

Abyssal A 361

Chapter 361 - 361: The Journey Back To Silverwind

Waking up early in the morning to catch the first boat back, Alice was shocked to spot Selen waiting by the docks, scanning her eyes across everyone who was taking the first boat back to the Silverwind Valley.

In her hands, she held a small device. A compass that continuously spun around the centre every time someone walked past.

'Sh*t... Is that used to track me down?' Alice thought to herself.

If she was here now it meant that she had arrived in this town last night and discovered what had happened to Jyn and Rita.

Furrowing her brows, Alice wondered if there was any way to get onto the boat while evading Selen's notice.

There was the potential option of creating a mirror to teleport onto the boat but her range of control was limited without Cayla.

Attempting it would cause sloppy results and may even inadvertently alert Selen of her presence. Out of all of the guards within Erick's entourage, Selen was the one Alice was most on guard against.

Thinking about it for a moment, Alice had an idea as she conjured an orb of blood above her palm.

Aside from her four Sigil that granted her the ability to teleport, Alice had her first Sigil that could cause hallucinations.

If she were to control the output properly, she should be able to trick Selen's senses and make her perceive the compass incorrectly.

It was a little risky since she'll be in close proximity with Selen but the success rate was slightly higher than using her teleport. Just slightly.

Naturally, this won't stop the pursuit any time soon since they'll discover that she was the only one who took the orphanage quest. But by the time they discover this, Alice would've gotten used to her current predicament and prepared her own countermeasures against Erick's guards.

Whether that be trying to eliminate some of them within the Inverted World or taking care of them outside as she did with Rita and Jyn, it was an unexpected surprise but a very welcome one.

Without staying for some breakfast, Alice made her way down to the docks and stopped by the gates. Once the guards weren't looking at her, she began to spread a thin blood mist towards Selen, allowing the wind to push it towards her.

The mist was thin enough so that it wouldn't be easily noticed but with enough exposure, it should be potent enough to give her the gap she needed to trick Selen.

Focusing her mind on wrapping Selen with the mist, Alice snapped her finger and activated her first Sigil.

Giving it a moment to take effect, Alice walked towards the boat as cold sweat filled her back.

She was watching Selen from her peripherals, making sure not to make eye contact.

The moment she walked past Selen, Alice could see her checking the compass. Unsure of whether or not the hallucinations worked, Alice clenched her fist inside her sleeve, ready to pounce if things turned south.

Thankfully, Selen ignored her as Alice sighed in relief and got onto the boat.

In case the compass lingered, Alice focused as much as she could on maintaining the hallucination while supplying a constant flow of blood mist.

'I was half expecting her to jump you.' Alyss crossed her arms while Alice agreed.

'Either way, it's a simple journey back now. Hopefully, the branch manager should have the information ready since it's been a while. Any longer and they might prepare to leave.' Alice sighed while Cayla sat in silence before opening her mouth.

[O'master mine... I don't think your illusion worked.] Cayla furrowed her brows, surprising Alice.

'Eh? What do you mean?'

[When you walked past her, she had reset the compass. Seems like she was never truly under the effects of the hallucination. Though I'm sure as to why she would... help you in this regard.] Cayla crossed her arms in confusion.

Hearing this, Alice furrowed her brows as she too was confused as to why Selen would reset the compass. If her hallucination didn't work then a fight should've broken out. But Selen let her go.

Why?

'Who cares. At least it works in our favour. Plus we won't be able to know unless we talk to her directly and I'll be honest, that's a pretty stupid idea.' Alyss shrugged. There were too many unknown factors for them to draw up a proper conclusion.

Nodding her head in agreement, they could only hope that this buys them enough time before she was discovered to have taken the quest.

###

Watching the boat leave, Selen sighed before waving her hand in annoyance.

Dispelling the blood mist, she began to take a walk around the town since she needed to waste some time before going back.

If she returned too early while being empty handed, Erick wouldn't take it nicely.

'To think she's brave enough to try to get past me with just a simple hallucination. This resolves the debt I owe her for taking care of Jyn and Rita I suppose.' Selen thought to herself while storing the compass in her pouch.

Regardless, she could only hope that the one eyed girl leaves Silverwind Academy as soon as possible and changes her identity.

She may have killed Jyn and Rita while cleaning up the area, but the Zenia's won't let her go this easily. They'll track her down and tie up the loose ends.

But this moment of distraction while they track her down might give her the chance she needed. The chance to break free from the Zenia's and escape the radar.

###

After a long journey back to the main island, Alice registered the success of the quest with the Guild and got her reward. She simply reported that there was a slight issue with the beast guarding the place and that it had killed everyone inside.

Their fight had destroyed the building and nothing could be recovered.

Once the quest was marked down as completed, Alice booked an appointment for a four star Hunter exam and noted her fourth Sigil belonging to a Void Spectre, a ghost like beast that could tap into the Void.

Of course, it was far inferior when compared to a Six Winged Void Seraphim but letting them know the truth wouldn't do her any good. Just letting them know a rough estimate of her ability was good enough.

Thankfully, there was an examiner ready in the guild so she took the test immediately.

Her opponent, a five star Hunter with the power of lightning and clones.

"The exam is rather straightforward. Please withstand the onslaught using your Sigils to the best of your abilities. Once enough time has passed, I'll deem it satisfactory and you'll get your four star license." She explained while holding a pair of swords.

One was in standard grip while the other in reverse grip.

Nodding her head, Alice created a single blade mimicking the appearance of Void Fang and held it by her side.

Since it was an exam focused on surviving an onslaught, Alice decided to take this moment to further practice her Zone control.

Taking a deep breath, she deployed her Zone to the limit of her reach.

Seeing that Alice was taking it seriously, the examiner nodded in appreciation since there have been too many Hunters who take it easy and get eliminated straight away.

But if Alice is taking it seriously from the get go, then it'll be her job to use everything she's got. She can't allow a young seedling to get destroyed by her negligence when she takes four star commissions in the future.

***BANG!!!**

Lightning crashed down on the examiner as she activated her first resonance!

A black and white crystal began to cover her body while purple lightning crackled across the jagged spikes protruding from her skin.

Her eyes transformed into a golden colour while the sclera turned black.

Beside her, a phantom similar to her appearance but more bestial hovered with the same weapons.

"Watch out!" She warned, rushing towards Alice with a crackle of lightning.

Seeing the examiner appear to her side while the phantom flanked the other, Alice narrowed her gaze and slashed towards the examiner with her blade.

*CLANG!!!

Parrying the strike, the examiner stabbed towards Alice with her spear weapon but blood mirrors flickered to life around her.

Both of the phantom's strikes and her's were diverted away from Alice!

However, she didn't let her surprise ruin her guard. While Alice may need to survive, it didn't stop her from fighting back!

Blocking a kick aimed towards her stomach, the examiner wrapped her arm around Alice's leg before replying in kind, kicking towards her head.

Leaning back to dodge the kick, Alice was pleasantly surprised by the examiner's reaction speeds.

Focusing her senses, she realised that the examiner had also deployed her own Zone! Its boundary was slightly beyond her current reach but the edges were incredibly stable!

Snapping her finger, Alice created a miniature Void Flux between them to force some distance as she narrowed her gaze at the examiner.

Instinctively, Alice could tell that the examiner was holding back while trying to get a feel for how strong she was.

If that's the case then...

Taking a deep breath, Alice brought her blade to her side and focused her gaze. Her Zone condensed and stabilized as she prepared to use Void Flux – Cleave!

Feeling a chill down her spine as though she was looking at a beast that was ready to strike, the examiner was surprised a four Sigil Hunter could give her this kind of feeling.

In the many years she's spent as an examiner, the number of times that this had happened could be counted on one hand!

Revealing a satisfied smile, she entered an offensive stance as lightning crackled around her.

She was going to go to her top speed immediately!

Chapter 362 - 362: Four Star License

*BANG!!!

Shooting forward, the examiner created a field of clones before flickering through them with her true body.

Meanwhile, Alice furrowed her brows and tried her best to track her down.

She only had one chance to use Void Flux – Cleave at full power. Not only that, but she also had to be careful not to hit the examiner directly otherwise it could prove to be lethal.

Even without Cayla, Alice was able to spot the instances where the Examiner manifested in one of the clones. How the lightning sparks would shift and the source of the gaze would change locations. Alice could sense it all.

Taking two steps back, Alice created four blood mirrors in front of four clones, cutting off the examiner's path of retreat as it narrows down the choices to just three.

Taking another step back, she created another mirror, narrowing the choices down to two!

Naturally, the examiner understood what Alice was aiming for and the teleportation between her and the clone began to speed up.

If Alice were to choose wrong, it would allow the examiner a perfect chance to attack her from cover.

Seeing the blood mirror manifest in front of her, the examiner curled her lips into a smile.

'She chose wrong!'

But just as she was about to attack, she noticed her mistake.

The mirror wasn't teleporting her away but rather teleporting Alice to her! She never chose wrong. Alice simply chose to attack!

Seeing Alice appear in front of her mid swing, the examiner felt a chill down her spine as she immediately halted her attack and tilted her body to the side.

*KRKK!!!!

Feeling a graze against her cheek, she glanced back and watched as Alice's strike collided against the wall. Seeing the deep crevice left behind after the energy dissipated, her smile began to twitch as she held both her hands up.

"I give up. You pass."

If a four star Hunter was actually able to pull off this kind of technique then there was no worry that they'll struggle with four star commission. After all, those who can use techniques outside of the abilities granted by Sigils are those who are backed by large families or influential figures.

While she doesn't know who Alice was backed by, there were records of sponsorship in the past thus she could only assume it was the same person.

With the exam now over, Alice dispelled her blade and recalled all the blood she had used to create the blood mirrors.

"You'll get your four star license once you head to the main reception. But I must ask, how did you know which one was the real me?" She asked curiously.

"You have my record right?" Alice asked as she nodded her head.

