

Abyssal A 431

Chapter 431 - 431: Torgeir's Blood

"The fruit is this way. Since it's fresh, it's more potent than the ones I've been giving you. Reduce how much you eat usually and the effects should be much higher." Ragnar explained, leading her down the farm until they reached a large tree with crimson leaves.

Flicking his finger, Ragnar brought out an empty sack and filled it with fresh fruit for Alice.

"Do I need to pay you or..." Alice asked, wondering if he was going to demand money from her.

While he might possibly be an Abyss Lord, she couldn't rule out the chances of him wanting some material riches.

"If you want to repay the other fruit you've eaten then sure." Ragnar smirked.

"Nope~ I'll kindly accept this gift from an old man I've only met a few times." Alice shook her head, skipping away with a new bag of fruit in her arms.

Shaking his head, Ragnar let out a chuckle as she felt like an unruly granddaughter who only appeared for this fruit.

If Alice had known the true value and price, she wouldn't have even suggested the thought. She might even be tempted to rob the entire tree from him!

Following behind Alice, he exited his garden and closed the door.

"Again, remember that these are more potent than the usual ones I've given you." Ragnar reminded, not wanting Alice to overeat the fruit.

"I got it old man, don't worry." Alice waved as she escaped from the hill, causing Ragnar to laugh.

Stroking his beard, he glanced towards the main hall where Torgeir was dealing with the new information that Bo brought back and contemplated in silence.

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After leaving the hill, Alice was on her way back to her quarters when she noticed Bo stepping out of the hall with a frown on his face.

"Yo! Captain, why the long face?" Alice called out while eating one of the new fruits that she picked. Compared to the previous one, it was far sweeter and addicting but she knew she had to control her appetite.

"Let's sit down and talk. Don't want too many ears." Bo smiled bitterly as Alice tilted her head before nodding.

Making their way to the tavern, they found a corner to sit while Alice ordered some mead. Of course, this time Bo restricted how many she could order after the last incident.

"So what's up? It's not like you to have this kind of expression." Alice asked.

Swinging his head back, Bo took a large gulp of mead.

"Torgeir is thinking of retreating from this outpost. But before that, he wants to pave the way for retreat for our allies on the frontline. Once this outpost falls, the battle will be pushed further in and we'll lose a lot of our land." Bo explained.

Furrowing her brows, Alice understood his frown now.

"Is he worried about an Abyss Break and potential Dead Zone?"

"???" Blinking his eyes in surprise, Bo didn't think Alice would know about the Dead Zone.

"We know the cause behind the first break and it's made by the dogs from Extalia. They took the chance the moment we left to create a swarm of beasts. How they managed to do it is the concern. As far as we know, the methods to forcefully activate an Abyss Break should be near impossible.

"But the fact that they were able to achieve it and with such confidence, means it's likely that they have a method to pull it off consistently. With such a threat over our heads, how can we not retreat from this place?" Bo lamented as Alice folded her arms in understanding.

"Did Torgeir tell you what happened or did it just appear out of nowhere?"

She wanted to see if she could get some clues but Bo shook his head.

"It took everyone by surprise. It was just one wave but it managed to take out the majority of our defences. Most of the beasts were all five stars with a few even reaching six stars. Rest up for tonight, Torgeir will be making his announcement tomorrow." Bo suggested, taking his leave while Alice finished her drink.

Seeing as how he didn't mention anything about her abilities, Alice understood that Torgeir kept it a secret which was fine for her.

'I should probably compensate him since he's doing this favour for me.' Alice thought to herself as she too left the tavern.

But instead of going back to her room, she wanted to find Torgeir.

Making her way to the main building, she could sense where he was and knocked on the door.

"Come in." His voice rang out as Alice stepped through.

Pausing momentarily, she was surprised by his current state.

"Honestly, if I didn't know any better I'd say you're disguising yourself as me with all those bandages." Alice joked but she could see that Torgeir was not in the mood for that.

"I heard a bit from Bo, you want to retreat from this outpost?" Alice asked as Torgeir nodded his head.

"Go back to your room and wait for the announcement tomorrow." Torgeir closed his eyes and leaned back.

Seeing as how he was uninterested in talking, Alice simply shrugged.

"Before I go, can I ask you something?"

"Go ahead."

"Care to spare a bit of your blood? Not much but a vial would do." Alice asked as Torgeir opened his eyes and glanced at her with a frown.

"What are you planning to do with it?"

While he wasn't sure what his blood would do, he understood that a lot of rituals required blood. Especially those of the Eclipse Cult. Depending on her answer, he might have to deal with her immediately.

"Why so hostile? Why don't we sign a Law of Agreement? I'll tell you why I need it and you give me the blood. That way we can filter out the lies right?" Alice offered with a smile.

"I won't give it to you immediately but I'll hear you out. If I don't find anything wrong with it, I can spare a vial."

Hearing this, Alice smiled happily and drafted up a Law of Agreement with Torgeir.

The clauses are simple. Alice will answer Torgeir's questions without any falsehood and in return, she'll gain a vial of Torgeir's blood if he finds no fault with what she said.

"Ask away." Alice smiled, leaning back on her chair.

"Why do you need my blood?" Torgeir asked straight to the point.

"I need it to protect myself." Alice replied immediately.

"How does my blood protect you?"

"It lets me use my powers again."

"I don't believe my blood has that kind of power though." Torgeir knew the kind of abilities he'd obtained. And none of them would help reactivate powers or heal someone.

"It's not your power. It's more to do with mine. You know my injuries, until I've recovered, I can't really fight. But I can use your blood as a catalyst to jumpstart myself and fight for a short period of time. It's a little risky since I'll be harming myself more.

"However, with the threat of an Abyss Break and possibly a Dead Zone, you don't expect me to be entirely helpless now do you?" Alice explained. While she may have signed the Law of Agreement to be truthful, she never stated it'll be to the best of her abilities.

This way, she can hide the fact that she'll be copying his Sigils and how her body works.

Hearing this, Torgeir understood where Alice came from. It's most likely a ritual that uses the blood as a catalyst in exchange for a short boost of strength.

"Will you be using it to harm this outpost and its people?" He asked.

"Nope, entirely for protecting myself."

He could only relax once he heard this. Nodding his head, he resolved the Law of Agreement.

"Give me a moment then. I'll get an extraction kit from the alchemist." He stood up, gesturing for Alice to sit here for a moment.

While Torgeir was gone, Alice got curious and glanced at some of the files he left on the table.

It would be rude for her to flip through the pages, but nothing stopped her from reading what he left out.

Most of them were damage reports on everything that had happened while some were calling for reinforcements from the capital. A request to provide a safe path back for those fighting on the frontlines.

And most importantly, to call for the help of those who understand spatial abilities to counter the fact that the Extalia Kingdom is using manually activated Abyss Breaks.

After a short while, Torgeir returned looking a little pale. In his hands, he held a single vial of blood.

"This should fulfil my side of the request."

Handing the vial over to Alice, he slumped on his chair.

"Can I ask you a question? One that doesn't require the Law of Agreement so I hope you can be honest with me." Torgeir glanced up at Alice who put the vial into her pouch.

"Go ahead." Alice nodded.

"How strong are you? With your abilities recovered."

Folding her arms, Alice tilted her head before shrugging her shoulder.

"It depends. But if we're to compare it to the duel I had with Egil where Bo was my representative... Then Egil will die in about two or three moves." Alice admitted.

If she had the desire to kill, the process was simple.

Hearing this, Torgeir let out a small chuckle before nodding his head. After all, this was someone with the Spiritual status of SS. Her talent for using abilities was out of this world and in the realm of Lords. If she could exert even a fraction of her power with just one vial of his blood, then they might not need to leave this place after all.

But for now, he had to wait for the command from the capital before he made any decisions.

"That'll be all. I hope that when the time comes, you'll help me defend this place." Torgeir smiled.

"Depends." Alice shrugged, giving him a small wave and left the room.

Chapter 432 - 432: The Price For An Ally

Waking up in the morning, Alice stretched her body with a yawn while Selen was still sleeping. After such a tiresome journey back, it was no surprise.

Leaving the room carefully, Alice took a deep breath of the cold northern air.

Even though Torgeir said he was going to make an announcement, there has been no news about it so far. To Alice, it seemed like just a day off for everyone, with only a few guards on shift.

'Seems like most of the Civilians are already packed up to leave this place.'

'It makes sense. Unlike the warriors, they don't have a means to protect themselves. Who's going to save them when warriors can barely save themselves?' Alyss shrugged. If it was her, she'd be doing the same. In fact, she might even be the fastest to escape.

'The fact that they caused an Abyss Break right after we left probably means they're watching our camp right now. Any thoughts on how to deal with them?' Alice asked curiously while taking a leisurely stroll around the outpost.

'How about this, we let Torgeir work things out and we don't push our body further into destruction. Cayla's face doesn't look too well after our stunt from last time.'

'Right...' Alice sighed.

The best thing to do would be for her to get her fifth Sigil and sixth Sigil quickly.

Thinking about it for a moment, Alice clapped her hands.

'Welp, let's figure out what I want for my fifth Sigil then.' She grinned.

'Hah?? Already? Didn't we only recently get your fourth? You haven't even gotten used to it properly yet. I thought Allura told you to master it before you rush things?' Alyss almost fell off her bed hearing Alice's suggestion.

'I know we got it recently but it's unavoidable alright? The sooner I get Sigils the faster I can fight properly. Plus, our understanding of the fourth Sigil is pretty good I'd say. The power to manipulate the Void, I've got it handled ya know?' Alice shrugged.

Just like how Alyss has an instinct for physical combat, Alice found herself to be talented with casting. Even with her fourth Sigil, she was able to replicate certain spatial movements with just her own comprehension and some adjustments.

