didn't need to worry in the first place.

"Kids grow up so fast these days." He muttered with a small yet proud smile on his face.

She wasn't as helpless as he had expected, a far cry from the Alice he saw in the Zenia prison. The Alice right now was full of life and the desire to take hold of her own fate.

Sitting up, Kaden snapped his finger and created a Raven in his hands before allowing it to fly away.

Since Alice was wanting to dig up some dirt on the Zenia's, he'd give her a hand. He wasn't sure how much the branch manager of this place could find but having two Lords find information was better than just one.

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After leaving the Underground, Alice wanted to shed a silent tear for her poor coin purse. The money hasn't even warmed her pocket before leaving.

Even though she wanted to earn more money, she doubted the Arena would allow her back in considering she basically scammed them of their bets for an entire day.

'I need to get a weapon too... Using Void Fang is too conspicuous, but any random weapon would just break if I try to use it.' Alice sighed.

It didn't need to be an outstanding weapon, just something that could withstand her power for more than one exchange.

[O' master mine, why don't you just use the Zenia's money? They've agreed on taking you to the Inverted World have they not, why don't thou put on an act once more and seduce them into buying you weapon?] Cayla suggested, leaving Alice speechless.

[What? The core member named Erick seemed to be rather fond of you was he not? Just make him pay for your weapon as you 'coincidentally' bump into each other through the markets.]

While she may need to put on another act that gave her goosebumps, doing so to get a good weapon wasn't bad. Plus, she was spending the Zenia's money, the more expensive the better!

'Alright, let's go get compensation for the platina I spent.' Alice grinned as she immediately began to track down the Zenia group once more.

Chapter 350 - 350: Sealing Foundations

Walking around the marketplace, Erick wanted to see what kind of wares the city of Silverwind sold considering a prestigious Academy and the Inverted World was here.

But so far, from what he's seeing, it was lacking compared to the central continent that was directly connected to the Abyss.

"Everything here is made for exploring the Inverted World. There are even students who bring relics back to be sold. But as mere replications, they lack the durability and power of the real relic." Erick chuckled.

Michael and Melissa nodded their heads in agreement.

In the distance, they noticed a small figure stomping her feet against the floor in front of the smithy.

"Big guy, what do you mean I can't try out the weapon before I buy it?! What if it's trashy like the rest of them?!" Kale shouted in anger while the owner of the smithy crossed his burly arms.

"I've heard what you've done in the arena lass! You're definitely going to break my weapon if you try it."

"Then you're trying to sell me weak trash! I need a weapon that can actually handle my power ya know? A Hunter's weapon is their lifeline and all that." Kale tried to persuade the owner but he was adamant in his decision.

"Miss Grani, seems like we meet again." Erick called out with a small laugh as Kale froze up and revealed an awkward smile.

"Are you having some difficulty finding a weapon?" He asked curiously as Kale sighed and nodded her head.

"All of these weak sh*t weapon's can't handle my Sigil power. I bought a greatsword before but it couldn't even last one swing." She lamented while Erick recalled the fact that she had requested several weak weapons to be placed in the arena.

"Selen, do we have any spare weapons that can handle her power?" He glanced back at his personal guard.

"Perhaps. But without directly letting her try it out, it's hard to say."

In the end, they gave Kale a spare greatsword they had prepared in case one of the guards lost their weapon.

Holding the weapon in her hand, Alice was rather surprised by the weight. For its size, it weighed practically nothing!

"Is... Is this really going to withstand my power?" She asked dubiously. Something this light and 'flimsy' felt like it would crumble beneath Tiamat's power.

"We shall see." Erick laughed, gesturing for her to give it a try.

Narrowing her gaze, Alice activated Tiamat's Sigil as power began to flood the weapon. The metal in her hands trembled as cracks began to form, surprising Erick as his smile began to falter.

He was confident that this weapon would've been fine considering it's been made with a six Sigil Hunter in mind but it couldn't handle Kale's power!

"Erm... I don't think I should continue..."

"Let's not explode a weapon in the middle of the market." Erick coughed awkwardly while Alice withdrew her power.

Looking at the greatsword that was now cracked, she could see that it had lost its initial lustre and sheen.

It is nothing but a broken hunk of metal in its current state.

Scratching her hair, Alice handed back the weapon immediately.

But just as Selen received the weapon, it crumbled apart.

"Do I have to pay for that?" Alice asked while Erick shook his head with an awkward smile.

He was rather confident in the weapons made for the Zenia's but Alice's power made him reevaluate the durability of such weaponry.

"What did you even kill for a Sigil this powerful?" Erick asked curiously.

Scratching her cheek, Kale hesitated for a moment.

"A dragon. I just found a dragon that looked similar to my bounty and it was the right one all along." She shrugged yet her nonchalance caused Selen's eye to twitch.

