

Abyssal A 611

Chapter 611 - 611: Lost Daughter Of The Eclipse

The final selection for the tournament didn't surprise Alice at all. Everyone whom she thought would pass thanks to the records, passed, including herself.

Jin also did pretty well for the spar as he was actually put with a normal instructor.

Turns out, after Alyss's stunt in the first chamber, no one wanted to spar with her out of fear.

Despite being in a position where she couldn't use her Sigils or enhancements, she still found a way to break the door!

They didn't want to imagine what kind of damage she could do if they were to accidentally annoy her during the spar.

"The main tournament will be starting in about two days, are you excited?" Alice asked Jin as the two of them were walking through the streets of Baichuan.

The festival was still going strong with more people crowding the streets.

"Not really?" Jin shrugged.

The calibre of contestants was a little disappointing for him. Except for maybe a handful of people, none of them caught his attention.

Perhaps it's because he's slowly unlocking the offensive Zone but their movements seemed sluggish and lacklustre.

"Oh hou~ Confident now are we?" Alice hid her smile with her fan as Jin felt a chill and quickly shook his head.

"N-no! It's simply that no one can compare to you master." Jin coughed, sneaking a glance at Alice who nodded her head in satisfaction.

"Well no matter how much you praise me, Alyss will still give you that training session you owe her." Alice chuckled.

Hearing this, Jin's shoulders drooped down with a deep sigh.

Just as Alice was about to smell something else, she noticed a fragrant scent in the air.

'Alcohol!'

Swallowing her saliva, Alice had Jin go off on his own for now, they'll gather back at the Inn later.

Seeing Alice run off so quickly, Jin couldn't help but chuckle knowing that she was probably going to go drinking.

But his smile soon faded after noticing something in his periphery.

A figure he was familiar with. That hairstyle, those eyes and that smile on his face. . .

Quickly turning his head over, he frowned as there was nothing there.

'Am I being paranoid?' Jin frowned.

There was no trace of the cult's energy there so it couldn't have been who he thought it was.

Shaking his head, he sighed and glanced up at the sky only to see the Eclipse hanging above him.

"!!!"

Rubbing his eyes, he noticed that it was gone once more.

'What the hell is going on.'

Was it the lingering effects of the Eclipse Ritual? Was the Eclipse planning something else? What was going on?

Jin had countless questions flying through his head yet had no answers.

###

Following behind Luke, Ria watched as he cleaned up all of the victims that lashed out at them.

The more she watched, the more confused she became.

Was she like that too? Did she try to lash out at Gin?

Why did he spare her? Why can't she help them?

'Are they not lesser beings to you? Hm?' Her voice asked as Ria blocked it out.

It was trying to sow doubts into her heart, and as much as Ria is loathed to admit it, it was working.

She was beginning to doubt what she was doing, why she was doing this.

But every time she asked herself this question, only one answer appeared in her mind.

She wanted revenge.

Revenge for what they made her become, for the actions she did during the ritual.

'Oh no no no. They didn't make you do it. YOU did it. You ate, you killed, you laughed, you danced. You could've just folded over and died, clinging onto your morality till the bitter end but YOU, tossed it away for survival. You survived upon the sacrifices of the others that were in that pit with you.'

Gritting her teeth, Ria punched the wall beside her as Luke glanced back in surprise.

Shaking her head, Ria gestured for them to push forward.

'You don't want revenge, you want justification. Justification for everything you did in the past so that you won't be blamed for it. Are you afraid? Afraid of their hands gripping around your neck in your sleep?'

*CLANG!!!

Glancing up in shock, Ria was surprised to see a fanatic with a blade in hand inches away from hitting her. However, Luke managed to intervene and parry it off to the side before casting his Bishop piece.

Manifesting a spectre of Alice, he controlled her to fire a Void Flux point blank, erasing the upper half of the fanatic.

"Maybe we should sit down for a bit." Luke suggested.

The closer they got to the heart, the more severe Ria's reactions were becoming.

It even got to the point where a normal human was about to harm her.

"Right... We should." Ria sighed, clutching her head.

'Does it feel good? To get his pity? Oh~ Poor you, having to go through what you went through~ Shall we conveniently forget the fact that you even went out of your way to kill some of them?

'Oh who was it again? What was his name? Poor lad tried to defend you before Luke appeared. But then you chased him down through the lake of blood, gutted him like a pig and watched as the light disappeared.

'Can you still remember his last words?'

"Why..." Ria muttered, glancing down at the floor.

Her vision turned a little hazy as drum beats pounded in her ears.

She could hear the rhythmic chanting of the fanatics while they killed each other in the pit of blood.

Their harmonic choir and the clashing of weapons against the ground.

She wasn't just any victim of the Ritual.

She was their best executioner.

The one who lasted the longest.

'How could you ever forget how you lured them in? Acted all weak and innocent. Oh poor me, look at how meek and cute I am. I need your protection otherwise I'll die~ Every new batch they brought didn't know any better and bought into your bullsh*t kekeke.

'Then when they turned their backs... You struck.'

Closing her eyes, Ria tried to take a deep breath to try and calm down but it felt as though she just drank a mouthful of blood.

Her eyes snapped open only to see that nothing changed.

There was no blood in her mouth, it was simply her own hallucinations.

'Miss the taste? Delicious isn't it. Go on, look to your right. He's just like the others back then right? Wasn't he your next victim before Gin appeared?'

'You're wrong!' Ria denied, looking away from Luke.

'Am I? We both know the answer to that.'

'Go on, listen to the call. Be like the good girl you were in the past. You wanted their approval didn't you? Because if you did, you'll survive. Do you truly believe you can kill a God? Our God?'

'You saw what the Apostles can do with a wave of their hand. Abyss Lords are mere children to them. Even if you reach the fabled nine Sigils, what makes you think the Apostle of Famine wouldn't just swat you like a fly?'

Ria didn't know how to reply.

Shaking her head, she forced herself to stand up.

"Maybe you should rest a little longer." Luke frowned, concerned about Ria's current state.

