

Abyssal A 551

Chapter 551 - 551: Budding Excitement

Crashing down on Lorien's ship, Alice was about to cheerfully call out to them when she noticed the injuries they sustained.

Even Lorien wasn't unscathed as she could see the anger on his face as he clutched the stump where his right arm used to be.

A medic ran over, giving him a vial to drink but he hesitated. Reluctance could be seen in his face but eventually, he caved and snatched the drink.

Gulping it down in one go, the flesh on his shoulder began to bulge and twitch before burning out into a cocoon. From within this cocoon, Alice noticed a flow of energy reconstructing his arm.

However, it was clearly different from before. More... Abyssal.

'A side effect. He's using the side effect to regenerate his arm.' Alice thought to herself.

She had already taken a look around the city. There were no Churches of the Moon for him to go to. No priests to help heal his arm.

Therefore, the only thing he could rely on right now was Abyss Blood.

As the new arm burst out of the cocoon, Alice could see the reptilian markings disappear before returning back to what a normal arm should look like.

"Well well well, seems like you had a pretty rough time didn't you?" Alice smirked as a vein bulged on Lorien's forehead.

"Shut up. Did you deal with Minerva?" He asked, glaring at Alice who shrugged.

"I kept her busy if that's what you're asking about. She'll probably be back tomorrow. And the shipments?"

"They're fine but a box got taken." Lorien spat as he forced himself to stand up.

Giving Alice another glance, he noticed the lack of damage on her body.

"You could've killed Minerva couldn't you?" He asked as Alice stuck out her tongue.

"Perhaps. But your task was simply for me to keep her busy no?" She grinned.

Hearing this, anger filled Lorien's mind as he rushed to grab her but a thick killing intent surged out, freezing him in his steps.

"Touch me and I can promise you that no amount of healing vials will save you from what I'll do." Alice warned with a cold tone.

Choking on what he was about to say, Lorien took a step back as Alice regained her smile.

"You can't get violent with a cutie like me. Otherwise, I'll dislike you okay~?"

"How much?" Lorien spat out.

"What do you mean?" Alice played dumb, taking this chance to mess around with Lorien.

"How much do you want in exchange for killing Minerva." Lorien clarified while Alice tapped her chin.

"While I do need money, I don't need that much. And... Killing Minerva brings quite a few enemies on my back. I'd rather not have that happen."

He wanted to protest but stopped after seeing the look in her eyes. He knew that no matter what he said, there was nothing that he could offer her that would make her kill Minerva.

Except... There was one way.

To entice this girl with whatever's in the box.

But doing so was very risky and he'd rather avoid it if possible.

'They already claimed one box so it's only a matter of time before they find out what's inside it. At least it should take them a while to open it up.' Lorien thought to himself before letting out a sigh.

As long as he could get the shipments tomorrow, it didn't matter even if he was missing a box or two.

"Forget it then. Let's head back." Lorien clicked his tongue.

Hearing this, Alice raised her eyebrows in surprise but didn't say anything. She had expected him to try and win her over so that she could scam- she meant to earn more money from him.

But if he doesn't want to then so be it.

Leaning against the railings, Alice felt the cool breeze brush past her face as they made their way back to the port.

Once again, she dropped several beads of her own blood to mark down where the shipments were going.

###

Returning back to the port in a huff, Minerva was clearly annoyed as Alice had just scammed a bunch of Platina from her. Not only that, but she was still intent on taking Lorien's money!

However, if there is one silver lining, that is the fact that they managed to retrieve one of the shipments that Lorien tried to smuggle into the city.

Unfortunately, the container refused to budge no matter what they did. It didn't matter what skill they used to try and break the thing, it seemed to reflect the energy regardless.

"Minerva, Darrow wants a word with you." Virn walked up as Minerva was surprised to see Darrow's right hand man coming to the port.

"Is it that important for you to leave your post?" Minerva raised an eyebrow.

"He simply asked me to deliver a message and I have." Virn shrugged.

Frowning slightly, Minerva sent out orders for them to pack everything up and send the shipment to her residence. She'll sort it out herself once she finishes talking with Darrow.

Once she gave out the orders, Minerva followed Virn and soon, she was standing outside Darrow's room.

Usually, Darrow would be rather laid back and relaxed. No matter what she said or threatened, he wouldn't budge or get mad with her. But this was the first time that he's had Virn call her over so she couldn't help but be nervous.

Taking a deep breath, Minerva entered the room and saw Darrow flipping through some documents while looking at the map.

Silence filled the room as Darrow let out a chuckle.

"What's wrong? Being silent isn't like you." He glanced up as Minerva frowned and clicked her tongue in annoyance.

"Did something happen? Why did you have Virn call me over?" Minerva asked as Darrow leaned back on his chair.

"I simply want to hear about what happened from your mouth." He gestured for her to take a seat.

Even though he was using his usual tone, Minerva could tell that he was being serious.

Taking a moment to sit down, she decided to be upfront and told him everything she knew. While she may argue with him often, he was someone she could trust her back to.

Listening carefully, Darrow furrowed his brows when she started to mention Alice.

He was very familiar with how strong Minerva was at one on ones and close quarters combat. But for her to be dominated this badly could only mean her opponent was someone abnormal.

Then there was also the fact that her fighting style and aura seemed to shift halfway through the fight.

The golden chains that wrapped around her limbs...

None of this was anything that Darrow had heard about before. However, there was one clue. Her appearance.

It was the same as what he had seen on the beach the other night.

The same woman that split the seas with one attack and turned the beach into glass.

Once Minerva finished reporting on everything, she waited for Darrow to respond.

"Good job on signing a contract with her. Though you should've added some preventative clauses in there since there's no real punishment for breaking it." Darrow chuckled as he reached into his drawer and pulled out a pouch before throwing it to Minerva.

"This is?"

"Money. Use that money to help with the contract. Be grateful that she didn't want to kill you otherwise not even I could keep you safe. You're going to intercept the last shipment tomorrow right?" He asked as Minerva nodded.

However, her mind was in shock as this was the first time she'd heard Darrow admitting that he couldn't beat someone outside of Lords.

Was Alice truly that strong?

"Continue what you're doing but simply watch them. Don't intercept, don't interfere. Just watch the exchange." Darrow suggested, causing Minerva to frown.

"Shouldn't we try to stop them at least?"

"We should. But didn't the girl already tell you? She's marked down the locations of the shipments. Once the final shipment is brought into the city, she'll make her move. While I'm against having the battle break out near civilians, it can't be helped if that's what she has planned." Darrow shrugged.

Thankfully, the location of the Underworld is further away from the city than before. Even if a battle was to break out, it should be relatively safe... Right?

However, he considered the demonstration of her power by the beach and became silent.

If she were to unleash that kind of attack, forget the Underworld, the entire city would be wiped off the map.

They were primarily a trading city after all, not a city built for defense.

"Perhaps I should join you tomorrow. I want to see and talk to this Calista personally." Darrow scratched his chin.

Minerva on the other hand was excited. If Darrow was planning on making a move then-

"Don't get your hopes up. I still don't suggest interrupting them since it cuts down the time we have. I simply want to talk to this girl and see what her thoughts are like." Darrow shook his head.

After so many years, it's only natural for him to understand what Minerva was thinking about.

"Tsk."

Letting Minerva leave, Darrow gave his body a stretch and let out a sigh.

He's been occupied by meetings and discussions for so long that this was probably his first real outing in many months. As someone who preferred to go outside, he couldn't help but smile at the thought as a tinge of excitement welled up in his chest.

Even though he knows that he's probably not a match for Alice, he was still tempted to give it a shot. To see where he stood against the new generation.

Chapter 552 - 552: Arwen's Condition

With some new platina in her coin pouch, Alice had a skip in her step and a wide grin on her face.

On her way back to the Inn, she even spent some money on food for Alyss. Since they were by the sea, most of the food here was different methods of making seafood.

From grilled to steamed and so on. While Alyss enjoyed it to a certain extent, she still preferred meat skewers. Something to really sink her teeth into and chew.

The closest that came to claiming her stomach was the grilled squid skewers but it still lacked that final step.

'Don't sulk now, I'm sure we can find something interesting for you to eat. Plus, didn't you hear the traders? The chefs from the East are specialists when it comes to making food. Whatever the spice, whatever the meat, they'll make it into something edible.' Alice tried to pacify Alyss but she refused to budge.

The food looked absolutely fantastic, raising her hopes only for it to crash down on the first bite.

Her disappointment was immeasurable.

While trying her best to pacify Alyss, Alice opened the doors to the Inn.

"I'm back~" Alice grinned but paused when she realized that Tristan wasn't by the counter.

"Ohya? Are you taking over the counter today Arwen?" Alice asked.

The girl panicked around for a moment before nervously nodding her head.

Something triggered inside Alice as she gained the intense desire to tease the girl in front of her.

Revealing a smug grin, Alice sat by the counter.

"Is Tristan busy? I can't believe he'll leave the entire place to you. Don't you think it's a little unfair?" Alice asked while resting her chin on her palm.

Opening her mouth a few times, Arwen hesitated before shaking her head.

"You don't think it's unfair? I think the Inn is bound to get popular, even if I'm the only person here right now. It'll get tough from now on, don't you think?"

Once again, Arwen didn't say anything. She simply shook her head before nodding.

"Are you... struggling with talking?" Alice asked curiously.

Thinking back, Alice hadn't heard Arwen speak once. She's been using only gestures to communicate, even if its with Tristan.

Scratching her cheek, Arwen gave an embarrassed smile before nodding her head.

"Hmm..." Tapping her finger on the counter, Alice couldn't help but wonder if that'll pose an issue when Tristan eventually has to leave.

He mentioned it himself, he couldn't stay forever. If Arwen struggles with speaking and wants to open an Inn, it'll be difficult for others to understand her never mind the customers.

"I'm back." Tristan's voice rang out as Alice glanced back and saw him returning with some groceries.

