

Abyssal A 61

Chapter 61: Arriving At The Ruins

Not long after, they left the city and started their journey on the roads. With the Ruins being half a day away, it'll be rather close to 'night' when they arrive.

Without the skies ever changing in the Abyss, it was hard to get a grasp of time but most follow the established time above ground. There were large clock towers that had been spread across the city so that people knew what time it was.

Due to the trip needing half a day, Alice was allowed more time to practice with her wires while Ria was surprised by how quickly she was able to familiarise herself with the new weapon.

It was troublesome weapon to use but once you understand the functions, the versatility was unparalleled. With the durability of the Silk, Alice discovered that it was strong enough to support her weight. Which is to be expected if she wanted it to trap the Kata Charger or at least restrain it momentarily.

Inspired by Alice's eagerness, Ria started to explore ways she could use her own Sigils. With her Sigils requiring her to use her body as a conduit for her lightning, she was trying to find a more efficient way of channelling her power.

Thankfully, the trip was uneventful as most merchants, drivers and other Hunters seemed to be avoiding the road towards the Ruins. Even if their destination was not the Ruins, no one was on the road towards the same direction.

Naturally, Alice could understand that they must be afraid due to rumours of deaths and possibly that large shadow their driver witnessed.

Thinking back to a large beast, Alice couldn't help but remember the giant titan beneath the city of Slaughter Docks. A beast so large that she could stand on its back as though it was a island.

So many slaves were chipping away at its armour only made one imagine how large it must've been in its prime. Not only that, what kind of being was strong enough to cleave the beast in half and imprison it in such a state.

A state where it was on the verge of death and harvested for the armour.

'I wonder why they didn't go for the blood. Or perhaps the side effects were too strong?' Alice wondered to herself.

If the blood of a normal Abyss Beast attracted a person's attention, then the blood of such a behemoth will definitely be desired.

'Maybe they did collect it and sell it to rich people instead. I doubt they'll sell the blood of that titan for cheap... Ah... I should've asked mister Nalem about that beast and the chains that bind it. Maybe he'll know what kind of beast it was.' Alice paused in realisation.

Sighing out in slight regret, she glanced out of the carriage towards the mountains and admired the passing scenery. Despite the urge to get stronger, she felt more peaceful than ever.

Noticing Alice's mood, Ria couldn't help but chuckle. She had to admit that Alice had a great poker face. But that was only if they didn't include the eyes. If they included her eyes, one could read her like a book.

"Alice, you might want to work on hiding what you're thinking all the time." Ria called out as Alice turned her head back.

"What do you mean?"

"Your eyes. They tell people what you're thinking all the time. Whether that be happy, angry, sad or curious. In a fight, it might be disadvantageous for you if others can keep seeing how you're feeling." Ria explained while Alice tilted her head in confusion.

Furrowing her brows, she wondered how she could hide what she felt.

"How to hide... eyes?" Alice asked in bewilderment.

"You... Hm. That's a good question. The only reference I got is Allura I suppose. I can never tell what that woman is thinking about. She shows you what she wants to reveal and keeps everything else under tight wraps." Ria shrugged.

"So maybe you can try keeping a blank stare? For Allura, it think her grins and explosive actions make a good distraction but you're different. So maybe start with a blank stare and work up from there." She suggested as Alice nodded her head slowly.

She still wasn't too sure about what Ria was talking about but if it's a blank stare, there was one that she had seen plenty of times to serve as a reference.

Her father's stare.

Closing her eyes momentarily, she remembered her first experience with that stare. The first experiment where he looked on coldly.

As she opened her eyes once more, the atmosphere of the carriage turned frosty as Ria was forced to hold her breath from the sudden sense of pressure. It was similar to when she saw her grandfather being serious, a stare that belonged to one that stood above all.

One that judged everything with cold indifference.

Cold sweat dripped down Ria's back as she felt something trying to trigger her fight or flight senses. She knew that she was stronger than Alice but now, doubts started to crawl through her mind.

Disappearing as fast as it appeared, the pressure dissipated after Alice closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

"Something like that?" She asked, seeing Ria not saying anything.

"Well... It'll certainly work in a fight. I wouldn't say it'll be handy if you need a poker face for negotiations though since it might antagonise them." Ria forced a smile as she could imagine a scenario where Alice is meant to keep a poker face but pisses the trader off instead with a threatening aura.

"Where did you even get such a glare from in the first place?" Ria asked while rubbing her arms, feeling the goosebumps.

"My father." Alice replied with a light shrug.

Hearing this, Ria paused as she couldn't imagine what young Alice must've felt seeing that glare enough times to memorise and even replicate it.

"I'm sorry." Ria apologised, causing Alice to blink her eyes in confusion.

"Why are you apologising."

"Hm? Oh no, I just thought mentioning it would make you sad." Ria scratched her hair awkwardly.

"Why would I be sad over him?"

". . . That is a fair point. My bad." Ria raised her eyebrow in understanding. Meanwhile, her reply only left Alice more confused than ever.

'??? Your bad? Why is it Ria's fault again? Did I miss something?' Alice thought to herself in confusion while Ria had already turned her attention to the scenery around them, showing no indication of needing to explain herself.

###

As the day went on, the two had short naps in the carriage to replenish their strength after a sleepless night.

Ria made sure she wasn't in deep sleep as she kept half of her focus on the surroundings. Naturally, Alice tried the same but was unable to, eventually letting out small snores while sleeping, causing Ria to chuckle at the display.

Upon reaching their destination, Ria could feel the carriage come to a stop and opened her eyes.

The driver had brought them to an abandoned village with a large broken windmill. In the distance, the tower stood ominously with a myriad of broken ruins and forest surrounding the area.

"I'll make a camp here. This is far enough to guarantee some degree of safety but we'll need to be careful about smoke and light. Only use some small lanterns in the houses if needed." The driver explained since he was already feeling nervous about approaching this area.

"Any house you want to recommend?"

"A few but the windmill is the best option we've got. The walls are mostly in tact there so it'll shield us from the wind and keep a lot of the light from escaping." He replied while pointing towards the broken windmill.

Nodding her head, Ria nudged Alice's shoulder to wake her up.

"Hng? Hm? Huh?" Opening one of her eyes, Alice was still half asleep as she didn't have the strength to open the other eye.

"We're here."

"Oh, okay." Nodding her head, Alice yawned before going back to sleep.

". . ."

Speechless, Ria gave Alice a few more nudges before finally being able to wake her up for good.

Giving her body a large stretch, Alice yawned before following behind Ria to set up camp for the night.

Now that they were near the Ruins, they needed to scout out the beast tomorrow so that she could formulate some plans on how to deal with the beast itself.

Alice wanted to see how strong the trees were and what kind of traps she can make with the Silk. If the area was too small or if there were no suitable places for her to lay traps, she'll be forced to improvise on what to do. A situation she hopes to avoid if possible.

Not only that, Ria will need to see what kind of beasts are nearby and how to keep them away from the fight without the Kata Charger running away.

There was a long night ahead for the two of them from this moment on and there was no time to spare.

###

Deep in the forest, a beast stalked the area as its horns broke large chunks of a tree trunk without any issue.

A purple liquid seemed to flow out of its maw with each step being taken with great difficulty.

Letting out a pained growl, it collapsed onto its knees while the muscles on its body started to twitch and bulge. In the space behind it, a large figure narrowed its glowing eyes at the Kata Charger.

Opening its jaw, a black mist spewed out before being infused into the Charger's body.

Cracking sounds echoed through the Charger's body as it reared its head back and let out a ground shaking cry that blended with the calls of beasts through the forest.