"It's fine. The faster we get this over the sooner I can stop hearing this voice." Ria smiled bitterly before summoning her weapon.

She could sense that the heart of the ritual was not far from them now.

In another few floors, they'll reach the bottom.

To their right, she could see the waterfall of black ooze that dripped from the sun flowing deeper towards the heart of the ritual.

Taking her eyes off the ooze, Ria crouched down slightly as lightning coursed through her body.

*BANG!!!

Rushing down without waiting for Luke, Ria could see the fanatics trying to scramble against her.

All she needed to do was disarm them. Disarm their weapons and they can't fight back.

*KRK!!!!

Appearing before a fanatic, she twisted her body and cleaved them in half.

"!!!"

Adjusting her grip, she stabbed her sword into the ground, sending out blades of lightning that fried the others within the proximity.

Watching the blood evaporating, Ria glanced down at her hands.

There was no tremble, no guilt.

She could see her reflection in the mirror, the 'shock' in her eyes.

She was smiling a twisted smile. Her eyes were calm and she saw a shadow of her former self in her reflection.

###

Kneeling in a pool of blood crafted by the corpses of countless fanatics gutting themselves, a robed figure raised their hands into the air.

"Sons and daughters of Eclipse, harken to my words. Can you feel it? Our lost sibling has returned. With her hands, she has delivered our family to the Lord's embrace. Welcome it! Embrace it!

"Through the spilling of our blood and flesh, we will be reunited with the Lord! The Eclipse loves all! Only through war can peace be appreciated. Only through famine will the clouded eyes be opened. Beneath the banner of the Eclipse, all is equal!" They proclaimed as another wave of fanatics walked towards the pool.

Raising their ritualistic daggers, there was a fervent light in their eyes as they smiled.

"All is equal!"

Plunging the dagger into their stomachs, they twisted the dagger and threw themselves in as their blood revitalised the pool.

"Lord of the darkened Sun, give onto us your blessings as we carry out your holy word. We will welcome back our lost sibling with open arms. We will accept her, forgive her and bring her to the light." The figure prayed towards the statue of the God of the Eclipse.

Chapter 612 - 612: Shinsei Raikiri

Arriving at the bottom of the ritual site, Ria could see only one fanatic still alive and in the middle of the pool.

Around him floated dozens of dead bodies with him silently praying.

Furrowing her brows, she glanced around to see if the Ritual was still continuing.

However, she didn't have the same vision as Alice so she couldn't see the flow of energy. All she could see was statues of the God of the Eclipse holding a flickering flame.

The easiest way to go about this would be to deal with this figure so that there was no one else to conduct the ritual.

"Dear lost sister, shall we talk?" The figure suddenly spoke as Ria frowned and glanced down.

She could see him turning around, sitting beneath the statue.

Not wanting to waste any more time, Ria didn't hesitate as lightning coursed through her body.

When dealing with the Eclipse, it's best not to listen to what they say!

***RUMBLE!!!**

Teleporting next to the man, she twisted her body and slashed up with her blade only to see chains and rusting swords jump out from the pool of blood, blocking her attacks.

"By all means sister, make me a martyr. But now is not yet time. I must deliver unto you the words of our Lord." The man smiled, causing a vein to bulge on Ria's neck.

Jumping back, she activated her Resonance as lightning crashed down on her body.

Summoning a spear, she twisted her body as circles of amplification appeared before her.

***BANG!!!**

Throwing the spear like a javelin, she watched as the lightning bounced off the rusted weapons, crashing into the walls around them.

"They might be your Lord but they sure as hell ain't mine!" Slamming her palms together, Ria gritted her teeth as lightning converged around her once more.

*CRACKLE!!!

Lightning lashed against the blood while a golden and blue radiance began to overlay Ria's body.

"Deny it, reject it, turn your eyes from it but the truth still stands. Thou art a child of our Lord, a subject of our holy Ritual. Our blood runs in your veins!" The man proclaimed, ignoring the nexus of energy wrapping around Ria.

Creating a concentrated orb of lightning, Ria crushed it with her hands before firing it towards the man.

Lightning split off into countless strands but weapons erupted out from the pool of blood to block it all.

"The armoury of our Lord protects me! Now allow me to open your eyes lost sister."

Narrowing his gaze with a fanatical smile, the man brought his hands together for a prayer as blood red ritualistic symbols began to manifest around them.

Glancing around, Ria's eyes constricted in shock as she recognised some of these markings.

It was a continuation of the ritual she was in before!

Immediately turning herself into Lightning, Ria wanted to leave the range but it was already too late.

Crashing into the barrier around the pool, Ria was flung away as she glared at the man.

"This holy sanctuary was not made for you, dear sister. However, with your homecoming, I have been tasked with glorious purpose. To awaken you to your true self, to open your eyes and welcome you back with open arms. Rejoice! For our Lord has deemed you worthy of such costs.

"This land, this ritual, it will all be for you!" The man raised his arms in worship as Ria glared at him.

She had to stop this ritual!

Thankfully, she wasn't hearing the voice now so she could concentrate fully.

Right now, the only thing defending him were the rusted weapons.

As long as she could bypass that, she can stop this!

Taking a deep breath, Ria slammed her hand down, creating a cage of lightning smaller than the boundary of the ritual.

Little by little, nodes began to manifest through the cage as Ria's body disappeared.

She flickered through each node while gathering as much power as she could.

"Struggle, defy, the Lord will welcome you nonetheless."

Ignoring his words, Ria threw two javelins in quick succession as rusted weapons blocked them once more but before the electricity could dissipate, Ria swapped their positions and fired a bolt of lightning at point blank!

*BANG!!!

However, a second layer of weapons appeared between them, dispersing the lightning.

"Why must you defy our Lord's love? How many would die to be in your position?" He asked with a side glance.

"By all means, take it from me. I care not for it." Ria grabbed the weapons in an attempt to pry them away.

But it was futile. The weapons refused to budge as Ria changed her focus to destroying the weapons instead! Overcharging her fists with lightning, she unleashed a flurry of blows.

'Not a single scratch.' Ria clicked her tongue.