Seeing him return, Arwen's eyes brightened up as she ran over and gave him a hug.

Returning the hug, Tristan noticed Alice sitting by the counter.

"Sorry about that, we ran out of a few ingredients since I've been busy repairing the building these days. I hope you weren't waiting for long." Tristan apologized as he handed the bags to Arwen to brought it to the back.

"Don't worry, I only came back a little while ago. So, if you don't mind me asking, why is Arwen struggling with speaking?" Alice shook her head before asking.

Hearing this question, Tristan paused before looking towards the kitchen.

Pausing briefly, he let out a soft sigh.

"It's... It was an accident when we were travelling. We were desperate and she was injured so I bought whatever healing blood I could get my hands on. Unfortunately... That vial was Dreamweaver Siren." Tristan revealed a bitter smile.

'Dreamweaver Siren... Dreamweaver Siren...' Alice frowned before looking up at Tristan in shock.

"Seems like you know of it. The side effects includes enhancing the voice into one that lures other people. It's a... hypnotic effect that not even the user can really control. If it was Hunters, they could resist. But the same can't be said for normal civilians.

"After I gave her the blood, she's stopped herself from talking around people she's unfamiliar with except for me." Tristan shook his head while going behind the bar.

He could still remember her fear as the people they were travelling with suddenly began running towards her with a strange fanaticism. No matter how she called out for them to stop, they wouldn't. In fact, her voice only drove them closer to insanity.

Had it not been for him, something dire could've happened. He possessed a resistance to charm effect that he didn't notice before. Perhaps it was a blood he drank when he was younger or an innate ability, this charm made him practically immune.

It wasn't just charm either. 'Debuffs' overall were less effective on him. Curses, charms and even rituals found it difficult to latch onto his 'soul'.

This was the reason why the Moon Church recruited him.

"With that kind of condition, it'll be hard for her to open an Inn. You know that right?" Alice asked with a frown.

"I'm aware. But she had always wanted to open an Inn and I didn't want to deny her of that dream. Thankfully, the Church is sending someone over to help with managing the place. While I don't want my job to be tied with my personal life, it'll be difficult for her dream to come true without the church's intervention." Tristan admitted before asking Alice what she wanted to drink.

"Give me something smooth today. And..." Alice trailed off before shaking her head.

She was tempted to see if she could do anything to help but perhaps this isn't the right choice.

If she was in his place and someone she barely knew said that she might be able to solve her sibling's issue, Alice wouldn't trust it one bit.

Instead, she decided to go with an alternative route.

"Are you aware of what's been happening out at sea?" Alice asked while Tristan was mixing up a new drink.

"You'll have to be more specific with that." He chuckled.

"About someone who was seen in the Underworld and even at the beach. A strange woman that fired off an attack that lit up the night sky."

"Ohh, yes. I'm aware of that person. There's been talks between pirates saying that she managed to push back Minerva during one of their confrontations. Though it seems like she's working for the Underworld. Makes you wonder why she sent an attack out to sea doesn't it?" Tristan nodded his head.

The Goddess was also curious about that woman considering her power held traces that should realistically belong to the Moon Church.

"I've heard some... Interesting rumors about her. I'm not sure if you want to give it some thought or not. Apparently, she holds a strange kind of miracle medicine. One bite and her wounds can just, disappear in a flash.

"They say that during the fight with the Pirate Queen, some saw her arm get blown off before regenerating after she threw something into her mouth. Do you think that medicine might work for your sister?" Alice asked, giving Tristan a non existing rumor that holds some truth.

Hearing about this medicine, Tristan's actions paused momentarily before resuming.

"Arwen's condition is a side effect. I've already tried to get the Moon Church to help heal her but it's not possible without modifying... Well, it'll do more harm than good to get rid of it." He shook his head while pouring a luminescent blue drink into Alice's glass and placing a lemon slice on the edge of the glass.

"Thank you~" Taking a sip, Alice shivered from the smoothness of the drink. It was both light and smooth with a soft alcoholic hint to it in the background. It wasn't enough to disrupt the nature of the drink but strong enough to let you appreciate the flavor.

"Well you never know. Progress is being made everyday after all. It's up to you if you want to give it a try or not." Alice shrugged before paying the bill.

She praised his drink before making her way to the bathhouse in the back.

[Do you think you can resolve the side effect?] Cayla asked curiously.

While Alice had indeed helped those in the north, it was directly tied to what the Zenia's tried to do.

It was a reaction based on their modification of her blood which was why she could 'undo it' to some degree.

But this wasn't the same.

It was a side effect caused by drinking Abyss Blood.

A modification of the soul/spiritual heart. This wasn't something that Alice had even attempted before.

'I had a theory that could've worked. Even if it didn't, it wouldn't cause Arwen any harm. But what he said just now gave me a new idea. You heard it too right?' Alice smiled, relaxing her whole body in the bath.

Tilting her head, Cayla wasn't sure but Alyss spoke up.

'He said it'll do more harm than good to get rid of it. It wasn't that it was impossible or that he couldn't achieve it. But rather the cost outweighed the good. It's possible to get rid of the side effect.'

'Indeed. The moon is focused on spirituality and immortality. Meaning, their method is most likely the modification of the Soul. With that in mind and using the information I have on the Spiritual Heart, I do believe it's rather possible for me to remove the side effect with minimal harm done.' Alice smiled confidently.

While Alice was bathing, Tristan cleaned the glass in deep contemplation. He stared at his own reflection before silently making a choice in his mind.

Chapter 553 - 553: Final Night Before The Last Shipment

After having her bath, Alice got to work.

Tomorrow was the last day of her contract with Lorien, and once that was over, they would become enemies. Not only that, but there was also an agreement with Minerva. While they had an agreement regarding money, there was nothing punishing them if they broke it.

In this kind of situation, Alice couldn't trust anyone but herself.

Taking out several empty flasks from her pouch, Alice began to create several vials of her own blood.

When she transforms into Calista, she'll lose access to her blood generation since her third Sigil will be replaced.

Therefore, before that happens, if she were to stock up on blood now, she'd still be able to make use of her second Sigil and manipulate that blood.

The same applied to any weapons she would create though right now, her gloves were more than enough.

She also had her personal Artifact if she really needed some extra firepower.

'Isn't this a bit overkill? It's just Lorien and Minerva after all. At most, we throw Tristan into the mix but I don't know how well he can fight.' Alyss asked curiously.

'It doesn't hurt to be extra cautious. We don't know what's inside the boxes. If my experience is right, it's probably something that could give Lorien an extra boost in power. Enough to the point it gives him confidence despite Minerva trying to stop him.

'We both know that he's no match for her. So whatever is inside that box is strong enough for him to take this risk.' Alice explained.

'Strong enough for him to take that risk against Minerva maybe. But you?'

'Maybe he's just confident that it'll help him even if I'm his enemy.' Alice shrugged.

Hearing this response, Alyss nodded her head with a smile.

She was here to make sure Alice didn't drop her guard or get too ahead of herself after all. A voice of reason in other words.

Of course, she wasn't a perfect voice of reason considering the fact that she loses her own sh*t at times and goes all murder hobo. But that's where Alice would step in. They keep each other in check so that neither of them gets ahead of themselves.

Alyss wanted to make sure that no matter how weak they may perceive their opponent to be, they must always be careful of the tricks they might have.

They were a great example of that after all.

If a Lord were to drop their guard, given enough time and prep, Alice would be able to kill them. It wasn't a lot of prep needed either when you think about the skills they have.

And if they could do that to a Lord, what's to stop someone from doing it to them?

What if her regeneration was to get hindered once more?

What if a person appears who could eliminate themselves from Alice's perception like Selen and assassinate them while their guard was down?

These are the questions that both of them needed to think about. And of course, if both of them got too arrogant, Cayla was here to help.

Sometimes it pays off to have voices in your head.

Regardless, Alice prepared thoroughly for tomorrow.

She kept a large supply of her own blood, blood bead bombs to toss if needed and emergency escape nodes.

These nodes were a new creation of hers that was formed from the combined power of her blood and fourth Sigil.

With these nodes, all she needed to do was channel a bit of energy from her artifact into them and a blood mirror will open up beneath her feet, sending her to the coordinates that she had imputed before hand.

An escape tool.

'Resources check, bombs check, escape tools check. I don't think there's anything else I need to prepare for right?' Alice tapped her chin while looking at everything she prepared.

She couldn't think of anything else she needed in case something was to go south.

Since that was the case, the only thing was to sleep and welcome the next day.

###

Pacing around in front of several open crates, Lorien had a twitching smile as he felt insanity grasp at his mind.

He was missing one shipment but that was fine. He had accounted for a few lost samples but the fact that only one was lost was far better than what he had hoped.

Indeed, relying on Alice to keep Minerva occupied was the right choice after all.

Even if Minerva takes an entire ship's worth of cargo tomorrow, the plan will still proceed without any hindrances.

Once he obtains all the parts, he'll be able to reform this city in his image. Just imagining it sent a jolt of excitement through his body.

Just one more day. One more day then he could be the ruler of Caethis. Hell! Even ruling the entire northern lands won't be impossible for him!

He'll be the one to bring about a new world order!

###

Standing by the beach, Darrow once again looked at the glass shards that were left behind by Alice's demonstration.

Even after two days, he could still feel the lingering power left behind by that attack.

The clear desire to destroy the world and bring about an apocalypse.

However, it was also merged with another strange fluctuation. One that seemed to have been melded deeply into the attack, allowing it to succeed.

"It's not like you to visit a place so often." Virn walked up to Darrow as he let out a small chuckle.

"Can't fault a man for being curious. That kind of firepower is not something anyone can get." Darrow tapped his foot against the glass.

"Even if I was to use everything I've got, I doubt I can do something on the same level as what we saw."

However, Virn shook his head.

"Perhaps you won't be able to reach this level of raw power, you'll certainly win out when it comes to technique and experience." Virn reassured but Darrow didn't say anything.

