

Abyssal A 441

Chapter 441 - 441: Tenebris

[O'master mine... What in the f*ck is this?] Cayla's smile twitched as she was roused from her sleep.

The first thing she sensed was the overwhelming pressure exuded by a passage linking to Terminus. The second thing she sensed was Alice gathering her power for an attack.

'You're awake, good morning.' Alice greeted with a smile.

[Good morning my ass. What the f*ck is happening? I go to sleep for a little bit after warning you not to push yourself only for this sh*t to happen.] Cayla rolled her eyes.

As she turned her attention to reality, she noticed a strange gathering of all the beasts from Terminus along with a large fissure that was being stretched open.

[An Abyss Break???]

'Oh you know? Well that saves the trouble of explaining then. Yeah, it's an Abyss Break. Figured I'd try and get my fifth Sigil while I'm here and see if there are any suitable beasts to kill. Turns out one seems to match pretty alright so I'm going to take this chance and close the fissure as well.' Alice explained quickly while gathering her power to sever the connection of the fissure.

*Sigh...

[If my complaining could've changed anything I wouldn't have been sealed by you in the name of training. So which beast do you want to kill for their Sigil this time?] Cayla asked, surprising Alice.

'I thought you'd be against it.'

[No sh*t o'master mine. If it's not for the fact that we're on a timer since your body is far from recovered, I would've lectured until you went deaf. But since we don't have all day, I might as well make

use of this time to help you filter out the right candidates. So which beast are you thinking of killing?]

Cayla explained with a shrug.

If she had a table, she would've launched it across the mind realm for all the crap that Alice put her through. But since they're short on time, she'll make a table next time. She needed to decorate this place a little since it was rather barren.

'White haired woman over there with half flesh plant face.'

Turning her attention over, Cayla couldn't help but tilt her head.

[Why would you want her? It's just a Parasitic Rose Chimera. It doesn't exactly give any Sigils that are useful for you.]

'I'm looking for a Sigil that can help me change the composition of someone's blood. Isn't a parasitic based ability good? Or is her Sigil ability based so it won't let me change things.' Alice asked curiously seeing Cayla's flat out rejection of the idea.

[I know that o'master mine. Which is why I'm asking why you want a parasitic ability. It doesn't matter what kind of ability it is, whether that be user based or ability based, it won't help you achieve your goals whatsoever.] Cayla shook her head once again.

'Huh??? What do you mean?'

[O'master mine... Sometimes you can be frighteningly smart yet other times dumb as a rock. Please think back to all the information you have about contracts, the Abyss, the Will of the Abyss and the Spiritual Heart.

Once you thought of all of this, tell me why a parasitic ability wouldn't work.] Cayla let out a sigh as she decided to let Alice figure it out by herself rather than having her provide the answers all the time.

Crossing her arms, Alice furrowed her brows and began to think.

She went through all the information she'd gathered up till this point. All the experiences she's gone through, the knowledge she's obtained and the information she acquired in the Inverted World.

At a certain point, she began to see the gaps in her theory and couldn't help but facepalm in disappointment.

[Now do you see why I'm asking you why you want to change the blood? I mean sure you can 'purify' their blood for a certain amount of time but that change is not permanent. With the state of the Spiritual Heart, it'll only be a matter of moments before their blood begins to return to its 'natural' state as the body balances itself out.

[Acquiring the parasitic ability is no different to treating the symptom rather than the cause. It'll be superficial at best even if they look normal. But I'm 99% sure that this is not what you want for them right? You want a proper 'cure'.] Cayla rested her chin on her palm.

'Yeah... Urg I can't believe I overlooked the Spiritual Heart.' Alice sighed in annoyance.

[Aren't you glad I'm here to tell you before you get ahead of yourself? Give me a moment, I'll look over this group and see if there's anything actually suitable for you.] Cayla shrugged.

[While I'm looking, tell me which candidates you had in mind. I'm sure you had more than one since it's not like you to limit yourself to just one choice.]

Pointing out the candidates she had in mind, the weird skeletal figure and the woman with many eyes, Alice waited patiently for Cayla to analyse the beasts.

With each passing second, Alice could feel the power leaving her body but it was needed in order for Cayla to remain functional.

If it went south, she'll have to use Torgeir's vial as well. It's not like she can't collect more blood from him later while this was a precious chance she might not get again in a long while. To hunt beasts that come straight from Terminus.

Meanwhile, Cayla was silent. Even though Alice was mistaken regarding her final choice of the parasite due to a small oversight, her three choices were correct. They were the most suitable and compatible to Alice from everything that was here.

However, Cayla's gaze lingered on the second target, the woman with many eyes.

[Once again, I'm questioning your decision to seal me. If I still had my abilities, it'll be much easier to figure out what that beast she is.] Cayla clicked her tongue in annoyance.

'Can you not tell what beast that is?'

[I can. I'm just questioning what stage of evolution it's at since it's hard to differentiate between the stages. You're either fighting a four Sigil beast or something as high as a Lord Candidate or even higher. Even within the six Sigil stage, there are tiers. Lord Candidates as you have faced before, are beings that are very close to becoming Lords. All they need is that one last spark.

[But this beast is rather... how do I put it. I guess unique? If this is a Lord Candidate then you can forget about fighting her completely and just walk away from this place. I'm saying this with the knowledge of your power and what you can achieve o'master mine so don't take this as me underestimating you. If anything, I'm overestimating you in this observation.

[However, if she is below that, killing her for the Sigil is probably the best thing you can get from this horde.]

Hearing this, Alice couldn't help but blink her eyes in surprise.

'Oh? For real?'

[Yes, for real. The species we're looking at is a race that's primarily known as Tenebris. A race of beasts capable of rapid growth based on the danger they're in so it's best to kill them in one go. Unless you want to risk dying that is.] Cayla nodded with a frown on her face.

[Since the power of the Tenebris is related to what you're hoping to achieve in the future.]

"!!!" Pausing at the mention of this, Alice couldn't believe what she just heard.

'What do you mean by that? I thought her powers were eye related?'

[You're not wrong but that's not what's important. The eyes are just a catalyst for the ability. There's a reason why they're sealed in Terminus regardless of how strong they are and that's to do with WHAT their ability does. To put it simply...

[It's an ability that has the potential to nullify contracts.]

After saying this to Alice, Cayla turned her focus back on the beast. To determine what level this beast was, she had to resort to the original method of identification. The number of eyes it has and how fast it could drain the opponents.

But even then, it was still difficult to estimate accurately.

[There's a high chance that it has six stars.] Cayla spoke up after a brief pause.

'Likely hood of me killing the beast?' Alice asked curiously.

No matter how desirable the beast was, she needed to be able to kill it.

[It's worth the gamble if you use Torgeir's blood. You need to use everything in your power to kill it in one shot. If you fail, you can only hope it's weaker than expected.] Cayla sighed.

It was far too uncertain for her to give Alice a proper answer. This was the best she could say.

Leaving the decision up to Alice, Cayla waited in silence.

After a moment of contemplation, Alice opened her mouth.

'Let's go for it. You said it's a beast sealed in Terminus for a reason right? So it's safe to assume I wouldn't run into this beast at least not for a long time. If this can bring me closer to my goal, I might as well give it a try now. Nothing comes without risks.' Alice smiled.

[Understood.]

Pulling out Torgeir's blood, Alice drank it without hesitation.

She needed all the power she could muster to kill the beast in one go before it could turn on her. However, she first needed to seal this fissure.

To take care of it with as little power as possible so that the beast won't take notice of her.

And to do that, Alice created a bow in her hand and took a deep breath.

Chapter 442 - 442: Blackened Heart

Taking out the fissure wasn't a difficult task. After observing it for so long, she's already gotten a feel for its 'pillars'.

If anything, it was far harder to take out the pillar for Solaris and force him to go back.

The difficult part about this mission, however, was that she had to be stealthy about it.

Stealth was never her strong point as all of her attacks have always caused some kind of large phenomenon. If she were to do the same again, there's no doubt that the beast's attention would be dragged towards her included in the Tenebris.

'It doesn't need to be a powerful arrow. Just strong enough to target the strands of support with the help of Allura's Sigil and my blood.' Alice thought to herself.

Opening her hand, blood began to coil above it and condensed into a single arrow.

'It needs to be thinner... Smaller...'

Focusing her mind on compressing the arrow, it began to twist until it was thinner than a twig. But even then, Alice wasn't satisfied.

Notching the arrow onto the bowstring, she summoned Ruinous Void and transformed it into the unbound form.

With this choice, the Personal Artifact broke free of its constraints and transformed into a spiralling black hole with strands of energy surrounding it before imprinting itself upon Alice's hand.

[Ruinous Void – Casting]

Unbound Form: Capable of opening pathways to the Void at will, harnessing the natural forces within the Void to push or pull.

*KRR~

Using the power of the Void around the arrow, Alice began to forcefully compress the arrow until it was now wider than a needle.

It was only now that she was satisfied with it and pulled back on the bowstring.

[Once you take care of the fissure, you'll only have a small window to attack the Tenebris without giving up your location. Can you recover fast enough for that attack o'master mine?]

'Easy, just gotta make sure the arrow doesn't notify it of my presence.' Alice curled her lips into a grin as she transformed Ruinous Void into the Singularity Form.

Singularity Form: Transforms [Key of Destruction – Ruinous Void] into a medium for abilities. Significantly enhancing ability power, casting speed and allowing the user to gain high levels of control over the Void.

'Increased casting speed, enhanced ability power and control over the Void. With all of this at my disposal, it's only natural that I abuse the power of the Void and prevent others from noticing no?' Alice explained as she fired the arrow compressed by Ruinous Void.

*CRACK!!!

Breaking apart the space in front of it, the arrow disappeared as Alice dismissed her bow.

There was no flashy explosion, no torrent of energy no nothing. Just silence as a ripple appeared across the fissure.

Then, from the edges, it began to disintegrate, unable to hold its position.