Despite the weapons being rusted, they had more durability than even some of the finest crafts that she's seen!

"Ria!!!" Luke's voice suddenly called out as Ria glanced back.

She could see Luke vaulting over the railings as he summoned four pieces.

Quad buffs! Knight, Rook, Queen, King!

Overlaying the buffs onto Ria, he then summoned his third piece.

Bishop!

Transforming into a spectral version of Alice, the bishop piece rushed forward with a Void Flux in hand and targeted the barrier of the ritual.

*BANG!!!

To his shock, the barrier held firm.

"Just keep me buffed up!" Ria shouted, knowing that aiming for the barrier was futile in their current state.

Jumping back, Ria raised her hand, summoning a bolt of lightning and transformed it into a sword.

A normal Raikiri wouldn't cut it. The rusted swords were too strong.

She needed something faster, stronger. Something that'll eliminate everything in a straight line.

The targeted area doesn't need to be wide. Just big enough to kill this man and end the ritual.

'Focus Ria. There's no voices distracting you now.'

She recalled her training with Rosalyn. How to best channel her power and how to concentrate it into a single hit.

How to bypass certain defences and most of all, how to identify a weakness!

Lightning began to crackle from her body, forming a boundary around her.

The man wanted to say something but felt a chill down his spine.

Her unwavering gaze, this absolute focus.

His smile faltered.

'Listen my dear lightning chihuahua, in this world, rituals are not just for making contracts with higher beings. They are also a form of restriction for yourself. By cutting off certain paths, you open new ones. Focus, discard what you don't need. Don't be greedy. Focus on what you can accomplish in front of you.'

Rosalyn's lesson rang out in her mind.

This was the same advice she taught her when she created the Raikiri technique, an attack based off of her grandfather's slash and Allura's power.

'Discard what I don't need.'

Ria could feel the power coursing through her body.

She could see the droplets of blood slowly flying up into the air as a result of her lightning crashing into the pool.

She could see the faint trembling of the man's pupils.

It was not fear but uncertainty.

What she desires right now is not a slash to kill. But rather a single slash to remove everything in front of her!

The world lost its colour for Ria as her focus reached an all time high.

She could see the rusted weapons slowly extending from the pool in preparation for her attack.

'Do not waste the power, channel everything into the blade.'

At that moment, Ria's resonance began to shift. With her in the centre, a boundary expanded, draining colour from the world, almost as though it was freezing time.

With a flash, Ria's body disappeared.

Shinsei Raikiri!

*BANG!!!

In front of the man, Ria could be seen with her blade drawn in the air.

A charred line of destruction tore through his body and into the boundaries of the ritual, forming cracks along the symbols.

The rusted weapons that acted as his shield had cracks on the surface, clearly failing to block this attack.

Just as Ria was about to retrieve her blade, she saw a reflection of herself next to the man.

That twisted smile, that presence.

Walking over to the trembling body of the man who was about to die, 'Ria' turned into mist and disappeared.

"Hiya~ How on earth did a cutie pie like you bypass my blessing on this man? Granted, it was a little lazy but still, you broke it." The man's voice began to shift as his body contorted.

Ria felt a chill down her spine as cold sweat filled her body. Jumping back, she wanted to create some distance but felt a hand press against her back.

*BANG!!!

Turning around for a slash, her blade was caught by a woman with sharp teeth, black blood dripping from her eyes and black hair.

"You seem shocked. Surprised? Shouldn't this guy be dead? Why did he turn into a woman?" She teased, pushing Ria back with her finger.

Glancing over at Luke who was still trying to break this barrier, the woman flicked her fingers up as rusted chains shot out of the walls, wrapping around his body and securing him to the wall.

"Would you prefer me to take the form of a man instead? Most of my followers seem to like that more than a female form. Makes you question doesn't it? Honestly I prefer to look like this." She played around with her hair as the energy of the Eclipse began to fill the room.

Above the statue of the God, a darkened sun slowly manifested.

"Don't want to talk? What a bore. Even when you meet your God, you say nothing. You gave me quite a few sacrifices back in the day as well, I can see them clinging onto you." The woman grinned sadistically as Ria's pupils constricted.

If what the woman said was right then...

In front of her...

The God of the Eclipse Cult!!!

Chapter 613 - 613: Enris's Descent

Swallowing her saliva nervously, Ria didn't dare make a move.

She expected a potential Lord to appear, maybe in the rare case an Apostle since the scale of this ritual was far bigger than what she had originally expected.

But for the Goddess herself to descend?!

"I can smell your fear, you know? I can see that cute brain of yours scrambling for a way out." Enris's voice rang out next to her as Ria froze up.

Enris was currently behind her with her hands around Ria's neck.

"What happened to my dear devoted subject? Such hatred, hurts my heart. All of my followers are akin to children to me, family even. A mother would be hurt facing such hatred." Enris lamented while letting go of Ria.

"What... Do you want with me?" Ria forced herself to ask despite the fear in her heart.

"Finally mustered up the courage to say something but the first thing you say is questioning me? *Sigh... You could've welcomed me with love like my other dear children." Enris glanced back while picking up the head of a fanatic.

Lifting it up, she played around with the jaw, mimicking a talking motion before tossing it away.

"And... Why should I tell you what I want to do with you? What's a mortal to question a God's desires?" Enris chuckled as Ria felt a chill.

***BANG!!!**

Expanding her boundary in an instant, she quickly transformed herself into lightning and jumped back.

In her place, countless rusted swords had rained down from above.

Appearing not far away, Ria could be seen clutching her shoulder as one of the swords managed to slash her before she got away.

***Clap clap clap**

"Fast reactions as expected. You're even using the sh*tty system concocted by sunny boy's Apostles." Enris praised.

In the past, there would be a lot of people who knew how to use the Zones. However, as time went by and the Apostles got lazy, the appearance of this technique slowly faded into obscurity. There will still be a handful of people who knew how to use it, but they were few and far between.

"And here I wanted to kill you painlessly. You're really making me work for it aren't you?" Enris acted frustrated before curving her lips up into a smile.