'Uhuh, so what do you even suggest for our fifth ability then? I know we can switch out Sigils but we still want to choose carefully. There could be a situation where my connection is interfered with and I can't switch Sigils for you.' Alyss reminded.

She couldn't get the incident in the Inverted World out of her mind. That resonance between Alice and the tree made it impossible to switch out the Sigil causing the resonance. If something like this was to happen in the future, they needed to be prepared for it.

'Well, it depends. We have plenty of firepower I'd say so something more utility wise? Or defensive. Kaden wanted us to get the lifeblood link but I chose Blood Coil Manifestation instead.

So it wouldn't be a bad idea to get a highly defensive Sigil that keeps us in the fight rather than drowning myself in healing vials.' Alice contemplated as there wouldn't be chances to drink healing vials in the future.

The more powerful her opponents become, the harder it'll be to catch a break during the fight.

'Plus, even if we have our own regeneration that we can rely on, we're not sure about the source. Our regeneration is ineffective right now and if we were to keep relying on it, there's no telling that it might suddenly turn off in the middle of a fight.' Alice reminded as Alyss folded her arms.

Indeed, their source of regeneration was a mystery to them. The only thing they know is that it's heavily linked to whatever Nyer used to create them.

Closing her eyes, Alyss leaned back as she tried to think of a beast that would suit their purpose while Alice did the same.

Their knowledge of beasts was still limited to what they knew from their time in captivity along with certain names they've come across in books.

But compared to Kaden and the others, her knowledge was far too shallow.

'They really need a damn catalogue on what kind of beasts are available.' Alice complained.

'Why don't we go ask Torgeir? I'm sure he knows a method to get information since he's sending it to the capital right? If it's him, he should be able to get us what we want.' Alyss suggested.

'Sure. And if he doesn't work we can always ask Ragnar. That old man is definitely in the realm of Lords or something similar. There's no way he has that kind of garden and knowledge without being a Lord. He keeps appearing and disappearing like Allura too.' Alice nodded.

Making their way over to the training grounds to find Torgeir, she soon spotted him with a deep frown on his face.

"Why so down first thing in the morning?" Alice asked curiously as Torgeir glanced up.

"Reinforcement won't be coming anytime soon. The Extalia's are launching ambushes all over the place and it's not just us that's been hit. Unfortunately, we need to figure out a way back ourselves or abandon the frontlines." Torgeir gritted his teeth.

Furrowing her brows, Alice could see why he looked so down.

"How far are we from the frontlines? What do you think is the likelihood of us actually paving a path of retreat?" Alice questioned.

"Further than the port. If we pave a path, there's a chance that the Civilians will die. If we retreat now, the supplies going to the frontline ceases and they'll die." Torgeir admitted.

Regardless of what they picked, someone was going to pay for that choice.

Biting his lip, Torgeir came to a conclusion.

"We'll pave a way to the frontlines. Without the soldiers, protecting this nation will become far more difficult. I'll have a separate smaller group escort the civilians inland.

"However, I'm telling you this because I need your help. You mentioned that with my blood you'll be able to use your powers for a short period at a cost. Please help me rescue my fellow soldiers on the frontline." Torgeir asked as Alice frowned and folded her arms.

"You remember me telling you that it comes at a cost and you're still asking me to help?" Alice pulled up a chair and sat down.

Crossing her legs, she narrowed her gaze at Torgeir.

"I know what I'm asking for. But the manpower in this outpost is severely lacking. We lost most of our forces thanks to the expedition to the port and the following ambush here. I'll take everything that I can get at this point." Torgeir glanced down with a sigh.

He knew what he was asking of her and he knew the dangers he was putting her in. But this was his responsibility as the one who's been tasked to look after this outpost.

The capital has given him full authority to choose what to do from now on and his desire was to save his fellow warriors.

They're people who decided to put their lives on the line for the nation. Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, sons and daughters. They all had family yet they still put the nation in hopes of building a safer place for them to live.

He couldn't betray that dedication and abandon them. He wanted to save them even if it cost him his life.

Taking a deep breath, Alice let out a sigh.

"I'll help out but not without payment. And I'll continue acting as a shield supporter unless there's something you absolutely cannot deal with. Remember that I'm vulnerable once I make a move. One assistance. That's all you're getting so use it wisely."

Hearing this, Torgeir was surprised but happiness filled his heart.

"Thank you." He smiled but Alice held up her hand.

"Don't thank me just yet, you haven't heard what I need as payment." She rolled her eyes.

"Right... What do you want as payment?" Torgeir asked.

On top of the request for assistance from the capital, he had also sent some information about Alice to them. A rare double S rank in the Spiritual Stat.

There was only one order given to him.

Bring her to their side no matter what!

Even if it's expensive, as long as he sends a request to the capital, they'll try their best to meet that demand.

Narrowing her gaze, Alice could see the resolve in his eyes.

'Seems like he's pretty desperate for help.' Alice thought inwardly.

'Scam him.' Was Alyss's first response.

Alice was speechless as her smile twitched. The man in front of them wanted to help his fellow soldiers and the first thing that came to Alyss's mind was to scam him.

'What? Might as well ask for something more than what we originally wanted.' Alyss shrugged.

Rolling her eyes, Alice turned her attention back to Torgeir.

Even though she wasn't a fan of it, Alyss was right. She originally wanted to ask for information regarding beasts and to help her use the Void Hawks to send a message so Ria and Luke knew that she was safe.

But if the price she had to pay was to put herself at risk once more, it was far too cheap.

Thinking about it for a moment, Alice curled her lips into a grin.

"Now that I think about it, I'm not quite sure you can afford me. I had already risked myself to bring Bo and the others back. After all, I'm the one who killed the Grandmaster after he killed the other captains."

Torgeir could practically see coins in her eyes as he let out a sigh before pulling out a piece of document.

"The capital is prepared to offer you a numbered equipment if you become our ally."

Chapter 433 - 433: Offer From The Capital

"The capital is prepared to offer you a numbered equipment if you become our ally."

Blinking her eyes in surprise, Alice didn't think they would go that far. However, there was one key detail in what he said.

"As tempting as it is, I did say I'm just helping out this once. I'm not entirely sure if I want to become an ally of the Verona Queendom just yet. I'm a freedom loving gal after all~

"Plus, I already have weapons and armour that are satisfactory for me. I have no use for numbered equipment. Even if it is made by the Lord of the Forge." Alice shrugged.

With Void Fang and Ruinous Void as her main weapons, she had no use for numbered equipment. If anything, she'd prefer a good beast to hunt instead.

Meanwhile, Torgeir was shocked that Alice rejected the offer for numbered equipment.

People in the north would do anything to get their hands on such treasures but she rejected it? What kind of equipment does she have for her to reject the offer so readily?

"If not a numbered equipment then perhaps we can give you something of equal value?" Torgeir asked but Alice shook her head.

"No, you're not getting what I'm trying to say. I don't want to become an ally of the Verona Queendom. I'm helping you out because the circumstances call for it. If it wasn't for this, I would be roaming around freely rather than working under a nation." Alice clarified.

The main thing was still that this was just a simple exchange. She wasn't giving them her assistance because she wanted to become an ally of the Verona Queendom. That was not on her mind at all.

"This is a trade. You pay me for my services and I lend you my power. There are no mentions of becoming allies and the whatnot."

Hearing this, Torgeir finally nodded his head.

"I... Understand. What do you require for your services then?"

Since she wasn't keen on allying herself with Verona right now, he could only wait. And it wasn't that he didn't understand her either. Everything she's seen so far hasn't put Verona in a good light when compared to the Extalia Kingdom.

Little did he know, his guess was completely wrong as there was no way Alice was going to ally herself with the Extalia Kingdom.

The Zenias have practically taken it over after all. Allying herself with them would just be putting herself in the jaws of death.

"What do you think is worth my services? The lives of your soldiers?" Alice asked, throwing the question back at him.

All she really needs is information on beasts and a catalogue. Other than that, her requirements are pretty much nothing.

Though money would be something good to have since she doesn't have much on her and she was running out.

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The girl in front of me was mysterious in many ways.

She was littered with wounds across her entire body, signs of side effects from having used Abyss Blood and even the stench of curses.

However, despite all of these wounds and shortcomings, she says she was the one who killed the grandmaster.

Bo simply said none of the captains could kill him and they were forced to retreat but someone appeared later and dealt with him. He didn't say who but Alice confirmed that it was her.

If that was indeed true then her full power is most definitely above mine.

But the most surprising thing of all was her rejection of the numbered equipment. What can I even offer her for her to assist once? Money? Far from it. The thing that people like this need the most isn't money but equipment and rare materials. Materials that money can't buy.

She wouldn't be poor to the point of needing money from me.

What would someone like her possibly need?

"I believe the lives of my soldiers are not something money can buy. But without knowing what you require, I can't exactly offer you a fitting price." I shook my head.

Not even numbered equipment could sway her so the best I can do is to simply let her state what she wants.

"Is that so..."

She doesn't seem to be very pleased with my answer. Most would want to see what the other party could offer before accepting or making suggestions. But everything I've stated so far has been brushed off by her so what else could I do except ask her to suggest a fitting price?

"Tell you what, I got a perfect price in mind." She leaned forward with a grin.

"I want a meeting with the Lord of the Forge. Rather than getting a numbered equipment, I want him to take a look at my current weapon and make some adjustments. If you can do that for me, I will help you save your soldiers."

It wasn't necessarily a high price as the Lord of the Forge takes requests several times in the day. Though that's normally anything he has an interest in.

"I... Can't say for sure but I can submit a request. Anything else I can do for you in the meantime?" After all, it was uncertain whether the capital would even approve of this request for just one instance of help.

"Two things. One, a catalogue of beasts or spirits and their abilities. I'm not sure how you do it in the north but I'm looking to get my fifth Sigil. Two, I want a Void Hawk to help me send a message to the Abyss."