Many of the beasts still within Terminus tried their best to claw themselves out before the fissure fully closed, but the barrier prevented them from moving at their full speed. They could only watch as their chance at freedom slowly disappeared as the light from the surface faded away.

The beasts who couldn't escape fully have their bodies cut in half by the closing fissure, left to bleed out on the ground.

Looking at the beasts that came through, Alice scratched her chin.

'That's quite the horde... Oh well, at least the fissure is closed now. I'll notify Selen and tell her to escape.'

Crushing a blood bead so that the Selen knew it was time to retreat, the barrier began to fade away and the beasts started to disperse.

[There are three things you need to watch out for when you fight the Tenebris regardless of what level it might be. First is her eyes, the key part of her ability set. Her powers work with vision so when you fight her, be careful not to stay within her vision or if it's unavoidable, try and blind as many of her eyes as possible.

[Second, her umbral domain. It's an ability that all of them have regardless of level. You can think of it as a Hunter's second resonance or the blood moon sanctuary belonging to the Maiden of the Blood Moon that you fought before. Within this realm, she gains a power similar to Kaiden and that she can manipulate any shadow that she can 'see'.

[Not only that, but she also gains a huge boost in all of her powers while draining away the sanity of her enemies.]

'Sanity? You mean I'll go crazy if I'm in her Umbral Domain?' Alice blinked her eyes in confusion as this was the first time she'd heard Cayla directly refer to sanity.

[Indeed o'master mine. The longer you spend within the Umbral Domain, the more you'll begin to hallucinate. You'll misjudge the attack, making it seem bigger and scarier than what it actually is. You'll space out from your own imagination and so on, unable to differentiate between what's real and what's fake.

[Depending on the level of the beast, she can pair it with an ability she gets later that casts a dark mist over the area, increasing the effects of Umbral Domain and making it so that you're surrounded by artificial darkness that can't be dispelled.] Cayla explained.

During the era when Ayr was still around, Velouria had sealed this beast away due to its nature of bringing fear and severing the contracts that bind people. And depending on whether or not they were a Lord or not, they could also nullify to some extent, the rule that Velouria put in place.

Meaning that even if beasts adhere to the rules set by Velouria, they'll forever remain as a beast.

[And the last ability that you should be careful of is Blackened Heart. I've only ever seen this ability activate once so I don't know the conditions of obtaining it or the activation requirements. It's not

available as a Sigil either so I can only speculate. But when it does activate, it'll begin to siphon the lives of those around her. With each life taken, she can survive another lethal attack.]

'The f*ck??? So I can't kill her in one go then?' Alice paused in annoyance.

With this kind of safety net, how was she supposed to kill her before she turned around and just cancelled all of her contracts?

[There's no guarantee that she has this ability o'master mine. I'm just letting you know so you don't get taken off guard.] Cayla shook her head but that only caused Alice's smile to twitch.

'Cayla... I want you to recall my luck. Recall all of the enemies I've faced and everything that's happened. Then, I want you to think to yourself. Knowing my luck, will she or will she not have this Blackened Heart ability?' Alice answered by giving her a question.

Thinking about this, Cayla was silent.

[. . . Fair point.]

'So what now? How am I supposed to one shot a beast that can siphon lives from the beasts around it?' Alice asked, sitting down with a sigh while she kept her eye on the Tenebris who was taking a stroll through the outpost.

Her eyes connected by the dark energy scoured the corners, taking the lives of beasts and man alike and leaving nothing but drained husks behind.

[It depends. Her Blackened Heart struggles to siphon lives if the target is strong. Or if there's no target at all. You'll have to isolate her so that she can't gain lives even after a surprise attack.

[Though to do so, it'll no doubt warn the beast and put her on guard.]

'Can she siphon lives from the dead? So if she's surrounded by beasts that I've killed, would she be able to gain lives?' Alice furrowed her brows.

She needed to create an ideal hunting ground before Torgeir's blood ran out of effectiveness. She had the option of drinking the blood of beasts but the longer she stayed in this state, the worse the backlash from her artifact would become once it wore off.

[She can't. But her range is unknown. It might cover this entire outpost or it might just be the area around her.] Cayla shook her head.

'After all that, it basically comes down to killing her while nothing is around her right? Either that or kill her fast enough so that she can't regenerate and retaliate.' Alyss replied in boredom. All of this planning and talking bored her as she'd rather just fight and duke it out with the beast.

'I suppose. But it's good to know what she does. She seems to be the casting kind so flipping her controls might not work as well as we hope. Let's go for Tiamat as the sixth since it gives us the biggest boost in energy. I'm not exactly worried since the fissures closed anyways and Tiamat's nowhere in sight.' Alice gave her body a stretch.

Tiamat's ability of draining colour from the world was mostly a visual effect. The true effect was siphoning and condensing all of the ambient energy into a single orb.

'Gotcha. Switch out with me if it gets hard to dodge.' Alyss nodded with a smile.

'Of course, we're two people in one body after all. Can't clap with just one hand.' Alice chuckled.

Activating her artifact, she kept it in the singularity mode and utilized the power of the Void.

To isolate her existence within a barrier and prevent energy from leaking out until the last moment when she would fire her attack.

Resonance!

Red spider lilies blossomed across her body but Alice wasn't done.

Partial Bloodline Release!

A malevolent aura erupted from Alice's body but this time, it held a hint of fallen divinity. The final embers of a god.

Sensing this, Alice understood it must be Nyer's doing from the time she was in the Inverted World. The resonance between the current her and the product of the past. But now was not the time to think about this.

Taking a deep breath, she aimed her finger towards the Tenebris in the distance that had no idea Alice had locked onto her.

A convergence of energy manifested in front of her finger. From a single mote of fire, it collapsed into a spark as fragments of the Void overlaid the attack. Colour began to drain from her surroundings, reinforcing the spark.

Crackles of energy danced from Alice's body, tearing apart the ground around her but Alice ignored it.

"Feast o' flames of mine."

*BANG!!!

A bestial figure appeared behind her, cracking open its jaw and funnelling more power into the spark.

This was her maximum output. The strongest Void Flux.

Chapter 443 - 443: Look Upon My Work Ye Mighty And Despair

The surge of energy formed a bow within Alice's hand as the spark transformed into an arrow.

Watching the kaleidoscope of energy surging towards her bow, Alice had a frown on her face as she began to struggle with containing this monstrous attack.

Bestial energy from her blood, falling divinity from the remnants of Velouria, partial Bloodline Release, Tiamat's ability belonging to a Lord of the old Age, the volatile energy of Ruinous Void and finally, the ritualistic energy flowing to her body from Alyss and the countless souls they've consumed thus far.

The arrow notched on the bow string erupted with a blinding light as it began to tremble, threatening to burst apart and take Alice along with it.

[Fire it!!!] Cayla shouted but Alice shook her head.

"Not yet!"

All of the energy was still converging towards the arrow. If she were to fire it now, the preparations would've gone to waste.

Veins bulged across Alice's arm as crackles of lightning and energy erupted around her. Despite her barrier, the skies above began to rumble. Dark clouds loomed overhead and the air became charged by the energy converging towards a single spot. A single attack.

Gritting her teeth, blood began to seep out of her arm and orifices but Alice didn't stop. She couldn't stop. Not until she wrangled all of this energy into submission.

She recalled the lessons of Kaden on the theory of casting and creating Sigil based attacks. To layer it and focus on harmonizing the power. How to adjust the different variables to produce the greatest result.

Naturally, parts of it were going to take a penalty based on what she increased but that was unavoidable.

'There's no need for a huge amount of accuracy. Allura's Sigil will skip the travel time so there's no worry about it going off course. Everything into power!' Alice thought to herself.

In front of the bow, a ritualistic circle spun to life as the icon of Alice's Sigils started to appear along the edges of the circle.

*CRACKLE!!!

The energy whipped out from her body, splitting the ground beside her as Alice began to struggle.

With her focusing all of it on power, the control, efficiency and accuracy waned.

'I need control to harmonise the power to stop it from dispersing. I can't let the multiple sources collide and cancel out one another. They need to flow down the same route and through the same output.'

*KRKKK!!!

The barrier that Alice had placed began to creek as it threatened to burst apart from the sheer amount of energy contained within this small area.

Everyone across the battlefield paused their fights as an overwhelming sense of impending doom rushed through their minds. They didn't know where the source was nor did they sense an attack approaching them.

All they could feel was pure despair and a sense of death.

Even the world acknowledged this phenomenon with the sky being obscured by ominous black clouds. A storm crashed against the outpost with high speed winds ripping out houses from the very foundations they were built upon.

Some even wondered if this was God's wrath.

Observing the barrier around her, Alice knew she only had 30 seconds at most before her barrier shattered. Once that happened, she could forget about taking the beast by surprise. Even with all of the

natural phenomena and the sense of impending doom that was happening, the beast continued to wander the outpost.

Curling her lips into a wide grin, Alice made the final adjustments to her attack.

*KSHH!!!!

Bursting to life, violet flames exploded forth from the arrow while latching onto Alice's body.

Holding a bow of energy, a Void Flux arrow and the violet flames that flickered on her like a cape, Alice arched her body and pushed the final ounce of her strength into pulling back the bowstring.

At this stage, this was no longer a Void Flux. This attack has transcended the limits of her Void Flux and became something else entirely but Alice didn't have the leisure to give this attack a name.

'SET THE BEAST AS MY TARGET NOW!!!' Alice roared out, pulling go of the bowstring.

[DONE!]

*BANG!!!!!!!!!!

Upon releasing the arrow, the explosion of energy detonated beside her, propelling the arrow forward while the ground shattered apart to form a crater. Alice was flung back but before she crashed into the wall, she watched as the Void cracked apart to welcome the arrow.

*SHATTER!!!

With this attack, the barrier was shattered apart with the remnants of the sweeping across the battlefield.

Cold sweat filled the backs of those within close proximity.

Soaring through the Void, countless strands of energy began to twist and merge with the attack as a shimmering trail of void lights began to follow behind the arrow.