"First Sigil, hallucinations. I created two illusions without deploying a single blood mirror. The only one that reacted to it was the real you." Alice shrugged as the examiner widened her eyes.

She was so preoccupied with Alice's other Sigils that she completely overlooked the hallucination aspect of her first Sigil.

In this regard, it was her oversight as the examiner.

"I see... Alright. Congratulations on getting your four star license." She laughed, patting Alice on the shoulder as this young Hunter had shown far more promise than what she originally expected.

Bidding farewell with the examiner, Alice made her way to the reception and got her new Guild ID. From three stars onward, each of the new IDs would take a slightly different appearance.

For the four star license, her ID now had four silver stars above her name along with silver linings against a black background.

Putting her license into her pouch, Alice left the Hunter's Guild. Just when she was about to go back to the Academy, she could feel the Underground crest vibrate. A sign that the branch manager has collected the information she wanted.

Making her way to the Academy so that she could disguise herself as Kale once more, Alice walked to the docks.

Upon approaching the entrance to the Underground, Alice was welcomed in without a single word.

'Seems like they're expecting you.' Alyss chuckled.

'Obviously. If the branch manager sends me a notice, would the workers dare make me wait?' Alice shrugged while making her way down.

[Tis would indeed make a bad host if she did.] Cayla nodded with a smile.

Walking past the main market and towards the suspended platform with the sealed Lord, Alice entered the dark office once more as the branch manager was already waiting by the table for her.

She sat on the surface while resting her hand on a small stack of parchment next to her.

"Welcome Ms Grani, it has been a while has it not? I do apologise for the... severe delay in delivering your commission. As you may know, the Zenia's hold a rather tight grip on their information and digging things out isn't as easy as one may think." She chuckled while Alice couldn't help but doubt.

What kind of information would an Abyss Lord struggle to obtain? Regardless, now that she has the information, checking it out was a must.

Just as she approached, the branch manager held up her hand.

"I do have to warn you though. As the broker of this information. Knowing it would get you tied up in something rather complicated. And even with the information I've gathered, some parts are still missing

as I wasn't able to find out the whole truth. Are you willing to risk this despite the incomplete information?" She asked, narrowing her gaze at Alice.

However, a helpless smile appeared on Alice's face.

"Unfortunately I'm already tied up with them. Knowing more wouldn't change anything." Alice shook her head.

Her response interested the branch manager but she didn't say anything more and flicked her finger.

The parchment shot towards Alice as she grabbed it out of the air and scanned her eyes across the page.

". . ." The more she read, the deeper her brows furrowed as her grip tightened on the parchment.

"Seems like the information I've obtained has been rather satisfactory. Though seeing as how you're not surprised, you must've known this beforehand right?" The branch manager crossed her arms as she began to probe Alice's identity.

When she found out the information she gave Alice, not even she could hide her surprise. An Abyss Lord who's seen much of what's happened in the Abyss couldn't hide her surprise yet this girl in front of her could?

The branch manager had two conclusions she could draw from this as of this moment.

First, Alice already knew this kind of information. If so, how? Kale Grani, a combatant that appeared out of nowhere new this information was most definitely an abnormality.

The Second was more concerning depending on your stance. And that was she was directly connected to it!

If it was indeed the second possibility then who exactly is she?

Flipping through the parchment, Alice's expression grew cold as she took a deep breath and nodded her head.

"Thank you. If there's nothing else, I'll take my leave now." Alice nodded before turning around.

"Thank you for your patronage. And by all means, Ms Grani, my branch is always open for you."

Watching Alice leave, the branch manager's smile faded as she tried to attach another tracker. It was far more discrete than the previous one yet the instant it made contact with her body, it was as though all of the energy was drained before it was dispelled.

Truly, she came with all kinds of surprises.

Even if she was curious, the branch manager understood that digging deeper may hold more risks than the benefits of satisfying her curiosity. Especially with the Zenia's tied up in this.

'I might've said the branch is always open to her but honestly, I don't mind it if she never comes back.' She thought to herself as it would be too much hassle. While she was collecting information, there were quite a few times when she almost got caught.

Shaking her head, she prepared a report to the main branch of the Underground as there would be no doubt that the Master would be interested in this information.

###

Leaving the underground without a single word, Alice made her way back to the Academy as she sat down on her bed.

Looking at the parchment once more, she clenched her fist and covered her eye with her arm.

'What now?' Alyss frowned with her hands crossed.

In the report that the branch manager gave her, none of the people that Erick brought with him were good people. All of them were involved in the gruesome acts done by the Zenia family. Moreover, both Melissa and Michael were deeply involved in what they call the 'Next Generation Plan'.

A plan to merge and create new Sigils, powers and Abyss Blood that were unheard of. Any method was welcome and they would go beyond moral guidelines if the experiment showed even the slightest sign of success.

On top of this, they were given new products produced by the New Generation Plan. Their Sigils and powers do not belong to any known species of Abyss beast.

Naturally, Alice could draw her assumption based on her current existing knowledge.

The Zenia's must've found a way to use her blood!

While Melissa and Michael were part of the New Generation Plan, Selen and her guards were potential 'candidates' for another plan.

The Immortal Bastion.

A plan to make use of the collar that tortured Alice for a decade, to repurpose it for soldiers who will not die in the midst of battle. A collar that will constantly feed them blood so that the task will be carried out successfully.

There were gruesome details of the experiments pertaining to both parties but this wasn't what shook Alice. It was what they were planning to do in the Inverted World.

To reclaim a lost 'relic' of the Zenia's. The foundation of their craft that is tied to the history of their noble family.

While the branch manager couldn't find out the truth and only the whispers of certain events, Alice knew of the truth.

Her birthday party! She was the 'relic' they wanted to reclaim!

Chapter 363 - 363: Recovering A 'Living' Relic

The report states that they were negotiating uses for the Inverted World so that the Zenia family could begin setting up a new branch near the Academy. Not only would they attract students to their departments but also achieve their goal of investigating the Inverted World.

[Theories on how to recover a 'living' relic as opposed to just taking out replicas... They really don't see you as a person, do they? O'master mine.] Cayla raised an eyebrow.

Every time she recalled what was written on the page, her expectations on how low the Zenias could go were rewritten every time.

The lengths they would go to achieve 'success' in their experiments, the sacrifices they are willing to make and the losses of life they gladly incur.

Even the Eclipse looked tame in comparison!

'That's just how they are. After ten years I'm not surprised that they're anxious about losing their most profitable tool. But I didn't think they would try to... recover another 'me' from the Inverted World of all things. What makes them think it's possible in the first place?' Alice frowned.

[The Inverted World is a library of memories and events. Taking out relics is simply a reward per say. But taking out a person... I'm unsure.

[After all, changes to the events within the Inverted World have no impact on the history of reality. It's simply a viewing experience where you can take souvenirs. And in this case, the Zenia's desire to take you as a souvenir. Though the logistics of having two you's in reality simultaneously with one being a memory can be rather chaotic.] Cayla furrowed her brows while tapping her chin.

'Regardless, we can't let the discussion for the Inverted World go through. As bad as this sounds, it's because they need humans for their experiments that the progress of their inventions is rather slow.

'Just imagine what they can do if they could access memories and experiment within the Inverted World.' Alyss reminded as Alice's expression turned dire.

The Zenias were the one family they could not allow access to the Inverted World.

'Any way we can stop them without implicating the principal? If we do it inside academy grounds, it's just another excuse for the Zenia's to send more.' Alice asked as both Alyss and Cayla fell silent.

Unless the principal could somehow convince the Zenias to stand down, the Zenia family will continuously send people to pressure her into handing over the access.

Even more so if they kill Erick and his entourage without proper preparation.

'Perhaps it's time for us to talk to the principal don't you think? See what her connection is to Allura and if there's a way we can help her while killing the Zenia's in the process.' Alyss suggested as Alice thought about it for a moment before nodding her head.

On top of talking to the principal, there was another thing she needed to sort out, her full transfer to the Theory Department so that she could start accessing the tools she needed.

Hopping off her bed, Alice was about to make her way out of her room when she froze up on the spot and slowly turned around.

She saw a raven standing by the windowsill, staring at her with unblinking eyes.

"Yo."

"F*cking hell!" Alice shouted out, unable to get used to Kaden's voice coming out of a raven.

"Care to tell me what you've been up to? One moment you're almost dead the other you're alive again. Next thing I know you're almost dead again only to miraculously be alive once more. I can't begin to

explain how stressful it is while I'm trying to do things on my end of things." Kaden complained with a frown as Alice scratched her cheek.

Smiling awkwardly, Alice explained the fight between her, Jyn and Rita while Kaden listened silently. On top of that, she decided to let him know what she plans on doing with the current Zenia group so he didn't worry.

Looking through the information she gave him, Kaden nodded his head.

"I see... I had Nalem look into something for me too. It seems the Zenia's are tied with more groups than I thought. The deeper we look the more dirt we find. But all of this information is indeed correct.

"After taking you out of the prison last time, they seemed to have focused most of their efforts in branching out rather than looking for you. Now, only a small group is assigned to try and find you." He explained, pushing the parchment back to Alice.

"Try not to get yourself into trouble if you can help it. Look for the principal for help if you need it. If you're on the verge of death use the feather I gave you. I'll be mostly unavailable since there's something urgent I need to sort out and fast."

Hearing this, Alice understood that it must be something to do with Allura. Only Allura would get him to react like this as she nodded her head.

"Alright. If... If it's something to do with Allura please let me know if I can help at all. I don't know if my blood or knowledge can even help-"

Before she could continue, Kaden's raven jumped onto her shoulder and tapped her head with his wings.

"Don't worry I know. We're verifying some... potential solutions to Lua's injury. While looking into the Zenia's, it seems like some of their research caught Nalem's attention. It might give us a clue on how to help Lua."