Even if he was good with techniques, with this kind of power, would that girl even need to care?

"How do you feel about going for a drink with me?" Darrow asked while glancing back at Virn.

"I... *sigh, very well." Virn revealed a helpless smile. Even before he could finish his sentence, he could see that Darrow wasn't going to budge.

"I knew you'd understand me. Let's go to my regular spot." Darrow grinned as the two of them left the beach.

###

Once he had made his decision, Tristan cleaned up the bar and first floor of the Inn before going upstairs.

He knocked gently on Arwen's room before opening the doors and saw her hugging a pillow with a smile on her face.

Sitting on the bed, Tristan smiled softly while brushing her hair.

If it wasn't for him, she wouldn't have needed to drink that accursed blood in the first place. If it wasn't for him, she'd be able to speak and talk to anyone she wanted without fear.

But the past can't be changed.

In order for the Moon to help cure Arwen's condition, they needed to remove pieces of her soul. The result of doing so, especially through the methods of the Moon, may cause Arwen to change and lose parts of what makes her well... her.

Memories, habits and so on.

Not only that but because the side effect had tangled itself with her soul for so long, it was going to be even harder to properly remove.

The chances of mistakes happening is greater than the success. And even with the chance of success, Arwen refused to take the procedure.

He could still remember her words at the time, how she didn't want to forget her time with him.

A soft smile appeared on Tristan's face as Arwen's eyelids twitched slightly before opening.

"Ah... Sorry, I didn't mean to wake you up." Tristan apologized.

Shaking her head, Arwen grabbed her brother's hand and held it with a smile.

Opening her mouth, Arwen hesitated for a moment before speaking.

"You... Seem like... You want to do something dangerous." She spoke softly. Even without the charm effect, many would fall in love with Arwen's voice.

"I wouldn't say dangerous. Apparently, there might be medicine that can help... you speak without worry again." Tristan explained with a bit of hesitation.

He knew that Arwen was sensitive to things like this so he didn't want to hide it from her. After all, if he were to suddenly disappear for a long period of time without explaining, she'd get worried.

Hearing this, Arwen furrowed her brows.

"Brother... You know I don't mind things being like this..."

"I know. But it doesn't hurt to give it a try. Don't worry, you know your brother is strong. I'll keep myself safe. If it's not possible, I'll give it up tomorrow okay?" Tristan patted her head.

Seeing her brother like this, Arwen felt a sadness creep into her heart. She felt like a burden to him.

Since they were young, her brother had always shielded her, keeping her safe from the world.

"Why the sad expression? If it works, wouldn't it be good news?" Tristan chuckled.

"Am... Am I not a burden to you?" Arwen asked while looking down at the blanket.

At that moment, Tristan patted her head.

"You're never a burden to me. Never was, never will. You're the only family I have. In this life, we have to rely on each other. Neither of us is a burden to the other." Tristan reassured as Arwen smiled and nodded her head.

Once Arwen fell asleep once more, Tristan closed the door behind him.

There was a renewed sense of determination in his eyes as he prepared himself for the battle tomorrow.

###

"EVERYONE DOWN!!!!"

"ALL HANDS ON DECK!!!"

"HELP!!!"

Looking at the chaos unfolding around her, Alice only had one thing she wanted to say.

"What the f*ck???"

Chapter 554 - 554: Darrow The Pirate King

"What the f*ck???" Alice blinked her eyes.

She felt as though she was suddenly transported into a dream realm as the chaos around her unfolded.

Lorien had expected this kind of fight so rather than four ships, he had actually brought a fleet of ten!

Cannons whistled through the sky, crashing into the barriers of enemy ships, rocking them back and forth while the crew screamed in defiance.

They scrambled to fire their own cannon shots back while Lorien screamed out orders frantically.

Opposing them was a grand fleet of more than 15 ships, each more majestic than the last.

And to make matters worse, raging storm roared from above. Dark clouds, lightning and a barrage of rain crashed against the barriers.

"STAND TALL! Are we going to let these b*stards take us down?!?! FIRE THE NEXT WAVE!" Lorien roared, slamming his hand down and creating a wave of crimson energy to block the next strikes.

"YES CAPTAIN!!!" The entire crew roared out in unison.

Even though they may be members of the Underground, they held unwavering faith in their captain. Despite the dangers, he was here with them, commanding them.

This gave the crew a boost of confidence as they reloaded the next shots.

While this was happening, Alice stood by the railings and observed the enemy.

'They're holding back.' She concluded as Alyss agreed with her analysis.

They could be firing cannons back at a much faster rate but rather than eliminating them, it's more like they want to tire Lorien's crew out. To circle them like a group of sharks, waiting for the right time to strike.

Moreover, Alice couldn't see a single sign of Minerva's phantom fleet nor could she see her ship.

This wasn't Minerva's fleet. They were too efficient and capable for that to be the case.

The crew moved as one, all of them part of a well oiled machine that fired back cannon balls in rhythmic unison.

On the other hand, Minerva's crew was in a similar state to Lorien's. They all scrambled to fire cannons as soon as possible, lacking the rhythm and calm of their current enemy.

With this in mind, Alice had a suspicion that this might be the crew of Darrow the Pirate King instead of Minerva.

Giving Lorien a glance, Alice could tell that he was worried about that as well.

Even though he tried to hide his nervousness, it was clear to Alice.

Right now, she was acting as his trump card. The moment she is ordered to make a move, they would've run out of tricks to play. Therefore, she had to keep watching until the right time.

###

"They're holding out pretty well." Darrow observed the situation from his own ship which wasn't part of the attacking fleet.

"They'll fold soon if they don't do anything. Lorien seemed to have given them a boost in confidence but their retaliation is still weak." Virn shook his head.

They were expending too much stamina for a simple task. While it might not seem a lot in isolation, repeated motions with poor efficiency will tire them out much faster.

That wasn't the only thing either, as they begin to run out of stamina, chances of injuries increase. Once someone gets injured, their shooting efficiency drops even more.

Their retaliation is simply the last ounce of energy of a dying animal. A show of desperation rather than power.

By the side, Minerva watched the situation unfold with a sparkle of excitement in her eyes.

While she may argue with Darrow a lot, he was still her idol. She was simply upset at the fact that Darrow sat by idly and did nothing while things were happening in the city. If he had decided to move, the criminals wouldn't even dare to raise their heads.

"Minerva, you mentioned that you made a contract with this... Calista right? Has she made a move yet?" Darrow asked with a side glance.

He wasn't familiar with Calista's power. All he knew was that the girl could fire off a huge torrent of energy by the beach.

"She hasn't yet, it seems like Lorien is keeping her as a trump card. She's by the third ship, observing from the railings." Minerva pulled out a telescope.

"He probably doesn't want to tire her out before the Phantom Fleet makes an appearance." She concluded.

Tapping his chin, Darrow contemplated in silence as a smile appeared on his face.

"Let's give her a reason to come to our ship. Minerva, send out your fleet." He ordered as Minerva nodded her head.

Jogging over to the main deck, she took a deep breath as Sigils began to light up across her body. From these Sigils, tentacle markings stretched from one to the other, turning into an array across her body as luminescent blue energy burst out from Minerva's body.

The seas around her began to bubble.

*BANG!!!

Bursting out from the depths, the Phantom Fleet made its presence known.

###

"PHANTOM FLEET SIGHTED!" A crew member shouted down from the crow's nest.

Hearing this, Lorien didn't hesitate to look at Alice who had already begun making her preparations to rush over.

In this situation where the real fleet was besieging them, he couldn't allow the Phantom Fleet to interrupt.

"Yo~ Captain~ What should I do if Darrow is there too?" Alice asked, massaging his neck.

Furrowing his brows, Lorien looked up at Calista who didn't seem to be worried.

"I'll double everything I've paid you if you can also deal with Darrow."

Minerva's Phantom Fleet was one thing but Darrow? If Darrow summons his fleet then they might as well start writing their last will and testament. In the situation where Darrow joins the fight then all he could do was pray that Calista was strong enough to keep him occupied as well.

"Double huh? Sure, I can work with that." Alice shrugged.

However, she was snickering on the inside as he wouldn't even be able to pay her later. Right now, she was essentially here to watch everything from the front row seats. Lorien hadn't even realized that she had long defected from his side.

Giving her body one last stretch, Alice mapped out the route in her mind.

The distance between them was quite far so she'll have to be a bit more careful with how she plans on jumping to the other side.

"Lorien, care to fire erm... two cannon balls for me? Make the second delayed." Alice asked as Lorien nodded.

Giving out the orders, the first cannon fired but Alice didn't move.

It was only when the second was fired that she finally jumped.

*BANG!!!

Rocking the ship with her jump, Alice held onto her tricorn hat so it didn't fall off. After all, it would be quite a waste to lose something she had recently bought.

Once she began to lose height, she narrowed her eyes and tapped her foot against the cannon, kicking it into the water but giving herself an extra boost to her jump.

Watching this happen, Lorien blinked his eyes as he couldn't believe what he was seeing.

She was using the cannon balls as a platform!!!

How much strength did she have in order to propel herself again???

Regardless, after jumping off the second cannonball, Alice was directly above the ships and saw Minerva summoning the fleet.

"Hallo~ I've come to play again." Alice greeted with a grin.

Looking up, Minerva couldn't help but roll her eyes.

Just as Alice was about to land on the surface of the deck, a fist appeared in her view as her pupil constricted in surprise.

'When?'

Alice didn't perceive anyone approaching her let alone throwing out a punch.

But now that the first was mere inches away from her face, Alice had to react.

Bending her body back, she launched a kick against the arm.

"!!!"

*BANG!!!

Crashing against the ground, Alice flipped back and landed on her feet.

There was a frown on her face as Darrow stood unmoving with his fist out in the open.

When she kicked against the arm, it felt as though she was kicking a brick wall. Tough as well and it refused to budge.