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'This should be alright.' Alice thought to herself.

If he agreed to this, she'd have achieved her initial goal while also getting an Abyss Lord to take a look at her personal equipment. If she could somehow resolve the link and the issue of it trying to forcefully adjust her body, it would be more beneficial to her rather than numbered equipment.

She could ask Old Man Ragnar since she thinks he's a Lord, but that was off the table.

There's probably a reason why he's acting like a normal old man so she didn't want to change that fact.

If he wishes to tell her, he would. If he doesn't, she can't force him. He might be a Lord after all.

"Is that all?" Torgeir raised an eyebrow hearing the second half of her request.

"Too much?"

"No not at all. That can be arranged. In terms of getting your fifth Spirit, would it be possible to wait till after the rescue on the frontlines?" He clarified as Alice folded her arms before nodding her head.

"Sure, I can wait that long." It wasn't like she'd have time to hunt down the beast while they were busy saving people in the first place.

Hearing this, Torgeir let out a sigh of relief.

"As for the message, can you let me know where you wish to send it? I'll make the arrangements immediately."

Giving him the details and letting him know to send it to the underground, Alice explained that it was to let her friends know that she's safe.

Even if it's dangerous for the Hawk to traverse to the Abyss, it is a small price to pay for Alice's help.

With the agreement sorted, Alice took her leave as it had been quite a busy morning.

Giving her body a stretch, she made her way back to her accommodation as it was about time for Selen to wake up.

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"YOU DID WHAT?!?!" Selen cried out in anger after Alice told her of what happened.

The first thing that she heard in the morning was that Alice agreed to put herself in danger once more before her body healed.

Not only that, but she also planned to forcefully bring out her power to do so.

"Do you know how much I had to work to stop you from dying on the way back?? And the first thing you do is to put yourself in danger again?! Are you trying to kill yourself?!" Selen shouted while Alice wanted to pacify her but it didn't work.

"I wasn't planning to do so okay? But Torgeir wanted to save his soldiers and seemed honest about it. Plus, it's not like it's for free right?"

"Great, what are you going to do with the reward when you're dead? It doesn't matter what he promised you if you f*cking die while trying to help people. What's to say they don't go back on their word once they're done with you?

"What if you go and meet this so called Lord of the Forge and instead, they imprison you? You know his goal is to get you because you have a double S in spirituality. What if they wanted to experiment on you and see how you reached that level? To replicate and mass produce warriors who can do the same?

"Zenias aren't the only ones capable of doing what they've done! With enough of an incentive, anyone would go down the same path!" Selen gritted her teeth in anger.

She's seen the ugliness within the human heart far too many times now. Yet despite being subjected to the same, Alice wanted to put herself in harm's way again.

"I told you once and I'll tell you again. I don't like you. I don't like the fact that your blood is what turned me into what I currently am. I don't like that your blood is the reason why all these experiments happen. And most of all, I don't like that you don't seem to care about your actions. You don't take into consideration the risks and consequences.

The people you implicate with your stunts." Selen grabbed Alice by the collar.

Gritting her teeth, she let go of Alice before slamming the door and walking away without saying anything.

Sitting on her bed, Alice scratched her hair and let out a sigh.

Chapter 434 - 434: Mysterious Powder

After Selen left, Alice dressed her wounds herself.

Her work was messy compared to Selen and made Alice understand how much care Selen took in helping her recover. Yet despite that, she continuously threw herself into danger. Anyone would be annoyed and angry not just Selen.

In fact, some might've even been angrier sooner.

'I should probably apologise to her.' Alice sighed.

'Really? I thought it was pretty okay though. Danger is naturally part of life and if we didn't put ourselves in harm's way, we wouldn't have saved people back at the port.'

'I mean for going to the frontlines and promising to help. Even though the chance is unlikely, we'll need to make a move if it gets out of hand. Selen is worried about that part.' Alice clarified.

'I kind of get it kind of don't. Risk and reward come together naturally. There is no reward without risk and no risk without reward. You can't just expect to get one side and not the other.' Alyss folded her arms in confusion.

'Yeah, but this is entirely avoidable. I think that's the issue.' Alice shook her head before looking through her outfits.

Picking out a warm set today, consisting of a large hooded jacket and oversized sleeves with a skirt, tights and warm boots, Alice tied her hair into a twin tail and got some breakfast.

Her outfit choice was naturally different from what the northerners usually chose but she didn't care about the glances.

She wanted to look for Selen but she was nowhere in sight.

Letting out another sigh, she grabbed the new fruit and ate it slowly.

Roaming around the outpost, she took this time to memorise the sight of this location. The mountains, the rivers and the houses that are built here.

Soon, they'll be evacuating this location and the sights will be lost to war.

And as expected, Torgeir soon made the announcement at the centre of the outpost.

A call for retreat and for all civilians to prepare to leave for the capital. Most of the civilians reacted how Alice had predicted.

After the announcement for the civilians came the next order for the Warriors.

To pave a path of retreat for the allies on the frontline. This outpost will be abandoned completely once they depart and rather than coming back, they'll be travelling inland to the next outpost.

While the warriors were gathering all the supplies they could carry in order to pave a path of retreat, Alice tried to talk to Selen but she simply ignored her and helped out the warriors.

'Seems like she doesn't want to talk for the time being.' Alice scratched her hair while Alyss shrugged.

'Let's leave her be for now. Since we're abandoning this outpost, let's go see old man Ragnar. I'm not sure how he's going to move his hut but if he's a Lord, it shouldn't be that difficult.' She suggested as Alice nodded her head.

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Watching Alice leave, Selen let out a frustrated sigh.

"Did you have a fight with Alice?" Egil asked curiously.

Since the two of them were placed on the vanguard squad during the previous attack on the Port, the two of them have gotten to know each other a little better.

"Somewhat. She doesn't care about the wounds on her body after all." Selen huffed in annoyance while grabbing a large stack of boxes and hoisting it onto her shoulder.

"She's a warrior at heart huh? Sometimes duty calls and you just have to tough it out." Egil let out a laugh while Selen punched him on the rib, causing him to flinch in pain.

The battle by the gates caused wounds on Egil's body. No matter how durable he is, he still covered for everyone during the retreat. Even after healing blood, some of the wounds remained.

Unlike Alice, he couldn't abuse the healing properties of healing blood. He had to take it in small doses or else side effects would begin to manifest on his body.

Every warrior takes care of how much Abyss Blood they drink so the Abyss doesn't claim their body.

"You're one to talk. I have two idiots and neither wants to live with a healthy body." Selen spat out in annoyance as Egil revealed an awkward smile.

"I never needed to bother about attacks anyway. This is just an... exception since I had to cover for people."

"Can you really call it an exception if it happens more than once?" Selen rolled her eyes.

"The world's changing for the worse. You saw the beasts that ambushed us. Can you really say with confidence that you can take on their attacks without care? Hell, if Alice wasn't injured, your defences would be reduced to nothing."

"Seems a little exaggerated." Egil shrugged, not believing her at all.

"I wish. Recall the attack of the beast, one that wiped out almost half of our numbers. Now imagine Alice throwing out tens of them at once without care." Selen scoffed.

She could still remember the power held behind Alice's attack.

"Seriously?" Egil blinked his eyes.

"Seriously."

If Alice was this strong then what caused her to be injured in the first place?

"Whatever, if she wants to heal her body she'll stop trying to kill herself against strong people. I'm not going to go out of my way worrying about her if she doesn't give a f*ck herself."

The more Selen thought about it, the angrier she got. Was she trying to heal her body or was Alice? Because so far, it felt like she cared more about it than Alice did.

Her nonchalant attitude after returning half dead pushed her past the limit. Once was acceptable. Accidents happen.

But every battle felt like Alice was going to die. That was taking it too far.

"Now now, don't be like that. People make mistakes and they try to change. Didn't Alice try to talk to you earlier? Why don't you at least talk it out since you two are journeying together." Egil tried to persuade her but Selen glared at him before jabbing him in the ribs again.

"So you're taking her side in this?"

"Hey! Ouch! I'm not taking anyone's side okay?" Egil rubbed his ribs in pain.

He knew how much Selen cared about taking care of the body. Even though she wasn't a healer or a cleric, she prioritised it more than anyone to an abnormal degree.

However, at the same time, he also understood Alice's side of things. Sometimes things happen and you just have to step up to the task no matter how much damage it may cause to you. Because other lives are at stake.

He might not have cared before, but it was different now. He wants to redeem himself for his past actions. To become a better man so that his mother wouldn't have to worry anymore. Thus he needed this chance to prove himself on the frontlines. To make a large contribution and get the money and manpower he needs to protect her.

If it was him, even if he's on the verge of death, he would do the same as Alice and put his life on the line.

"Look, just talk to her and get her to understand when you get the chance okay?"

Pouting a little, Selen let out a sigh before nodding her head in agreement.

"Later then. She seems like she's planning to look for someone so I'll leave her be. I didn't hit you too hard on the ribs right?" Selen glanced over as Egil revealed a grin.

"I'm tougher than I look."

"Like hell you are. Whimpy as hell when I was pulling the spearhead out of your ribs." Selen slapped him on the arm instead of the ribs.

"Anyone would be in pain when they have a spearhead in their ribs!"

Who wouldn't yelp in pain with that kind of wound???

Meanwhile, Selen thought back to Alice's pain tolerance. Even with her wounds, she rarely let out a cry of pain.

###

Making her way to Ragnar's house, Alice noticed Ragnar packing up his luggage.

"Back already? I don't have any spare fruit for you this time." Ragnar waved his hand as though shoos her away.

"I'm not here for fruit old man, who do you think I am?" Alice's smile twitched.

"A gremlin who's emptied out my pantry of fruit and even had to take some from my tree."

Alice couldn't deny it.