Understanding that the Zenia's are at the forefront of Abyss Blood research, it wasn't surprising that they may have the clues to a solution. If the Zenia's don't have it then it was very unlikely that any of the other families will.

Watching Kaden's raven fly out of her window, Alice clenched her fists as she could only wait for news regarding what they find.

All she could do now was sort out the things on her end.

###

Making her way to the Academy, Alice was once again reminded of her poor reputation as the crazy b*tch.

Around every turn, there was always someone whispering to their friend about her. How she's the crazy b*tch that lured the beasts during the exams and so on.

Of course, the biggest surprise for them was the state of her eyes. The right eye specifically. Having split hair and eyes to match was basically a trademark of her appearance yet her right eye was now closed with a gruesome scar on the eyelid.

They could only assume what had happened while Alice continued her way through the Academy.

But with so many eyes on her every movement, it was beginning to annoy Alice as she activated her temporary Sigil and disguised herself around a corner.

Taking the appearance of a common black haired girl with black eyes, a pair of glasses and a forgettable attire consisting of just standard wear that you see everywhere, Alice blended in with the masses.

Her right eye was disguised with a fake eye and soon, she was near the principal's office without anyone bothering her.

There were no guards for the principal, which was to be expected.

After all, six Sigils represented the pinnacle with the exception of those truly gifted who become Lords. Even mores so for beasts.

Knocking on the door, Alice waited for a moment before a soft fatigued groan could barely be heard as the principal composed herself.

"Come in." She called out.

Dispelling her disguise and stepping inside, Alice closed the door behind her.

Seeing that Alice took the initiative to see her, Rosalyn raised her eyebrow in surprise.

"Well well well... If it isn't the prodigy trained by Allura and Kaden. To what do I owe the pleasure of welcoming you into my office?" Rosalyn smiled, resting her chin on her hand.

"I just figured we might as well have at least on talk considering the fact that you look like my parental figure." Alice smiled as Rosalyn gestured for her to take a seat.

"By all means, ask away. Though I have a few questions of my own. I must ask, what happened to your eye?"

Touching her scar with her hand, Alice chuckled.

"Just some simple training."

"Rather reckless if you ask me but Allura and Kaden are ever the risk takers. Now let's set aside my observation and let's talk about what you want to ask me." Rosalyn shrugged.

"The Zenia's. Do you have a way to get them to stop pursuing the Inverted World?" Alice asked, getting straight to the point.

Hearing the Zenia name, Rosalyn's eye twitched as she had to hold back the slurs she was about to shout.

Clearing her throat, she tapped her finger on the table.

"The Zenia's are a... tenacious bunch. They're putting quite the importance on getting access to the Inverted World but rest assured, I'm not going to let them take it without a fight." Rosalyn reassured but Alice was not convinced.

"Pardon me for saying this but considering how long the talks have been going on, is it safe to say that you're not succeeding at convincing them?"

". . . You're just as infuriating as Kaden." Rosalyn's smile twitched as she scratched her hair.

"Yes, the Zenia's aren't budging at all. Even when I try to test how far they're willing to go for this, I haven't found their limit yet. But why does it matter to you? Surely the one chosen by Allura and Kaden have no ties with them, no?"

Crossing her legs, Alice decided to be blunt and revealed a bloodthirsty grin.

"I'm going to kill them."

Chapter 364 - 364: Rosalyn

"I'm going to kill them." Alice grinned.

"Ideally in a way that doesn't implicate the Academy considering you have ties with Allura and Kaden and that you look like my adoptive mother. It would feel rather sh*tty on my end to put you through that which is why I'm here. And unfortunately, it's unavoidable. I WILL kill them."

A silent stare-off ensued between the two as Rosalyn's frown grew deeper, understanding that Alice wasn't joking around when she mentioned wanting to kill them.

"I don't like it. Frankly, I think it's downright stupid. It's a stupid choice and even if you have a vendetta against them, its brainless to go after them right now. How much manpower do you think the Zenia's have? In fact, let me ask you this first. Do you know what they desire from the Inverted World in the first place?" Rosalyn asked, her face cold.

She didn't care if Alice was chosen by Kaden as this didn't mean she could do whatever she wanted.

While Kaden may be free spirited and nihilistic to some extent, even he knows the stupidity of going after the Zenia's while their goal is right in front of them.

Killing the group would only give the Zenias more reason to claim the Inverted World and less room for her to negotiate.

"And if you do know what's at stake then still choosing to go after them because of your vendetta is childish and immature. You may gain instant satisfaction but what will you do when the Zenias claim the Inverted World? Will you kill every Zenia that enters this city?" Rosalyn asked as she narrowed her eyes.

Her aura seemed to dwarf this room as Alice swallowed her saliva.

"Can you afford to stay in this city for that long? I don't know what Allura and Kaden have planned for you, but I doubt you can stay in this backwater area for long. There are true monsters living in the mainland. Monsters that can kill me with a single flick of their finger despite having the same number of Sigils."

Silence ensued between the two of them before Alice sighed.

"Fine. But what do you propose if I don't kill them immediately? Two of them have already died by my hand and it was a complete accident. I didn't think a quest I received from the Guild would result in a confrontation with them." Alice shrugged, throwing the evidence she recovered from the Orphanage towards her.

Catching the experiment notes, Rosalyn began to read through it. Little by little, her expression turned cold as her hands clenched against the pages.

"Don't destroy it. It's important evidence after all." Alice reminded as Rosalyn took a deep breath to calm herself.

With this kind of evidence, anyone would be inclined to kill the group inside Silverwind immediately. But once again, doing so was simply ignoring the consequences of pitting themselves against the Zenia family. No, they needed to handle this carefully.

"I'll take this into account so don't kill them immediately. If you do, it'll be the same as welcoming the Zenia family into my city with a red carpet." Rosalyn massaged her forehead with a sigh.

If Alice was anything like Allura and Kaden then she'd probably go after them anyway and let her clean up the mess afterwards.

"Alright. I'll hold off as much as I can. But once they track it back to me, I'll have no choice but to kill them like I had originally planned." Alice leaned back in annoyance.

As much as she hated it, the principal wasn't wrong. Killing them now would only invite more trouble in the future. If she kills them now and leaves, the Zenias will gain access to the Inverted World. Once that happens, she'll have to deal with an immortal army bolstered by the collar.

On top of that, letting them live will give her time to investigate Selen, the one who let her go despite knowing she was the one who killed Jyn and Rita.

A decision that confused Alice no matter how she thought about it. Especially since Selen was involved in some of Zenia's plans.

'Do you think she's trying to rebel and leave the Zenias?' Alyss asked but Alice shook her head.

'It's too early to say. But if we hold off a little, it should give us time to investigate and time for the principal to convince the Zenias to stand down. Or at least I hope so.'

While Alice and Alyss were discussing the issue around Selen, Rosalyn blinked her eyes in surprise.

'She... actually accepted my suggestion? She didn't ignore my side and go ahead with what she wants to do?'

"Are you truly Allura and Kaden's chosen?" Rosalyn asked as Alice furrowed her brows.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Nothing, don't mind it. But alright. If they go after you, you obviously need to protect yourself. There are two locations where I could reduce the impacts of their deaths with some excuses. First, the Inverted World.

"Since you're dealing with memories of the past, there's always a chance of you running into an abnormally strong beast that was never mentioned. Butterfly effects and so on. The Inverted World records all of the variables that could happen during that instance in time.

"The second is to kill them outside of the city. More preferable since it's out of my jurisdiction and the Zenia's can't hold it over me. However, doing it this way gives the Zenia's a chance to establish a branch just outside of my city. Once again, outside of my jurisdiction so I can't say much about it." Rosalyn suggested as Alice listened with a nod.

Since she had killed both Jyn and Rita outside of the city, the Zenia's can't do much and even if they do establish a branch, it's not as though they haven't already with the Orphanage. Moreover, the principal didn't know about it until now!

"But me giving you these two options isn't an invitation for you to lure them into trying to kill you or for you to provoke them into trying to kill you there or for you to attack them while they're out of the city. It's a last resort okay?!" Rosalyn reminded sternly.

"Don't worry I know. I'd rather not have the Zenia's access the Inverted World if it can be helped which is why I'm keeping an eye on them." Alice shrugged.

Just as she stood up, she decided to ask a favour from the principal.

"Speaking of which, can you help me set up a fake ID or something similar? I'm using a fake identity to know them after all and the Underground doesn't have eyes inside the Academy. It's the only way I can safely change my appearance." Alice asked with a smile.

"Eh? What do you mean? I don't think you have a disguise type Sigil right? Or are you drinking blood for it?" Rosalyn blinked her eyes as Alice let out a soft chuckle.

"Who knows~"

Activating her Sigil, her appearance changed into Kale Grani, leaving Rosalyn stumped before Alice left the room.

Standing rooted in her spot, Rosalyn blinked her eyes as she began to question what she had just seen.

'What? How? Huh? She should only have four Sigils no? When did she get a disguise skill?' Questioning how Alice was able to disguise herself, Rosalyn soon remembered where she had seen Alice with that appearance.

The girl that was seen hanging out with the Zenias not long after they would finish a meeting, go around shopping and occasionally fight. It was Alice all along!

The flip in personality and manners was shocking to say the least. It's as though they were completely different people!

"No wonder the Zenia's didn't notice anything wrong..." Rosalyn furrowed her brows as she leaned back in her seat.

Letting out a groan, there was more work for her now. Planning a second exam, pressure from the noble families, Zenia's wanting access to the Inverted World and now Alice wanting a fake ID.

However, at least Alice warned her beforehand. It was far better than what Allura and Kaden have been pulling.

###

"You couldn't find the culprit?" Erick raised an eyebrow in surprise. Selen of all people couldn't find it despite taking the tracking relic.

"The one who killed Jyn and Rita didn't stay the night. I scanned everyone in the town but the compass didn't react at all. I even checked the boats and carriages leading to other cities. My best guess is that they left immediately after finding out the truth about the Orphanage." Selen reported. Her gaze didn't flicker nor did her expression change.