"!!!"

Sensing a grave threat of death, the Tenebris began to panic but it was too late. The time that should've been needed for the arrow to travel was severely reduced thanks to Allura's Sigil!

All of its eyes glanced up and constricted in shock.

Pushing through the Void, the arrow appeared in the air.

A maelstrom of energy erupted within the sky as the clouds twisted to reveal the head of a draconic being.

It was only a moment as time seemed to stop for the beast.

From its open jaw, a spark appeared dying the world in an apocalyptic red and purple.

A single line of energy rushed down, marking the Tenebris in its glow as though declaring her to be a sinner who's to be eradicated from this world.

*BOOM!!!

With the Tenebris being at the epicentre, an orb of raw energy manifested before unfolding like an untold cataclysm. A swirling mass of stellar radiance and Void energy burning with the embers of Alice's fire, shredding away any blessing bestowed to the beast by the Abyss.

Reality began to compress, pulling everything nearby towards the beast as houses were torn down until it was nothing but dust.

Within a single instant, everything around the Tenebris was reduced to nothingness as the core of the orb reached a critical point.

An eruption of hellfire thrashed out, sending out arcs upon arcs of destruction, cleaving beasts in half and burning away their skin, flesh, bones and organs before the flames laid claim to their very souls.

A destructive force that cared not for what was in range and despite not being near the epicentre, the mountainous demonic beast was set aflame. Its skin was torn off and the miasma was dispelled, revealing its flesh that was being disintegrated just by being close to the attack.

But this was just a signal of the end.

Distortions manifested around the attack as cracks began to form. The barrier between realms crying out in pain.

Even those from afar could feel the unrestrained force pulling them towards the centre as they clung onto anything they could in a desperate attempt to pull themselves from the jaws of death.

Then there was silence.

The birth of destruction.

***BANG!!!!!!**

A roaring column of light and fire surging towards the sky with a swirling vortex of violent energy below.

Everything that was caught by the blast was reduced to atoms with no exception. Man, beast, building alike. Escape was impossible as despair filled the eyes of all those who witnessed the column of destruction.

As the pillar of energy faded away, all that was left was a haunting void. As though a painter had just painted a black line across their reality, all forms of light were swallowed by the all encompassing darkness that stood in the place of the pillar.

A cold, hollow silence filled the gaps of the realm.

Where the Tenebris stood was now a singularity, hovering above a warped crater that crackled with the remnants of energy from the attack. The air continued to distort around the singularity but compared to the initial attack, this was nothing but dying embers.

Around the crater, many corpses of beasts could be seen with half of their bodies missing. Desperation filled their now dead eyes as they tried to claw themselves away but were sucked into the blast radius in the end.

Dark motes of light rained down from above as the landscape was forever changed.

No one dared to move in fear of triggering a second impact from that attack.

*BANG!!!

Slumping over, the corpse of the mountainous beast collapsed on the ground with its blood and innards spewing out through the outpost. A flow of lava and blood merged to set fire to the buildings.

After the attack, there were no differences between man or beast. There were only spectators to this devastation.

Many of the civilians that had evacuated thanks to Torgeir's early orders knelt in horror upon seeing the permanent pillar of darkness that now resided within the confines of the outpost.

Their homes and memories, swallowed by the icon destruction.

The warriors who were tasked to escort the civilians felt fear. However, there was another emotion that was far more dominant than fear.

Relief.

Relief that they weren't within the outpost. Relief that they were this far away and thus allowed to survive.

###

Looking at the pillar of darkness, Selen sat on the ground as strength escaped her legs. Her eyes trembled at the sight as she understood this was Alice's power.

Had Egil not grabbed her and pulled her away, she might've become one of the many corpses- no, she might not even have a corpse left if she was dragged towards the blast radius.

At this moment, Selen felt fear.

Fear towards Alice and the power she held.

Fear towards the monster that Nyer brought into this world.

Chapter 444 - 444: Apocalypse

Looking at the pillar of destruction she caused, Alice couldn't help but cough awkwardly as this was far beyond what she had initially expected.

She knew that it was going to be strong but to this extent?

Not only that, but this line of darkness that refused to disappear, Alice could tell the barrier between realms was waning around this spot.

'Safe to say even if the Tenebris has the Darkened Heart it won't revive right?' Alice asked with a twitching smile.

[You don't say... How did your firepower reach this extent when I was asleep?] There was no shock in Cayla's voice; it was just sheer confusion as to what had happened.

One moment, Alice was barely getting out of the Inverted World alive, the next she's practically making new paths between realms.

'And here I thought I was gonna get a chance to fight. *Sigh~ what a waste.' Alyss complained.

This was the first time they 'one shot' a beast as a Hunter should without things going south. Though the power required was... Intriguing to say the least.

Just as Alice was about to reply, she felt the strength escape her body as she collapsed in the crater she was in.

One attack was all it needed to burn through all the time she had with Torgeir's blood.

Thankfully, she expelled everything with that one attack. If even a fraction of that energy was left behind, there was no telling what could've happened to her body.

However, to make matters worse, a foreign flow of energy began to seep into Alice's body.

The Tenebris Sigil!

Alice wanted to stay awake but she began to struggle. An overwhelming sense of fatigue assaulted her mind but she was unable to pull herself to safety.

She couldn't even hear what Cayla and Alyss were shouting at her as a blurry figure came into view.

###

Glaring at one another, Torgeir and Valtor were both on their knees as blood poured from their wounds.

Neither had any healing vials left to keep them in the fight and the sudden pillar of darkness had also cut their fight short.

"I didn't think you had this kind of card up your sleeve. Is that why you wanted your warriors to evacuate the civilians?" Valtor asked, looking up at the darkness.

There's no doubt that all of his subordinates were swept along with this attack as he was the one who ordered for them to keep people within the city.

"Who knows." Torgeir responded. It was true that he didn't know as this was outside of his calculations.

The only person that possibly came to mind was Alice but it felt impossible to him.

This level of power and destruction, could the source really be a split haired girl who couldn't even maintain her body properly?

Regardless of the truth, the calamity of the fissure came to an end.

Forcing himself to stand up, Torgeir took a deep breath and brandished his spear.

The immediate danger may be over but he still needed to kill Valtor.

"Seems like you don't plan on letting me live this time." Valtor let out a hollow laugh as Torgeir shook his head.

"Not this time. You've crossed the line."

Chuckling softly, Valtor took a laboured breath and glanced up at the sky.

"Say, old friend. Do you know how we were able to cause an Abyss Break?"

Hesitating for a moment, Torgeir stopped in his steps. If he were to know the secret behind it, then it could make attacks like this in the future avoidable by noticing the initial conditions.

However, this hesitation of his brought a twisted grin to Valtor's face as he threw something into his mouth and burst into action.

"!!!"

Widening his eyes, Torgeir expected Valtor to attack him but that was not the case. What he was aiming for was the pillar of darkness!

'Sh*t!' Gritting teeth, Torgeir cursed himself as he ran after Valtor.

Knowing his old friend, there was no way he was doing this without a plan. Meaning there's still something he could cause!

'Is he going to open another fissure?' He thought to himself as he pivoted on his foot and launched the spear.

*BANG!!!

Sacrificing his right arm, Valtor cackled in a frenzy and showed Torgeir a middle finger.

"It's too late Torgeir!" Valtor grinned as a black orb could be seen pulsing on his chest.

Veins of dark energy stretched out from the orb and dug into his body, causing Valtor to cough up blood but he didn't care anymore.

Since he was the last one left, he'll make the plan come to fruition.

An Abyss Break was only the start of the calamity planned for the Verona Queendom. The beginning of the apocalypse.

Upon reaching the base of the pillar where he could see a fluctuating singularity that was still absorbing the surrounding power, he couldn't help but laugh as the gods had not abandoned him yet.

While the attack may have destroyed the fissure, it left behind a seed of destruction that he could use to his advantage.

"Valtor!" Torgeir screamed.

"I can hear you just fine old friend! Now watch! Watch as I burn this nation to ashes!." Valtor plunged his hand into his chest and pulled out the orb.

Strands of flesh clung onto the orb as he pulled his arm back before jamming it into the singularity.

*RUMBLE!!!

With this, the realm began to tremble once more as crimson lightning crashed down from above. The singularity spun to life as the force of attraction surged out once more.

But this was part of Valtor's plan.

To fuse himself with this singularity and become the new calamity that will befall this nation. To watch its fall with his own eyes.

Around him, the air began to warp, bending the space in impossible ways as it seemed as though the world was flipped on its head.

With a deafening silence, the singularity imploded, creating a vacuum where all light and sound were consumed into nothingness.

Valtor's body was broken down right to the very atoms that made up his existence as Torgeir stabbed his spear into the ground, preventing him from being dragged into the orb.

A shockwave exploded out, shattering the reality around the singularity and revealing the infinite Void, the chasm between realms. A stellar sea of infinite stars and the radiance of cosmic flames.

*BANG!!!

The sky tears apart, revealing even more fissures leading to the Void as energy began to filter towards the Void. The form of Torgeir's spear began to falter, unable to sustain itself.

Through the singularity, the horizon warped, folding itself to the point where it felt like there were now two worlds. One above and one below. Countless corpses began to float as everyone within the boundaries of the outpost found themselves being lifted into the sky.

Even the corpse of the mountainous beast was dragged along as its lava and blood pooled into beads in the air.

An unravelling of energy now visible to the naked eye. A kaleidoscope of colour bleeding out into their realm. Their deadly beauty signifying the breakdown of the very realm they live in.

"It's over Torgeir. I've won. This power- no... MY power, will become the end of this worthless nation." Valtor's voice echoed out as the stellar seas began to form a figure around the singularity.

"And my first act will be to wipe this outpost from the face of this earth!" Valtor roared as his energy soared.

The unravelled strands of energy were pulled towards his core as Torgeir was helpless to stop it.

At this stage, Valtor has far exceeded the power given to a six Sigil Hunter.