"Just kidding~" She stuck out her tongue as Ria's vision blurred.

The drums of war echoed out in her mind as parts of her view turned a blood red.

She could hear the war cries of countless roaring out in the depths of her mind, their thirst for blood and her own desire for slaughter.

"You've already handed over your soul when you partook in my rituals darling, what makes you think you can defy me?" Enris asked while folding her arms.

"Or do you perhaps think that I won't have full control over my subjects?" She asked with a smirk.

Furrowing her brows, Ria wasn't sure what her options were. Luke was being restrained against the wall, unable to break out no matter how hard he tried.

She was stuck within the boundaries of this ritual with a God.

The only option left was...

'I'm sorry.' Ria apologised in her mind as she crushed the orb that Rosalyn had given her.

*RUMBLE!!!

A floor of blood immediately erupted around Ria as Enris raised an eyebrow in amusement before floating back slightly and sat on a throne of weapons.

Opening her eyes, Rosalyn frowned before sensing her surroundings.

She had given the orb to Ria as a way to forcefully teleport her in case she got infected by the Outer God's blood.

However, as she laid her eyes on Enris, panic shot through her body.

'££*"£^*£\$&* MOTHERF*CKER WHY DID YOU BRING ME HERE AGAINST A GOD???' Rosalyn cursed in her mind as she glared at Ria in anger.

Bring her against a Lord, sure. Bring her against the outer Gods' minions, that's also fine.

Apostles? Hitting the limit but barely doable if the situation is in their favour.

But against a God?!

"Are you f*cking crazy?! Why the sh*t is there a god here?????" Rosalyn whispered through gritted teeth while trying her best to keep up her guard against Enris.

After interacting with both Allura and Kaden, she was distinctly aware of the feeling of divinity. And no doubt, the being in front of her was a 100% the avatar of a God!

Meanwhile, Enris found this a little amusing and simply allowed the two to speak. She had all the time in the world. If she were to end this play too soon, she'll be back to being bored.

'Sh*t sh*t sh*t! How the hell do I even talk us out of fighting a god???' Rosalyn wanted to punch something out of frustration.

"What? Done talking? I thought the cutie wanted to call in reinforcements but you don't even want to fight?" Enris asked as Rosalyn's smile twitched.

'Who the hell wants to fight a God?!?!'

"Ahem, erm... Your divine majesty, we mere mortals cannot compare to your might. Of course it is futile for us to even dare dream of contending against it." Rosalyn forced a smile while Enris lost her smile momentarily.

She had heard this kind of bootlicking before and had long grown tired of it.

Hearing it again simply brings her more boredom.

"Oh? What's not what the cutie thought when she slashed at me. She almost gave me a small scare."

"!!!"

Glaring at Ria with bloodshot eyes, Rosalyn truly wondered what was going on in her head for her to attack a God of all things!

"My apologies, she's still young and inexperienced. Is there anything I can do for your divine majesty to make up for the younglings' mistake?" Rosalyn asked while Enris scratched her chin.

She was beginning to lose patience in this farce. She was amused for a moment but now, not so much.

"There is one thing. I want you to bring me a suitable vessel. And lucky for you, there are two for you to choose from." Enris narrowed her eyes, looking at Ria before turning her gaze to Luke.

Pausing momentarily, Rosalyn understood that there was no way out of it. She just wanted to see them struggle and dance.

Even if they were to follow instructions and give her a vessel, she'll simply kill them afterwards.

"Tsk, f*ck! Ria, you better prepare your ass after this" Rosalyn cursed as she scratched her hair before brushing it back.

"Sure, if we're alive after this." Ria nodded, knowing that Rosalyn was now resolved to fight, even if their opponent is a God.

Seeing the fighting spirit within their eyes, Enris was finally feeling a little entertained as she flicked her finger towards their direction.

At that moment, countless rusted weapons shot towards them as Rosalyn slammed her hands down.

*BANG!!!

Since they were surrounded by a pool of blood, corrupted or no, she was in her prime location!

A pair of vampiric wings unfurled behind her as blood transformed into weapons to fight back.

She didn't need to destroy them, she simply needed to throw them off course.

Using her spare hand, she aimed towards Luke and clenched her fist.

From his body, blood flowed out and freed his right hand.

"Brat! Give your buffs to me!" Rosalyn shouted, creating a crimson moon above them. A mark appeared above Enris's head as she snapped her finger, breaking the mark in half.

Gritting his teeth, Luke summoned his pieces and applied it to Rosalyn.

Penta buff! Knight, Bishop, Rook, Queen, King!

"Ria! Act as my support!"

Transforming herself into blood mist, Rosalyn appeared above Enris as blood converged into a crimson orb.

*BANG!!!

Firing the blast down, Enris simply raised her hand to block the attack before flicking her finger.

A scythe suddenly shot out of the ground, cutting Rosalyn in half but she quickly stitched her body back together using blood.

Shinsei Raikiri!

*RUMBLE!!!

Before Ria's attack could fully land, it was caught between Enris's fingers.

However, Rosalyn didn't let this opportunity go to waste.

Resonance!

A pair of jaws created from blood erupted around Enris who simply allowed it to happen as both of Rosalyn's eyes turned black with red pupils.

Black cursed markings appeared across her body as power flowed through her veins.

Just as she was about to make a move, blood leaked out of her eyes and mouth.

"So greedy~ Trying to siphon the power of a God isn't good for the mortal body." Enris's laugh echoed out as a wave of red energy burst out, slashing the room in half.

Rosalyn was barely able to push Ria out of the way before her arm was torn to shreds.

Gritting her teeth, she glared at Enris who peered at them through the gap she had just created.

Right now, Rosalyn was forced to hold back some of her attacks since she wasn't suited to fight with people around her.

All of her attacks targeted the area around her and if she was to unleash it, Ria will no doubt be caught up in it!

If she was to be honest, against an opponent like Enris, she was simply hard to kill. Nothing more nothing less.

Gritting her teeth, there was one other thing that she could use since she had no choice right now.

