

Abyssal A 45

Chapter 45: A Hunter's Growth

"Hng..." Slowly opening her eyes, Alice yawned as she was happy that she finally got some uninterrupted sleep. Every time she had passed out so far only reminded her of her past but this time, there was nothing.

Sitting up, she glanced out the window and saw that they were currently resting in the dead of night. There was a small campfire while both Ria and Allura was chatting besides it. The driver of the carriage has already gone to sleep.

Alice checked her arm and was happy to see her wound being fully healed. She was still feeling a little light in the head, but it was much better than before.

Upon stepping out of the carriage, both Ria and Allura turned towards her.

"You're up. Feeling hungry?" Allura smiled, gesturing to some meat that they were cooking over the fire.

"Mnm a little." Alice nodded her head.

"You two can talk for a bit. I'll go sleep now." Ria yawned while stretching her body.

Bidding the two good night, she laid down in her own bedroll.

"Now then, after your first experience outside of the coliseum and fighting your own battles, how do you feel?" Allura asked with a smile.

She wanted to see what Alice took away from the experience herself.

"It's hard... Everything very dangerous. Need to get more Sigils." Alice replied honestly since it was what she believed. If she had more Sigils, she'll be able to overcome these issues.

"You're only half right. The monsters you fought at the start are dangerous. That I agree with. But the one at the end? They're cannon fodder. Lowest of the low.

What you need is not more Sigils. What you need is knowledge and mindset." Allura pointed at her head.

"You see, the trees you fought could've been defeated by just holding your breath, closing your eyes and blocking your ears. But what happened? You bit yourself to use your blood and almost died from blood loss because of it. If you continue like this, no matter how many Sigils you get, you'll still die from the weakest beasts."

Hearing this, Alice paused in contemplation. She knew that Allura wouldn't lie when she mentioned how weak the beasts were. She knew it herself with how low their defences were. If she wasn't on a timer due to her blood loss, she could easily tear them to pieces.

"While the Abyss does not impose any time restriction on acquiring Sigils, the time between gathering Sigils allow you to hone your existing strength and prove yourself to the Abyss. Personally, this is the cycle I like to use."

Grabbing a wooden stick, Allura extinguished the flame before drawing a diagram on the floor.

"We'll skip step one since you already got your first Sigil. What we need to focus on is the time between your first and your second Sigil. You need to use this time to fully understand the pros and cons of your ability. Mindset is a very important aspect of this. With the right mindset and creativity, you can do many things with even the simplest of abilities."

Flicking her wrist, Allura's first Sigil lit up as flames danced across her fingertips.

"My first Sigil is simple. I obtained it after killing an Ember Wyrms. They have the ability to coat their entire body in flames. Now, usually the Ember Wyrms would be chosen as the second or third Sigil due to the fact that they can control their flames at will. But I killed it without any Sigils and without any Abyss Blood." Allura grinned, causing Alice to blink her eyes in surprise.

"How did you do it?"

"It was simple. I spent about 2 weeks observing the Wyrms. Once I knew its route, I set up a water trap, waited for the f*cker to drop in and stabbed a sword through the head. It couldn't light itself on fire if it's doused with water. Naturally, this wouldn't have worked if it was already on fire since a layer of protection is formed, blocking out the water.

But because I knew its weak point and found its route, I was able to kill it without any Sigils or Abyss Blood to help. And that, is mindset and creativity.

"Now back to you. I must ask, why is your first instinct to harm yourself and brute force your way out? The first solution you find may not necessarily be the correct solution or the most efficient solution. I'm not saying what you did was wrong, because at the end of the day you still survived. What I'm asking you to do is to reflect upon your actions and think about the consequences.

What would've happened if Ria wasn't there, if the trees outlasted you and maintained the illusion."

Leaning back a little, Alice thought to herself.

Why was her first instinct to harm herself to use her blood?

Perhaps all those years in the Zenia prison made her numb to the importance of her own body. She wasn't bothered by the pain and her blood was poisonous to others, why shouldn't she use it to her advantage? The only issue was how she almost ran out of blood, but she sought to remedy it using the power of Sigils.

'So this is what Allura means by mindset huh?' Alice thought bitterly since she could already see the issue. She wasn't thinking about how she could remedy this issue with what she had already. Instead, she only sought more. And the way she was thinking of her own abilities... it was no different to the scientists.

She didn't care about the damage, only the result. It is only when she almost died did she think back to the damage she was taking.

"Seems like you're understanding the issue. That's a good start. You understand the mindset you need to adopt now, the drive to find a multitude of solutions and the creativity needed to hunt beasts. The next step is to understand your own power. With my first Sigil being one that lets me cover myself with flames and control it, what do you think I can do with this ability?" Allura asked.

"Hmm..."

Furrowing her brows, Alice thought of the possibilities. If she was given the same ability.

'She can set herself on fire and control the flames... With these options maybe she can make a sword light up with fire too? Or maybe she can set someone on fire from the inside out if she can get her hand inside them.'

Explaining the options to Allura, Alice watched as she demonstrated what she described.

"Not too bad but very rudimentary. 50% of a Hunters growth lies in experimentation. Finding the conduit of your power, how the Sigils manifest their abilities and how far these abilities extend. After I tested my ability, I found out something rather interesting with my first Sigil." Allura smiled.

Flicking her finger, a small flame appeared on her fingertip.

"It's the ability to hijack any flame. You see, if I allow this small flicker of fire to enter the campfire, this campfire falls under my control. Since it becomes part of my fire."

Placing her hand into the fire, the flames started to dance before transforming into the shape of a wyrm.

"With this knowledge, I can spend less energy exerting myself to produce fire while all I need to do is to carry around some oil and alcohol. That way, I can get ten times the result with a tenth of the effort." Allura chuckled before returning the fire back to normal.

Seeing this, it was like a whole world was opened to Alice. Ideas flooded her head as her mind started to turn.

The conduit of her ability was her own blood. It was her blood that allowed the first Sigil to activate. However, was there perhaps something more? Could she perform a similar feat to Allura where her blood hijacks another body of blood? Or perhaps if she was to dilute it in water, would it still retain the effects? Would the water become a drug that can be used as a trap?

'If the source of the poison is my blood, can I turn my blood into something that will diffuse the poison more? If that is possible I can poison an entire room without almost killing myself with blood loss.'

With this realisation, Alice understood that she shouldn't rush to get her second Sigil. There was already plenty of possibilities with her first and she should explore every avenue before securing her second. After all, each choice was permanent and shouldn't be taken hastily.

Her physique made it so that she couldn't get permanent boosts from Abyss Blood which meant that she had to be extra careful with each Sigil she obtains since they're her only form of power boost.

Quickly finishing her food, she said thank to you Allura before looking for some sharp objects, vials and water flasks. With the healing blood that Allura had given her, she'll be able to sustain herself through her experiments to find the best way to utilize her first Sigil.

Countless possibilities manifested themselves as Allura watched Alice with a smile on her face.

'That's it, keep thinking. Explore the possibilities, visualise the effects and don't be scared to take risks on outlandish ideas. It is this mindset that will carry you to the ends of the Abyss.' Allura thought to herself.

If Alice continues down this path, she'll be able to handle things herself and understand the best course of action for her Sigils.