The power to warp the very realm they live in... The power of a Lord!

Colour began to drain from the world, leaving nothing but the flashes of energy from the singularity. Within this maelstrom of energy, Torgeir felt infinitely small as though he was nothing but a speck on a single orb. As though his mind had left his body and he was witnessing everything from above.

The energy of the world, no the world itself was compressed into a singular orb and lost its colour. A realm of darkness and flames surrounded them as Torgeir froze at the sight of a being that held the orb within her palm.

Wild red hair danced within this darkness, hiding one of her eyes. Draconic horns protruded from her head as she revealed a set of sharp teeth. Her lips curled up into an amused grin.

Playing with this orb in her hands with Valtor frozen in time, unable to move, the woman narrowed her eyes as flames began to coil around the orb.

Licking her lips, she opened her mouth and threw the orb in...

*CRACK!!! SHATTER!!!

"!!!"

Falling onto the ground, Torgeir panicked as he felt like his entire being was consumed by the but he was returned back to reality.

What used to be a pillar of destruction with Valtor was now missing as a single woman hovered in the sky.

She wore an elegant sleeveless black dress that reached her ankles with draconic patterns along the fabric. A pair of long black gloves on her arms, tights and thigh boots, the woman let out a charming chuckle.

The chains that surrounded her wrist and ankle began to wither and fade while the restraint on her neck remained.

But just as the restraints on her wrist and ankle disappeared, golden chains rushed down from above, seeking to bind her once more.

"Dead but still a pain in my ass. Don't you know the dead should stay dead, Velouria?" She clicked her tongue in annoyance.

However, compared to before, these bindings were far weaker as she snapped her finger.

*BANG!!!

Flames rushed out and collided with the chains, igniting the sky in a sea of fire. However, a single cuff still managed to latch itself onto her wrist.

"Tsk, well three out of five seals undone is good enough for now." She sighed before taking a deep breath of fresh air from the surface.

Tiamat, Dragon Queen of the Apocalypse, a sealed Lord of old was now free.

Chapter 445 - 445: Tiamat's Freedom

Basking in the air of the surface, finally free after centuries, Tiamat folded her arms and glanced at the now almost destroyed outpost.

Out of everyone here, there was only one girl that grabbed her interest. The split haired one.

Not only did she show signs of Allura's Sigil and Velouria's bindings, but she also used a trick that only sealed Abyss Lords know.

Bloodline release.

It was a crude imitation with hints of the true technique but the fact that she knows how to perform this interested Tiamat.

Which sealed Lord taught her? How did she convince them? She wanted to know and thus she'll keep her alive.

"Ah... Right she also showed signs of my power. But it seems quite weak." Tiamat tapped her chin.

The first arrow that pierced the fissure acted as a node for her. A guiding light to figure out how to get out. In this aspect, the girl has her appreciation.

"Now to erase the witnesses of my freedom."

Raising her hand, flames began to gather but she paused upon seeing an old man appear in front of her.

"May I ask an esteemed Lord not to kill everyone that has survived the calamity?"

Looking at the old man in front of her, Tiamat narrowed her eyes as his aura was weak. Weak to the point of practically being non-existent. But strangely, it still held signs of what it used to be.

"Hou? And who are you to bargain with me? Or are you saying I should just listen to the suggestions of an old man that appeared randomly?" Tiamat decided to humour him.

Centuries of no interaction and being stuck in one place was unbelievably boring after all. She couldn't die but it couldn't be considered to be living either.

"I'm just a humble farmer. I merely wish to avoid more bloodshed after such devastation has already occurred." He bowed slightly, hoping that Tiamat would take pity on them.

Flicking her wrist, a crimson throne appeared behind Tiamat as she sat down and crossed her legs.

"And if I don't want to? Don't play around with me old man, you can hide it all you want but I can sense it. You have the stink of a Lord." Tiamat chuckled, creating a fan and pointing at the old man.

"That... I won't deny. But I can no longer be considered a Lord." Ragnar chuckled softly.

"Oh? I'll permit you to tell me why. If I feel like it, I might even spare this outpost."

Seeing that Tiamat wasn't making a move for now, Ragnar sighed in relief. He could only hope that the people still within the range of this outpost understood the situation and left as soon as possible.

"I made a contract with the Abyss. To give up my status as a Lord in order to seal another from the enemy nation. Had I not done so, we would've suffered many losses." Ragnar explained while Tiamat tapped her fan.

"To make a contract with the Abyss, especially one that makes you give up their favour, you were close to the pinnacle, weren't you? The Abyss doesn't show this kind of favour to just anyone." Tiamat raised an eyebrow in surprise.

The Abyss, excluding the Will, favours all with no bias. It doesn't care if your enemy becomes a Lord or not. Once you receive its blessing to become a Lord, everyone could be considered to be of one family.

Yet for the Abyss to allow this old man to give up his Lordship to seal another Lord... that's a treatment she's only seen when it 'speaks' to those with nine Sigils in the age of old.

"Name and title." Tiamat demanded.

Hesitating for a moment, Ragnar opened his mouth.

"Agar. Formerly known as the Abyss Lord of Titans. I've long passed on my title along with the seventh and eighth Sigil to my successor and now I'm just Ragnar, an old man who tends to a farm of fruits."

Hearing this, Tiamat was silent. To think that people could now pass on Sigils to successors... She didn't know why the Abyss allowed this kind of transfer but seeing as how she's been sealed for centuries, it's only natural that there are things she didn't know about.

"If you gave your Sigils away, that means you have six Sigils right now, am I correct?"

"Indeed, it is as you say." Ragnar nodded, unsure as to why that was important.

"I was going to make us fight to see if you can save the outpost if you were still a Lord. But if you just have six Sigils then it's going to be boring. I'll give you one chance. Give me your best attack. If you can wound me even by a little, I'll leave this outpost be." Tiamat smirked.

After so many years, she could finally get the entertainment she craved.

Ragnar was surprised that Tiamat would be this lenient as doubt filled his mind. He knew what some Lords were as all they wanted to do was see the desperation in someone's eyes.

But even if this was a trap, he had to do it.

"I'm not as young as I used to be. One strike is all I can manage anyway." Ragnar shook his head as he took a few steps back.

"I sincerely hope that I can meet your expectations." Claspng his palms together, an aura burst out from Ragnar's body.

Sigils burned across his skin as the remnants of what belonged to a Lord seeped out.

Standing up, Tiamat dismissed her throne and gave off a light yawn. She hoped that he wouldn't make her wait with this attack.

As he was no longer a Lord, Ragnar couldn't muster up the power he had in his prime. The power he used to seal away a Lord.

However, if it's just one strike, he'll accomplish it. Even if it's just a fraction of his power, he'll drag it out no matter what.

Opening his palms, a condensed array of symbols could be seen as he threw it into the air, expanding into a large ritual.

*RUMBLE!!!

Breaking open the clouds, a single golden blade could be seen as flames danced on its edge.

It was a simple strike.

Just a simple stab with everything he's got in hopes of damaging the body of a Lord.

Glancing up at the blade, Tiamat felt bored. She gave him this challenge because she thought he would be able to show something exceeding that of a six Sigil user considering his previous identity.

But this? This could be suppressed by even those with a little bit of talent using just five Sigils. It's all size and no substance.

A strike that looked intimidating but lacked proper power.

'I suppose that's all this old man can muster up right now. His body is clinging onto life in desperation.'
Tiamat sighed in disappointment.

She could sense the state of his body but still wished for a miracle and entertainment.

Since he wasn't able to give her that, then it was time to end this farce.

Just as she raised her hand to block this strike, her pupils constricted.

*drip...

A single bead of blood rolled down the corner of her lips as the energy within her body was in turmoil.

*BANG!!!

Violet flames burst out from her arm as it began to bite against her skin. It wasn't able to damage it but it hindered the gathering of her power.

Furrowing her brows, Tiamat gritted her teeth as she had little time to expel whatever was doing this within her body before the blade would hit.

*CLANGGGG!!!!

As the blade collided with Tiamat, an explosion of dust pulsed out, obscuring Ragnar's view and causing him to stumble back. Glancing up at the Lord, Ragnar held his breath. He knew his power had waned but he still dared to hope.

Standing in the sky, she held the blade between her index and middle finger. Twisting her hand, she snapped the blade in half but a single cut wound could be seen.

Looking at the regeneration that was hindered, a vein bulged on Tiamat's neck as she tilted her head back and reached in with her hand.

From the pits of her stomach, Tiamat ripped out a condensed orb that was burning with violet flames. Within the orb, black blood bubbled.

'What the hell is this...' Tiamat frowned.

It was consumed by her during the first instance where she decided to interfere. A left over of the attack that shook the lands.

The source, no doubt, was the split haired girl.

But then the question changes. How is she able to live with this kind of blood inside her?

Gritting her teeth, she crushed the orb before throwing it aside, burning it with her fire.

It was a little difficult with her current power but soon the violet flames and blood disappeared.

Looking back at the old man who was staring at her with an expectant gaze, Tiamat felt annoyed.

Even if it wasn't him that caused the damage to her internally, his blade still caused a slight cut on her finger.

"Tsk, fine. Now get out of here before I'm sick of your wrinkly ass." Tiamat scowled as she walked towards Alice's location.

She wanted to figure out what the hell that blood was.

Seeing this, Ragnar sighed in relief but dread soon hit as he realised she was looking for Alice.

###

Landing in front of the crater where Alice was laying down, Tiamat walked towards the unconscious girl slowly.

The multitude of energies that raged within her body...

Had it not been its strange property that Tiamat couldn't digest, she'd be half tempted to eat her now and take it all for herself. But it's a risk she wasn't willing to take especially when she's just been freed.

Kneeling over Alice, Tiamat stared at the curse on her body, the golden chains and finally, the aura of Allura's Sigil.

Thinking to herself for a moment, Tiamat's lips curled up into a grin.

Chapter 446 - 446: Crown Of Eyes

". . ."

Standing in an empty Void, Alice wasn't sure when she became conscious after the transfer of power was complete.