Darrow had a head of short wild dark brown hair, a pair of crimson eyes and a stubble. There were scars on his chin and chest.

He wore a loose white shirt that revealed his trained body, golden necklaces, a pair of dark green pants with red sashes around his waist and leather boots.

Hanging off his shoulders was a large red coat with golden tassels, buttons and other accessories.

"A little rude don't you think? I'm here to say hi to a friend after all." Alice narrowed her gaze.

Just the wind pressure from that punch alone was almost enough to dispel her disguise.

"Minerva's in her rebellious age. As her father's friend, I have to make sure she's hanging around the right crowd of people." Darrow grinned while scratching his chin.

He was rather impressed by her reaction speed considering his surprise attack.

Red and black lightning crackled along his arm as it converged into a single cutlass. Pulling his arm back, he revealed a grin before unleashing an upwards cleave!

*BANG!!!!

"!!!"

Before Alice could even react, a diagonal cut appeared across her chest as she immediately brought out a vial and crushed it in her hands. As the mirror jester's disguise wore off, she used her blood to hide her appearance.

However, cold sweat rolled down her face as she glared at Darrow who stood in a relaxed position in front of her.

'This is bad twinnie.' Alice admitted with a twitching smile.

She knew that his punch was testing her so it wasn't as fast as it could've been.

But that slash? It breached her two layer defence before she could even react. If he wanted to, he could've probably cut her in half with that attack.

Outside of Lords, Darrow the Pirate King might possibly be the strongest opponent she has seen to date.

Chapter 555 - 555: Alice Vs Darrow

"What's wrong? I heard from Minerva that you were quite the fighter. Don't tell me one hit was all it took to douse out your fire?" Darrow asked as he gestured for her to attack.

Furrowing her brows, Alice could feel an invisible pressure crashing down on her.

It didn't help that her disguise was broken almost immediately. Had she known this, she would've spared herself the effort and not bothered with the Jester's Sigil.

But for now, she needed to judge what he was capable of.

Alyss understood what Alice wanted to do and tagged out.

As the golden chains wrapped around her limbs, the Sigil of Duality exploded into action, reversing the motor controls.

Just as Darrow was about to intercept Alyss who burst into action, he noticed the change in his body and his mouth curved up into a smile.

'He's switching to energy!'

Alice tagged in and flicked her wrist. It interrupted Darrow as he was preparing a pulse of energy to push her back.

However, this was a trap!

"Seems like you can only choose between physical or spiritual. Not both at the same time." Darrow leaned forward, grabbing Alice by the arm and tossing her into the air.

Red and black lightning crackled against his arm once more as he unleashed a devastating cut that seemed to split the world in half.

Golden chains snapped around Alyss's limbs as she twisted her body and countered with her own slash!

"TSK!" Clicking her tongue in annoyance, Alyss could feel the blood blade crumbling under the pressure of this slash and decided to go a different route instead.

Discarding the blade and sacrificing her left arm, Alyss regenerated her arm before slashing her fists together.

Ruinous Void! Gauntlet Form!

Detonating the Void behind her, Alyss launched herself towards Darrow before swinging her fist.

Seeing her regeneration for himself, Darrow couldn't help but widen his eyes in surprise.

He's seen countless variants of regeneration in his life. Regeneration via a slime like body. Regeneration through cancelling out damage and so on.

But it was the first time he's seen such a tyrannical pure type of regeneration that can regrow limbs. And the limb that was cut off transformed into blood before gathering back to her body.

He couldn't figure out the weaknesses of this regeneration unless he was to cut off her head.

But if he was to do that, then perhaps she might even regrow a new body.

The safest option was to destroy her completely.

Crouching down, Darrow caught Alyss's punch with the face of his cutlass before pushing up and preparing a counter.

But just as he was about to swing, the Void detonated in his face, causing him to stumble back a little.

'So her punches leave behind a mark.'

He could sense that these... explosions were harming him directly and ignoring the defences on his body.

A rather troublesome ability but that was it. Simply troublesome.

Tossing his cutlass up into the air, Darrow narrowed his eyes and slapped his palm against the side of Alyss's fist, pushing it off course. His spare hand slapped down on her knee before he followed up with an elbow to the chin.

However, Alyss managed to lean back just in time to avoid getting hit.

"So you're this kind of fighter. Alright, let's rumble." Alyss glared at Darrow before jumping in with a chop towards his neck.

He blocked with an open palm before trying to counter but Alyss caught his arm and attacked with an elbow towards his sternum.

*BANG!!!

Darrow caught Alyss's elbow between his own elbow and his knee before giving her a taunting smirk.

However, Alyss simply stuck out her tongue as energy was now introduced into the mix.

A pulse of energy pushed Darrow's arm away as she slapped him on the side of the stomach, hoping the detonation would cause him to move away.

"That it?" Darrow asked with a raised eyebrow.

*CRACK!!!

"!!!" Gritting her teeth, Alyss was forced to glance down as Darrow had released a powerful kick to the side of her knees, breaking her balance.

"Your lower half is too exposed." Darrow commented before following up with a kick to the side of the head, sending Alyss crashing into the side of the ship.

Tapping his foot against the ground, Darrow could see how Alyss was able to easily crush Minerva in a fight.

Even though her balance was off, she parried that last kick.

So while it looked painful, Alyss was actually relatively unharmed.

Pushing herself from the rubble, Alyss was clearly annoyed as she went in for another round of close quarters combat.

As someone who specialises in fighting with her fists, she refused to take this loss!

"Calm your emotions girl, it makes you easy to read." Darrow smirked.

Despite being a pirate, he had fought his fair share of opponents in his life and experienced countless forms of martial arts.

A person who loses themselves in their emotions and throws out attacks via brute force were the easiest to counter!

Catching Alyss's fist, he threw her over his head before twisting his body and landing a round house kick into her stomach.

*BANG!!!

Breaking the walls of the ship, Alyss coughed up a mouthful of blood as she tried to stand up but stumbled on her feet.

Realising that Alyss had lost her calm, Alice forcefully tagged in and dragged herself out of the rubble.

Despite having so many chances to kill them, Darrow was testing them instead. Doing what he believes was within the limits of their regeneration.

"Anyone told you that you're more suited to being a teacher than a pirate?" Alice asked as she wiped away the blood.

She gathered all the blood that she shed into a single bead in her hand before eating it.

"Anyone can look like a teacher if they're fighting someone inexperienced." Darrow taunted but Alice didn't bite.

'Her aura's changed. The chains disappeared as well.' He noticed the changes. It's as though a whole new person stepped out of the rubble.

"In that case then I hope you can enlighten me!"

Ruinous Void! Fractured form!

Slamming her hand down, glass like cracks began to spread out through the area.

Even though she replaced her fourth Sigil with something else, she could still emulate the Void Steps using the power from her artifact!

At that moment, Alice's body blinked behind Darrow as she twisted her body and kicked down with her leg.

"!!!"

Widening his eyes, Darrow stepped to the side and narrowly dodged her kick but Alice wasn't done.

Grabbing his shoulders, she swung herself around and tried to knee him in the face.

"Tsk." Clicking her tongue in annoyance, Alice couldn't believe he was able to catch her attack in that short period of time.

She kicked off his chest, jumped back and created a modified Void Flux using Tiamat's Sigil.

Aiming at Darrow, she flicked it and overlaid it with Void Steps!

Darrow's instincts screamed at him to either dodge or cut the attack apart.

Naturally, he chose the attacking option!

Grabbing his cutlass, he slashed down faster than the eye could see and the Void Flux was split in two.

Even with the boost using Void Flux, Darrow was able to react!

'F*ck! Is this how people feel when they fight me???' Alice cursed in her mind.

His reaction speed and instincts were simply too fast for her to take advantage of. She couldn't do anything to him but he could attack her whenever he wanted.

Meanwhile, Darrow could feel the cutlass trembling in his hand as that attack packed quite the punch behind it.

However, it wasn't on the same level as the attack she unleashed on the beach.

A smile appeared on his face as he rushed forward.

Since she wasn't using lethal force, he'd reply in kind and treat this as a simple spar.

There's no need to kill one another.

While Alice was exchanging attacks with Darrow using every trick she had in the book without going down the route of killing, Minerva watched from the side with sparkling eyes.

She was happy she could see Darrow fight against but what was more impressive was the fact that Alice was keeping up!

She could tell that Darrow was ramping up the difficulty with each subsequent attack.

He'll analyse the weaknesses of Alice's fighting style, her tricks and abuse the openings. To force the fighter to improve.

This was the training that Darrow provided to those that got his favour.

Yet despite sparring for this long, Alice was still going strong!

With each weakness that Darrow exploited, Alice would counter with a new attack to make up for the faults. She was unknowingly refining and absorbing all of the knowledge and experience that Darrow was imparting onto her.

At first, he was simply using his fists. But now, with Alice using the power of her Sigils and Tiamat's power, Darrow was forced to rely on his cutlass!

"Amazing..." Minerva muttered.

However, a shout came down from above as it interrupted her focus.

"TRADERS INBOUND!"

This shout practically stopped the entire battle as Darrow pushed Alice away and glanced up with a frown.

Crouching down, he jumped up to the crow's nest and focused his gaze on the horizon.

He could see the boats approaching and even from this distance, he could feel the ominous aura being radiated by them.

Despite having this many ships intercepting them, they're still approaching them.

This confidence caused Darrow to frown as a bad feeling filled his chest.

Meanwhile, Alice realised a slight issue.

She was wondering why Lorien had decided to bring along the previous shipments with him despite the risks. Yet now that the enemy ships is approaching, Alice had a theory in her mind.

He was trying to gather the shipments in one place!

Chapter 556 - 556: Darrow's True Power

'Damn! I should've done something once I realised he was bringing along the shipments.' Alice gritted her teeth.

After her preparations yesterday, she thought things were going to be fine.

However, two issues cropped up.