But doing so will weaken her quite a bit for the next few days since her body couldn't handle it. Even with her identity as a Lord.

Taking a deep breath, Rosalyn activated her second domain, dragging just herself and Enris into it.

Looking unamused, Enris waved her hand, breaking the realm and forcing the two of them back into reality.

However, as the shards of the realm disappeared, Enris noticed Rosalyn in a cocoon as blood converged around her.

In the past, she drank Allura's blood thinking it would help her achieve the status of Lord. Instead, it overwhelmed her and caused her to lose her true body.

Much like Alice, she was able to store a portion of the power of anyone who she took a drink out of. However, this was severely limited and only had a one-time use per person. Even if she drank their blood again, it won't replenish the use.

In all these years, she was never forced to use the fraction of Allura's power from back then since she never needed it. But there was another reason.

Because she'll die if she did!

But now, with the body of a Lord, she'll last just long enough to survive.

Barely.

Rosalyn burst out of the cocoon with one attack in mind. One to shred the tether between the God and her avatar.

Authority of Severance!

Chapter 614 - 614: Severing Enris's Connection

Authority of Severance!

Seeing the slash that cleaved the world in half, Enris couldn't help but widen her eyes in surprise.

Countless memories flooded into her mind as her smile widened into a large grin.

Reaching out with her hand, she was about to block it when pieces of her flesh began to fall apart.

'Ah, so this is the limit of the mortal body. Shame.' Enris lamented.

She knew that Rosalyn wasn't targeting her specifically but rather the tether between her and her avatar. Even before the slash hit, the already weak connection was unravelling before her eyes.

A girl who was supposed to be a vessel, a vampiric beast who could use the authority of the Apostle of Severance, Enris could feel her heart beat against her chest.

Finally, finally! She could cure this boredom that's frozen her heart over.

***BANG!!!!**

As the Authority of Severance clashed into her tether, the connection she had towards the ritual site was instantly severed and the barrier containing the ritual was slashed apart.

Finding herself back in her chambers, Enris sat up and wrapped some clothes around her body.

'War should be busy in the East right now. She's trying something a little interesting but a tad foolish. I suppose it wouldn't be a bad call to take a walk around the place.'

###

Shielding her eyes from the sudden burst of power from Rosalyn's body, Ria stumbled a few steps back as she tried to assess the situation.

The sound of the barrier breaking could be heard while the call of the Eclipse disappeared. She could feel her heart regaining its calm while Luke ran over.

The rusted chains finally broke apart as he checked to see if Ria was fine and sighed in relief.

"Tsk, this is why I f*cking hate using that power. Why the hell does the god have to descend huh?!"
Rosalyn's angry voice could be heard in the dust cloud as her silhouette became visible.

However, Ria was confused as to why her voice sounded much... younger? Even her silhouette seemed smaller.

Flicking her wrist, Rosalyn created a new set of clothes for herself before waddling out of the dust.

"!!!"

Both Ria and Luke were shocked while a vein bulged on Rosalyn's neck.

"What are you little sh*ts looking at!? It's your fault I had to become like this!" Rosalyn gave them a middle finger.

But compared to usual, neither Ria nor Luke knew how to respond.

After all, Rosalyn was now not even half their size. Her childlike form tried its best to be menacing only to fall short. Literally.

"Pft, Rosey." Ria smirked.

*PUCHI!!!

"ARGG!!" Rosalyn jumped up, kicking Ria's head and sending her body flying back.

"I might be small now but I can still kick your ass! Why the hell do you have to bring me down to face a God in the first place?! I gave you the orb in case you got infected not because I wanted to die to a God! Do you even know how hard it is to make that orb?!" Rosalyn complained while Luke didn't dare make a peep.

Groaning in pain while amidst the rubble, Ria slowly sat up.

"Sorry, I didn't have much of a choice considering the danger." She smiled apologetically.

"Tsk, and you didn't even think if I wanted to be here or not. I don't have spatial transference powers. What you crushed basically killed my old form to make a new body next to you and transfer my consciousness over. Teleportation with extra steps and death." Rosalyn folded her arms in annoyance.

"Forget it, at least the three of us are alive. I don't even know how long it'll take for my body to recover from using Allura's blasted authority." She groaned in annoyance, sweeping the three of them up in a swirl of blood.

Arriving on the surface, they could see the eclipse disappearing but the black liquid that dripped from it remained.

"Tch, does the Eclipse God not even care about what the hell she's doing to this world?" Rosalyn clicked her tongue in annoyance.

Creating a set of blood crosses, she planted them around the perimeter of the lake and manifested a blood barrier.

It won't do much considering the nature of this location but it was better than nothing. At least it'll help delay the spread and give them time for someone else to come deal with this.

With the barrier of this desert now broken, both Ria and Luke were free to travel around.

Sending the two off on their way, Rosalyn hovered in the air in annoyance while drawing out a ritual circle with her blood.

Soon, she established a connection with someone she knew.

As he looked at Rosalyn's form, a smirk appeared on his face.

"F*ck off!" Rosalyn cursed as anger rose in her heart.

Every time she used her blood storage ability, her body would take a toll based on the power that she used. Most of the time, she would de-age a little. But this time, after using Allura's one time use skill, she was reduced all the way back to when she was just a kid!!!

Even now, Rosalyn didn't know the height of Allura's power.

"Sorry sorry ahahah, now what do you want me to do for you?" The man on the other end laughed while Rosalyn turned the view around to show the barrier she created.

"Lake of Outer God's Blood, Anri Desert in the East, South Sikha. I've already marked it down, deal with it."

Hearing this and seeing the barrier, the man immediately became serious as he placed his hands together. A strange aura seemed to appear around him while Rosalyn felt a chill.

Every time she dealt with this guy, it felt uncomfortable due to the nature of his being.

"Did you check out the barrier?" He asked with a serious tone.

"I did. Nothing was broken aside from what you already know. Some small signs of damage from the inside. Dumb f*cks in the east are trying to pull some sh*t." Rosalyn complained as the man scratched his chin and smiled.