All that was left was to choose the Sigil she wanted and she'll wake up from this mental space.

Looking around her, Alice noticed a figure that was standing not far from her. Similar to Velouria yet different.

Similar to Cayla yet not quite the same.

She had long silver hair with a pink hue while wearing the dress that Velouria usually wears. Turning around, she glanced at Alice.

"Cayla." Alice called out as Cayla nodded her head.

"You're looking... a little different."

Unlike before, where she took the form of Velouria, she was beginning to take on her original appearance.

[It's to be expected. The stronger you become, the more my original power returns. Though you can't access it since the seal Kaden put in place is blocking it.] Cayla smiled as a mirror appeared next to her.

She used to have a pair of bright blue eyes but now that she was looking more like her true self, one of the eyes turned a dull grey while the other maintained its bright blue colour.

"That's true. But hey, we're matching a little now. I got split hair and you got split eyes." Alice scratched her cheek at the mention of seal.

[Very funny master. I may hold a grudge over being sealed but being blinded in one eye is arguably worse you know that right? In the future, Kaden's seal will come undone. But at this point, Nyer has already become one with the power he stole from me.

[Even if we get it back, I won't be able to make the most out of it.] Cayla shook her head.

"Errr... Alright I guess I shouldn't say anything about it then." Alice coughed awkwardly.

"But setting that aside, you've stopped calling me o'master mine now. Did you take lessons from twinnie?"

[It's quite the mouthful to keep calling you that so I changed it.] Cayla chuckled while holding her hands behind her back.

Turning around, she flicked her finger and four paths appeared before Alice.

[But I'm sure master would rather figure out what ability to take as your fifth rather than talking about my eloquent speaking patterns right?]

Shrugging her shoulders with a smile, Alice walked up beside Cayla.

"So what are we working with here?"

[Two Anti Hunters, an Anti Beast and the fourth is Anti Army. The Tenebris we killed was indeed on the verge of becoming a Lord. If you didn't kill her in one shot, she would've activated her Blackened Heart and revived herself.]

Snapping her finger, Cayla created four displays in front of Alice that explained the abilities in detail.

The first was the Anti Beast as she figured her master was least likely to choose this one. Her goal was to aim for the legendary nine Sigil resonance that many have failed to grasp.

Even in history, there have only been a few who succeeded and they could be counted on one hand.

Allura and Kaden were not among those few.

[Umbral Domain – Anti Beast]

Allows the user to conjure the Umbral Domain around you. While the Domain is present, the user is able to manipulate the shadows that you can see along with a large boost to overall physical power.

In this domain, enemies will lose up to one sanity per second. The stronger the enemy, the slower the build up. Upon losing 100 sanity, they'll enter a berserk state, losing grip on reality and attacking anything and everything. In this state, the user's attack will deal more damage against the enemy.

The boundaries of the domain can be adjusted. The smaller the domain, the more concentrated the effects are.

A veil of darkness will descend within the domain, increasing the rate of sanity drain. The user can see through this darkness.

Reading the effects of the Umbral Domain, Alice felt a little tempted but it didn't match what she wanted at all. If she went a different path and had Anti Beast Sigils then this would sound suitable. Being able to make her opponents go crazy during a fight was insanely helpful since their guard would be down.

However, upon further analysis, Alice realised this was a Sigil that's strong against the weak and weak against the strong. The key is the part where the build up becomes slower based on her enemy. Meaning those with strong willpower or high Sigil counts would just shrug off this ability.

Eliminating the choice, the path disappeared as Alice moved to the second choice.

[Crimson Skies, Thousand Eyes – Anti Army]

Activating this Sigil will invoke a ritual upon the battlefield. Eyes will begin manifesting in reality with each kill you make against the opposition. With each eye manifested, sanity will begin to drain while you siphon their life force.

Within this ritual, with each eye that manifests, your perception of the battle will increase and you'll gain a natural defence against sneak attacks.

The more corpses that pile up, the stronger you become. Burn away lifeforce to recover from attacks and take more lives in retaliation.

For each thousand eyes you manifest using this ritual, you'll get to summon a Nightmare Warden that massively drains sanity upon its summoning. Eyes can be stored to summon a Nightmare Sovereign instead who immediately drains sanity and inflicts berserk.

Reading this skill, Alice could see why lots of people would cultivate Anti Army focused Hunters rather than using standard Sigils.

Just by activating this skill, she essentially becomes a one woman army with infinite lifeforce. Not only that, but she could also cause confusion in their ranks by draining their sanity. Then there's the summoning conditions for the Nightmare Warden and Nightmare Sovereign.

She wasn't sure what kind of beings they were but the fact that the Cayla didn't specify the sacrifices needed for the Sovereign meant that the cost was astronomical.

Especially if it's a beast that'll immediately drain sanity to inflict berserk.

If she were to activate this against one person, it would do nothing. But against an army? Sheer destruction.

"I thought Allura said I had to get multiple Sigils that synergise, how come this one just appeared?" Alice asked curiously.

[Because you do have multiple abilities that synergise. The Crimson Skies, Thousand Eyes isn't a Sigil that belongs to the Tenebris. It only appeared because your Sigils resonated with the abilities of the Tenebris to create the Anti Army ability.] Cayla shook her head.

Even though she didn't say this, the Crimson Skies, Thousand Eyes was probably the strongest Anti Army skill she had seen at this level. Most would only achieve this kind of effect during their second resonance with Anti Army but Alice? She accomplished this with her fifth Sigil.

This just proved how absurd her initial Sigils were along with the abilities that she carries in her body.

Crossing her arms, Alice was hesitant but in the end, she shook her head and gave up on the Anti Army skill.

She wanted it, she wanted it badly but it didn't match her desires. There was only one thing that she wanted from the Tenebris.

The ability to potentially cancel out contracts. That was the main reason why she listened to Cayla's suggestion and hunted this beast instead.

Dismissing this Sigil, the path disappeared leaving just two.

[I figured you didn't want those, though the second one was a shame. It's quite rare for a Sigil of this power to appear as your fifth. But if it's not fated to be then there's no point dwelling on it.] Cayla smiled as Alice nodded her head.

[The last two can go either way. So take your time choosing.]

Raising an eyebrow, Alice was confused as there was only one choice and that was to cancel contracts. What kind of Sigil was enough to make her change her mind?

[Crown of Eyes – Anti Hunter]

Manifest the crown of eyes around your body. Everywhere you look, you'll begin to siphon the life force of others. From their corpses, more eyes will begin to appear.

[Now this is where I need to come in since there isn't much else that needs to be said about this ability.] Cayla interrupted as Alice was just thinking about the short description.

[The Crown of Eyes siphons the lifeforce of others. But more specifically, it siphons the energy that is filtered through the Spiritual Heart. Through this, it is able to completely nullify the contracts which usually means death for your target.]

"But there's more to it, isn't there? Otherwise, you wouldn't say that this is what I wanted."

[Indeed. You are able to cut off connections and isolate them using your fire and Allura's Sigil. If you isolate the Spiritual Heart from the user, you can potentially nullify the contracts without killing them outright. However... I don't know what kind of reaction the Abyss will have if you were to rip someone from their embrace.

You can think of it as stealing someone's soul from a God which you're very familiar with.] Cayla explained.

Furrowing her brows, Alice tilted her head back.

Cayla was right in that this was indeed the Sigil she wanted. Depending on how well she could control this ability, nullifying contracts and potentially reverting the damage done to the body was possible.

Its potential is capable of reverting the changes and turn them back to normal humans.

However... If she was to anger the Will and the Abyss at the same time, then it's practically a death sentence. Not only that, but there was no guarantee that they'll live. Maybe it was just idealistic expectations for this ability to be able to revert changes.

Either way, Alice wasn't going to rule out the option since it was the closest to what she had wanted. The deciding factor now lies in what the fourth Sigil ability was.

Chapter 447 - 447: Scarlet Wings, Demonic Descent

[Before you read the fourth choice, I want to offer a word of warning. It's... Quite the anomaly. The reason why I said it could go either way was because it's up to you whether or not you want to take the risk of choosing it.] Cayla warned as Alice raised her eyebrows in surprise.

"Anomaly? How so?"

[Because it's not a skill that should've been part of the Tenebris. Rather, I don't know where it's from.] Cayla shook her head with a sigh.

Hearing this, Alice was a little surprised as there was little that Cayla didn't know about. Yet for her to be like this over a single Sigil made Alice curious about what the power was.

[Scarlet Wings, Demonic Descent – Anti Hunter]

Upon activation, the power of your blood will manifest as a pair of scarlet wings behind you. In this state, you are able to tap into power that is restricted by your output.

Once this skill is activated, the user will be placed on a timer as a rift will begin to form between the user and the world around them. The longer you sustain this power, the harder it becomes to anchor your being.

"Isn't this more of a restriction than a blessing?" Alice glanced at Cayla as the description of this skill was rather ominous.

The longer she uses her power the harder it becomes to anchor her being? And what does it mean by a rift between her and the world around her?

[Please finish reading the skill before you complain to me master otherwise I'll hit you.] Cayla sighed as Alice coughed and kept reading.

While the Scarlet Wings, Demonic Descent is activated, the user can use two sub skills. Crimson Immolation and Halo of Ruin.

Crimson Immolation: Enter a berserker state where all of your abilities are automatically raised to the next level. During this state, the timer will burn faster in exchange for unyielding power.

Halo of Ruin: While basking the Halo of Ruin, the enemy will continuously get their maximum energy capacity reduced until only 10% is left. Their capacity is transferred to you temporarily as a second container. The more you reduce, the more resistant you become to their attacks.

Folding her arms, Alice was still confused as to why it had such a large drawback if this was all it did.

Noticing her master's lack of understanding, Cayla couldn't help but sigh.

[Sometimes I wonder if you hit your head too hard. Master, think of it like this. What kind of skill lets you automatically upgrade all of your abilities?] Cayla pointed out.