First, Darrow was far stronger than what she had originally anticipated. The second, Lorien WANTED the shipments to be bunched together!

*BANG!!!

Landing down from above, Darrow gave Alice a glance before turning to Minerva.

"Can you handle Lorien?" He asked with a serious expression.

"Leave it to me!" Minerva grinned as Darrow nodded with a smile.

He gave her head a pat before turning to Alice.

"Calista, care to join me for a moment?" He offered as Alice paused for a moment before nodding her head.

"Virn, send down the order. Have the crew focus on ending Lorien with Minerva. I'll intercept the traders with Calista over here." Darrow requested as Virn gave Alice a hesitant glance.

But if Darrow was giving her his trust then so be it.

"Alright."

With Virn now sending out the order, Darrow pulled out a small wooden boat and threw it out to sea. Jumping down, he called Alice over.

Alice's smile twitched seeing the boat clearly too small for the two of them.

"Please tell me you're not asking me to jump into this boat with you."

"Why not? This boat has been with me since I was but a sailor." Darrow laughed, giving the side of the boat a confident slap.

The wood was practically crying under his slap as Alice found herself feeling doubtful.

However, seeing his insistent gaze, she sighed and jumped down.

"Wouldn't it be better for you to get one of your crew rather than me? Weren't we just fighting each other right now?" Alice asked, taking a seat around the back while Darrow tapped his foot and the boat began to move through the water towards the traders.

"We weren't fighting to the death and I already know about your contract with Minerva. I merely wanted to see what kind of person could make my friend's daughter feel defeat." Darrow shrugged nonchalantly while taking a seat opposite her.

It was going to take a brief moment for them to reach the traders so Darrow wanted to take this chance to speak to her.

"Now that we got the chance to speak, why did you come to Caethis?" Darrow asked as his aura shifted to a more serious one.

Furrowing her brows, Alice was about to say something when Darrow interrupted.

"We can fight. But I'd rather us focus on these traders that are looking to disrupt the peace that I painstakingly built."

Hearing this, Alice understood that Darrow didn't intend to kill her while their intentions aligned.

"Travelling and money. I came here because I wanted to travel east and ran out of money." Alice shrugged.

It wasn't a secret that she was doing this for money considering her contract with Lorien and Minerva.

"Then that certainly makes things easier for me. And that demonstration at the beach?"

Darrow wanted to know what kind of situation caused Alice to unleash such a devastating attack.

"Experiments. I found a new toy so I figured I'd take it out for a test drive. Who knew it'd split the sea in half." Alice shrugged once more.

While Alice was nonchalant, Darrow felt his eyelid twitch momentarily.

That demonstration at the beach was... an experiment?

"Setting that aside, it sounds like you know of these traders. Three eyes in a flame." Alice gestured to the ships in the distance.

"I only know that they've been on the rise overseas and in the Abyss. Other than that, there's no information on them. I don't know who created the group, why they created the group or where they're based." Darrow admitted.

"If you want information from me then sorry to disappoint, but I know less than you do."

"I'm aware." Darrow nodded with a laugh.

Seeing how this man can be joking on moment, serious in another, Alice felt was though she was being thrown around by two people. She couldn't get an accurate judgement on this man in front of her.

"So why do you need me to follow? With what you've shown me, you can probably take care of them by yourself." Alice asked the question that was bothering her.

In terms of pure experience and close quarters combat, it was clear that Darrow outmatched both her and Alyss.

No matter how many tricks she tried to pull in close quarters, he was able to react, adapt and even counter in one move.

"To introduce new variables. As the figure head for Caethis, even if it's been governed by three parties, my skills are rather well known. There's no doubt that the traders have prepared something for me and Minerva. So if I throw you into the mix, wouldn't that disrupt their plans?" Darrow chuckled.

"My services don't come cheap. Especially in a situation like this."

Without even saying anything, Darrow tossed over a pouch to Alice.

"!!!" Widening her eyes at the heft of this pouch, Alice hesitantly opened it and saw 20 Platina sitting in the bag.

"Downpayment. I'll give you another 30 if the peace is undisturbed by the end of today." Darrow offered.

"Well sh*t, what's all you had to say boss. What can I do for you?" Alice grinned, throwing the pouch into her bag.

50 platina!

With this kind of money, she wouldn't need to worry about food, mead or clothing for a while.

And when paired with the other contracts that she has, she would've almost earned 100 platina from this trip to Caethis!

"I want you to give me a hand when it comes to dealing with the traders. But you don't need to interfere much. The key is to step in if they have a hard counter for me."

"And you're not scared I'll switch sides boss?" Alice questioned.

"Not even a little." Darrow stared at her confidently, surprising Alice.

Both Minerva and Lorien had their own doubts and took risks when establishing the contract.

But Darrow is saying he didn't doubt her at all? Alice found it bizarre.

"Well aren't you the confident one. Do you put your trust in everyone like this?"

"Call it a hunch. Now then, I believe we've talked long enough. Let's give these traders a little welcoming party." Darrow stood up before folding his arms.

***BANG!!!!**

A tyrannical aura erupted from his body as Alice's pupil constricted in shock.

Now that he wasn't restraining himself, Alice felt the full force of his energy.

A Lord that's not a Lord!!!

It was clear that Darrow's power was already touching the realm of Lords without even needing a seventh Sigil! It lacked the feeling of a 'title' that she usually got from Lords.

But this raw power...

It's undeniable!

Luminescent Sigils lit up around his body as the waves trembled.

*RUMBLE!!!

The seas cried out in shock as dark clouds loomed from above.

"What did you think about Minerva's Phantom Fleet?" Darrow asked with a grin.

"Pretty bad if I'm being honest. Especially with her being a glaring weakness." Alice admitted honestly.

"Exactly. The Phantom Fleet is great for group combat but lacks the proper defences to protect the caster.

"Now, what do you think of the true Phantom Fleet?"

*BANG!!!

Parting the clouds, ghost ships began to descend while more ships burst out from the sea.

Each ghost ship was bigger than even the biggest 'real' ship that Darrow had prepared. Each was covered head to toe in weapons that all began to focus towards the Traders in the distance.

With the speed at which the cannons were moving, Alice found it difficult to find a gap.

She could instinctively see the wave of cannons that this fleet would fire and unless she was fighting at full power from the get go, there was no way she'll get through this barrage.

But the biggest difference of all was that Darrow wasn't focusing on commanding the fleet! It was automatic!

Summoning his cutlass once more, Darrow's muscles bulged as he took a step forward and unleashed a single slash.

SEA SPLITTER!

In an instant, a crimson arc shot out, carving the sea in two! The Void warped from the raw force that was pushed out with this strike, rendering all spatial abilities ineffective!

*BANG!!!

One of the ships created a barrier to block this strike only for it to be cleaved in half without resistance.

The other ships quickly steered away from danger and as spectral arms manifested in front of the slash.

Purple chains and runic markings decorated the arms as it collided with the arc.

"Tsk, seems like there's someone pretty capable on those ships." Darrow scratched his chin before flicking his fingers.

*RUMBLE!!!

The fleet of over 30 ghost ships turned towards the Traders and began to gather energy.

It felt as though a blackhole had just been opened and even Alice could feel her energy dropping as everything was being siphoned!

"Fire!!!" Darrow commanded!

*BANG!!!

Countless cannon shots echoed out in unison as each was as powerful as a Void Flux that Alice would cast!

Facing this kind of barrage, it was no exaggeration to say that no city that she's seen so far could withstand this attack.

And yet, this kind of powerful Hunter STILL wasn't a Lord!

What would happen if he was to gain his seventh Sigil? What title would he get? How much power would he obtain?

Alice found herself not having the answers to any of these questions.

Hell, she couldn't even figure out a way she would fend against this barrage of attacks!

To survive, she'll have to use everything she's got!

There was only one thing Alice could say for Darrow.

He is strong!

Chapter 557 - 557: Strange Creatures Beneath The Robe

Watching this endless barrage of cannon balls fire towards the Traders, Alice figured that there was probably no need for her to intervene too much.

If the enemy was able to block Darrow's strike that she couldn't even perceive, then there was no way for her to help.

"The Sea Splitter is more of a gimmick I developed when I was younger than anything." Darrow explained after noticing Alice's thoughts.

He's seen that kind of gaze far too many times now for him to not realise what's going on in his mind.

"A gimmick?" Alice tilted her head in confusion.

"I won't say more since it'll be boring that way. See if you can figure it out." Darrow laughed.

Pulling his arm back, veins bulged on his forearm as he released two more Sea Splitters.

Two black and red arcs of energy rushed forward while the spectral arms deflected them to the side.

"Yeesh, seems like I can't use the Sea Splitter anymore. Whoever is controlling those hands knows how to see through this gimmick." Darrow smirked while resting his cutlass on his shoulder.

After the first slash was blocked, he wanted to be sure that the enemy was indeed seeing through this gimmick rather than pure luck.

Which is why the second wave had one true and one false. One of the slashes had the gimmick while the other didn't.

If it was pure luck, one of them would've hit.

But the fact that both were deflected properly meant that they could indeed see through the smoke and mirrors.

A troublesome opponent.

Adjusting his coat, Darrow was about to jump towards the traders when he noticed Alice making a small arc using her blood.

His pupils constricted in surprise as a wide smile appeared on his face.

One hint!

That's all it took for her to figure it out!

"F*cking hell... No wonder I couldn't detect it." Alice muttered, making a miniature Sea Splitter using her own blood.

The technique itself wasn't anything complicated. It's frankly just a powerful slash similar to Void Flux – Cleave. But what sets it apart is the fact that Darrow could adjust where the true slash was!

Now that she knew the gimmick, she understood that during their spar, the slash was a lot faster than the visual phenomenon!

Since it was a spar with no killing intent, the first layer of her defence was nullified.

And with the second, since her mind was too focused on the visual phenomenon, by the time the slash approached the thin zone that she established, it was already too late.

Naturally, he could adjust this so that the slash is slower than the visual cues as well.