"Setting that aside, how are you going to take your garden with you? Or is it like a private space or something?" Alice asked curiously. She wasn't sure if the garden was bound to this hill or not.

"I have my methods. Are you going back to the frontline?"

"Yep. I got hired to help out after all." Alice shrugged.

"With your body? Please do not tell me you're going to damage it again." He frowned as this girl was far too reckless.

"Well~ Only if something he can't deal with appears. If nothing happens I won't have to make a single move."

Letting out a sigh, Ragnar reached into his pouch and threw a small bag of powder towards Alice.

"If you get wounded heavily, crush the fruit and mix it with that powder. Apply it to the wound and it should speed up the healing process. Avoid using it if you can help it since it's a last resort."

Catching the bag, Alice opened it slightly and saw the crimson powder.

"What kind of powder is this?"

"Trust me, it's better if you don't know. It's pretty gross after all." Ragnar grinned as Alice raised an eyebrow. Since a potential Lord was saying this, she simply accepted it as a mysterious powder that could save her life when mixed with the fruit.

Just as she was about to thank him, she felt a deep chill down her spine. Ragnar stopped smiling at the same time as flickers of lightning and dark energy crackled across the outpost.

Chapter 435 - 435: Second Abyss Break

Turning around, Alice could see the converging strands of energy towards the centre of the outpost.

The power of the Abyss drifting up from below.

"You should probably evacuate unless you're planning to fight." Ragnar suggested as Alice furrowed her brows.

"Depends on the danger. Ideally, I shouldn't but I can't say for sure considering the damage done to the outpost. An old man like you should leave with the rest unless you can wipe them out with a swipe of your hand." Alice gave him a smirk but it was a silent request for help.

The aura she was feeling around her surroundings was one that sent a chill down her spine.

When that happens, it's usually something she couldn't deal with without some risks on her side.

"Fufufu~ I wonder who you're talking about. I'm just an old man who likes to take care of his fruit. A retired old man far too weak to face off against beasts." Ragnar let out a chuckle as he turned around and gathered his things.

Seeing this, Alice understood that he had his reasons. That was probably why he didn't make a move during the first invasion as well.

"Take care old man. I don't know if Torgeir is planning on gathering everyone together after this but if he does, I'll see you soon. If not, look after yourself and thanks for the fruit." Alice waved her hand with a smile.

Nodding his head, Ragnar watched as Alice left.

###

"Sir, the activation is a success. An Abyss Break should occur soon." A hooded figure reported.

Hearing this, the silver haired man let out a laugh as he massaged his shoulders.

"Perfect. Now that all of them are gathered, we're going to take care of them in one fell swoop. Order everyone to prepare for battle. Focus on taking out the captains, the beasts can deal with the average warrior. I'll take of Torgeir personally." He cracked his knuckle in excitement.

He wanted to deal with Torgeir during the last invasion but he didn't give him a chance. This time, he wasn't going to let the opportunity go to waste.

With such little manpower, Torgeir will be pushed to the limit.

"I'll rip that damn head off your shoulders myself."

###

Running towards the centre of the outpost, Alice furrowed her brows as she watched the volatile reaction of the Abyssal energy merging with the ambient energy of the surface.

Weaves upon weaves of energy fusing, stretching, twisting above the outpost. Even those who can't sense the threads of energy of this world felt goosebumps on their arms.

Ripples fluctuated across space as jagged crackles of energy crashed against the empty space. Visions of the clouds began to distort and soon, even the mountains felt like they were about to be pulled into a single point.

*CRACK!!! SHATTER!!!

Then, accompanied by the sound of shattering glass, a fissure was torn open as though an invisible hand ripped a gateway into their realm.

An endless void revealed itself while miasma flooded into the outpost.

Within the fissure, pulses of energy shimmered as faint glimmers of light slithered in the darkness. Each a different beast of an unknown nature, each sending chills down Alice's spine.

This miasma, this aura, this familiar pressure and sickening chill. There was no doubt about it.

Cold sweat rolled down Alice's face as this was possibly the worst case scenario.

'We can't let this portal open fully.' Alyss frowned.

'Agreed. We need Selen's help.'

Grabbing a vial from her pouch, Alice hesitated for a moment.

Gritting her teeth, she stored it away before creating several footholds with her shards.

She could hear the panicked orders shouted by Torgeir as he tried to get as many people away from the epicentre as possible.

Warriors scrambled for weapons to prepare for the incoming swarm of beasts.

"Selen!" Alice called out, spotting Selen and Egil who were helping with guiding civilians away from the outpost.

"We have to stop the portal at all costs. If this thing opens fully, we won't be able to deal with the consequences even if I break my body." Alice immediately explained the situation as Selen's face turned dire. But seeing as how she was speaking to her rather than acting, it seemed like she hadn't consumed the blood just yet much to her relief.

"What do I need to do?" Selen asked, not questioning how or why Alice knew this.

After all this time together, Selen has learned to trust Alice when it comes to things like this.

"Not sure. I'm not entirely familiar with the process either. All I know is that if we don't do anything, a full gateway to the Terminus layer will be opened. Once that happens, imprisoned Abyss Lords and beasts that roam that layer will come spewing out." Alice glanced up at the ever widening fissure with a deep frown.

She would never mistake this sense of danger as she visited the layer personally. This was no doubt Terminus and to make matters worse, she could feel a faint strand of Tiamat!

Tiamat might've been friendly to some extent in the Inverted World but this was reality. Time changes people and beasts are no exception.

With Velouria's passing, there was a chance that the bindings holding the Old Lords might've weakened to some extent. The Will shared his divinity with Velouria after all.

But this gamble was far too dangerous for a small outpost like Kvia.

"I can try to slow it down but there's a limit. My abilities can't exactly cut the space they're trying to open." Selen suggested as Alice scrambled her brain for a solution.

Pausing for a moment, she glanced at Selen and hesitated.

"Never mind, slow it down for now. I'll ask Torgeir, maybe he has a solution. If he doesn't, no complaints about me using my power right?" Alice shook her head.

If it escalated to that stage, Alice had to make a move. It was better to prevent the portal from opening than to fight the beasts that came later.

"I don't like it but if Lords do come spewing out then it's better to close it early. Don't overexert yourself and break your body beyond repair... Please." Selen paused before nodding.

Hearing this, Alice gave her a grin and a thumbs up before running towards Torgeir.

Meanwhile, Egil was confused by their discussion.

"What the f*ck?"

"Don't worry about it. Help me set up a few nodes, I'm going to slow this portal down." Selen chuckled, creating several staves for Egil to carry.

"Sure but even if I'm confident in my body, I can't hold back Lords alright?" Egil sighed. He figured Alice and Selen wouldn't joke about the appearance of a Lord, even if it does sound a little exaggerated.

"Don't worry, we don't expect you to. I just need someone fast to plan these while I hold back the first wave." Selen smirked as Egil paused.

Now that she phrased it that way, he felt a little insulted as he prided himself on his body. But this was a Lord they were talking about so he didn't even want to entertain the idea of stopping it.

Letting out a huff of annoyance, he crouched down before jumping away, leaving a small crater beside Selen.

With Egil going to plant the staves, Selen narrowed her eyes at the fissure. She could feel several strong signatures already making their way towards their realm. Taking a deep breath, she created another staff in her hand and jumped onto the roof of a building.

'In order to properly slow it down, I have to do more than just slow down the surroundings. I need to infuse some of my power into the fissure itself so they'll struggle with traversing the two realms.'

Twirling the staff in her hands, she slammed it against the ground and activated her Resonance.

A realm of monotony expanded with Selen in the centre. Since this wasn't a resonance aimed to trap something within but to contain a space, she allowed her power to bleed into their reality. The monotonous boundaries of her personal realm began to mix with the clear blue colour of the sky like two shades of ink in water.

Within her realm, a single eclipsed sun hung in the sky and bled towards the rivers around her.

Holding out her palm, a black material formed around her arm as a handle protruded out. Grabbing the handle, she unsheathed a single guardless blade and took an offensive stance.

Breathing out slowly, Selen narrowed her eyes and began to release a series of slashes towards the fissure. Each slash distorted the space around them, freezing it in place.

Once she finished releasing the slashes, she stabbed her blade into the ground and clasped her hands together.

Iridescent strands of energy extended from each slash, forming a ritualistic pattern around the fissure.

Resonance + Ritual – Kietoma!

Kietoma, a skill that takes advantage of Selen's ability to slow down time to a near halt. Usually, this skill would be used to 'lock' time in a single second and inflict as much damage as possible. But for this instance, Selen had to adjust the ritual to prolong the duration rather than damage.

A pulse of energy erupted from Selen's body as a semi transparent seal began to form around the fissure. The beasts within began to slow down but their movements couldn't be stopped. Regardless, she had achieved her desired result. All that's left now is to maintain this seal while Alice finds a solution for this barrier.

Chapter 436 - 436: Chaos In The Outpost

Glancing back, Alice smiled seeing the seal being formed around the fissure. Knowing that Selen was going all out relieved a lot of stress from Alice as she hurried to the training grounds.

Immediately, she spotted Torgeir shouting out orders as she landed not far from him.

"Torgeir!" She called out, catching his attention.

"Alice. Go and evacuate with the others." Torgeir nodded before turning his attention elsewhere.

"Didn't come here to ask you what to do. I just want to know if you have any spatial manipulation abilities that can close this damn fissure? It's connected to Terminus and if any of the dangerous beasts come out from that layer, we're all going to die." Alice rolled her eyes as Torgeir frowned.

"If I had something I could do I would've done it already. I can only assume that's Selen stalling for time." He shook his head.

Hearing this, Alice furrowed her brows.

"Wait so there's nothing you can do?"

"I have a spear that can kill stuff. I don't have anything that can cut off the connection in space. Just treat it as a natural disaster and leave, it's better for everyone to evacuate."