After all these years, she's gotten used to hiding her emotions when she needed to.

Taking a frustrated breath, Erick sat on his bed while tapping his heel repeatedly against the ground.

While the Zenia's could cover up everything that has happened, having this kind of negative news while they were trying to acquire the Inverted World didn't work in favour of increasing their odds.

Plus, the principal of the Academy was being rather stubborn, refusing to budge a single inch even when the Zenias were prepared to go above and beyond for her.

"Send word to the main family. Let them know that the branch was breached and that the guards were killed. The culprit no where in sight and have them send some of our best trackers to clean up the loose ends. We can't make a big deal out of this."

"Understood." Selen nodded her head as she turned around and prepared to leave but Erick stopped her.

"Have someone else send the message. You have a more important job." He revealed a lecherous grin as Selen bit her lip until it bled but soon, the wound healed as she returned to her nonchalant state.

"Understood."

Chapter 365 - 365: Alice Vs Luke

After her discussion with the principal, Alice took this time to train by with Luke since Ria was busy. Both of them needed more practical training with different opponents.

For Luke, he needed to be able to defend himself against all sorts of threats. For Alice, she needed to get a better grasp of her new depth perception and scope of vision.

With her right side now blind, she had to turn her head more often to cover for the blind spots.

*BANG!!!

Dodging the downwards cleave of the Paladin that Luke summoned, Alice slid against the ground as lilies would blossom wherever she touched.

As they sparred, Alice discovered a strange change within her second Sigil, one that she only began to notice the peculiarities of.

Ever since the manifestation of her spider lilies, her second Sigil and resonance have been split into two halves.

Alyss's half consisted of the violet flames that now also enhance the body with the energies it absorbs along with the countless black limbs that only Alyss could summon. No matter how Alice tried, the limbs refused to manifest.

The second half, Alice's half, consisted of the red spider lilies. Flowers that enhance her casting ability while robbing the energy used by her enemies. Not only that, but these flowers blossom within the opponent's body, using it as fertilizer to grow and fester.

Naturally, Alyss couldn't manifest these flowers.

With this new information, Alice's abilities could be summarized as such:

First Sigil: Hallucination, Physical Buff (Disguise – Temp)

Second Sigil: Blood Manipulation, Red Spider Lilies/Violet Flames

Third Sigil: Blood and Metal Manifestation

Fourth Sigil: Void Control

Of course, information about her spider lilies were largely unknown since it was a new ability that manifested during her fight inside the Inverted World.

Even now, Cayla was making notes on Alice's power.

The key property of these lilies are their nature to fester and grow, turning anything they touch into a flower bed.

With this as a basis, Cayla instructed Alice to experiment with ideas surrounding this concept.

Creating a blood needle that hovered above her finger, Alice took aim and fired it towards the Paladin who released an upward cleave.

*CLANG!!!

Knocking the needle aside, it was about to charge at Alice when a torrent of briar thorns rushed towards the construct.

Summoning a shield, it blocked the thorns while Alice ran in from the blind spot.

In her hands, she held a blood dagger and jumped up.

Stabbing into the paladin's neck, the dagger collapsed into a pool of blood as Luke snapped his finger and conjured a chess piece.

"I don't think your dagger can breach my paladin's defences." He called out while Alice avoided Luke's attack with a backflip.

"I don't have to breach the defence. I just need to make sure I plant the seed." Alice let out a laugh.

Narrowing her gaze, she aimed her finger at the paladin before mouthing the words 'Bang'.

*CRACK!!!

Tearing the armour apart from the inside, red spider lilies began to bloom from the paladin's neck as its roots dug deep into the armour. With each moment that passes, the lustre of the armour would fade while the lily's pedals would radiate a scarlet radiance.

Seeing his paladin restrained by the lilies, Luke's smile twitched.

"What a broken Sigil. You just need to plant the marker and your flowers will grow, who can even block it?" Luke complained while snapping his fingers.

The paladin scattered into a sea of light particles.

"Promotion – Bishop!" Luke narrowed his eyes as a figure began to appear next to him.

Seeing this, Alice's smile twitched.

"You already have Ria and you've gone as far as to copy me now? Shameless!"

"Cry about it." Luke smirked as his bishop piece aimed her fingers towards Alice.

Void Flux!

Seeing the flames condense into a single spark that shot towards her at blistering speeds, Alice slammed her hand down and created a sea of blood.

Thankfully, the bishop wasn't able to copy the technique at full strength nor was it able to copy the nature of Alyss's fire.

Right now, it was simply a very destructive attack that lacked the properties that made it monstrous!

From this sea, walls upon walls of briar thorns erupted from the surface as it collided with the attack and consumed it.

Upon the briar thorns, spider lilies began to blossom.

"Eh?" Blinking his eyes, Luke didn't expect Alice's attack to lack the power he had seen before. But before he could contemplate as to why that was the case, he noticed the flow of energy gathering towards Alice.

"Let me show you how it's truly done."

Flames erupted and converged into a single radiant spark. Just the presence of the true Void Flux was enough to warp the space around them as Luke felt a chill down his back.

Commanding his bishop to stand in front of him, she prepared a Void Flux of her own as the two fired it off at the same time.

The clash didn't even last a single second as Alice's attack consumed the fake and even empowered itself!

"F*ck!" Cursing out loud, Luke recalled his bishop and resummoned his paladin.

"Cry about it~" Alice revealed a smug grin as the paladin slammed the tower shield into the ground, forming an illusionary wall.

*CRACK!!! BANG!!!

Diverting the Void Flux to the side, Luke watched as the left half of his paladin was completely erased by Alice's attack.

"Are you sure you should be looking away right now?" Alice's voice rang out. Running from the side, she slashed towards Luke with her sword.

Promotion – Knight!

*CLANG!!!

Parrying her slash, the Knight pushed Alice's blade to the side before slamming his shoulder into her chest, knocking her back by a few steps.

"Don't worry about that. If I don't show a small gap, how can I make you bite?"

###

The fight between the two lasted for a while with no clear winners. Alice wasn't able to breach his defence while Luke wasn't able to land a single solid blow against Alice.

Both lacked offensive capabilities to properly end the fight without endangering their lives.

In the end, they decided on a draw while Alice covered her right eye with her palm. Not being able to see out of her right eye had been affecting her more than she originally expected. She had figured that she'd adapt to this vision soon enough but no matter how much she fought, there was a gap in her reaction that she couldn't overcome.

[Take your time o'master mine. Losing one's vision isn't something that can be overcome in a single night. Many take years to adapt while it's only been a few days for you.] Cayla reminded as the more stressed Alice was about adapting to this new vision, the less she'd achieve.

'I know. It's just turning out to be harder than I expected that's all.' Alice smiled wearily.

"What's with that goofy ass smile on your face?" Luke asked, leaning over Alice as he handed her a towel.

"Talking to the voices in my head. Are you going back to your lessons now?" Alice chuckled, accepting the towel as she sat up.

"Yep. Unlike some, my lessons haven't stopped. Even if I'm a special class student, there are still lectures that Xinbei suggests I listen to." Luke sighed while adjusting his hair and glasses.

"Oh? Though I thought you said you didn't have a goal for Abyssal Engineering?" Alice raised an eyebrow, confused as to why Luke would continue to pursue this topic if he had no goals for it.

"Just because I don't have a goal right now doesn't mean it's not a good skill to have. Abyssal Engineering doesn't account for trinkets. With enough mastery, you can even make weapons with it or adjust existing ones.

"Who knows? In the future, I might be the one who makes adjustments to your sword that Kaden sealed away." Luke rolled his eyes while Alice let out a laugh.

"I'll be honest, there are many things you can probably improve in the future but Void Fang probably isn't one of them." Alice revealed a grin as this was a sword blessed and modified by Velouria after all.

The Goddess of the Abyss and the Queen of Ayr.

"Tsk, just you wait then. I'll make you eat your words." Luke clicked his tongue in annoyance as this was a challenge directed towards him.

Waving his hand goodbye, Luke made his way out of the training grounds.

Standing up, Alice gave her body a stretch before letting out a yawn.

It was about time for her to resume her disguise as Kale Grani and meet up with the Zenias again. She was curious as to how things would play out now that both Jyn and Rita were dead. Would Erick keep her around or would he focus on his task at hand.

If he keeps her around, then it'll be easier for her to keep track of what they're up to now that two of the guards are dead.

'Maybe we can lure them out of the city and give them a quick... ya know...' Alyss trailed off as she did the gesture for cutting their throats.

'Did you forget what we promised the principal? Our job is to simply observe and involve ourselves with his group. Slowly gain trust and see if we can disrupt their plans without the Zenia's making big moves.' Alice sighed as Alyss was a little too bloodthirsty despite their promise to the principal.

Not that she didn't understand her eagerness as she too would prefer to just kill them.

But with the Inverted World at stake, she couldn't risk them getting access to a banquet of experimental resources. That is to say, other humans.

'Tsk boring. But how many Lord level beings do you think the Zenia's have for the branch manager of the Underground to struggle?' Alyss asked as folded her arms in annoyance.

'Who knows? But considering their prestige probably a handful.'

Regardless, it wasn't something she should bother with right now. Activating her first Sigil, she applied her disguise of Kale Grani and made her way out of the realm to meet up with Erick.

Chapter 366 - 366: Erick's Offer

Making her way through the marketplace, Alice decided to 'look for an eyepatch'.

With Cayla being sealed, there was no avoiding the fact that her right eye couldn't be used right now and thus, she incorporated it into Kale Grani's disguise.

Previously, she had a pair of bright crimson eyes. But now, her right eye was dull. No longer was there a crimson shine but instead, it was replaced by a greyish blue.

She noticed the Zenia group approaching in the distance but decided to ignore it since they were coming from her right.