The dragon family is filled with different variants of the beast from wyverns to hydras. But within that family, only the purest of the lineage and most powerful could truly claim the moniker of dragon.

These beasts could be said to be on par with Lords in terms of power!

"I got pretty lucky though since it was basically on the verge of death. The scales were cracked, it even had hair sticking out from the gaps. So I can only assume it's an old one." Kale shrugged while creating an orb of power using Tiamat's Sigil.

Seeing the orb above Kale's hand, Selen was suspicious of the legitimacy behind this claim but if it was a dragon's power, I'd make sense why the sword couldn't handle it.

Clenching her fist, Alice dispelled the orb as she sighed.

"Seems like you have quite the impressive range of Sigils Miss Grani. You mentioned that you were a three star Hunter right?" Erick asked as Alice nodded her head.

"Then do you have access to a Resonance?"

Realising that Alice might not have been going all out during their fight, Jyn's pupil shrunk trying to imagine what I'd be like if she used her Resonance.

"Ah... About that. I kind of... Messed up with my choices so I don't have a resonanceahaha." She scratched her hair.

It wasn't wrong considering the fact that she can't use her resonance right now since she's replaced her Sigils.

But a resonance between Sigils owned by Lord level beings would be quite the spectacle to see.

Talking to Erick and co for a little longer, Alice decided to end it early and bid farewell to them as they couldn't get her a weapon capable of withstanding Tiamat's power.

Making her way back to the Academy while making sure there were no eyes on her, Alice sighed while looking at the bracelet on her hand once her disguise was lifted.

'Seems like only Void Fang can hold my power.' She sighed inwardly.

###

Over the course of the next few days, Alice, Ria and Luke continued to take lessons from Kaden who ensured that each of them couldn't move by the end of the training sessions.

Luke focused on survival while Ria was distracted by thoughts which only served to annoy Kaden, thus making her training harder.

As for Alice, Kaden had a different kind of training for her. One that worked on her risk taking nature and allowed her to plan things out more thoroughly without over relying on Cayla's power.

Standing in the middle, Alice took deep breaths to calm her mind. Kaden had placed a blindfold over her eyes made from his power of shadows, leaving her with just her ears and other senses.

She was allowed to only use her blade to parry attacks that he sent towards her.

The whistling of a projectile rang in her ear.

'There!'

Turning her body, Alice slashed towards it with her blade but she had missed, allowing the orb of shadow to hit her in the chest.

*BANG!!!

Flinging her body back from the collision, Alice felt as though her body was shattered apart when a portal opened up beneath her and sent her back to the middle of the arena.

Getting back up on her feet, she gritted her teeth and sharpened her senses once more.

Now that Cayla was 'sealed' it reminded her of how much she's been relying on her abilities to survive.

"Taking risks is good but your risk taking is built on the foundation of the Eye and your body's unnatural composition that lets you ignore the side effects of blood. Lose the wings that allowed you to soar and learn how it feels to walk. Only then will you fully understand the gift you've been given." Kaden explained while sending more projectiles towards Alice.

While her accuracy and reaction may have improved over the course of this training period, she still failed in hitting the projectiles.

When she tried to expand her Zone, the range was practically non existent as her Zone was constructed using Cayla as a base.

Frustration filled Alice's mind as she tried different methods to accurately hit the projectile but failed each time. Not only that, but Kaden didn't allow her to use her other Sigil powers, leaving her with just her senses.

At the end of the session, Alice's body was filled with bruises as he handed her a vial of healing blood.

"Do you think it's impossible?" Kaden asked with a smirk, standing next to her while she sat on the floor.

"A little. But you don't give me impossible tasks do you?" Alice pouted while Kaden raised an eyebrow.

"Nope. It's definitely impossible for you right now."

Hearing this, her smile twitched but she let him continue.

"Since the beginning of your fights, you've been using the power given to you by Cayla. It's become the foundation of your entirety you could say. You take risks and you can react to when it goes south because of the kinetic vision. You are allowed sight into the flow of energy and activation time of powers.

"But if someone is to realise that, and understand the meaning of you having Cayla, they would immediately seek to destroy her. What will you do then if they were to remove the foundation of your fighting style?" He asked as Alice understood that the training was to put her in a situation where someone takes away Cayla.

If... She had to confront the real Nyer who knew of Cayla, this would be the situation she'll be in.

"Here is my task for you in order for you to improve to the next level. First, keep Cayla closed. Second, do not use the weapon I gave you. Strip yourself bare of these powers that act as your foundation and try to survive. Even if you're about to die, you should find a way out without relying on these two.

"Once you can do that, I will then acknowledge the fact that you've become a proper Hunter." Kaden smiled as Alice clenched her fist.

"Then can you let me take one more risk?" She asked, causing Kaden to raise his eyebrow.

"Can you seal Cayla and Void Fang?"