"Alright, leave it to me."

Since the man agreed, Rosalyn didn't see any need to keep up the call and ended it.

###

Seeing the connection ended, the man couldn't help but shrug his shoulders.

"So cold. But don't you think it's about time you control your lads in the East? I have to agree with Rosalyn here. They're going a little crazy on trying to get the Outer God's attention." The man glanced back with a smile.

"You know I don't control them. They're the ones deciding to go this far. Humanity as a whole is desiring a man made God, a god under their control. They want to rebel against the natural order, even if it means tapping into powers they know naught of." A figure replied while observing the reaction within the test tubes in front of him.

"Oh I'm well aware. But you're the one who set everything in motion are you not? Though I don't really care as long as you don't violate our agreement." The man laughed while the other shrugged.

"Trust once lost is not easily gained back. Do not worry, I don't plan on breaking this mutual trust. We still have use for one another and it's best we keep it this way. After all, we hold each other's lifeline." The figure didn't even bother to look back as his eyes focused on the test tube.

"A simple reply would do but you do you. I'm going out to deal with this pool of blood, don't make a wreck of this place now."

Nodding his head, the figure let out a soft sigh as he leaned back and massaged his eyes.

Not far from where he was sitting, a woman could be seen suspended in a strange liquid.

Fair skin and long white hair, the body of a God.

Despite having pieces of her missing, limbs and chunks of flesh, there were signs of healing.

Standing up, the figure walked up to the container holding this woman and placed his palms against the glass.

He stood in deep contemplation before walking over to the test tubes and drank the contents.

Ignoring the pain he was feeling in his body, he walked over to the top of the container and made a cut on his arm, allowing his blood to flow into the liquid.

###

'Alyss.'

'Alice.'

'You see this too right?'

'I do. But do you see what I see?'

'Perhaps. It's not a dream, is it?'

'No it is not.'

'Should we?'

'We should.'

[You two are both a different kind of stupid, you know that right?] Cayla stared at them with an are you serious look.

'Hush Cayla, now is not the time to judge.' Alice shook her head.

'Indeed. This is a momentous occasion that must be observed in full.'

[. . . You two are the last braincell competing for second place.]

'Shhhh, let us focus.'

Right now, Alice was waiting for a vacancy to appear. They were currently in queue for an eating tournament.

On the left, a drinking tournament between some of the best drinks in the city.

To the right, a competition to see who could eat the most spicy skewers. These weren't ordinary skewers either; they were practically made with poison that enhanced the spice levels.

Naturally, Alice wanted the left while Alyss wanted the right. But they could only partake in one due to how many people wanted to compete. To keep it fair, they'll join the first one that has a spot free.

Absolute Zone!

Expanding her boundary, Alice wanted to focus on the exact moment any of them shifts their ass muscles to move off the chair so she could replace them!

[You two are actually stupid.]

Chapter 615 - 615: Alyss Vs Jia Ying

The main portion of the no powers tournament had 8 contestants including Alyss and Jin.

Alice, who was ranked number 1 in terms of seeding and Jin, who was ranked 2 thanks to his performance during the first test.

Qiu Qiu, in her disguise and changed name, was ranked as third seed.

The brackets were as such:

Alyss vs Jia Ying

Jin vs Xiao Wei

Yang Yi (Qiu Qiu) vs Qian Li

Lu Xun vs Cao Lian

If they were to win all of their matches, Alyss would only face Jin in the finals.

Naturally, Alice didn't have any complaints with the arrangements considering he was dubbed as the second seed.

If the first and second seed of the tournament were to face each other from the get go, it would be rather disappointing after all.

As for the other six figures, only Yang Yi caught Alice's attention due to the nature of her energy.

That flow of energy was something she had seen before. The composition, colour and way the strands flow around her was no doubt the strange woman that ambushed them.

And as a guarantee, Alyss recognised the way she carried herself.

Her habits and movements when she walked.

'Why do you think someone like her is disguising herself to join this tournament?'

'Don't ask me, I can't read her mind.' Alyss shrugged as she was more focused on eating the leftover spicy skewers.

Thankfully, she won the bet between them and joined the spicy skewer eating contest. If Alice had won, half the city might've disappeared in the aftermath.

'Tsk...' Feeling annoyed by Alyss being more focused on her food than what they were talking about, Alice let out a small sigh as she recalled what she understood of the contestants.

Jia Ying, high defence and brute force. Held some hints of martial arts from the Titan sect.

'Probably a vagrant who learned a few tricks but not the full thing.' Alice concluded since his performance wasn't anything interesting. All he had was some high defence.

Lu Xun was rather proficient in deception and being able to flicker through attacks like a ghost while Cao Lian seemed to be holding back quite a bit during his tests.

Alice didn't care for Lu Xun since his movements were clear as day under her Absolute Zone, nothing to worry about.

As for Cao Lian, Alice had expectations that he'll probably defeat Lu Xun when they fight, meaning she'll face him in round 2.

Jin's opponent might give him a bit of trouble since she demonstrated great patience and high parrying capabilities.

A difficult defence for someone like Jin to break through right now unless he stabilises his Zone.

And knowing Qiu Qiu's strength from first hand experience, there was no need to even consider her opponent.

If anything, Alice was more curious as to the fight that'll occur between Jin and Qiu Qiu.

Neither of them knew the full Zone.

Qiu Qiu could use offensive Zone but not Absolute.

Jin could tap into Absolute but the boundary was unstable and the same goes for his offensive Zone.

###

Looking at the list of contestants, Qiu Qiu had a frown on her face while the fires of determination burned in her eyes.

Noticing this, the Demonic Squad Leader scratched his chin while looking at the names.

"Is your opponent this Yan Lixing guy? The one you said showed signs of the state of Unity?" He asked curiously as her gaze didn't waver at all.

"Mnm. Any last minute tips?"

"None. I've told you everything you need to know. All that's left is for you to understand and comprehend my words on your own." The leader laughed.

"Are there really no final tips you can give me? Something to help me unlock the state?" Qiu Qiu asked but the leader simply shook his head.