'Not really if you think about the consequences of having a portal to the literal deepest layer of the Abyss but sure.' Alyss retorted in her mind.

If a passage was fully formed to Terminus then it'll be hard deal with all of the sealed Lords without a small chance of freeing them all.

Terminus was sealed off to become a prison of sorts. To keep the most dangerous beasts locked away and hidden from the world.

Only Ayrians know what kind of horrors lurk in the depths.

With Torgeir not giving her any options, Alice glanced back at the portal and gritted her teeth.

She didn't want to overexert her body if she could help it. But this was a passage to Terminus of all things, she couldn't sit idly by.

'It's up to you. Either we push ourselves now or push it when we rescue people from the frontline. Whichever you deem more important.' Alyss didn't mind either option as both had their benefits.

If they help out here, there's a chance they'll miss out on the rewards promised by Torgeir for her cooperation.

However, the alternate reward is that no passage is opened into Terminus and the horrors sealed away can't escape.

"For your reference, our deal only applies to your help paving a path of retreat. This disaster can easily be avoided if we simply retreat as we were planning." Torgeir called out, noticing Alice's hesitation.

He somewhat understood Alice's condition and getting her to use her powers twice was probably unlikely. Especially since she wasn't even moved by the promise of numbered equipment. Therefore, he wanted her to be in peak condition when they help their allies rather than an uncertain disaster like the Abyss Break.

Before Alice could even respond, a cloaked figure appeared above the fissure. They pulled back their arm, revealing the Sigils etched upon their skin.

Spectral horns could be seen on their head, forming a twisted crown while malevolent black and red energy exploded out from their body.

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

Punching down, they shattered the seal placed by Selen as Alice widened her eyes in shock. Torgeir was the same.

"AMBUSH!!! Warriors! Protect each other!" Torgeir roared, realising the dogs of Extalia must be nearby.

"Are you sure you still don't want me to help?!" Alice glanced at Torgeir who struggled with the decision before shaking his head.

"No, don't intervene. Save your strength for rescue on the frontlines. I'll deal with this."

Alice's smile twitched as she spat in annoyance before dashing away. She wanted to find Selen since she was the closest to the fissure.

With the seal broken, she'll be the beast's first target.

On her way to the fissure, she could see several cloaked figures rushing through the outpost, killing warriors who exposed their backs to them.

Even civilians weren't spared as they killed anyone they could get their hands on.

Feeling a chill on the back of her neck, Alice immediately created a shield using her shard.

*CLANG!!!

"TSK!"

Feeling a strike on her back, Alice rolled forward and retrieved two daggers from her pouch.

Throwing it at her assailant the first chance she got, Alice frowned seeing another hooded figure parry her daggers with ease.

"Hitting a cute girl on the back of the neck isn't a very nice thing to do now is it? Or are you trying to kidnap me? Kyaa~ Didn't think I was in such high demand." Alice smirked as the hooded figure frowned.

"Nonsense!"

"Ohya? So it's a girl under that hood. You jealous I'm so cute lookin'~?" Alice stepped to the side, dodging the stab before punching up against her elbow.

Bending her body back to avoid a horizontal slash, Alice kicked up against the woman's chin. Twisting her body, she followed up with a leg sweep and disarmed her.

Since there was no reason to keep her alive, she grabbed the dagger and prepared to stab her neck when a pulse of pink energy burst out from her back.

"Urg!" Shielding her body from the blast, Alice was sent tumbling back as the woman's hood was torn apart by the activation of her abilities.

She had long black hair with pink on the inside and a pair of white and pink eyes.

Crackles of pink energy flickered around her as she created two daggers and threw them at Alice.

Just as she was about to dodge, Alice watched as the Void cracked open to swallow these daggers and position them below her.

'Holy sh*t!' She cried out in her mind, quickly forcing her body to the side before kicking the daggers away.

She wouldn't have thought someone would do this if she hadn't seen what Selen had done to the poor beast the last time they fought.

But her extra attention to things aimed at her rear had paid off. If she didn't react in time and kick the daggers away...

Alice shivered at the thought as veins bulged on her neck.

"Pervy b*tch! Why the hell would you try stabbing someone in the ass like this?!?!" Alice cried out in annoyance as she was forced on the defensive.

The woman unleashed a flurry of stabs and slashes with her daggers while using powers of the Void to assist her but Alice was too hard to hit.

No matter how fast she tried to go, Alice was always able to dodge at the last moment.

"Not a talkative type huh? Shame." Alice shrugged, punching her wrist to force the stab off course before jamming her elbow into the woman's sternum.

Following up with a quick double kick against the chest into a backflip, she threw two daggers at the woman but it was swallowed by the Void.

'Tsk.' With just hand to hand and trying to her best to keep up through observing the way her body moves, Alice was barely able to come to a stalemate. But to kill her would be a tad difficult.

'Wanna let me try?' Alyss offered.

'Go for it. And make it painful since she tried to take my damn chastity with a f*cking dagger.'

'Pft... Sure.' Alyss chuckled as golden chains manifested around their body.

Massaging her neck, Alyss glanced at the woman with a grin.

"Come on, round two baby girl~" Alyss laughed.

Stomping down, she rushed towards the woman.

Taken aback by the sudden change of pace, the woman stepped back and tried to use her abilities to keep Alyss away.

However, after watching the fight from Alice's mindscape, she had gotten a feel for the 'pattern' of attack.

Something of this level was far too easy to deal with even if they didn't have their Sigils to help.

*BANG CRACK!!

After dodging the attacks, Alyss released a quick one two strike causing the woman to stumble. After which she grabbed the head and slammed it into her knee.

Before the woman could even stumble back from the sudden strike, Alyss twisted her body, hooking her leg behind the woman's head and threw her to the ground.

Learning from Alice's mistake, she dodged the crackles of energy and grabbed the dagger.

"ARG!!!!"

Letting out a cry of pain, the woman could feel the dagger stabbing into her spine before all sensations faded away.

"And with that~ The end." Alyss narrowed her gaze.

Kicking the dagger she stabbed into the woman's spine, Alyss used it as a lever to pull her head and spine from the body, killing her in an instant.

'I know I said make it painful but I meant for her. I feel like I took more psychic damage than the pain she felt.'

'If you're not happy you should've ended her yourself.' Alyss shrugged, giving Alice a smug look as Alice rolled her eyes.

'That's only because you wanted to give it a try. I had a way to end her ya know?'

'Yeah yeah~ Sure whatever you say twinnie.' Alyss waved her hand dismissively while sitting on her bed, feeling refreshed after a bit of exercise.

Letting out a sigh, Alice took control once more. Before rushing to Selen's location, she retrieved the daggers that she had thrown since these were her only weapons right now.

###

Upon watching the figure break apart her seal, Selen was prepared to fight.

She had to deal with this threat immediately and reapply her barrier or else the beasts will come pouring out. However, what the hooded figure said next caused her to freeze up.

"You... I know you."

Chapter 437 - 437: Egil's Assistance

"You... I know you." The hooded figure narrowed her eyes at Selen who frowned at this proclamation.

"I don't believe we've met."

Depending on who was under that hood, Selen might have to give up on this fissure completely and take care of them.

If they are part of the Zenias, both her and Alice's safety is at risk.

"You're part of the Zenia family, aren't you? I've heard of a fighter who could manipulate the flow of time to a near halt. A woman treasured yet given away as a reward." The woman jumped down and landed not far from Selen.

"You were quite the hot topic a while ago. What happened to you? For you to be here in the North and hindering our plans?" She questioned, not showing signs of wanting to fight just yet.

Furrowing her brows, Selen was silent.

The woman wasn't part of the Zenia family but the fact that she knew about the incident where she was 'gifted' away meant that she was somewhat in the know.

Not enough to truly understand what's at stake but enough to hear about certain events.

Meaning... If she were to inquire about why she was here, the Zenias would find out that she was still alive.

*Sigh~

"Seems like I have to take care of you before I take care of that fissure." Selen sighed as she grabbed her blade.

Narrowing her eyes at the woman, Selen hopped on the spot, confusing her enemy.

'She doesn't have her guard up properly. It's a bit cheap but I can't afford to let you spread the news!'

*CLANG!!!

Flickering in front of the woman, Selen released a horizontal slash at her neck only for it to be blocked by an armoured collar.

"Tsk!"

"You b*tch!" The woman widened her eyes in shock seeing Selen attack her out of nowhere.

Jumping back, she slammed her hand against the ground and began to pull out a metallic material.

Not wanting to let her get a chance to recover, Selen rushed forward, activating acceleration on her own body. Appearing in front of the woman, she jabbed her hand against her throat before attempting to slash down but it was too late.

Pulling out a bestial head from the ground, energy converged around the woman and released a single blast of energy towards Selen's stomach.

*BANG!!!

Barely blocking the attack with the face of her blade, Selen was forced back as the blast threatened to break her weapon.

"ARGGGG!!!" Letting out a cry, she parried the blast aside and watched it obliterate a house and leave behind crackles of lightning energy. Turning her attention back at the woman, Selen noticed that she was now covered with jagged black armour, looking as though it was freshly carved from the body of a beast.

Mounted on her back were two bestial heads, resting on her shoulders and controlled by her hands. Pillars of metal stabbed into the ground behind her, acting as a support frame.

Pulses of crimson energy flickered through the gaps of the armour, condensing around the jaw. Forcing the mouth to crack open, two streams of raw destructive lightning energy rushed towards Selen.

Widening her eyes, she didn't hesitate and immediately conjured a staff.

While her personal realm may have been broken apart by the woman's first attack, she could still use the residue power left behind to conjure one more time stop on a larger scale!

Slamming the staff down, the sound of a clock could be heard momentarily before colour drained from the blasts and it came to a near halt.