Not only that, but she made sure to expand her unstable Zone boundary since the Guards had noticed it before.

"Ah~ That's not very cute though..." Alice groaned while looking at eye patches. All of them were a dull black colour and lacked any designs. Upon hearing her comment, the shopkeeper seemed a little annoyed.

"Beasts aren't going to hold back regardless of what you wear. Even if you wear the cutest outfit possible, it doesn't make you any less of a meal for them." He reminded as Alice shrugged her shoulders.

"Yeah but if I'm going to die I wanna die a cutie ya get me? If I wear something dull I'm going to flip in my grave!" Alice grinned and stuck out her tongue.

The instant Erick stepped into the range of her boundary, Alice snapped her head to the right while jumping back with a hostile glare.

Once she saw it was Erick, she relaxed her guard.

"Ah sorry sorry! I'm a little skittish when people approach my right side now." She scratched her hair in embarrassment.

"Did something happen?" Erick asked curiously, seeing the discolouration in her eye.

"Eh... I mean... Just a little. Ah but don't get it wrong, I'm still strong okay?" Alice laughed as she hopped over to their side.

"Hm? Where's the gorilla and the silent one today? Are they out doing something important?" Alice blinked her 'innocent' eyes in confusion as Erick's smile twitched for a moment.

"They're a little preoccupied for now. But setting them aside, can you tell me what happened to your eye? I might be able to help you fix it." Erick chuckled as he reached his hand towards Alice's face.

Screaming in her mind while allowing him to get a better look at her eye, Alice opened her mouth.

"It's... Kind of hereditary. Do you know how I can fight against Jyn pretty well? It was because of my right eye. The people in my family are able to see a little better than the average Hunter. It's like time just slows down.

"But the more you use it, the worse the eye becomes. Spacing out the uses is fine but there's always a risk if you overuse it. I was in a fight while exploring the Inverted World and overused my eye a little and now it's blind." Alice stuck out her tongue while Erick furrowed his brows.

"I've never heard of a hereditary trait that allows you to see better but I suppose it's the Abyss so anything can happen. Melissa, Michael, can you have a look at this?" Erick asked as Alice let out a small cough.

"Erm... maybe not in the middle of the streets?" She squirmed in embarrassment as Erick was still holding onto her cheek.

"Ah, sorry about that." Erick coughed but snuck a glance at Kale's embarrassed expression.

Meanwhile, Alice was biting the bed covers in her mind, trying not to break her act while Alyss howled in laughter beside her.

Letting go of Alice's cheeks, he invited her back to their Inn so that Melissa and Michael could make a quick diagnosis on Alice's eye.

Once she arrived at their Inn room, Alice followed instructions and laid down on the bed while both Melissa and Michael activated their Sigils.

For Michael, a halo manifested behind him while his eyes turned to a radiant gold while Melissa manifested a bloodied halo. Her eyes became bloodshot as ritualistic patterns appeared along her arm.

Now that she was seeing this in person, Cayla was more confused than ever. In all her time acting as the Eyes of the Abyss and the knowledge she had amassed, this was the first time she had seen this kind of power.

Everything that came from the Zenias was abnormal, Alice included, and practically flipped all the existing knowledge of the Abyss on its head!

Michael's power had a hint of repulsion towards the Abyss, similar to how the flames acted while Melissa's blood was oppressive and violent.

Holding still beneath their gazes, Alice was ready to strike out if she needed but held back.

Meanwhile, Selen watched with a conflicted expression.

'Is it coincidence?' She wondered to herself upon seeing Kale's eye.

The suspect for the killing of Jyn and Rita also had a damaged eye but there was no traces of Kale's power at the scene of the crime. Not only that, but they were simply too different to be the same person.

'The other girl tried to use illusions. Unless Kale can use illusions, it's unlikely for her to be involved.' Selen concluded. She figured that she was probably too eager after such a variable had appeared, but eagerness could lead to her downfall.

She had to continue as she had always done and take things one step at a time.

"It's as she said sir. Though... rather than hereditary, it's more of a curse." Michael frowned as Erick raised an eyebrow.

"Eh? A curse? Who me?" Alice sat up in shock while pointing at herself.

Seeing her surprise, Michael understood that she didn't know anything about it.

"It's only speculative since we don't have any equipment on hand. But it seems like there's a curse on your eye, one that drains it of sight and power. I'm not sure what kind of curse can be inherited as such but it might be a ritualistic type that targets the bloodline rather than the individual." Michael shrugged, deactivating his Sigil.

"It's definitely not a ritual, I don't see any signs of exchange or ritualistic contracts on this curse." Melissa shook her head, denying the possibility.

"So it's a curse targeted at her bloodline but it's not a ritual either? Then what is it?" Erick folded his arms.

"No clue sir. Can't check it properly without tools from the lab." Michael raised his hands in defeat as Alice flinched inwardly at the mention of lab.

While her movement may have gone unnoticed by the others since they weren't looking at her, it didn't escape Selen's eyes.

Suspicion welled in her heart but she didn't make a single move.

"Hmm... What do you think of this?" Erick turned to Alice who sat on the bed while covering her right eye with her hand.

"Hm... Doesn't really change much since I'm already blind in one eye nowahaha..." Alice laughed bitterly while kicking her legs back and forth.

Looking at Alice's figure, Erick thought to himself for a moment before opening his mouth.

"Would you like to go back with me to the Zenia family? As you know, the family is the best when it comes to Abyss Blood. I'm sure some of our research can help solve your curse issue." Erick offered, surprising Selen as she didn't think he would invite her to the family rather than keeping her as a plaything.

"Eh? To the Zenia family? Alice blinked her eyes as did Melissa and Michael.

"Just like Selen, you are clearly capable of fighting people above your Sigil count. And the Zenia's value that, truly. And if we can help you resolve this curse, what do you think about joining the family? As a knight like Selen?" Erick smiled while Selen clenched her fist.

Closing her eyes, she could remember the offer extended to her.

The moment she was chained to this Gods forsaken family. And once again, she has to see the same scene play out in front of her.

"Of course, as I am not part of the main family yet, I don't have direct say into whether or not I can get you in. However, we're very close to achieving what we've set out to do in this city. Once I achieve that, I'll be accepted into the main family and directing some resources into solving your curse should be a piece of cake for me." Erick continued, making his way towards Alice.

"So how about it? Would you like to come with me to the Zenia family?"

Hesitating, Alice glanced up at Erick.

"But..."

"I recall the words you told to me at the time we met were that you are strong, wasn't it? I need strong people by my side. I lack the physical powers of guards or the mental prowess of our researchers and that's exactly why I need to surround myself by people I can trust and people who can protect me.

"In return, I'll do everything I can to fulfil your wishes. Even fixing this eye of yours." Raising his hand, Erick places his hand on Alice's cheek with his thumb next to her eye.

'Bullsh*t.' Selen thought to herself.

Blushing from his touch, Alice took a few steps back while looking away in embarrassment, causing Erick to chuckle as he retracted his hand.

"You don't have to give me an answer immediately, I'll wait for your reply. For now, rest in the room as long as you need."

Watching them leave, Alice was throwing up on the inside when she noticed Selen flicking something towards her and caught it immediately.

A small pin with the design of a sword.

[It's connected to her, similar to what the branch manager tried to track us. Though it's for us to track her instead...] Cayla muttered in confusion.

Looking at the pin, Alice furrowed her brows before storing it into her pouch for now. It wasn't a pin used to track her meaning Selen had no interest in Alice's whereabouts. Instead, it was for Alice to know hers.

Questions floated in Alice's mind and the only one who could give it to her was Selen.

'Seems like we'll have to talk to her sooner than expected.'

Chapter 367 - 367: Selen

After Erick left, Alice passed the time for a bit before leaving the room while tracking Selen's location.

She pretty much spent the entire time following Erick around by his side, guarding him from danger while visiting the Academy.

Aside from visiting the Academy, it seemed like they were checking out the rest of the city. From its defences to the different alleys and even the sewage area.

'What do you think she's trying to achieve by showing us all of this?' Alyss asked curiously.

'No clue.' Alice shrugged.

'If she's acting against the Zenia's, is she not afraid of their retaliation?'

'Considering the fact that she's a captain and she went to find out what happened to Jyn and Rita, it's clear that she knows about the things the Zenias hide from the public eye. Either she's grown a conscience or she's looking for a chance.'

Continue to observe their movements over the course of the day, Alice didn't find anything too strange until Selen began to move rapidly to the docks as Alice took this as her cue to meet up with the girl.

Making her way to the docks, she spotted Selen waiting by an alley.

"Yo~ You wanted to talk with me?" Alice asked with a smile as she threw the pin over to her.

Catching it with her hand, Selen glanced towards Alice.

"You can drop that act now. I've seen how you reacted when Michael mentioned the lab. You know what the Zenia's do don't you?" Selen narrowed her eyes as she tapped her finger against her arm.

At that moment, Alice felt overwhelmed by a sense of weightlessness.

Widening her eyes, Alice immediately adjusted her posture as she rolled against the black and white ground within a realm of monotony.

A single eclipsed sun hung in the sky, bleeding a colourless blood while withered branches protruded from the trees.

Seeing the eclipse, Alice immediately associated her with the Eclipse Cult but that doesn't seem to be the case either. Selen didn't hold any traces of Enris' energy.

But understanding that her act as Kale Grani was dropped the moment she flinched at the word Lab, Alice scratched her hair in annoyance and dropped her act while keeping her disguise.

"What about it? Are you here to silence me now?" Alice narrowed her eyes towards Selen who sat atop a boulder.

"You should stop while you still can. Getting involved with the Zenia's is more trouble than it's worth. Though if you persist, I can only tie up loose ends." Selen warned as a thick killing intent oozed from her body to the point that even Alice felt goosebumps forming on her arms.

"If you felt that way, you wouldn't have given me a chance to talk to you. You don't like the Zenia's either, do you?"