"If it was that easy, don't you think the squad would be filled with people who can use the state of Unity? The knowledge I've imparted, to put it crudely, is giving you the knowledge that a key is needed to open this door.

"However, the shape of the key is entirely up to you to discover. I don't know the exact parameters to open this door." He explained while Qiu Qiu simply looked at him in confusion.

Letting out a sigh, he dismissed it with a wave of his hand.

"Forget it. The best teacher is still experience after all, regardless of a win or loss. Just keep that in mind and you'll discover what you need in time."

Nodding her head, Qiu Qiu made her way to the waiting rooms while the leader found a seat in the crowd stands.

On the opposite side of the arena, the 'Vips' could be seen sitting near the Empyrean Dragon sect leader.

Children from noble families or clans representing them, honoured disciples from sects and even wandering warriors who made a name for themselves.

The Empyrean Dragon sect was generous with these seats.

Of course, the Demon Extermination Squad also got an invitation but he didn't respond to it. If it wasn't for the fact that he wanted Qiu Qiu to get more experience, he wouldn't have bothered at all.

###

In the waiting rooms, all of the contestants eyed one another as none of them said a single word. Alyss sat on a table and crossed her legs while Jin stood next to her.

Qiu Qiu stood near the door, glaring at Jin while the other contestants were spread across the room.

"Did you insult her or something? Why is she glaring at you like you're her mortal enemy?" Alyss whispered.

"If I knew, I would tell you. But she's been doing that since round one." Jin replied, feeling wronged as he didn't do anything to oppose her.

'Do you think it's because she thinks he's a part of the cult?' Alice theorised but Alyss shook her head.

'If she did, you really think this hot headed girl would sit still like now? She'll probably ignore the tournament and go after him.'

It's also another reason why Alyss was taking charge right now. If Alice was to reveal herself, Qiu Qiu would be able to sense the 'cult's energy' on her body. Not that she knew what kind of energy the girl was seeing.

Not only that, but when Alyss took over, the energy disappeared, which was strange to say the least. If it didn't, a fight would've broken out by now.

Ignoring Qiu Qiu for now, Alyss glanced at Jia Ying, her opponent for the first round. Boasting high defence and power supported by his large stature.

Immediately, he was looking down on Alyss with an arrogant light in his eyes, confusing her since neither of them had interacted.

'Pft, I got a theory twinnie. Do you think he got absolutely destroyed on the first test since he's a defensive type? The first one tested dodging and parrying ability after all.' Alice chuckled.

His scores for the other test weren't bad, which is why he managed to secure a spot.

"What do you think you're starin' at?! Huh?!" Jia Ying snapped while Alyss turned her gaze away.

Seeing her nonchalance, a vein bulged on Jia Ying's neck but he forced himself to calm down.

Causing trouble within the Empyrean Dragon sect was asking to be killed. He might be confident in his defence but he wasn't dumb enough to oppose the Sovereign sect.

Peeking through the doorway, Alyss could see the assumed sect leader of the Empyrean Dragon sect, Jiang Luoyan. The one who was rank 2 for the records set during the first test.

An Absolute Zone range of 17 meters without using any powers.

As though noticing her gaze, Alyss felt him staring back at her for a moment, causing her to frown.

'He's probably the one controlling the arrows and spears during the first round. I don't know who else would be able to see the gaps through Absolute Zone if not him.' Alice furrowed her brows.

While rank one was Mo Xincheng, Alice didn't hear any news about them within the sect. They were simply known as the sect leader's friend.

Hearing that he was probably the one messing around with her during the first round, Alyss's smile twitched as she wanted to beat him up immediately.

'Just hold it in for a bit. Let Jin have his fun and once we're done with things, we can just attack him and see what happens. He has the aura of a Lord so it won't be an easy fight.' Alice suggested.

Jian Luoyan wasn't exactly keeping his aura subtle so it was easy to tell if he was a Lord or not. Compared to Rosalyn and Darrow, he felt far 'sharper' and dominant. It was as though he wanted to force his surroundings to submit to him.

Once he was finished with his pleasantries as the leader of the sect, he signalled the beginning of the tournament.

Soon, the announcer began to introduce each of the fighters, their strengths and fighting style. When it got to Alyss, she was described as a fierce fighter with superb parrying skills, reaction and counters.

He even added an extra line regarding how her style held similarities to the Swallowtail Sect.

Jin got the opposite.

Full on brutality and adaptability, a martial artist that knows how to push his advantage.

Once the introductions were over, the first fight was announced and Alyss made her way to the arena.

Opposite her, she could see her opponent cracking his knuckles but Alyss paid him no heed. Instead, she glanced towards the VIP stand since she saw two familiar faces there.

Her drinking buddy Hualing and Xiao An.

With Alyss being distracted, Jia Ying's anger reached its peak.

Striking the gong to signal the beginning of the battle, everyone watched as Jia Ying rushed forward like an unstoppable tank.

Since he was so confident in his defence, Alyss decided to let him face reality.

During her spar, she mastered two strikes. One to break stability the other to strike through her opponent's defence.

Without hesitation, she pulled back her arm and dashed into his guard.

Jia Ying was shocked by her speed but crossed his arms to guard himself.

The instant her punch landed, one thought crossed his head.

'Oh sh*t.'

*BANG!!!

Chapter 616 - 616: Instant Victories

Feeling the punch connecting with his arm, Jia Ying felt a force pulsing through his body as his eyes widened in shock.

Stumbling back from having his guard broken so easily and with such overwhelming force, he could only watch as Alyss twisted her body, slamming her foot into his face and kicking him out of the arena.

With Jia Ying defeated so quickly, the audience wasn't sure how to react as the announcer quickly reacted and announced the winner.

###

Watching things unfold the way it did, Jiang Luoyan had an amused smile on his face.

The principles of her attack clearly held signs from other martial arts yet delicately blended into one harmonic attack that shatters the defence.

There's only one other that comes to mind when talking about this kind of talent.

'So she's the demoness. Looks a little different than what's been reported.'