A tricky attack that becomes much easier to dodge once you stop focusing on the visual cues and target the slight hints of energy coming from the true slash.

"Where did a girl like you pop out from?" Darrow asked as her adaptability was frankly freaky.

Even if he didn't give her the hint, she'd probably figure it out sooner rather than later.

"A vial of weird sh*t." Alice shrugged before standing up.

Rolling his eyes, Darrow figured that Alice was probably joking not realising that it's the truth.

"Follow me closely and don't fall into the water now." Darrow laughed.

###

Looking at the barrier that was holding under the constant barrage of attacks launched by Darrow, a robed person walked towards the front of the ship.

They could sense Darrow approaching with another aura.

A... strange one.

"Keep the strange one occupied. Darrow is mine to handle." They ordered as the other robed figures began pulling out different weapons.

*CRACK!!!

A fracture appeared on the barrier around the ship before breaking under the pressure.

Darrow could be seen grabbing Alice by the back of the shirt and a wide grin on his face.

Twisting his body, he threw Alice towards the crowd of robed figures and slashed down with his cutlass.

*BANG!!!!

The robed figure immediately deflected the cutlass off to the side and pinned it down with her scythe.

"Hmm, it doesn't seem like you're the source of those strange arms. But that scythe, where did you get it?" Darrow questioned as he recognised the craftsmanship of that scythe.

A weapon that had given him a bit of trouble in the past.

Upon hearing this question, the robed figure paused momentarily before slashing up with the scythe but Darrow managed to dodge out of the way.

Kicking his cutlass towards the figure, he was surprised to see them block using the pommel.

His smile slowly disappeared as he recognised this fighting style but he couldn't be sure.

Therefore, he decided to go a little serious.

Pulling out a cigarette, he took a deep breath as a mist began to roll in from all sides, obscuring the vision of the robed figure.

"You know, the owner of that scythe gave me a bit of trouble. But I still made sure to bury that weapon where she rested. So the fact that you're carrying it means that you looted their grave didn't you?" Darrow asked as his voice echoed from every direction.

However, upon hearing his question, the figure only seemed to grow angrier as they twirled the scythe above their head and slammed it down, causing red and purple crystals to erupt from the ground.

A crimson energy linked between the crystals, forming a ritualistic circle beneath her.

"Die!" They shouted out, releasing a tightly woven net of slashes all around them in an attempt to dispel the mist and cut Darrow to pieces.

"I quite enjoy my current life so I'll have to reject your offer." Darrow's voice rang out behind them as they glanced back in surprise.

He was completely unharmed!

Using their own body weight to counter the weight of the scythe, they swung towards him while creating distance between the two of them.

But to their shock, the weapon phased through Darrow's body as he grabbed the robe hiding their identity.

Looking at the strange robe in his hands, Darrow glanced up at the woman who was glaring at him with hatred.

She had light purple hair tied into a ponytail, a mourning attire with a pair of black gloves and a pair of black shoes. From her head, a single black horn jutted out from the side with the tip dyed the same purple as her hair.

"You're the spitting image of your mother, you know that right?" Darrow revealed a nostalgic smile, tossing the robe to the side as the woman gritted her teeth.

"Don't you dare mention her!"

Lifting her scythe, a purple light erupted from the centre as the world around him began to shift.

But before it could take hold, cracks formed across the space on the ship.

*SHATTER!

Widening her eyes in shock, the woman glanced up in confusion when her Personal Realm failed to establish itself.

"You didn't need to do that, I have it handled." Darrow called out with a chuckle.

"Should've said so earlier. Even made me waste some of my energy." Alice clicked her tongue in annoyance.

Recalling her personal artifact, she dodged the wild swing of another robed figure and slashed up with her blade.

However, the robed figures dodged everything she threw at them as though her actions were predetermined.

"Just focus on yourself, I'm busy catching up with an old enemy's daughter." Darrow waved his hand dismissively.

"Suit yourself." Alice shrugged.

It wasn't like she cancelled out the personal realm out of worry for him. Rather, that realm was about to drag everyone into it including her.

Without her own realm to protect herself, Alice wasn't going to take that kind of risk.

With Darrow occupying himself with the strange open, Alice scratched her hair and looked at the group of robed figures that refused to get hit.

"I'm already annoyed I lost earlier. So why don't you guys drop this annoying sh*t and stop dodging!" Slamming her hand down, the power of duality erupted with her in the centre as crimson threads formed a spider web around them.

The moment one of them stumbled over due to their motor functions being flipped, Alice sensed it through the threads and grinned.

"Bingo."

Void Flux + Void Step!

Firing a Void Flux using the properties of a failed Void Step, the spark of destruction flickered through the Void and manifested in front of the robed figure before detonating!

The time it took for Alice to fire the attack was less than that of a second. The moment he stepped onto the threat, his fate was sealed!

"ARGGG!!" Letting out a scream of pain, the figure was sent crashing back as the robe on his body broke apart from the attack.

This allowed Alice to get a full view of what he looked like.

She could see a middle aged man with the upper half of his face 'modified'. His teeth was exposed with no lips to keep them hidden, sunken cheeks and strange artificial skin as white as snow.

The upper half of his face could be described as a strange eyeless mask with horns but that wasn't quite accurate either. The bone beneath the skin peeled away from the skull and caused the skin to stretch from the tip to the skull. This tip created a strange horn from his forehead while wild long hair flowed down to his waist.

Strange black bands wrapped around his arms and legs while a cloth made from the same material fluttered around his waist.

But the strangest of all was that Alice couldn't sense the Abyss's influence on them!

They were completely free from side effects or Sigil powers!

Chapter 558 - 558: Outer Gods

"Well aren't you a f*cked up looking piece of sh*t? No wonder you got those robes." Alice furrowed her brows while putting on a brave smile.

However, they were giving her the chills.

It's the first time she's sensed someone completely free of the Abyss's influence despite looking... this way.

And frankly, it was weirder than even the Hybrids that she sensed.

"Kill her!" The eyeless monster of a man shouted as the other robed figures rushed into action.

A strange black mist like energy surged through their body as Alice instinctively countered with her flames.

Her instincts were warning her not to touch this strange energy!

As her flames clashed with the black mist, Alice's pupil constricted in shock.

She lost the contest of power!

Her flames were immediately swallowed up and she was forced to jump back to create some distance.

Creating three orbs of Void Fluxes above her, she fired them towards the figures but they managed to dodge with ease.

Behind her, a figure manifested from a cloud of black mist and slashed down.

"Too easy!" Alice shouted out, hoping to dissuade the robed figures.

She stomped down with her foot and Tiamat's Sigil roared to life.

A burst of energy erupted from Alice's body, pushing the figure back.

'The flames aren't working. But Tiamat's had some effectiveness.' Alice thought to herself as she forged a blood blade in her hand.

Taking a deep breath, she focused her mind and using her spare hand, conjured her personal artifact.

Fractured Form!

*CRACK!!

The space cracked apart as Alice disappeared from her spot.

Void Steps!

Appearing behind the robed figure, she slashed down with Void Flux + Tiamat's power!

The world lost its colour momentarily as energy converged towards the blade.

Just as her sword was about to cut the man in half, a tendril of black mist caught Alice's wrist.

'Sh*t!'

At that moment, Alice felt as though her soul had just been dragged out.

She felt infinitely small while standing on what looked like a palm. As she tilted her head back, she gazed into the infinite unknown and saw countless sunken holes that felt like eyes.

[ALICE!!!]

Golden chains burst out of Alice's body as the vision around her was instantly dispelled.

Realising the danger she was in, Alice didn't hesitate to activate her trump card.

Duality + First Sigil + Tiamat!

*BANG!!!

A destructive aura burst out of her body as the robed figure was blown back by Tiamat's power. His body crashed across the ship deck as the robes were torn off, revealing his monstrous body.

Alice had entered the second version of Tiamat's Sigil in order to create some distance for herself.

With a moment of safety, she quickly switched to the first variant as the world lost its colour. Rather than energy, she could now see the aura around the robed figures.

It was the same as the strange black mist that transported her to a different realm momentarily as Alice ducked under another attack and forced them to back off using her personal artifact.

The first variant of Tiamat's Sigil when used with Duality allowed her to absorb energy by turning her into a walking conductor.

But no matter how experimental and reckless she may be, even she knew the black mist was bad news.

[I knew it.] Cayla frowned.

'What did you find?' Alice asked while using her threads to keep the robed figures at bay.

They were primarily using this strange energy to try and restrain her. But with Alice focusing on defence, she proved to be a slippery target.

[It's not Abyssal, Void or Holy. It's... It's energy belonging to Outer Gods.]

Furrowing her brows, Alice recalled hearing some information on the Outer Gods. But this was limited to the fact that Velouria and the other Gods were trying to keep them out.

[It shouldn't be possible since the barrier protecting this world is still in place. Did a crack appear?] Cayla paced back and forth before shaking her head.

[We can talk about that later. For now, don't touch it at all. Touching the mist forcefully establishes a connection with their patron Outer God.]

'What the hell am I supposed to do then? Tiamat's Sigil has limited effectiveness on them and for some reason, mine and Alyss's flames do jack sh*t.' Alice gritted her teeth.

Stomping down with her foot, she created a singularity and fired off several disks of energy around her in a circle.

The robed figures reached out their hands and activated a strange power.

The same spectral hands that blocked Darrow's attack earlier manifested and shattered the rings.

"Thanks, I didn't think you'd take the bait like that." Alice grinned as in her hands, a spark was being cultivated.

Activating the second state of Tiamat's Sigil, energy erupted from her body as she sought to expel everything at once!

Blue and gold strands converged towards the spark while the figures realised the danger.

They immediately moved to stop her but Alice was a step ahead of them. Briar thorns erupted from the ground while spider lilies blossomed.

First Resonance!

Alice's form shifted as a new dress appeared on her body.

Artificial Resonance!