Crouching down, she rushed forward, twisting her body and kicking the back of her blade, sending it towards the woman's head.

Just as she tilted her head to dodge the blade, Selen activated acceleration on herself for a second time and grabbed the blade.

Narrowing her gaze, she slashed at the woman diagonally, hoping to take out one of the bestial heads but she grinned.

From her shoulder guard, several beams of energy exploded out, piercing Selen's body as she tumbled back from the attack.

Blood poured from her wounds.

"Blame yourself for attacking me." The woman aimed her cannons at Selen and prepared to attack.

"WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE TRYING TO KILL!?!?" An angry roar could be heard from above.

*BANG!!!!

Crashing down from above, Egil slammed his fists into the woman who blocked with a metallic shield.

*CRRRR

The sound of metal bending cried out as the woman gritted her teeth and pushed Egil away.

Landing in front of Selen, he tossed her some healing vials before glaring at the armoured woman.

"She's the reason why the seal went down right?" He asked as Selen nodded, drinking the vial and watching her wounds heal.

"Alright, let me deal with her quickly then." Egil cracked his knuckles.

Slamming his fists together, he activated his resonance as spectral animalistic traits appeared across his body.

"Careful of her cannons. They hurt like a motherf*cker." Selen warned, slapping her hand on his back and giving him acceleration.

"Don't worry about that, I trust in my own toughness." Egil laughed as he twisted his body and punched at the sneak attack the woman had launched.

*BANG!!!

Widening her eyes in shock, she didn't think the barbarian would just punch the energy blast apart!

With a single step, he left a crater in his wake as he appeared in front of the woman and slammed his fist into her chest.

*CRACK!!!

The armour began to fracture from the force of his fist while the woman's eyes turned bloodshot.

Crashing into a building from the punch, she pulled herself out from the rubble and glared at Egil who blinked his eyes.

"Is that it?"

With all the defences around her body, he thought she would at least defend herself like Alice would. Redirect his strikes or dodge.

But she just sat there and took it.

This confidence in her armour was truly astonishing to Egil. For Selen, this kind of opponent was the worse since she didn't have much in the defensive department.

But for him who's all about physicality, this is probably the easiest match up for him.

Hearing his nonchalance, the woman felt like a vein was about to pop.

"Is that it huh? I'll show you what I can do you brainless barbarian!"

Sigils flared across her body as the metallic armour began to shift and morph. From a stationary turret, her form began to mutate.

Unlike the beasts they saw during the ambush, she transformed into a metallic dragon littered with weaponry and mechanical joints.

Each segment of the wing held a different cannon while crimson lightning crackled through the gaps and pulsed with eerie energy.

Looking at this beast, Egil felt calm.

Compared to the aura Alice passively exuded during a battle and the strange beasts during the ambushes, this one felt like a kitten.

Baring its tiny fangs and reaching out with its claws to seem frightening despite its size.

Giving her a taunting smirk, Egil massaged his shoulder.

"Tell you what, I'll give you a chance. One hit is all you get so hit me with everything you've got." Egil laughed.

"Are you stupid???" Selen cried out.

Even if Egil was confident in his body, this was beyond reckless!

Right after she lectured him about taking care of his body too!

"It'll be fine~ Don't worry about it."

Feeling speechless, Selen wanted to smack him on the head and crack it open to see if he still had his brain or not.

"I swear to the gods you have two brain cells and they're both fighting for f*cking second place."

Blinking his eyes in confusion, Egil shrugged.

"Just watch, I'll show you something fun."

Taking a deep breath, emerald energy began to cover Egil's body as spectral armour manifested on his arm, waist and shoulders.

As for the woman inside the dragon, she prepared her own attack as well.

Since he dared to challenge her firepower, she was going to respond in kind.

Crouching down, energy pulsed out from each of her cannons while the dragon's head cracked open to reveal a hidden cannon.

Energy coalesce towards the opening, a spiral of multicoloured rays of destruction. The metal around the draconic body began to heat up as the ground beneath her bubbled and boiled.

Once the energy reached its apex, the blast disappeared momentarily before exploding towards Egil.

Watching the torrent of raw destruction rush towards him, he let out a hearty laugh and stomped his foot down.

*BANG!!!!!!

Before the energy could collide, an emerald avatar manifested around them, blocking the strike. With each second that passed, the outline would fluctuate and threaten to break apart but it held on.

After a few seconds, the torrent of energy disappeared leaving a line of glass and lava on the ground before being split apart to reveal a completely safe Egil and Selen.

"Is that it?" Egil grinned as he asked those words for a second time.

"ARGGG!!!" Unable to hold back, the woman lunged towards Egil with the mechanical beast but he simply pulled his arm back.

All of the damage that his 'shield' withstood, he'll send it back to her!

Flickers of blue and purple danced across his fist as he parried the mechanical beast's first strike with his left arm. Twisting his body, he swung his fist from below into a devastating uppercut.

The release of energy caused a pillar of light to explode from his punch, completely tearing apart the head of the dragon and piercing the clouds above them.

With the sudden explosion of energy came the collapse as the sound of an explosion echoed throughout the battlefield, causing everyone to turn their head towards the pillar of light with confusion.

Meanwhile, Selen was speechless.

'I'm surrounded by powerful idiots.'

Chapter 438 - 438: Seeking Opportunities Through Disaster

Shaking his hand from the punch, Egil walked over to the slumped remains of the metallic dragon. He could see it slowly falling apart, revealing the bloodied and wounded woman who tried to kill Selen earlier.

That hateful glare felt like a tiny pinpricks against his skin, nothing serious.

"You want me to kill her or leave her be?" Egil glanced back.

Making a gesture of running her finger across her neck, Selen turned away to look at the fissure above them.

Behind her, the sound of bones cracking before popping could be heard.

"Did you have to crush her head like a grape???" Selen was speechless.

"What? It was painless." Egil tilted his head while shaking off the blood from his hand.

Letting out a fatigued sigh, Selen scratched her hair.

With the woman breaking apart her seal around the fissure, reapplying it wouldn't have the same effectiveness since she needed to activate her personal realm.

Unfortunately, since the personal realm was forcefully broken apart, reactivating it would take some time and a standard time slow barrier wouldn't be enough.

*Sigh~

"Why the long face?"

"ARGG!!!" Letting out a scream, Selen was shocked by Alice's voice suddenly appearing behind her.

"Make a sound when you walk!!" Selen cried out, feeling as though she just had a heart attack.

Confused, Alice shrugged before looking at the destruction around them.

"So why the sigh?"

"Because I can't exactly hold back the fissure anymore. Please tell me Torgeir has a method to shut this thing down for good." Selen shook her head.

"You see, I would be here to deliver some good news but unfortunately, that's not the case. He's calling for a retreat rather than closing the fissure since he doesn't have a method to stop it." Alice replied while peaking through the gaps of the fissure.

Seeing the countless beasts squirming inside, aiming to get out while the aura of Tiamat got stronger, she couldn't help but whistle.

The sheer destruction they could bring was going to become quite the spectacle.

'There won't be anyone left to help those on the frontlines if this thing breaks apart.' Alyss folded her arms.

'Yep. However, if we stop it, it's a thankless job. We won't get the rewards promised to us.' Alice let out a sigh.

'Honestly, f*ck it. Let it break who cares? It's not like we didn't try to stop it in the first place. If Torgeir is insistent on not closing it, who are we to stop him?'

To Alyss, it was far easier to just let hell break loose so Torgeir understands what kind of decision he made. How are they going to learn if they never fail?

Plus, having Alice risk her body twice, once to keep people safe and once to save people on the frontline was a no go for Alyss. She still remembered the consequences of risking her body last time. Alice was practically hanging onto strands and if it wasn't for Selen keeping her safe, feeding her and taking care of her bandages, she would've died.

Crossing her arms, Alice was a little hesitant. She had the same thought at one point but letting a fissure connected to Terminus break apart was simply off the table. If a permanent passage is created, all the horrors of Terminus will come spewing out, turning the surface into a second Abyss.

Furrowing her brows, Alice made a decision.

"If I'm going to stop this f*cking fissure, I'm gonna make it worth my damn time. Selen, let it break. Take this time and recover. Set up a perimeter around the opening and slow all the beasts down. Allow more beasts to pop through if you can.

"Depending on what happens, I'll either shut down the fissure or leave it be."

Hearing this, Selen tilted her head.

"What are you planning?"

"What else? I'm going to grab my fifth Sigil." Alice revealed a daring grin as Selen felt like her jaw was going to fall off.

"Are you crazy?!"

"Fufu~ Just a tad~ But don't worry, if there's nothing suitable, I won't risk my body. I'm only going to make a move if one of the beasts looks useful to me." Alice stuck out her tongue as Selen didn't hesitate to smack her on the head.

"What do you mean you won't risk your body??? You need to fight if you want to hunt!" Selen huffed in anger.

"If I get my fifth Sigil, I can speed up my recovery! So if things go well, I wouldn't risk my body ya know? Since it would've recovered partially." Alice tried to persuade Selen while Egil held her back from smacking Alice some more.

"But don't you need a shaman? How are you going to attune to a spirit?" Egil asked curiously.

"Erm... trade secret." Alice stuck out her tongue once more.

Taking several deep breaths to calm herself, Selen reluctantly nodded her head.

"But if there is nothing suitable, we're giving up on this place alright? No heroics of closing the fissure if there's nothing worth it."

"Gotcha~ Now let's get to work." Alice chuckled.

With Egil's help, Selen began to place several nodes around the fissure. The space was large enough to accommodate several beasts without breaking apart so the moment Alice saw something she liked, she'd be able to close the fissure immediately. If there's nothing, they'll give up.

The time limit was how long Selen's barrier could hold as the moment it breaks apart, they'll need to leave or else they risk being dragged into a fight against the beasts.