". . ." Staying silent, Selen stood up and held out her hand to her side.

From her palm, a black material began to form, breaking free of her skin as blood and black metal fused together to form a single guardless blade.

"So you insist on going against the Zenia family."

"Naturall-"

Before she could even finish her sentence, Selen burst into action.

Widening her eyes, Alice slashed up with a blood blade to counter her attack.

*BANG!!!

Releasing a horizontal slash, Selen destroyed the blade with ease as she appeared in front of Alice.

Just as Alice wanted to counter, Selen grabbed her wrist and flipped her over her shoulder before continuing with a kick to Alice's stomach.

"ARG!!" Coughing out a mouthful of blood from the kick, Alice's body was sent tumbling away as she crashed into a boulder and pulled herself out from the rubble.

"If you're trying to fight the Zenia family with this meagre strength then give up. I was mistaken, deciding to include you was wrong." Selen sighed.

"But that blood blade... You never showed it before. Seems like you have more than three Sigils after all."

"Who knows?" Alice forced a smile as she didn't think their talk would result in a fight.

"I can't stay away for long. So either prove yourself or die. And if you die, I'll apologize to you personally when I die in the future." Selen narrowed her gaze as energy began to surge from her body.

Taking a step towards Alice, symbols manifested above her head as Selen disappeared from her spot!

[She's adjusting time!!!] Cayla shouted, surprising Alice as the blade plunged into her chest.

*KRRRK!!!!

Ripping out a chunk of Alice's chest, Selen let out a sigh as the blade in her hand started to disappear.

Once again, she let her eagerness drag someone into her plans. Had she waited a little longer, she wouldn't have needed to kill them. But it was better to test them before Erick could take her to the Zenia family.

Should that happen, Alice could forget about leaving the compound without them forcing a contract upon her.

*Step...

Pausing in shock, Selen turned her head as she heard a footstep behind her.

She could see Alice's flesh stitching together but more importantly, her disguise disappeared!

'The girl from the other night!!!'

*BANG!!!

Firing a point blank Void Flux at Selen, Alice jumped back as she spat out a mouthful of blood in annoyance.

'What do you mean she's adjusting time?' Alice asked as she flinched from the pain of having her chest carved out.

[That power she displayed, it wasn't exactly like the beast that I know of but it's clear that she's manipulating her own time. She's speeding up her motions and attacks.] Cayla explained as Alyss sat up.

'Oi twinnie, want me to take over for a bit?' Alyss asked with a frown.

If Selen could manipulate her time then for Alice who hadn't grasped her depth perception just yet, it was a dangerous fight!

'Same plan as usual.' Alice nodded as she handed the controls over to Alyss.

Rushing towards Alice once more, Selen furrowed her brows upon seeing the golden chains appear on her body.

Revealing a maniacal grin, Alyss let out a laugh.

Slamming her hand down, flames erupted around her as black hands rushed out from the ground, aiming to grab Selen's body.

Feeling a chill from these hands, Selen wanted to jump back but Alice quickly took over.

Abyss Lord of Duality!

"!!!" Widening her eyes, Selen realised her body controls had been flipped and reacted immediately.

Conjuring a second weapon that looks like a wand, she stabbed it into the ground.

Suddenly, the sound of clock hands ticking slowing down sounded out before all sound came to a halt.

Looking around in confusion, Alice realised that Selen stopped all of the abilities around her.

Letting out a deep breath, Selen moved her body a few times before aiming her sword at Alice.

"Truly, I wonder how many abilities you've kept hidden. A Sigil that absorbs the surrounding energy, one that releases slashes, another that creates corrosive surges of energy, blood manifestation and manipulation, these flames and those black hands. Not to mention your disguise and whatever you did to change my motor functions." Selen narrowed her eyes.

*BANG!!!

Exploding with earth shattering speed, Alice flipped her controls once more but Selen didn't slow down.

'F*ck! She's a monster with body control! Let me switch!' Alyss shouted as golden chains manifested around Alice's body.

Creating a blood blade with a metal core, Alyss parried Selen's attack.

"Metal too huh? Logic tells me I should classify you as an Abyss Lord level being since you have 8 powers. But clearly, that's impossible otherwise I would've stopped breathing by now. Your experience shows that you're a pretty young Hunter, immature even. How long has it been since you stepped on this path?" Selen asked, adjusting her guard and disarming Alyss.

Grabbing Alyss's wrist, she punched up, breaking the elbow before following up with an uppercut.

Forcing Alyss to take a few steps back as her arm began to regenerate, Selen threw her sword at Alyss which stabbed into the shoulder.

"On top of that, you have regeneration. That makes it 9 different abilities now. You are clearly not the pinnacle of human power, a nine Sigil Abyss Lord so I ask you, what are you?" Selen asked, slamming her staff down as time froze once more.

Alice could feel the sword being stuck to her shoulder, fused even, and it refused to come out no matter how she pulled.

"Who knows? Wanna take a crack at it?" Alice forced a grin as she tore off her arm and regenerated her flesh.

Furrowing her brows, Selen stabbed her staff down before letting go.

Raising her guard, Alice wondered if Selen was about to continue the fight but that didn't seem to be the case. Her killing intent faded away as Selen began to unbutton her shirt.

"The f*ck are you doing???" Alice blinked her eyes, wondering why Selen was taking off her clothes.

"Calm down, I'm not undressing for you to get off to me." Selen rolled her eyes as she turned around and revealed her back.

Just as Alice was about to continue, her pupils constricted seeing the amalgamation of stitches and scars left behind by countless scalpels tearing across her flesh. A horrifying curtain of torture that was printed upon her back.

"Everyone is surprised when they see my back. But you, you have an idea on what caused this don't you?" Selen revealed a small smile, hiding the scars with her shirt once more.

"You said you wanted me to take a crack at what you are, right?" Selen turned around, recalling the sword to her hand.

"I'm thinking... You're just another f*cked up experiment in the long line of f*ck ups created by this family."

Chapter 368 - 368: Miralith

Furrowing her brows, Alice dismissed her abilities as Selen didn't show any signs of wanting to continue to fight.

Recalling her staff, Selen adjusted her clothes before turning to Alice.

"Since you're the same person that killed Jyn and Rita, I suggest you maintain your disguise as Kale for a few more days. Don't let people see you as... whoever you are. Erick is already telling me to find out your identity." Selen warned.

"Either way, we can talk more next time. At least now I know you're capable."

Raising her hand, Selen snapped her finger as the realm began to collapse around them.

Returning the two of them to the docks, she didn't hesitate to leave since she couldn't stay away from Erick for an extended period of time without a good reason.

Doing so would just be raising unneeded suspicion.

'She just does whatever she wants at her own pace doesn't she?' Alice blinked her eyes while Alyss shrugged.

First, she gives her a pin out of nowhere then she tries to kill them. Next thing they know she's left after telling them not to reveal her true appearance for a while.

'Regardless, it seems like she's another product of the Zenia's. A powerful one at that too.'

'Mnm... Those scars on her back look rather nasty too. Imagine what it must've looked like in its original state?' Alice nodded. With healing blood, you can hide away scars to some extent, but large amounts of damage will still leave marks.

[O' master mine, I believe there is one thing you must understand first of all. The power that she displayed, it doesn't belong to the average beast. The power to be able to manipulate the flow of time,

even if it is just in ones body, is gifted to a select few beasts. Most of them cannot extend their powers far.

[A beast that can pull off the stunts similar to what she had displayed and even freeze the motion of attacks launched by Alyss can only be one. Though a slight downgrade to what I have witnessed before, it is no doubt the ability of a sealed Abyss Lord of the old age. The Abyss Lord of Time – Miralith.]

Hearing this, Alice frowned as she quickly reapplied her disguise before someone noticed.

'Miralith? So... The Zenia's have access to a sealed Lord. F*cking great and they're throwing out Abyss Lord enhanced Guards as well.' Alyss threw her hands into the air as this was beyond their initial expectations.

She and Alice knew that the Zenias had other experiments happening on the side while theirs was happening. But to siphon the strength of a sealed Lord and even produce a Guard of this calibre was frankly scary.

They don't know the cost to produce such a Hunter but if the Zenia's could mass produce it then it'll be an army of faux Abyss Lords.

Who knows, the Zenia's may have already achieved this and simply hid it from the public eye.

'Say if we were to start an all out war with the Zenia's.

Just from what we know, they now possibly have an army of immortal soldiers using the collar, genetically modified Hunters holding abilities that shouldn't be possible and with their inspiration being us, Guards who are able to use powers belonging to sealed Lords and lastly, Abyss Lord level Hunters that could worry the branch master of the Underground. Ya know what?

Maybe, just maybe, we're a little f*cked if that happens.' Alyss let out a laugh before kicking her bed out of frustration.

Panting out of anger, Alyss gritted her teeth.

With every new bit of information they find, the prospect of toppling the Zenia continued to extend beyond their reach.

Taking a deep breath, Alice calmed her mind.

'However, they have a glaring weakness.'

Raising her eyebrow, Cayla wondered what this weakness was.

'They all use Abyss Blood. Remember the book that Nalem lent to us when we first met in Zadash? Though you weren't... here like you are now so you might not know. However, the book is the journal of an old friend of his.

'The Abyss Lord of Poisons – Leoric Becker, first son of the Becker family. An Abyss Lord who got the same first Sigil as me but focused his life on mastering this poison.' Alice narrowed her eyes.

'If I want to fight against the Zenia family properly, I might have to walk the same path as Leoric. At least to some extent. I need to extend the range of my blood mist so that it can cover the entire army.' Alice raised her hand and conjured a single seed that blossomed into a red spider lily.

In her mind, she could already imagine the possibilities. An army of immortal Zenia soldiers marched at her but with a wave of her hand, crimson mist would descend upon the battlefield. In the next moment, a garden of spider lilies blossoming from the corpses of the so called immortal soldiers, forever used as the nourishment of her plants.