Her personal artifact split into three as the pattern in her eye changed into that of a singularity.

As the figures touched the briar thorns in an attempt to reach Alice, they found themselves locked in space while energy was siphoned from their body!

The briar thorns were connected to Alice and she was using them to funnel more power into her attack!

"Darrow!" Alice shouted out as she clenched her fist around this spark and jumped back.

"Hm?" Parrying the scythe, Darrow knew Alice was preparing something but he didn't know what.

As he glanced back, his pupils constricted as he recognised this flare, this phenomenon. He saw it from afar after all.

Without hesitation, he wrapped himself in his mist and evacuated.

Meanwhile, the figures were confused and felt that something was wrong.

But before they could escape, Alice activated Void Steps and appeared several meters away from the ship and falling towards the sea.

Behind her, luminescent wings of energy manifested as she overlaid the powers from three Resonances into one.

Ruinous Flux!

Amplification circles manifested in front of Alice as the spark shot through the array with the help of Void Steps, amplifying the speed further.

Lightning crashed against the sea as a torrent of destruction shot forward, turning the world into a canvas of white and blue.

Feeling the energy leave her body, Alice prepared to look for a platform when a chill filled her heart.

Snapping her gaze towards the ships, she noticed the black mist forming a swirl of black purple and red.

From within this mist, a single black and gold eyeball stared back at her, freezing her in place.

It was the same feeling she got from the Doctor!

She needed an attack that hit the soul!

Anger filled Alice's heart as she sought to fire a second attack.

At this moment, black chains burst out from the strange swirl, looking to enslave Alice!

"Foul beast watch my blade!" A voice roared out.

From the sky, a pure arc of energy crashed down in a crescent, shattering the chains and causing the eye to flinch momentarily.

Despite it being day, a moon could be seen in the sky.

Before Alice could crash into the sea, Darrow caught her in his tiny boat.

"Don't... touch my blood." Alice warned.

With her using that attack, she couldn't keep up her disguise anymore and had to recall her blood before it tainted the sea.

Hearing her warning, Darrow understood that it was serious and quickly placed Alice down on the other side of the boat.

Taking a deep breath, Alice made a small cut on her finger and recalled the blood.

Her 'crimson hair' returned back to normal, revealing the split between black and white. Her mask disappeared and Darrow was able to see her true face.

"Quit staring." Alice clicked her tongue, feeling annoyed that she was forced to this extent.

"Sorry sorry, but no wonder you wanted to hide your appearance. With hair like that, it's hard for anyone to forget what you look like." Darrow laughed with a grin.

Alice simply rolled her eyes before looking at the figure falling down from the sky.

That voice, it was no doubt Tristan.

Of all the times for him to appear, it's when she was out of energy and her disguise disappeared.

Landing on the crow's nest of the trader's ship, Tristan frowned while looking at the eye that was glaring back at him.

He had attacked it out of instinct due to the abnormal aura he was sensing from it. It felt as though it was something that shouldn't be in this realm.

As though looking at a spot of darkness on a white canvas, Tristan understood that it's his duty to eliminate this abnormality.

And more importantly, Alice was about to be injured by it. He didn't know why she was here but regardless, that was something he could worry about later. Especially the power of duality coming from her body.

Readying his sword, silver armour manifested on Tristan's body as the moon glowed with a radiant light above him.

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"Give it up Lorien, or do you want all of your men to die?" Minerva called out with a frown.

Lorien's men were a lot more tenacious than she initially expected. Even after pushing them to the bring and breaking their barrier, they refused to give up.

They even began taking drugs and fighting back with renewed vigour.

Looking at Lorien, she could clearly see that he wasn't in the right state of mind. He didn't reply and ran into the storage while Minerva gave out the order to seize the ship.

He could hear the footsteps above him as panic began to set in. However, a twisted smile appeared on his face.

Since it reached this stage, he might as well go out on a gamble.

Grabbing a blade, he slid it across his palm as blood started to pour over the shipments that he received...

Chapter 559 - 559: Cardinal Of The Moon

Taking a deep breath, Tristan could sense that these robed figures had a deep connection with the soul.

A speciality of the moon!

"Alice! We'll talk later!" Tristan called out before a scarf of lunar light appeared on his neck.

A helmet manifested around his head as he reached his hand up and summoned a greatsword.

Behind him, a halo spun to life as he crashed down and rushed towards the robed figures.

One of them tried to capture Tristan using the black mist but he stabbed his sword down and a giant array of lunar glyphs expanded with him in the centre.

The black mist was immediately dispelled as he pulled his sword out and released a vertical slash!

*BANG!!!

One slash was all it took for the robed figure to be cut in half before breaking down into mist that was absorbed by the sword.

Furrowing his brows, Tristan realised just how abnormal these figures were and split his greatsword into two longswords.

Crouching down, white flames burst out from the blade as he released a wave of horizontal slashes.

Realising that their opponent was probably the worst matchup for them, the abnormal monsters jumped back and looked for a way to escape.

"Don't even think about it." Tristan glared.

A blue light erupted from his body, dragging everyone within range into his personal realm!

As the light cleared, a garden of white cherry blossom trees could be seen while a single radiant moon hung in the sky above.

There's no need for multiple fanciful strikes.

Just one to take care of the wave!

Combining his swords into a greatsword once more, Tristan raised the greatsword upright as a neon blue light manifested across the blade's face.

Runic symbols appeared along the centre of the blade while lunar light filtered down from the moon.

This radiant energy made it seem as though the blade was on fire as he pulled it back and took a single heavy step forward.

[Go forth my blessed one] Lumiria's voice echoed out in Tristan's ear as veins bulged on his arm.

***BANG!!!**

A wave of raw destructive power swept forward as Alice engraved the view into her mind.

The black mist couldn't put up even a moment of resistance as the robed figures were wiped out in an instant.

The only one left was a woman with her scythe.

Behind her, the black mist started to tremble as the avatar of a reaper could be seen.

A skeletal figure wearing a set of tattered robes and black chains.

Purple crystals jutted out of their body as the reaper slashed down with its scythe.

A pillar of crystals erupted from the ground in front of her, blocking the wave and giving the woman enough time to pull out a strange orb.

"Darrow, just you wait!" She cried out before crushing the orb.

The space around her began to tremble as Tristan flickered beside her and tried to slash her in half.

However, by the time his sword reached her, she had already phased out of existence.

Furrowing his brows, Tristan sighed as he dismissed the greatsword.

The realm disappeared as he walked to the edge and stared at Alice who was exhausted on the boat.

"Well this is a little awkward isn't it?" Alice forced a brave smile.

However, there was a big issue.

She clearly felt a hint of divinity at the end! He's personally blessed by Lumiria!

If that was the case, then the likelihood of him being part of the top echelon of the church was very high.

Dismissing his armour, Tristan looked at Alice with a slight frown.

"An enemy of yours Calista?" Darrow asked curiously.

"Calista?" Tristan paused.

"Nope, not an enemy but rather the boss of the Inn I'm staying at." Alice shook her head.

"Want to talk about this later? I got a job to deal with right now." She asked as Tristan hesitated for a moment.

There were too many questions he wanted to ask.

Why did Darrow call her Calista, why does she have the power of duality, why did she tell him to seek her out for the medicine?

Letting out a sigh, he nodded.

"We're definitely talking later."

"You got my word." Alice gave him an ok sign with her index and thumb.

But just as she did this, a burst of malevolent aura erupted from behind them.

Snapping her gaze back, Alice understood that the source is where Minerva was right now.

Meaning...

"The other shipments!" Trying to stand up, Alice couldn't help but stumble over as she exhausted herself far more than she had expected.

Despite having great power, the drawbacks of using Tiamat's Sigil with Duality meant that she was purging all the energy in her body all at once.

An all-or-nothing attack that leaves her defenceless.

"Hang on tight, I'm speeding up." Darrow warned.

However, Alice was confused. It's only a little far away so it's not like they could pick up that much speed.

Walking to the back of the boat, Darrow massaged his shoulders.

***BANG!!!**

Beneath the ship, an explosion occurred as they were launched through the air.

Alice's pupil constricted in shock as she didn't expect him to use the shockwave to launch them through the air!

Her body began to float.

Just before she could fall off, Darrow grabbed her by the back of the jacket.

"I did tell you to hang on tight. What is it with kids these days and not listening to instructions." Darrow let out a sigh and a shake of his head.

Minerva was the same. He would give her instructions and she would dismiss them before regretting.

"Maybe if you told me what the f*ck you were about to do, then I'll listen. You can't just shout something and expect me to follow!" Alice snapped back in annoyance.

Lifting the small girl up like a cat so that he's face to face with her, Darrow raised an eyebrow.

"Need I remind you that before you released your big attack, the only thing you shouted was my name."

Hearing this, Alice paused and coughed awkwardly.

Indeed it was as he said. The only thing she shouted was his name.

"That... Maybe you just didn't hear me." Alice forced a smile and made an excuse but Darrow simply rolled his eyes.

It's impossible for someone of his senses not to hear something during battle, especially when someone is shouting towards him.

Turning his attention away from Alice, Darrow glanced towards the sinking ships with a frown.

Minerva could be seen on the main ship with wounds all over her body.

The phantom fleet swarming around the whirlpool of destruction while firing a constant barrage of attacks, hiding the figure within.

Once the barrage stopped, the creature revealed its form.

Much like the towering mountain of a beast that Alice saw back in Kvía, the size of this underwater beast was far bigger than average.

It had an elongated armoured head with a long row of sharp teeth yet no eyes. Armoured scales lined the head, forming a strange natural crown. Its body was slimy and muscular with the back being the same blue hue as the ocean and the underside being a greyish blue.

The forearms have jagged armour extending from the elbows while its claws resemble a reptiles with webbing between the fingers.

Unnatural bits of bone and armour jutted out of his body around the joints as a single long, curved tail trailed behind it.

Its aura and appearance didn't look like anything that the Abyss would produce.