'I don't believe we have a full understanding of the beasts from Terminus. Or are you planning on waking up Cayla for something suitable?' Alyss asked curiously.

'Nope, nothing of the sort. Instead, I'm going to provoke a fight between them and see what kind of abilities they'll showcase.' Alice shrugged.

She was basically going to turn this entire place into a monster derby to pick her fifth Sigil.

If Torgeir wasn't planning on saving this outpost to begin with, she wasn't going to hold back.

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Furrowing his brows, Torgeir glanced at the spot where a pillar of light had just exploded.

80% of the evacuations were done but many of the civilians had to leave without any supplies or their belongings. Meaning the travel towards a safer outpost inland was going to be treacherous with some even possibly losing their lives during the travel.

However, since it was the sudden appearance of an Abyss Break, there was nothing they could do. The only thing he could hope for was to save as many lives as he could while also leaving a potential path of return for those still fighting on the frontlines.

'This outpost is going to be a dead route once the fissure breaks. Once the groups are split into two, I'll need to get scouts to find a secondary path of retreat.'

The ideal situation would be to let Alice close the fissure but there was still the case of the unknown beasts that ambushed the previous expedition.

If they were truly as fearsome as Bo had reported, he needed Alice's power for them specifically and not a fissure they could just avoid for now.

At that moment, three figures appeared above Torgeir, each radiating killing intent.

The first was a fully armoured man clad in black metal and a fluttering red cape. Pulses of red energy could be seen through the gaps as he wielded a large black and red scythe.

The second was a young woman with black hair tied into two long twin tails. The end of the twin tails were set ablaze. She wore a black uniform, similar to the armour the first man wore but slightly different as parts of it were also on fire.

The last was a man with short swept back black hair. He wore a large fur lined coat and a uniform like the woman. There were no distinct features on his body except for a floating cube that constantly broke itself apart before piecing itself together.

"Seems like you're not satisfied with losing two of your finest warriors last time." Torgeir narrowed his eyes.

During the previous Abyss Break, he had assassins try to take his life as well but they fell short. This time was going to be no different!

Stomping down with his foot, a ritualistic circle crackled to life behind him as armoured bestial limbs clawed out from the summoning circle.

Beside him, another circle appeared, holding his spear.

*BANG!!!

Twirling his spear, he parried the first scythe while an armoured wing covered him from the flames.

"Are they so desperate that they'll send weak men to their deaths?" Torgeir questioned as another claw came down from above, looking to crush the armoured man.

However, a barrier manifested around him with pieces of a cube acting as the nodes for the barrier.

'A frontline, a main damage dealer and one support. A standard composition to fight a beast rather than assassination.'

Pushing the armoured man away from him, Torgeir adjusted his grip on the spear and threw it towards the support.

*CLANG!!!

It was blocked by the woman who wrapped flaming chains around the weapon but Torgeir wasn't phased.

A spear may be his preferred weapon but it wasn't the focus of his Sigils!

*ROAR!!!!

Pulling out its upper body from the ritual circle, a four armed winged beast could be seen as four crimson eyes glaring at the assassins with glee.

Energy converged towards the two horns on its head, condensing into a spiralling orb of power before firing.

*BANG!!!

The barrier shattered apart in an instant as the support didn't expect this kind of firepower but Torgeir wasn't done.

To ensure that the fight was short, he recalled his spear while the Sigil on his arm pulsed with energy.

Twisting his body, he released one more devastating throw.

*KRRR!!!

Tearing apart the earth beneath it, the spear pierced the body of the support and the woman before erupting with raw energy, obliterating their bodies.

All three were barely stronger than three Sigil warriors which only confused Torgeir.

This moment of confusion allowed a gap in his defences as a silver haired man curled his lips into a menacing grin.

Chapter 439 - 439: Valtor

With Torgeir's back being completely open, the silver haired man couldn't help but laugh inwardly as energy gathered towards him.

"!!!" Sensing this, Torgeir widened his eyes in shock from the familiar surge and immediately turned back.

The beast above him tried its best to protect Torgeir but it was too late.

*BANG!!!

A blast of energy pierced through the wing of the beast, burrowing into Torgeir's stomach and charring his organs. Coughing up a mouthful of blood, Torgeir rolled across the ground while the beast dissipated due to the damage he took.

"Urg... Valtor... How dare you show your face around here! Traitor!" Torgeir roared out in anger.

"Traitor? Who me? You wound me old friend. And here I thought you were going to greet me with a smile." Valtor cackled as he snapped his finger.

Around Torgeir's neck, shards of energy flickered to life.

*KRK!!!

Summoning the beast's hand to protect his neck, Torgeir jumped back and reached for a healing vial from his pouch.

"Tsk tsk tsk, let's have none of that." Valtor laughed, not letting Torgeir heal his wounds.

Appearing in front of Torgeir, he twisted his body and kicked him on the wrist, forcing him to drop the vial.

Understanding that his old comrade wasn't someone to let his opponents heal easily, Torgeir gritted his teeth and summoned his spear.

Twirling the spear in his hand, he tried to slash towards Valtor but his blade phased through Valtor's body.

"Come on, you know this weak sh*t won't work on me."

Ducking to the side, Valtor elbowed Torgeir on the side of the head before snapping his fingers once more.

Shards of energy condensed around Torgeir's leg this time but Torgeir was faster.

Destroying one of the shards with his spear, he moved his leg out of the way before the attack tore it off.

Sliding across the ground, he slammed his palm against the ground.

*ROAR!!!!

Summoning the beast's head, a torrent of energy surged towards Valtor without any delay. Had it been anyone else, it would've taken them by surprise but not Valtor.

Torgeir knew that this was futile against Valtor but he needed this gap to heal himself.

Just as he reached for his pouch a third time, shards of energy gathered by the opening and detonated, tearing off the pouch and almost shredding apart Torgeir's fingers.

"Can you stop that boring sh*t? You already know I won't let you heal so why try? Or... Are you finally about to kick the bucket? Feeling desperate?" Valtor's voice rang out as he created a shield using the shards of energy that he conjured around his body.

Gritting his teeth in anger, regret filled Torgeir's chest.

"I should've killed you when I had the chance! I shouldn't have let you leave!" He shouted in anger.

Ignoring the wound on his stomach, Torgeir let out a shout as he forcefully summoned the full body of the beast and activated Resonance.

As their figures overlapped, bestial armour appeared around Torgeir's body with wings, extra limbs and even a tail appearing behind him.

A feral growl could be heard from his helmet as he punched against the ground and launched his body towards Valtor who revealed a twisted smile.

"Good~ Good! This is how it should be old friend!" Parrying Torgeir's spear with a punch, Valtor slammed his elbow into Torgeir's chest but he wasn't phased.

The extra arms reached forward and grabbed his shoulder as Torgeir headbutted Valtor before swiping his tail into Valtor's stomach.

There was no elegance in their techniques. Just a pure brawl between two people who used to be friends.

"I looked forward to today ever since you left me on that battlefield!" Valtor shouted and snapped his finger to create a cage around Torgeir. However, he managed to dash out of the zone and slam his fist into Valtor's face, causing him to slide back.

"I tried to convince you to come with me many times but you refused each and every time. You knew the war didn't look good but you were still stubborn." Valtor wiped the blood from his lips.

"I had a family to look after! If Verona won't save them where else was I supposed to go you dumbf*ck?!" He shouted, conjuring a spiral of energy that exploded towards Torgeir who was forced to block with his wings.

Digging into the armour, the spiral of energy tore apart the wings, causing Torgeir to flinch in pain.

Blood began to seep through the gaps.

Thinking back to what Valtor said, it wasn't like Torgeir didn't understand it either. But to doom everyone in the squad back then to switch sides... He hated it.

He never had a proper family. Orphaned by war. His fellow brother-in-arms became his family. During that rainy day, when he found the corpses of his family and news of Valtor's traitorous actions, it broke him.

"But whatever, the past is in the past now. I was too late and both my family and my brothers have died. It's only you and me left and this blasted queendom of Verona...

"Torgeir! I'm going to raze this place to the f*cking ground. I'll give you one more chance so come with me. Don't make me kill my last brother." Valtor offered one last time to his old friend.

Collapsing on one knee, Torgeir's armour broke apart to reveal the wounds across his body.

The blood pooled beneath him as his vision blurred.

Forcing a smile, Torgeir glanced up at Valtor and shook his head.

Clenching his fist, Valtor bit his lips before letting out a sigh.

"Then I'll spare you the sight of this Queendom falling to ruins."

Just as he was about to attack, the ground trembled as the tyrannical aura of Terminus flooded the outpost.

A pressure never felt before crashed down upon them as they felt like they were being glared down by several Lord level beings.

Slowly turning his head up, Valtor looked towards the fissure as the first beast clawed its way out.

A gargantuan beast- no, rather than a beast this was more akin to a mountain. A demonic mountain shrouded in darkness and fire. A cloud of miasma followed its every move, obscuring its true form from the eyes.

The echoes of metal chains dragged behind it as it clawed its way out. The molten lava bubbling across the gaps of its skin formed a stark contrast against the miasma.

Each movement was not quite that of a beast but more so the shifting of the land. Each step sunk the earth and each breath exuded dark clouds that blotted out the sky.

Even without its full size in view, the outpost was already being shielded in its shadow. Its mere presence tore the fissure apart, forcing it to accommodate the beast as it forced its way out of Terminus.

The only way Valtor could describe it was simply that this was a living mountain.

Even though he didn't speak it aloud, he questioned the possibility of a beast even growing to this size.

Was this truly the beasts that dwelled in the Abyss?

With the mountainous demon forcing the fissure to expand far beyond its original size, countless smaller beasts took this chance to slip through the gaps.