'We could try to combine the effects of your blood mist with my flames while that happens as well. Have the fire erupt inside them the moment they take a single breath of this mist.' Alyss grinned as the two began theorising about possible ways they could try and wipe out an army using the properties of their fire and flower.

Meanwhile, Cayla watched by the side as her smile twitched slightly from the methods they proposed.

Some may even call it war crimes but against the Zenia family who have forgone any morals in the name of the greater good and research, this was just right.

###

"Where the hell have you been." Erick narrowed his eyes as he noticed Selen being later than usual.

"My apologies. There was a suspicious figure that caught my attention but I was being paranoid." Selen reported as Erick walked up to Selen.

Staring into her eyes, he nodded before turning around.

"Good work. I took the liberty of checking out if there were any... Hunters that took a commission near the orphanage. Turns out, there were three who did. Two are students and one was an old Hunter by the name of Samuel.

"I had him dealt with and now he's sleeping six feet under. But the annoying parts come with the two students. One is low profile while the other is high profile. The low profile student is a complete waste. Two years in the academy and nothing to show for it. Trash in other words.

"But the other is the recent main character of the Inverted World incident. Alice Agnelia, the last to escape and the one that took the longest. Someone who made a name for herself during the exams.

There are quite a few rumours that are passed around and if such a high profile figure were to suddenly disappear, it would bring into question the safety of this city." Erick shrugged while sitting on the bed.

"But disappearing is one thing. What if she was to... die inside the Academy grounds."

Hearing this, Selen sighed inwardly as she understood what Erick wanted to imply.

"When do you wish for me to make a move sir?"

"Give it another day or so. We have another meeting with the principal tomorrow and I can bring up the topic of safety within this city. After the incident, their manpower is rather spread out. The only notable teachers are the heads of department while the others are pathetic to say the least. As one would expect of a backwater island such as this one.

"The only value this kind of place has is the fact that the Inverted World is here, and the islanders latch onto it like a parasite." Erick shrugged.

"Now, shall we continue where we left off last time?"

###

The next day, Alice met up with the group again as Kale Grani. Every time Erick would bring up the topic of her joining the Zenia family, Alice would dodge the question embarrassingly as Erick assumed she needed more time to come to a proper decision.

If the day was to progress as usual, Alice would go on and do her own thing but that was not the case today.

Today, Erick invited her to the talks with the principal, surprising both Alice and Selen.

They didn't think Erick would take the initiative in such a manner despite the fact that Alice hadn't agreed to join the Zenia family yet.

Moreover, outsiders aren't usually privy to this kind of information.

'He's definitely thinking with his d*ck.' Alyss stated.

[With near certainty o' master mine.] Cayla nodded by the side.

'Even a blind person can see why he's doing this. Accepting this invitation is risky but rejecting it might piss him off considering the fact that you've been dodging his questions all day long.' Alyss followed up with a grin.

[Allow me to be... crass, o'master mine. Please continue to act as though thou wanteth to pull down his undergarments and jumpeth onto his bed.] Cayla smiled, holding back a laugh.

Forcing a smile while clenching her fist until blood flowed, Alice cursed the two in her mind as she revealed the sweetest smile she could muster to Erick.

"I mean... If you don't mind me being there."

"Of course not. Now come, we must meet the principal of the Academy." Erick laughed as he wrapped his arm around Alice's shoulder.

The moment he did this, Alice revealed the slightest hint of killing intent that she couldn't hold back while glaring at his hand.

'Hold it in!' Selen shouted in her mind, giving Alice a warning glare.

Erick felt a chill but he wasn't sure what the source was as he pulled Alice closer.

Maintaining her smile, Alice seemed 'normal' until you looked behind her collar.

The veins on her neck bulged to their limits as she held herself back from tearing off Erick's arm. Her smile wavered but Erick didn't notice.

With Selen giving Alice the silent warning, Alice who was mustering everything to hold back and Erick who was clueless to the ticking timebomb he pulled next to him, the group entered Academy grounds.

Chapter 369 - 369: Two Days

After entering the Academy, the group made a beeline towards the principal's office while Alice attracted a few looks since none of them had seen Kale before.

Ignoring the mutters, she kept her head down as they approached the principal's office.

Without knocking on the door, Erick opened the door and stepped into the office to see Rosalyn with a cold expression.

"How many times do I have to say this Mr Zenia, please have the common courtesy of at least knocking on the door to announce your presence." Rosalyn frowned before pausing briefly at the sight of Alice.

'Why the hell is she here???'

Trying her best to ignore Alice's presence, Rosalyn maintained her cold demeanour.

"I would if you hadn't noticed my presence approaching already. Or perhaps you were trying to hide something before I appeared?" Erick let out a laugh as he sat on the sofa and rested his legs on the table.

Gesturing pulling Alice to sit next to him, he rested his arm on her shoulder.

"Everyone desires a speck of privacy and I do wish you would respect that desire. Knocking on the door is a basic etiquette that even children know. Mr Zenia, are you suggesting that you are below children?"

Her retort caused Erick's smile to twitch for a moment before he composed himself.

"Regardless, if you have nothing to hide, I don't see a need for me to knock. Especially considering the fact that you have eyes all over this Academy right? You noticed us the moment we stepped onto Academy grounds."

"Courtesy is courtesy. Now let me ask you Mr Zenia, what brings you and your entourage to my office today? I believe I made it rather clear in the multiple meetings that we've had, that the Zenias will not

be given free access to the Inverted World. The Academy is fully capable of protecting the entrance and the safety of students." Rosalyn narrowed her eyes as killing intent wrapped around the room.

In return, Selen took a step forward, countering Rosalyn's show of hostility.

"Now now, let's not get aggressive here. Despite your claim for safety, haven't there been quite a few incidents surrounding the Academy these days? It would be quite a shame if more were to suddenly appear, wouldn't it? There are already whispers of discontent no?" Erick waved his hand dismissively.

Taking a step back, Selen returned her to a neutral state while Rosalyn furrowed her brows.

"Mr Zenia, I hope that the implications of your words are with the intention of goodwill. Because I assure you, any intruders within Academy grounds will be killed without mercy. I would rather shut down the Inverted World than to have it fall into the wrong hands."

Upon hearing this, Erick glared at Rosalyn who glared back.

He wasn't sure if it was a bluff or not. However, considering the fact that she had been principal of the Academy for quite a few years by this point, it wouldn't be surprising for her to indeed have a method to shut down the Inverted World.

"Either way, the Zenia's will be more than happy to keep up the public safety with our Guards. Even though we may be a family centred around Abyss Blood, we do not neglect the strength of our guards."

Standing up, Erick made his way out of the room.

"Have a good day principal." He smiled as Alice followed behind him.

After leaving the Academy, Alice managed to convince Erick that she'd give him her answer in two days so that she could deal with some personal matters.

Once separated from the group, Alice made her way back to the Academy as she could tell the principal wanted to talk to her.

Just as she was about to knock on the principal's door, it swung open with the principal showing a forced smile towards Alice.

"Yo~ Seems like you've melded yourself pretty deep into their group haven't you?" Rosalyn flicked her finger and closed the door before locking it.

Dispelling her disguise, Alice slumped onto the sofa.

"Just a little."

"I didn't take you for someone that'll allow a piece of trash like him to lay a hand on you though. I was surprised you didn't explode when he wrapped his arm over your shoulder." Rosalyn laughed, throwing a flask of mead to Alice since Kaden mentioned that Alice was a mead addict.

Pulling out a drink for herself, she sat on the table.

"Don't even remind me. The mother*cker kept touching my face too. If it wasn't for the disguise, I would've torn off his arm and shoved it up his ass already." Alice made a throwing up motion before opening the flask.

Her eyes glistened the moment she noticed that it was mead.

"So what are you planning then? Sticking so close to them." Rosalyn asked as she leaned back.

"Well... Let's just say I found myself an unlikely ally. Not a great fan of the Zenia's either. We haven't hammered out the key points of the plan yet but I think I have to avoid showing up as myself for a bit and stick with this identity of Kale Grani." Alice waved her hand, activating her Sigil and threw her hat into the air.

"Don't you think they're going to make the connection between your sealed right eye and the blind one?"

"It'll be fine. But seems like Erick wants to cause some casualties on Academy grounds. Do you think you can handle it? Or is the Zenia's getting access unavoidable?" Alice asked while Rosalyn tapped her chin.

"They're definitely a stubborn bunch that don't take no for an answer. Despite the countless reasons I've given them, they're still holding on tight. And if things are to continue like this... I think I might have to think of a way to close the entrance to the Inverted World instead." Rosalyn sighed, glancing out her window and towards the orb that hovered above the Academy.

The damage done by getting rid of this entrance would be big but far better than letting the Zenias have access to it.

"It wouldn't be the worst idea. If they succeed in getting access and do what they're planning to do, I can say with certainty that the world will suffer. Imagine having an army of mini me's with the same regeneration rate and the violet flame ability." Alice explained, glancing up at Rosalyn while not moving from the sofa.

"A f*cking nightmare then. My wyverns are still livid at you for killing one of them even though I brought him back." Rosalyn massaged her forehead.

While closing the Inverted World is a choice, the consequences of doing so were going to be a pain in the neck. Especially since they'll send inquisitors to ask about the reason. With the standing of the Zenia family, anything she says without sufficient evidence would just sound like a conspiracy theory.

To get rid of something with so much value like the Inverted World over a theory would warrant her death.

Sitting up, Alice finished the mead before throwing the flask back at Rosalyn who caught it with ease.

"Regardless, it's our last resort. I'll see if I can figure out anything with my new friend and we'll work out a plan." Alice smiled, adjusting the hat on her head and left the room. But right before leaving, Rosalyn stopped her.

"Try not to meet me after this otherwise it'll expose your identity. Erick tried to have his guards put eyes inside the Academy earlier. If I didn't take care of that, they would've found out."