"Isn't that no different from killing a stronger variant of the beast and taking their Sigils?" Alice blinked.

[. . . Yes and no. Then let me change the question master. If you kill a nine Sigil beast for their power, how would you upgrade it?]

"!!!" Widening her eyes, Alice was beginning to understand what Cayla was talking about.

This was an unconditional upgrade, one that allowed her to improve her skills even if it's at the threshold of what is possible for Abyss Lords.

[And if you are to take up Velouria's mantle as the Goddess of the Abyss, how will you get stronger from there?]

With this kind of understanding, it's no wonder that a rift will be created between the user and the world around them. This was practically breaking apart the rules of the world after all!

"Is it really that strong? How is this kind of thing in a Tenebris?" Alice asked with doubt.

What Cayla was suggesting was that a Sigil belonging to a six star beast was enough to transcend the limits of divinity!

[That's exactly why I'm saying I don't understand where it came from. Even though I'm sealed, I can still verify the truth using my prior knowledge. Yet everything I know about the Abyss and how the Sigils work is backing up this answer. It can indeed transcend the limits.] Cayla sighed.

[So it's up to you. I will tell you the consequences of using this ability though. When it speaks of a rift, it means banishment. After a certain point of using this ability, you'll become a stranger to the world. Once that happens, you'll be forced out from the surface or anything realm you're currently residing in. It's not temporary either, it's permanent.

[Every time you use this skill, you'll have to wait a prolonged period to 'reset' the damage or else you risk reaching the threshold. Then there's the case of Crimson Immolation which speeds things up. It's a powerful skill with an equally powerful drawback.] Cayla warned.

Folding her arms, Alice wondered if she should stick with her initial choice with the Crown of Eyes or risk it with this fourth Skill.

For the Crown of Eyes, there was also a risk but she knew what she was getting into. There's no doubt that cancelling a contract would cause the Abyss to be pissed while the second one not only had a dubious origin but also had the risk of banishing her from the realm.

[I'll leave the decision to you master.]

Nodding her head, Alice closed her eyes.

Allura had always taught her to think outside the box. If that was the case...

"Say, Cayla." Alice called out.

[Yes master?]

"What do you think would happen if my flames reached the next level? The purification part of it at least. One that burned away the powers of the Abyss."

Hearing this, Cayla understood what Alice wanted to verify.

[Depending on the combination of skills and Abilities along with the level up, I'm certain that you'll be able to find a solution. Though you'll still have to deal with the consequences of cancelling a contract.] Cayla smiled.

"Then there's no need to think anymore is there?" Alice chuckled.

"This Sigil, I'll take it. Scarlet Wings, Demonic Descent shall be my fifth."

Taking a step on the path, Alice immediately passed out as pain shot through her body. Crimson lines began to appear on her back as it slowly formed into a Sigil.

###

Blinking her eyes, Alice found herself staring at the white and grey sky while snow slowly drifted down.

Despite waking up, Alice couldn't feel the rest of her body or gain the strength to sit up. All she could tell was that she was currently lying down on a carriage.

"Ah, you're finally awake." A voice called out as Ragnar came into view.

". . .I swear you northerners like that greeting far too much. I've heard that so many times now every time I blacked out." Alice sighed but revealed a smile.

"It's a rather standard greeting so I don't see what's weird about it. But I have a lot to say to you, young lady." Ragnar shrugged before tapping her shoulder.

"!!!"

A jolt of pain shot through Alice's body as she wanted to move but couldn't.

"I'll save my questions as to how you released that kind of attack. But considering the damage done to your body, I'd say it's an adequate price." Ragnar pulled out a flask and took a drink while Alice began to drool.

However, Alice couldn't help but think that if he was to realise that this kind of attack could be released without a cost, what kind of reaction would he have? All of the abilities that went into this attack were basically her maximum output with all of her skills.

"Speaking of which, where are we?" Alice asked curiously.

She couldn't help but wonder if she was being taken to the front lines in order to help Torgeir as she had promised before.

Even though she'd gotten her fifth Sigil and Cayla's awake, she still needed a bit of time to recover after exerting herself.

Immediately heading into action was a little impossible.

"We're heading towards Esna, a town that's next up on the supply chain from the capital. We're not heading to the frontlines yet if that's what you're wondering. That Torgeir brat's too injured and our supplies are a mess." Ragnar explained.

"And the outpost?"

"Destroyed. The fact that we kept our lives is a miracle." Ragnar signed recalling the might of the red haired woman.

Even if he was at his peak, he doubted he could injure her.

"What do you mean? I thought most of the beasts were killed and the fissure was closed?" Alice blinked her eyes.

[He means Tiamat master.]

*COUGH!!!!

Upon hearing Tiamat's name, Alice coughed in shock as she didn't think the dragon lady would actually escape Terminus.

'The f*ck do you mean Tiamat??? I thought nothing else came out!' Alice's smile twitched.

'We wanted to warn you but you f*cking passed out right as she arrived. Thankfully she didn't seem THAT hostile so we're alive.' Alyss yawned.

Seeing their nonchalance, Alice felt like she wanted to pull her hair out.

This was Tiamat of all people of course they should be worried. But instead of worrying, they're treating it like it's just a walk in the park.

'What else do you want us to do? If you pass out it's not like I can take over your body and get us to safety. Regardless of what Tiamat would've chosen, we wouldn't have been able to do anything.' Alyss shrugged.

'Now don't disturb me, I'm gonna sleep some more.'

Turning over, she wrapped the blanket around herself while Cayla was silent.

She knew that Alyss was bitter over that since she couldn't help them run even if she wanted to. The overwhelming sense of powerlessness that comes with not even being able to fight back no matter how much she wanted to.

Scratching her cheek, Alice wondered what to do while Cayla simply shrugged and shook her head.

Taking this as a note to leave them be for now, Alice focused back on reality.

"Did you hit your head too hard?" Ragnar asked.

"Rude."

"Look who's talking? Ask me a question then you begin to randomly make faces while ignoring everything I'm saying." Ragnar flicked Alice on the shoulder again causing her to tense up.

"And Selen? How is she?"

"Safe. Both Selen and muscle lad with her are fine even though they were pretty close to the blast. Though... No never mind. Just focus on recovery for now." Ragnar shook his head.

Taking a deep breath and letting out a sigh, Alice looked up at the sky. She was just glad that Selen was safe after she released the attack.

Chapter 448 - 448: Ideas For Training

After a few hours, movement began to return to Alice's body as she could feel the flow of energy from within.

Seeing Alice sitting up and moving her arms, Ragnar was surprised by the rate of her regeneration considering her previous state.

"Oh I missed this feeling." Alice smiled, giving her body a good stretch while conjuring a bead of blood freely without the need for Torgeir's blood.

"You recovered? That fast?" Ragnar asked doubtfully. He couldn't help but wonder if she was forcing herself.

"Yep. Let's just say the battle was rather fruitful. Now I don't need to break my body if I want to fight." Alice puffed out her chest with a confident grin.

"Ah! But I'm not giving you back the fruits. They're mine now." Alice hid her pouch as Ragnar felt like smacking the girl over the head.

"Why would I fight a youngster for fruit I gave away myself?" He rolled his eyes.

"I dunno, maybe you wanted to get the seeds to replay your garden or something."

"If I had no other choice then yes. But seeing as how you're fine, this old man is going to rest by myself." Ragnar massaged his shoulder.

Even though it was just a small showcase of what his power used to be when he was 'fighting' against Tiamat, that was enough to give him internal injuries.

When he gave up his contract to be a Lord and passed on his power, he practically severed the connection he had with the Abyss.

All he has left are remnants of what used to be. A dying ember.

"Before you go, take this." Alice called out.

Turning around, Ragnar caught a bottle that Alice threw over gently.

"What's this?"

"A bottle of mead you can't get anymore. It's priceless ya know? If it wasn't for your help I wouldn't even have taken my baby out. This sh*t is actually limited okay? Can't get more." Alice shrugged.

She was indeed indebted to this man for the fruit, advice and just in general, the care he's shown. It's only natural for her to compensate him with something valuable of hers and the only thing that came to mind was Ayrian mead.

Raising his eyebrow, Ragnar chuckled softly as he nodded his head.

"Alright, I'll save it for a good occasion then." He stored it away before giving her a wave and making his way to another carriage so he could lay down and sleep.

Now that she was alone in her carriage, Alice was tempted to give her new power a try. But it was probably not a good idea to do so with so many people around.

Not only that, she wasn't sure what kind of effect it would cause. What phenomenon would appear if she were to create a rift between her and the world?

She wanted to test it out when she was alone so she could keep it a secret.

Playing around with a bead of blood between her fingers, Alice glanced around in hopes of finding Selen and Egil but they were nowhere in sight.

'They're probably in one of the carriages with a roof over their heads.' Alice thought to herself.

Since that was the case, Alice decided to explore her body a little more.

Now that she's gotten her fifth Sigil, her body experienced some reinforcement naturally. Not only that, but it felt as though her control had improved to another level.

Rather than just controlling one bead of blood to dance in her hand, Alice began to multitask with two, then three and then four. Each one was going through different motions.

'Actually... Do you think my resonance changed now that I've gotten a fifth Sigil? I know that my three Sigil resonance technically changed after I got my fourth with me and twinnie having one each.' Alice asked curiously.

[Unlikely. The change in resonance was a unique effect created by your constitution. Once it's been created, the likelihood of a resonance changing is very very small. So if things are to remain as they are, then no, your resonance wouldn't have changed master.] Cayla replied.

But knowing Alice, normality was never on the table and abnormality is her best friend. No matter how unlikely, she couldn't completely rule it off just like how the Tenebris had blackened heart.

Folding her arms, Alice began to tap her heel.

She couldn't quite sit still now that she had recovered to some extent. Of course, she still couldn't use her full power without collapsing since it wasn't like the Artifact had stopped trying to 'improve' her body.

However, it was enough for her to use her Sigils and experiment.

Pulling out some fruit, Alice passed her time but boredom gnawed at her mind.