[A minion of the Outer gods.] Cayla spoke up with a deep frown.

'So that's what he was trying to bring in through the shipments. But why did he need so many boxes?' Alice questioned.

She couldn't comprehend the body composition of these strange beasts belonging to the Outer Gods.

No matter the person, they'll have strands of energy coming out of their bodies and linking them to the Abyss. It's something that Alice can choose to focus on or entirely ignore.

But this beast in the whirlpool... there was nothing at all. No strands, no connections.

Not only that, but they also have the strange black mist that counter her flames...

Alice wanted to figure out the cause otherwise it'll be far more dangerous for her in the future.

Just touching it is enough to bring her face to face with what she can only assume to be an extension of the Outer Gods.

"This power... This feeling... So this is how it feels... Haha... Ahahahahaha!!!" The beast glanced down at his hands before releasing a maniacal laugh.

"Minerva, I bet you thought you had me cornered right? Serves you right!!! You can watch me kill everyone you brought with you!"

A pulse of blue light erupted from the beast, forming rings of natural blue energy.

From this energy, the sea began to churn as it soon condensed into a long serpentine body that wrapped around the beast.

A leviathan created from sea water!

"Yo, Lunar Cardinal, do you plan on giving a hand? Or are you going to watch things unfold?" Darrow asked while sweat rolled down his face.

He's faced many beasts in his lifetime. But this? This was outside of his power. No wonder Lorien was ready to risk everything.

Darrow could tell that a connection has just been formed between this beast and the sea!

Furrowing his brows, Tristan eventually nodded his head.

He didn't want to involve himself deeply with the conflicts of Caethis. However, this was beyond just a scuffle between two factions.

"I, Cardinal of the Moon, will lend you my aid." Tristan summoned his armour once more as the three of them descended into battle.

Chapter 560 - 560: Outer God's Minion

"Cardinal, what kind of fighter are you? We need to assign some roles for maximum efficiency." Darrow asked while commanding his phantom fleet to help Minerva and the others escape while they still could.

However, his barrage was being absorbed by the water leviathan coiling around the monster's body.

"Frontline fighter with some support skills. Namely healing, dispelling and some enhancements to your attacks." Tristan replied truthfully while giving Alice a glance.

She had recovered enough of her stamina to stand up straight.

"I know I look cute but you don't need to stare that hard." Alice rolled her eyes.

*COUGH!!!

"I- I erm... I didn't mean it that way." Tristan panicked but Darrow only slapped him on the back with a laugh.

"So Calista, what about you?" Darrow turned his attention to Alice.

"Just call me Alice, the disguise is out of the window anyway. If you give me a bit of time, I can focus entirely on offence but I wouldn't rely on it. The beast is... a strange one and unless it's an attack that targets the soul, it'll be hard to inflict lasting damage.

"There's also the issue of his connection to the sea. I can see... quite a few strands extending from his body and linking him to the water beneath us. Suffice to say, he's part of the ocean right now." Alice analysed the situation while trying to find a weak spot.

"Figures. Seems like the offence is reliant on you Cardinal." Darrow shrugged but Tristan shook his head.

"Don't you have... access to the power of Duality? It's a power that stems from the Church. Logically, you should also have the ability to target the soul."

"Look, it's complicated okay?" Alice sighed.

"The only thing I can do right now is inversion. I can flip the functionality of Sigils as well as certain aspects of control. Motor functions, energy control. I can't change it to target the soul when I never had experience in doing so." She explained.

Moreover, even though she saw the process of Tristan harming the soul, she still needed some time to comprehend it. Even now, Alice couldn't understand how one would interact with the soul.

Her only option before was through her flames but that was clearly not going to work. Her flames have zero effect on these beasts tied to the Outer Gods.

Plus, she herself didn't fully understand why she's able to consume a small portion of someone's soul and put it to use.

"But the power of Duality should cover more than just inversion."

"Now now, Alice did say you'll talk later. Let's focus on the task at hand shall we?" Darrow steered the conversation back on track.

Letting out a sigh, Tristan nodded his head.

"Then aside from attacking, do you think you are able to provide support for me and Tristan?" Darrow asked curiously.

"Naturally."

Helping them defend against the attacks wouldn't be hard, especially if she doesn't need to care about attacking.

"Just trust your back to me and no matter what attack comes towards you, I'll sort it out." Alice reassured with absolute confidence.

Darrow was a little taken aback but nodded his head while Tristan did the same.

Navigating the boat to one of his ships, Darrow had Alice step off the boat so that she could observe the full battle.

He gave instructions to Virn and had him circle the ship around the beast so that Alice could assist them when it's needed.

Watching both Tristan and Darrow make their way towards the beast while Minerva's crew backed off, Alice couldn't help but fold her arms and stand at the front of the ship.

'If I want to support the two of them and protect them from attacks, I'll need a different kind of grid. A much bigger one when compared to what I created against Egil.' Alice thought to herself as she reached into her pouch and grabbed every vial of blood she had prepared.

Originally, she thought these vials would be helpful against Darrow but the truth was far from it. Even with these, she'll probably lose to Darrow if they were to go for each other's throats.

She thought herself invincible with her regeneration and abilities but the world was far bigger than she expected. People with a myriad abilities and monsters she didn't know anything about.

Alice thought that she was already being cautious but it was clear that it wasn't cautious enough. Her arrogance blinded her.

Alyss was the same.

But this was no time to wallow and digest everything she had learnt during the spar. This was the time to kill a giant beast!

Opening all of the vials, Alice summoned the Shard and separated it into countless tiny pieces, each holding a trace of her blood and sent it out to surround the beast.

The grid she needed to lay out had to be big enough to allow Tristan and Darrow freedom of movement along with defences.

'The flames won't work and the beast will probably ignore it. The best option would be... Void.'

It was a shame that she had switched out her fourth Sigil otherwise this job would've been much easier. However, it was good that she could still use her personal artifact to compensate.

Using her blood as a marker, she'll open portals for projectile based attacks and spells. For physical, she'll use the shard and her own energy.

But after her stunt that ultimately failed, exhausting her energy this way would be a terrible choice. Instead, there's another method of her absorbing energy.

Duality + Tiamat + First Sigil!

Using the first form of Tiamat, Alice will be able to siphon energy from her surroundings as well as attacks.

She'll use this to act as the battery for her shards, allowing her to utilize them to their full capabilities!

[We don't know if you can convert the energy used by the minions of the Outer God yet. We still have plenty of crewmates for you to use instead.] Cayla reminded. It was better to be cautious against the Outer Gods as the rules are different for them.

Nodding her head, Alice walked over to Virn.

"Can you do me a favour?" Alice asked as Virn nodded with a smile.

"Of course, how may I help."

"Give a piece of this to any crew member that still has the energy to fight or stamina to spare, I'm going to siphon it so I can protect your captain from the beast." Alice handed him a sheet of crystalised blood.

Blossoming from the blood were red spider lilies.

"Each of these will act as a node for me to siphon their energy and stamina from. Careful not to give it to those who can't fight otherwise it might drain them of their life instead of energy and stamina." Alice warned.

Leaving the sheet of blood to Virn, Alice glanced back at the beast who was trying to lash out against the Phantom Fleet but an unrelenting wave of attacks kept it from leaving.

'What an absurd ability.' Alice couldn't help but chuckle.

With this kind of skill, Darrow was essentially a one man army who didn't need the support of others.

Flashes of red arcs would also rush towards the beast at times but it shrugged off the attacks like nothing.

Any wound inflicted onto its body would be regenerated in an instant using sea water.

Above, a torrent of lunar light crashed down but tentacles burst out from the sea, blocking the strike.

Right when one of the tentacles was about to crash into Tristan, Alice sprung into action.

Slamming her palm down, shards converged in an instant through the use of Void Steps and formed into a shield, blocking the strike!

Cracks formed across the barrier but it held on!

Flicking her wrist, Alice created a platform for Tristan to jump off from.

While the beast was focused on the shield and Tristan, Darrow appeared behind the beast with two ships and launched two cannon shots against its back.

"ARGGG!!!" Letting out a cry of annoyance, the beast swung its arm back but Darrow was too fast.

His Phantom Fleet phased through the battlefield using this strange mist as they would disappear and reappear elsewhere.

Hit and run!

That was their plan for now but all they were doing was annoying the beast. It didn't look like it was getting any weaker!

'Indeed, it seems like the b*stard won't die unless the sea dries up.' Alice frowned.

Thankfully, it seemed like he wasn't used to his power either as he's merely flailing his limbs around.

In order to cut off his connection to the sea... there was only one method.

Taking a deep breath, Alice focused her mind.

She needed to allocate a portion of her focus in protecting Tristan and Darrow. Just keeping them alive would be enough. As long as they brace themselves, it shouldn't be an issue.

What she needed to do was to act fast!

Artificial Resonance!

The three forms of her artifact linked up with one another as Alice gritted her teeth and began to thread wires of energy between each of the shard pieces.

Since she had already created a grid, what she needed to do was link everything up!

But doing so meant that her shields will slowly disappear overtime until there were no spare shards left!

Darrow and Tristan noticed this as Alice's energy surged from the boat and so did the beast.

Turning its head towards her, the beast cracked open its jaw as ocean waves surged towards his mouth.

A torrent of water shot towards the ship but Tristan was faster.

Twisting his body, a sanctuary of Lunar light crashed down, blocking the torrent of water!

Darrow released two Sea Splitters against its legs, causing it to stumble over.

Tentacles crashed down in an attempt to swat Darrow away but his mist protected him once more.

As more threads linked up between the shards, a cage was slowly being created!

The beast began to frantically attack using the power of the sea but as the Pirate King, Darrow had already mastered the waves!

These futile struggles did not slow down his assault and soon, the cage wrapped around the beast.

Alice only had one goal when it came to making this cage.

In order to cut off his connection to the sea and limit his regeneration, she was going to throw him into the Void!