Nodding her head, Alice left the room.

###

"Erick wants me to kill you before the next meeting." Selen explained as the two of them gathered by the docks once more.

Choking on her drink, Alice raised an eyebrow.

"What?"

"He wants me to take care of your... other identity. While there are two suspects, you have the biggest chance of killing Jyn and Rita. He is correct and thus, he wants me to assassinate you. I do hope you have an ability that can fake your own death." Selen crossed her arms.

"Unfortunately I don't. But I haven't appeared as Alice Agnelia for a day or so, if I keep this up it should be fine right?"

Thinking about it for a moment, Selen shrugged.

"Depends on how much of an importance he places on your death. He doesn't want me entering the Academy just yet since our 'eyes' were taken care of earlier.

"If I force it, the principal will have the justification of pushing him away which he doesn't want. He's ordering me to keep an eye on the entrance of the Academy for when you take a step out."

'Pretty funny considering the target he's looking for is right next to him.' Alyss chuckled while Alice nodded her head.

"I know I said I'll give him my answer in two days but any ideas on how to take care of him without Zenia's sending more people to this city?" Alice asked, causing Selen to furrow her brows.

"Originally, I was hoping you'd serve as a distraction. But that can't be done anymore. Let me think about it, I'll give you some details tomorrow." Selen shook her head as she didn't wait for Alice to respond before leaving the area.

'Well sh*t. We can't kill him inside the Inverted World nor can we kill him outside of it since both methods bring more Zenia's to us. The principal doesn't want us to make a move until she convinces him to step down. I'm starting to think I should've told him to give me a week rather than two days.' Alice thought with a deep sigh.

She could only hope that the principal could convince Erick in time.

###

"Pardon?" Alice blinked her eyes, unsure as to whether or not she heard Erick clearly.

"We're going to go into the Inverted World early." Erick smiled.

Chapter 370 - 370: Zenia Contract

Extalia, the continent that the Zenia family reside in. In the past, it was ruled by a single royal family, the Extalia royal family but after a civil war, the continent was split into three main kingdoms.

Extalia, the most central Kingdom, is known as the Land of the Abyss. The land that the Kingdom reside over houses the most amount of gateways into the Abyss hence the name.

Sikha, Land of the blistering heat. A Kingdom to the east that has turned mostly into a desert area after interference by the Eclipse Cult and constant wars with the Extalia Kingdom near the borders.

And finally, the Verona Queendom, the land of the blistering cold in the far North.

That was the world that Alice knew of before her subsequent imprisonment.

However, due to a sudden pandemic that broke out in the west of the Extalia Kingdom, a truce has been declared and the Zenia family has been given authority to enter the Inverted World to find a cure.

An order for Rosalyn, principal of the Academy that can't be ignored.

Not only that, but it has the royal stamps of all three families, making it so that if Rosalyn were to disagree, she'd be declaring herself an enemy of the continent!

Hearing this news, Alice's smile faltered but she tried her best to maintain her calm.

Sneaking a glance at Selen, she noticed that not even Selen was prepared for this scenario as a frown could be seen on her usually stoic expression.

"There will be representatives coming soon to verify this news and deliver it personally to Rosalyn. We'll be using that chance to enter Inverted World early which is why I must ask for your answer a day earlier than expected." Erick smiled, sitting down on the sofa while Alice swallowed her saliva.

"So what's your answer? Will you join the Zenia family with me?"

Poking her fingers together, Alice bit her lips before letting out a sigh.

"Erm... What does it entail exactly? I know that you want my help and in exchange, you fix my eye. But... what exactly am I helping with?" Alice asked curiously.

She had an idea based on the state of Selen. Despite her dislike towards the Zenias, she was still forced to work as a guard.

Meaning, she is under a contract!

"Unfortunately, I can't share the details until you agree to join the family. But I can guarantee that the family will treat you well if you join us. Fixing your eye will just be a small matter." Erick smiled as he reached into his pocket and pulled out a rolled-up piece of parchment.

"Sign this law of Agreement, become a member of the Zenia family and you will get the things you desire."

Swallowing her saliva, Alice unfurled the parchment and read the conditions.

The contract could be summed up to three key points.

Upon signing the Law of Agreement, Alice becomes a member of the Zenia family and the following restrictions will take place.

1)She must adhere to the hierarchy of the Zenia family.

2)What happens in the Zenia family cannot be disclosed to outsiders without permission from the family.

3)She will not harm the family.

'If you don't agree, we can't stay close to them and follow them into the Inverted World. If you sign it, it's restricting your movement and you can't harm them. It's a trap, we can't sign this.' Alyss frowned but Alice shook her head.

'You're missing the key point here my dear twin.' Alice revealed a menacing grin as she licked her lips and rubbed her hands.

'Huh?' Blinking her eyes, Alyss wasn't sure what Alice meant while Cayla was also confused.

"Yiya~ This contract seems pretty harshahaha. It's basically asking for my eternal loyalty, is it not?" Alice smiled, sitting across from Erick.

"I must follow the family's rules, I can't talk without permission and I can't harm. Isn't this just a slave contract?" Alice asked with a smile that wasn't quite a smile.

Even though she may have shown interest as 'Kale Grani', her persona wasn't the kind to just fold over for a slave contract like this.

"It seems harsh to begin with I agree but I assure you that the Zenia won't treat a treasured Guard harshly." Erick chuckled.

"Words are cheap~ Shouldn't you show a sign of sincerity?" Alice rubbed her fingers while making the gesture for coin.

"A sign of sincerity huh? Indeed, with your eye you were quite the formidable Hunter, even strong enough to fight against Jyn. However... Without your eye it's a little harder to say." Erick narrowed his gaze before shrugging.

"But very well, I'll simply think of it as an investment. However, why don't we add an additional clause to the contract? You'll serve as my Guard." Erick offered, modifying the contract before gesturing for Michael to stand next to him.

"I believe you know of Artifacts yes? So if you know of Artifacts, what if I was to give you a personal Artifact as the condition?" He asked.

Artifacts. Powerful relics are either crafted by a skilled craftsman or obtained from miraculous scenarios.

Each of these Artifacts grant various abilities that are akin to downgraded Sigil powers. But when used properly, it would be like a free Sigil.

Personal Artifacts on the other hand are weapons that have undergone a transformation to become bound to the user and enhance their abilities to the next level.

For Kaden, it was his grimoire that enhanced his authority as an Apostle. For Allura, it was her sword.

[Personal Artifacts while powerful, are hard to come by since they require compatibility with the user's power not to mention the drawbacks in activating these abilities. The cost of activation for Kaden and Allura are steep enough that even as Abyss Lords and Apostles, they suffered the physical drain.] Cayla frowned after explaining Artifacts and Personal Artifacts to Alice.

[I don't know how the Zenia's can just bestow a Personal Artifact but its definitely fishy.]

"If I recall, Artifacts can be attained in the Inverted World but the requirements for a Personal Artifact is far more stringent. How can you simply bestow one to someone you just met?" Alice asked with a raised eyebrow as Erick let out a small laugh.

"It's a little early since it's still in the testing phase. However, the Zenia family have achieved a method in mass producing Personal Artifacts. If you sign this agreement, I'll be more than happy to provide you with a Personal Artifact.

Additionally, a high grade Artifact will be given to you as well." Erick offered, sweetening the deal as Alice narrowed her eyes, contemplating if this is worth it or not.

Noticing this, Selen furrowed her brows but she couldn't say anything. Not when Erick was in the room.

For Alice, this was nothing but a trap. If she signs this, she'll forever be the slave of the Zenia family and moreover, Erick's slave as well.

"Hmm... You won't do anything naughty with me now would you?" Alice asked as she relaxed her tone.

Seeing that Alice was swayed by the promise of a Personal Artifact, Erick chuckled before raising his hands.

"I won't do that and if you're so worried, I can write that into the contract too."

While he enjoys doing things forcefully like he does to Selen, going the natural way was enjoyable every now and then. Plus, if it does get frustrating, he could always utilize the authority of the Zenia family held within this contract. It had the highest priority.

Watching them modify the contract with the new agreements, Selen could only sigh and shake her head internally.

She made a mistake. Despite the hatred that Alice showed, she was still swayed by the promise of a Personal Artifact.

Upon signing the contract, Alice could see the phenomenon of the contract taking place as Erick stored the parchment away.

"Fufufu~ Now! Show me how you can give me the Personal Artifact." Alice grinned, causing Erick to laugh.

"You're quite the gold goblin but sure, Michael, you can begin."

Nodding his head, Michael took a step forward.

"Which one would you like first? A choice of your Artifact as per written by the contract or the Personal Artifact first?" He asked as Alice thought about it for a moment.

Since she was getting two artifacts, she might as well save the best till last.

"Show me the Artifact first." Alice smiled as Michael nodded his head.

Pulling out a key from his pouch, Michael stepped to an empty spot in the room and inserted the key into the air in front of him.

Noticing the fluctuation of energy belonging to the Void, Alice raised an eyebrow as a door manifested in front of them.

"Each member of the Zenia family branches are given a 'vault' in the Void. This one is mine, feel free to pick any Artifact you find inside. While I may not be part of the main branch, I can assure you that you will not be disappointed by the selection." Erick smiled as Alice nodded her head.

Standing up, she walked to the door and gave it a push.

*Creak...

Pushing open the door, a world of gold and items greeted Alice's eye.

A vault hidden within the vast Void filled with Artifacts, items, weapons, armours, precious Abyss Blood and so on.

How many more vaults were like this hidden in the Void? If Alice could navigate the Void like the Void Seraphim, couldn't she rob the Zenias blind?

Thoughts filled her mind but right now, she had to choose a Artifact within this vault that was to her liking.

Licking her lips, Alice revealed a grin as an idea appeared in her head.

'What if I use my fourth Sigil?'