'I wanna fight!' She threw a tantrum in her mind while Cayla glanced at her with dead fish eyes.

To think she'd see the day of her master throwing a tantrum on the ground complaining about wanting to fight.

'Cayla~ can't you make some illusions or something for me to fight? Don't you have a bunch of illusions that show me what the beast looks like?' Alice pouted.

[Master. . . Even if I could, who's the one who sealed me?]

'Right...'

[But no, I cannot. I'm a compendium of knowledge and a tool to get knowledge. I'm the Eyes of the Abyss not the training ground of the Abyss.] Cayla sighed.

She was helpful and had a lot of capabilities but she wasn't an omnipotent being who could just do things on the fly.

'But why not thought? If you have knowledge of what they look like and their abilities, can't you reliably estimate how they're going to move and display it? Like how you display the illusions of what they look like at me, just link them up quickly and it'll become a training illusion no?' Alice suggested.

Cayla wanted to retort but no words came out of her mouth.

The more she thought about it, the more feasible it sounded. All she needed to do was slightly change the 'pose' of the appearance and then have it play back one after the other.

If she does that, it would indeed feel like fighting an illusion and getting training.

However...

[Master... I'm sealed.]

'...' Silence dawned in the mental space as Alice truly wanted to jump off a cliff.

All of her ideas were being blocked by the consequences of her choices.

'Tsk, and here I was getting excited for no reason. If you can give me illusions to fight, I wouldn't have to be bored all the time. I can just punch some f*cker in the face or something.' Alyss grumbled in annoyance.

While she was listening to the two talk, she could feel excitement bubbling in her chest but now she's just been doused by the cold water of reality.

Scratching her cheek awkwardly, Alice laid on her back trying to think of ways to make this possible.

But with so many of Cayla's abilities sealed, it was hard to say.

'Do you know when you'll be unsealed?'

[If I did, I would've told you already. Kaden didn't mention a time either, he only mentioned that it'll unseal naturally in the future. But considering the current state of the seal, you can be assured that it won't be anytime soon.] Cayla shook her head with a sigh.

Hearing this, Alice wanted to cry.

'Stupid stupid stupid! Me and my stupid mouth.' She cursed herself while letting out a big sigh.

Since asking Cayla wasn't an option, Alice could only sit still in her carriage while drinking mead and eating fruit. Truly a slothful lifestyle.

She wasn't going to tap into her reserve of Ayrian mead since she had no way of replenishing it. Instead, she chose to go through her other assortment of mead.

But even her large supply had a limit and she had to replenish her reserves soon.

After a few hours, it was time to camp as Alice stumbled out of her carriage with a blush on her face.

Those that were curious had a look at all the bottles that were left blinked their eyes in disbelief while Alice cleaned up and put them away in her pouch.

Swinging her head back, Alice took another drink as she finally recalled something.

'Actually... now zhat I think... aboutz it... Where did Tiamat go?' Alice asked as Cayla sighed.

[Disappeared. We don't know where she went but she's free from Terminus.]

'Zat so...'

Seeing the state of Alice, Cayla doubted she could even test out her new skills in secrecy as she had initially planned.

All she could do was watch as Alice zoned out completely doing her own thing.

Grabbing the materials needed for her tent, she pulled her hand back and...

*CLANGGG!!!!

Smashed down with the hammer using the might of God.

The sudden sound of Alice smashing the nail like it's her worse enemy caused more eyes to turn towards her but they dismissed it as the actions of a drunk.

Many were annoyed but they didn't say anything since Torgeir had warned them of it previously.

With Alice making so much noise with her tent, it was hard for people to concentrate.

". . . Why are you drunk." Selen's voice rang out as she looked down at the state of Alice who sat on the ground.

"Ohhh itz Selen... You no injured zats good..." Alice gave her a goofy grin as Selen sighed and massaged her eyes.

"I can't even leave you for a day and you make a mess out of yourself. How do you plan on surviving?"

"It'll be fineee~" Alice laughed, throwing the hammer into the air and catching it before preparing to slam it down once more.

Rolling her eyes, Selen poked Alice in the ribs causing her to laugh before falling on the ground once more.

"I'll set up the tent. Just go to sleep." She relented as Alice gave her a thumbs up before falling asleep.

Seeing this, Selen couldn't help but reveal a helpless smile. No matter how destructive or how much of an anomaly Alice was, at the end of the day, she's still just a girl who likes her mead a little too much. A goofy drunk brat.

Chapter 449 - 449: Sunrise

"Urg..." Waking up with a headache, Alice clutched her head while rolling around on the ground.

"How much did I even drink..." She groaned.

She could remember herself becoming bored and deciding to drink and snack on the carriage. After that, things might've gotten a little out of hand and it became a blur.

Alice could remember wanting to test out her Sigil in secrecy at night but seeing as how she was in her tent, that was probably forgotten.

Glancing around her, Alice noticed Selen sleeping by the side and understood she must've helped out. Thinking about this, Alice couldn't help but smile before taking a step out of her tent.

It was still early in the morning as the sun hadn't risen yet. The biting cold night air stung against her skin yet it was also strangely refreshing.

Looking up at the sky, it was different to the skies of the Abyss. The Abyss felt... like an artificial sky. A perpetual darkness that doesn't change no matter what.

But this? This felt soothing.

Looking for a chair, Alice found a small hill nearby and sat down with some fruit. Since she was up this early, she might as well watch the sunrise.

Of course, there was the option of doing more training and testing out her abilities early in the morning but Alice didn't want to ruin her moment of peace with that. It's rare that she'll just feel like sitting down and doing nothing.

Feeling the cold morning winds, Alice closed her eyes.

She felt as though she stood atop a great mountain, the gale brushing against her skin. Before her was the world.

Around her, a sea of clouds rolled across the horizon as the shimmers of the moonlight radiance bounced off its ever changing surface.

Alice lost herself in this feeling momentarily before opening her eyes. The sun peaked over as the darkness was dispelled by the luminescent purples, oranges and reds.

The soft cries of birds, the swaying of grass roots.

Away from the fighting, the schemes and the thoughts of vengeance, this felt like paradise. A paradise in the northern lands, watching the sun rise.

As the sun continued to rise, a rainbow of colours reflected across the skies, a burst of dazzling brilliance to welcome the beginning of a new day. The clouds parted the skies in two, radiant flames from the sun and the soothing cold blue of the moon balanced itself across the canvas of the skies.

Alice sat in silence as her eyes memorised this view.

She began to recall the desire for freedom when she was locked away in her prison. The desire to escape from behind the bars and run across the grass field while blue skies hung above her head.

Curling her lips into a small smile, Alice once again remembered what she was fighting for. She was fighting to bring down the Zenias so that no more like her would be created. No more like her would be imprisoned by them and robbed of their freedom.

To her, freedom was the best gift anyone could get. To be able to explore this world to their heart's content.

Standing up, she gave her body a stretch and prepared for the journey ahead. Since she was recovered to some extent, it was time to get to work.

###

After eating breakfast, Selen had Alice laid down in their tent while she examined her body.

Seeing as how she was able to move her energy around without coughing up blood and how all of her previous wounds have now stitched itself up, it was safe to say that Alice didn't need anymore help when it came to keeping her safe.

"Your regeneration is active again, same goes with your abilities. Doesn't seem like you'll have any issues just fighting normally" Selen muttered seeing Alice control an orb of blood.

"And all because you got your fifth Sigil right?"

Nodding her head, Alice adjusted her clothes since they got rid of all the bandages across her body.

"Then I'm guessing once you get your sixth Sigil, you'll be completely recovered or something similar." Selen asked curiously.

"Should be the case. Though... I did eat the mote of energy an Abyss Lord gave me. So maybe it'll require me to become a Lord myself." Alice tapped her chin as Selen froze up.

She knew Alice ate something strange during the fight in the Inverted World but a mote of energy from an Abyss Lord???

"I can't tell if you're brave, stupid or suicidal." Selen let out a deep sigh of frustration.

"I treasure my life okay?" Alice coughed.

"Doesn't look like it from the way you act. So what does your fifth Sigil do? Is it going to ruin your body further?"

"Well... I wouldn't say ruin." Alice scratched her cheek.

The Crimson Wings, Demonic Descent is a Sigil that exiled her from the realm if she wasn't careful with how long it activates. Not only that, but the berserk state burned the time she has left faster. Depending on how the berserk state works, she might have to keep it as a final, final resort.

Explaining how her Sigil works to Selen, Alice watched as Selen's face go from confusion to disbelief.

"What the f*ck did you even kill???"

"A Tenebris. Though this Sigil is a bit of an anomaly since it shouldn't be part of their skill set." Alice shrugged.

". . . Forget it. But if you are exiled from this realm, how are you even going to take out the Zenias? Are you able to come back after a while or is this exile permanent?" Selen questioned as this was the first time she heard of a Sigil that could exile the user from the realm they're in.

"Errm... You know what? Good question ahahah-ARG!"

Unable to hold herself back, Selen smacked Alice on the head mid laugh as she couldn't help but wonder how a reckless girl like her even got this far.

Originally, she was planning on going her own way now that Alice could protect herself. But with things like this, she'll accidentally banish herself if Selen wasn't around.

Pouting her lips, Alice rubbed her head as Selen disposed of the bandages before cleaning her hands.

Even though Alice's wounds have healed up, there was still some dried blood on the bandages and she didn't want to take the risk. She knew full well how potent Alice's blood is, dried or not.

"What's the plan once we reach Esna?" Alice asked curiously.

"Depends. People are still trapped in the frontline with no supplies. Kvia can still be used since the dead zone that was going to form disappeared. I think Torgeir will get us to resupply in Esna before making a beeline towards the front to pave a path out.

"Personally, I'd prefer if we didn't get involved since the Zenias are rather involved in matters regarding the frontline. Then there's also the weird hybrids not to mention the fact that one of the assassin's knew my identity." Selen reminded.