Plant like beasts covered with bloodied thorns and a beating heart, aquatic beasts that shimmered with a myriad of celestial lights and even mechanical monstrosities that are a blend of beast and machine. Jagged spikes that protruded from every part of their body making the act of attacking it harmful to the attacker.

Humanoid dolls no bigger than the average human that rode on the backs of draconic creatures. Ghostly beasts that carried the haunting cries of the dead and the spectral glows of lanterns. Even beasts that were almost entirely formed from energy slipped through the gaps.

A parade of beasts from the prison of the Abyss. Terminus.

Beasts that were sealed away in fear of the destruction they could cause.

***BANG!!!**

Right as the mountainous demon stepped through the fissure, an explosion erupted within the crowd of the beasts, snapping all the onlookers out of their stupor. Now fully understanding the danger that had just escaped from the fissure, they ran towards the exits in panic while the screams of beasts erupted from the horde.

An internal conflict as beasts began to battle one another.

Around the beasts, a barrier manifested itself, slowing them down the further they got from the fissure and preventing them from reaching the fleeing people.

Right when Valtor snapped out of his trance from sensing such horrific energy, he realised he gave Torgeir the chance he needed to drink a healing vial and quickly raised his guard but it was too late.

The shaft of the spear slammed into his ribs as nasty cracking sounds could be heard.

"URG!!!" Gritting his teeth, Valtor stopped himself from crashing against the ground while Torgeir wiped away the blood from his face.

Opening his mouth, Torgeir was about to say something when he decided against it.

There was no more words needed between them. Today, only one of them gets to get out of this alive.

"No words? Fine by me. I got nothing to say to you anymore as well." Valtor took this chance to drink a healing vial as the Sigils across his body began to burn with energy.

Activating his resonance, his silver hair turned black as his eyes glowed with a radiant white. Countless shards hovered around him while motes of energy danced across the air.

One last calm before the storm.

One last look at an old friend as memories of their past flashed through his mind. After this, there will be no hesitation.

*BANG!!!

Both men erupted with frightening energy as their weapons collided in mid air. With this clash, their brotherhood ended and there were only two enemies on the battlefield.

Chapter 440 - 440: Candidates For Alice's Fifth Sigil

Sitting on the roof of a building, Alice swung her legs back and forth while watching the swarm of beasts escape the fissure.

Her biggest surprise was the large mountainous beast that crawled through.

She didn't even see it walking up to the fissure before it tore through meaning there was a big chance that it was always there but Alice never saw it due to its size.

'Honestly, I wonder what kind of Sigil that beast holds. Seems fire related or something... well.. Size related.' Alyss wondered in amusement.

It would be quite a sight to see Alice suddenly transform into a beast larger than a village.

'True, but I don't want something so brutish. Ideally, I want something for my blood control. I need to bring it to the next level, the point I can begin manipulating the composition of the blood. And by extension, manipulate the composition of Abyss Blood within someone's body.

'It won't be at the level where I can completely sever their ties and contracts but at least they'll 'look' normal.' Alice glanced at the beads of blood that gathered above her fingertip.

Aside from the power needed to bring down the Zenia family, Alice had the goal of finding out ways to manipulate the blood within people. A feat that not even Velouria was able to accomplish.

If Alice could do this, the second Ayr would be more than just a safe haven. She'll make it into a place where people can rid themselves of the power given by the Abyss. A place of cleansing.

'Not everyone would want that after they've gotten used to having so much power in their hands. And unfortunately, if the weak civilians don't find ways to protect themselves aside from drinking Abyss Blood, it'll be difficult to convince them to discard that power.' Alyss reminded.

'I know but I still want to give it a try ya know? I can't get Allura's expression out of my mind when I think back to her friend. If I was able to extract the Abyss Blood from his body, she would've shown a different expression back then.' Alice nodded her head with a sigh.

Watching Selen erect the barrier around the fissure to keep the beasts contained, Alice kept her eye on the battle that soon broke out within the crowd of beasts.

"Weird energy siphoning tentacles... huge defence... fire based attacks... Shadow? No darkness..." She muttered, making a note of all the abilities that were thrown around.

More beasts spewed out of the fissure but the rate was slowed down thanks to the barrier. Naturally, the more intelligent beasts understood what was happening and sought to take down the caster.

Thankfully, Selen was in a rather obscure location so their discovery should take quite a while. And in the event that they should be discovered, Egil was there to cover their escape route.

However, as she continued to observe the fight, her frown only grew deeper.

"Poison... puppetry... lightning and ice... external claws that have high offence and defence..."

Nothing she saw interested her nor did it spark some kind of inspiration. Of course, there were potential ideas on what she could do with some of the abilities she saw. But they were only surface level.

She wanted something to truly push towards her goals.

'Seems like this is a bust. There's nothing that I want here in terms of healing. Everything is targeted at killing stuff.' Alice let out a regretful sigh.

Giving the horde one last glance, Alice singled out three targets.

All three had abilities that seemed pretty good for her in terms of increasing her offensive power.

Her first target was a strange skeletal figure donning dark red armour and a tattered cloak. It had a skull with red thorns piercing out of its head, forming a twisted crown while a blood red halo hovered behind it. From its shoulders sprouted several branches, creating a tree with blood leaves that arched above its head.

Much like the mountainous beast, dark miasma drifted from his body, especially the fragmented sword that he held in his hand.

Each fragment of the sword hovered within close proximity as though held by an invisible string, barely resembling the shape of a longsword.

In all of the battles that this beast was involved in, it would deploy spores that caused the same tree to sprout within others. But that wasn't the end, this tree would then turn their corpses into zombies to fight for him.

Aside from the last part, the rest was very similar to how Alice battled using her red spider lilies.

'Getting the second part of his abilities to create zombies seems helpful if I want to take out large crowds. But rather than Anti Hunter, it looks like a combination of both to become Anti Army.' Alice analysed. She wanted a Sigil that focuses on Anti Hunter abilities in order to form a synergy with the rest of her Sigils.

For the goal of achieving a nine Sigil resonance in the future with all nine being focused on Anti Hunter abilities.

The second candidate was an elongated woman dressed in all black. Long flowing black hair and a pair of piercing red eyes. But that wasn't the most noticeable aspect of her. Around her, crackles of energy and tendrils hovered with a myriad of crimson eyes attached to them.

Everywhere she looked, beasts would show signs of withering as from their blood, more eyes would appear.

'An eye based attack. Might synergise pretty well with Cayla once I unseal her in the future.'

'Speaking of unsealing, she's still holding quite the grudge over that twinnie. Kaden said the curse will undo itself in the future but we don't even know when.' Alyss chuckled. Alice was pretty reckless when she asked Kaden to seal both Void Fang and Cayla but it has helped Alice to become a little more cautious.

Just a little.

Still far from the desired effect. However, Alyss was rather excited to see what kind of power Void Fang could showcase once it has been unsealed.

After all, it was the closest thing to a Personal Artifact other than Ruinous Void.

'Urg... Don't remind me.' Alice sighed. She knew that she should've talked to Cayla about it first but it just kinda happened.

Shaking her head, Alice turned to the last and final candidate and the most promising one in her eyes.

A white haired woman with half her face being transformed into a carnivorous plant made out of flesh. Flowers decorated her hair while thorns acted as her dress.

The key reason why she's the best candidate in Alice's eyes is the fact that her abilities are parasitic.

From what she could tell, this beast plants a parasite into her target's blood and begins to consume them from the inside out. Her target will get a boost and begin to fight frantically not knowing that it's only furthering the beast's goals and spearing the parasite through the body.

Depending on how Alice could modify this ability based on the synergy, she could achieve something similar to her desires but it was a bit of a gamble.

To Alice, there were two ways this parasite could work.

The first is ability based.

An ability based parasite would be the worst kind since it'll go the opposite direction as to what she wanted. It'll be very difficult to change the properties and make it useful in separating the cursed blood from the body.

However, if it's the second way, it'll be exactly how Alice wanted it.

The second was user based.

The parasite changes based on the user's requirements and abilities. Meaning, Alice would be able to control it properly instead of just letting it roam freely within her target's body. If this was indeed the case then there's a high chance that she could modify it to extract Abyss Blood using her own blood as a magnet.

There will be lots of experimentation needed to properly calibrate the parasite but it's a step towards her goal.

Standing up, she gave her body a stretch and pulled out a vial.

'You're really going to gamble for this?' Alyss raised an eyebrow as Alice nodded her head.

'Might as well. Plus, if I get my fifth Sigil, Cayla will have an easier time, no?' Alice smiled.

Once she gets her fifth Sigil, Cayla will be able to talk to them while keeping the Artifact at bay.

'Fair enough.' Alyss shrugged.

Opening the vial, Alice drank some beast blood instead of the blood she got from Torgeir. It was going to be a short fight after all. An ambush.

Feeling the power returning to her body, Alice revealed a smile as she snapped her fingers and created a bead of blood.

Sending towards Selen's location, she wanted to notify them to retreat since she was going to cut off the fissure first before hunting her target.

Once the fissure was closed, no more beasts will come out.

'Help me replace my fifth Sigil with Allura's.'

'Way ahead of you.' Alyss smirked. With how long they've been working together, she's gotten a feel for what Alice needed in terms of Sigils and what she'll pick.

Out of all the Sigils they have, Allura's was most suitable for this moment.

'Hou hou~ And what if I wanted to use Tiamat's?' Alice raised an eyebrow.

'Well, that's just too bad.'

Shaking her head with a smile, Alice took a deep breath and focused her gaze on the fissure.

With her power returned, her senses began to expand. She could sense the strands of energy pulling the fissure apart. The bridge between the two realms and the exact point where it was conjoined.

To close the portal, she didn't need overwhelming power to shut it down in an instant. What she needed was to break one of the 'pillars' and watch it collapse on its own.

Just as she was about to make her preparations for attack, Cayla woke up from her slumber.