The fact that there are people who knew who she was is rather concerning. Especially since she wants to disappear off the radar for a while so the Zenia's don't bother with her. Granted, she hasn't exactly made it easy to disappear with all the things she gotten involved with after the Inverted World incident.

Folding her arms, Alice tapped her chin.

'Say, is there a Sigil we can use to disguise Selen as well? Or is it just limited to us?'

'None. The rest are at most illusionary effects that are worse than the Mirror Jester. Selen won't be able to fight without her disguise coming off. As for the Mirror Jester, you already know it disappears after one wound.' Alyss rejected the idea.

Furrowing her brows, Alice let out a sigh.

"It might be better for me to go on a solo mission then since I have a way to disguise myself. Plus, my existence is largely hidden in the Zenia family. Only the main family and the scholars who worked on me know who I am. As for the guards... well Kaden already killed them and I doubt they'll be on the front lines."

"Absolutely not. Who's going to carry your paralysed body back if you push yourself?" Selen rolled her eyes.

If Alice was left paralysed on the battlefield then everything they've worked for would've gone to waste.

"I mean... I don't plan on pushing myself like I did in Kvia. It's not like another fiss- never mind I'm not even going to say it in case I jinx it into reality." Alice shook her head, cutting herself off.

"Why do you even want to go in the first place? I'm pretty sure Verona can just send reinforcements themselves or something." Selen asked curiously.

"Pity and I suppose curiosity. Torgeir did promise me a meeting with their Abyss Lord of the Forge to upgrade my equipment if I accept this task. Well... I wouldn't say promise but you get the idea." Alice shrugged.

She had to admit that getting an Abyss Lord to upgrade her stuff was rather enticing. Especially if they can fix the gloves that Allura gifted her.

It was due to her own negligence and recklessness that the gloves were damaged. However, if she was able to fix it, there were countless ideas she wanted to put into place with these wires.

Folding her arms, Selen looked at Alice before letting out a sigh.

"Fine. See if you can rope me into the deal then. If I can get my stuff upgraded, I suppose it would indeed be worth the risk." Selen nodded.

Hearing this, Alice grinned and gave her a nod. Stepping out of her tent, she went to look for Torgeir.

Chapter 450 - 450: Esna

Finding Torgeir in the main carriage, Alice could see him surrounded by reports and mails sent from the capital.

Raising her eyebrows, she couldn't help but wonder if he was getting overworked considering his sunken eyes and deep bags.

"You've recovered, congratulations." Torgeir forced a smile as he was still covered with bandages. Unlike Alice, they couldn't abuse the properties of Healing Vials without caring about the side effects. Thus, he drank a vial that sped up his natural healing and let his body do the rest of the work.

"Thank you~ Though it seems like your state is far worse than before. You still want to lead the expedition to the frontlines like this?" Alice asked curiously as she sat down and crossed her legs.

"My brothers and sisters in arms are still stuck on the frontlines. I can't stop now. If I do, who will pave a path back?" Torgeir shook his head with a sigh.

"But aren't there other commanders? I'm sure they can lead the charge no?"

"They're responsible for their own section. Since a retreat has been called, everyone will be busy. The queen has already sent down the order so we must obey." He explained while reading through some new letters.

Folding her arms, Alice thought about it for a moment before opening her mouth.

"You still need my help right? I'm pretty confident I can help since my body's recovered more than expected. Aside from that, has the request been approved by the capital or has it been ignored for now?" Alice asked.

Previously, she was promised assistance for her fifth Sigil, a catalogue, and a letter for him to send.

Since she no longer needed help with the fifth Sigil, she wanted to get some information on her meeting with the Lord of the Forge.

"How do I put it... It's up for debate right now. They have a favourable impression of you considering the stats that you showed last time. However, this is still a meeting with a Lord so it's also up to the Lord if he wants to accept." Torgeir admitted truthfully.

With the authority behind Abyss Lords, it was hard to have any nation force them to do what they wanted. After all, they have the option to just switch sides.

Thus, any request involved with a Lord is also heavily dependent on their mood.

"Well that's fine. If you can arrange a meeting I can convince him myself. Though if we're to do that, how about having my friend tag along? On the off chance that I convince the Lord, it wouldn't be bad to have Selen's equipment upgraded too." Alice grinned.

Hearing this, Torgeir's smile twitched. It was already one thing to have a Lord meet a person of unknown origin but now she also wants her friend of unknown origin to tag along?

If it wasn't for the fact that she had an absurdly high spirituality stat, this kind of request would've been rejected in a heartbeat.

He was sure that once Alice reached the capital, the elders would probably want to foster her into a Lord of Verona but knowing how Alice is, Torgeir doubted that was going to succeed. If anything, he wondered if Alice was going to cause a mess.

Just thinking of it gave him a headache.

"I'll pass on your request but no promises. As for the bestiary, it's still being made as we speak." Torgeir sighed.

"Fufu~ thank you~" Alice grinned, pulling out a fruit to eat while sitting in the carriage.

"So how long are we staying in Esna?"

"Few hours then we'll be moving in a small but powerful group. We don't need that much manpower since we're paving a path." Torgeir shook his head.

Speed was key to helping those on the frontline. They needed a small group that could travel fast enough while being powerful enough to wipe out any beasts that might get in their way.

"Any candidates in mind aside from myself?" Alice asked, taking another bite of the fruit.

"Please swallow properly before you speak. But yes, the group will consist of Me, you, Bo, Selen, Egil and Alfva who's the best healer we have right now. It's the best group I can think of without making it too big."

Hearing these names, Alice pieced together the formation in her mind. She recalled bits of Torgeir's fighting before she took down the fissure so it wasn't hard to imagine that he'd be on the frontlines behind Egil.

Egil will be taking the vanguard spot while Selen will be supporting with her time slows if things get out of hand. Out of all of them, Selen and the healer probably have the weakest offensive power.

Though... Considering the fact that it doesn't seem like Torgeir thinks the attack on the fissure was her doing, she's probably taking the role of support instead.

"Am I supporting from the back or acting as an attacker?" Alice asked as Torgeir contemplated for a moment.

"Where do you want to go?"

Alice was the one who knew her own strengths the best. Therefore, it was best to ask her since he never saw her fight.

"Give me the frontline position then. I'll help you pave the way." Alice grinned, finishing her fruit.

"And you said that speed was key, right?"

Tilting his head in confusion, Torgeir nodded his head.

"Alright, I'll go test out of a few things while we wait then. See you soon." Alice chuckled as Torgeir felt a chill down his spine but he didn't know why.

###

Licking her fingers, Alice created a small hollow orb above her hand and snapped her finger. A tether appeared in front of it as the orb was flung into the Void thanks to her fourth Sigil.

An opening appeared a little further out as the orb was spat out far faster than it entered. But she wasn't done.

Creating another anchor and having the tether link to it, the orb was spun around before being thrown into the Void once more.

Recalling her experience from escaping the Inverted World, Alice had wanted to make some adjustments to her... Transport system.

With her understanding of the Void improving a little thanks to her uses of the Artifact, she understood a new concept that she'd like to call warp nodes.

Compared to reality, the Void was far more confusing as two points might not necessarily be next to one another. One step might take you countless miles while sometimes travelling miles may only result in half a step.

For others, it was hard to properly pinpoint where the Void may take you. Which is why Alice had an idea. To send out pulses of energy to these nodes and send them out to reality. While this is happening, she'll anchor a node where they entered thus she could judge how far they travelled and in what direction.

With this system of constantly referencing where they entered and where they exited, she'll be able to fling them across the land in record breaking speeds.

Of course, since this was still a prototype, there's no telling what could happen. There wasn't any safety put in place either so passengers will feel the full effects of being flung around reality and the Void.

But if she could handle it, she's sure the others can as well.

Just thinking of it reignited the sadistic fire within her as Alice giggled to herself.

"That's not f*cking ominous at all." Selen's smile twitched seeing Alice making her way back while giggling to herself.

"Ah ahem~ Nothing~" Alice waved it off.

"Bullsh*t." But Selen wasn't buying it at all.

"You'll find out later ahah. But Torgeir mentioned that it's up to the Lord of the Forge if I can bring you along or not. So we'll just have to do our jobs and see how it goes." Alice changed the subject.

Selen was still a little suspicious but it didn't seem like Alice was going to reveal what she's been planning so Selen didn't say anything.

After a short break, the caravan resumed their journey towards Esna as no beasts ambushed them at all since this was a protected route.

It's been regularly maintained and beasts have learned to avoid this place.

###

Upon arriving at Esna, Alice could see that it was similar to Kvia with a river next to the outpost. However, compared to Kvia, it was far larger with more routes branching out to more parts of the frontline.

Alice noticed that many of them were rather injured as well and came to the conclusion that Kvia wasn't unique in the case of the ambush.

Though unlike Kvia, the other locations didn't have someone nuking the fissure.

As they pulled into the outpost, Torgeir immediately got to work procuring supplies for their rescue mission while Alice gathered some information about what had happened in the other outposts.

Just by eavesdropping, Alice already understood that most of the outposts were attacked. Though their fissures were temporary since they were able to stop it rather quickly.

Kvia had it the worse since not only did it lead to Terminus, they had also lost a lot of their men due to the attack on the port stronghold.

Had it not been for that, they might've had an easier time.

[Ah...] Cayla suddenly spoke up as Alice glanced over.

'What's up?'

[I just realised something... Perhaps the Abyss Break led to Terminus because you were there...]

Hearing this, Alice paused.

'What do you mean?'

[Well... You do have the Heart, the Crown and the Eye of the Abyss all in one body. While I might be sealed, the others are not.] Cayla coughed.

If it wasn't for Alice's presence, the Abyss Break would've just picked a random layer instead of the deepest prison.

'You've got to be kidding me...' Alice's smile twitched.

If this was true, it meant that it was probably going to be impossible to avoid abnormal situations.

At this point, all Alice wanted now was just a normal adventure with nothing abnormal for a holiday but it seemed hopeless.

Abnormality was in her veins after all.