He couldn't help but wonder if she was here to steal the martial arts of the Emphyrean Dragon. Regardless, at least she was respecting the festival and not causing a mess.

Better than what she did to the Vermillion and Chi clan, crashing the wedding and causing their reputation to plummet.

"Woah, Xiao An did you see that? How do you think she did it?"

Not far from him, the daughter of the Chi clan exclaimed while tugging at Xiao An's sleeve.

"I'm not sure. Part of it looks like what my clan uses but at the same time, it's very different." Xiao An replied, trying to comprehend the movement that Alyss used.

"She's probably going to win, right? I don't think anyone else managed to set a record using distance rather than time." Hualing recalled the introduction that the announcer used.

"I believe so. She does indeed have a high chance of taking victory in this tournament compared to the others. As expected of first seed."

"If she's this strong without her Sigils, how strong do you think she is with them?" Hualing folded her arms.

There was one other that came to mind when talking about this kind of demonic strength. Especially being able to use the Zone.

Alice.

But what are the chances of her being here? The news about the demoness has mostly faded away since she stepped away from the public eye for quite a while.

Even the bounty on her lost its primary function since no one could find her.

"Who knows. Though it's a little unfair to dismiss the other contestants. There are two that seem to be rather strong as well." Xiao An chuckled.

While Hualing and Xiao An were discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the contestants, in the audience stand, the leader of the Demon Extermination Squad had his eyes on Alyss.

After their last... scuffle by Jejin port, she has improved far beyond his original expectations.

He could recognise a self-made martial art at a single glance.

No doubt, her journey of attacking all the sects and clans has given her the inspiration needed.

She was already annoying to deal with thanks to her Absolute Zone and reaction speed. But now? He wasn't sure if he could win against her easily through pure martial arts anymore.

From the information he had gathered from different sources, she just needed one fight to steal your martial arts. To understand the underlying principles and the reason why you would use it to achieve a certain purpose.

This kind of genius wasn't something you could come across even if you were to go searching all your life for it. Yet here she was, fighting in this tournament.

###

Arriving back at the waiting rooms, the others were now a lot more wary of Alyss but she ignored their gaze.

"You're up next, if you don't finish quickly I'll be disappointed." Alyss patted Jin's shoulder as his smile twitched.

After her performance, how was he supposed to match up to that?

Meanwhile, Xiao Wei glared at them in anger seeing as how Alyss was just dismissing her like that.

Meanwhile, Qiu Qiu stared at Alyss in shock.

That attack, that speed.

If she had her Sigils, she'll be able to react. But in their current state? Impossible!

Now the question was how.

How was she able to achieve that speed? That power?

Was it technique? How she applied her strength? How was she able to achieve this kind of performance?

And most importantly, Qiu Qiu wanted to fight her! She wanted to see how she compared against someone of her calibre.

With the announcer now calling the next match, Jin scratched his hair and let out a sigh.

"Look, I'm sorry. My master's not exactly the best when it comes to words. But I hope we have a good match." Jin reached out to Xiao Wei for a handshake but Xiao Wei smacked his hand away.

"I don't need your apologies." Xiao Wei spat out in annoyance before making her way up to the arena.

Letting out a fatigued sigh, Jin shrugged before following after her.

Even though he went out of his way to apologise to her due to Alyss's words, if Xiao Wei didn't want to accept it then so be it.

He'll simply do what he's ordered to do and make short work of the fight.

From what he saw, Xiao Wei was proficient in parrying attacks while he was more of a straight forward fighter, especially after Alyss modified his martial arts.

Standing opposite Xiao Wei in the arena, Jin loosened the chains around his arms and allowed the blades to dangle next to him.

As for Xiao Wei, her weapons were a simple pair of armoured gloves, clearly demonstrating her proficiency in blocking and parrying.

*BANG!!!

As the announcer declared the start of the fight, Jin didn't hold back and activated the Flicker Strike!

Rushing forward, he stabbed the blade into the ground as he appeared behind Xiao Wei who wasn't shocked by his aggressiveness.

Instead, she kept her calm and tried to parry his arm before he could generate the power to strike.

False Fangs + Falling Shadow!

*CRACK!!!

Before her attack could land, a blade crashed down from above, stopping her movements as her face paled.

Seeing the blade embedded into the ground, she understood that she would've lost an arm or even her life if he didn't adjust the fall of his blade.

With another fight ended in a single move, the crowd became rowdy as they felt as though the quality of the contestants was too low.

But that was not the case at all.

It was simply that the top seeds were simply too strong!

Alyss had a smile on her face as she was satisfied with how Jin was fighting.

In the instant the fight began, Jin expanded his zone and used Flicker strike to draw Xiao Wei's attention.

While she was focused on parrying Jin's next attack, the blade he stabbed into the ground was pulled up into the air before crashing down as Falling Shadow.

The fight was over the moment Xiao Wei focused all of her attention onto Jin's body.

'Seems like he took a bit of inspiration from the story of Selen's skill beating you to kingdom come.' Alyss chuckled.

'F*ck off, as if you didn't get your ass kicked by that.' Alice rolled her eye.

The ability to understand someone's perception and using it against them can turn the tides of battle in an instant.

Of course, if both fighters are able to use the Zone, it becomes a different question entirely. At that point, it becomes a chess game of who can predict what the other person would do and make preparations beforehand.

A battle of combat sense and experience.

Leaving the arena, Jin wanted to apologise to Xiao Wei again but she left without saying anything.

"Ignore her. It wasn't bad, no complaints from me." Alyss smirked as Jin nodded with a smile.

If Alyss had no complaints with how he handled that fight, then that was the highest compliment he could get from her.

A clear sign that he was going the right way.

With both Alyss and Jin finishing their fights in basically one move, Qiu Qiu frowned and wanted to accomplish the same.

However, she couldn't use the instant Draw since that'll immediately give away her identity.

Walking up to the arena once it was her turn, Qiu Qiu took a deep breath and observed her opponent.

Gaps everywhere.

Was he not taking her seriously?

"BEGIN!!!"

Rushing forward, Qiu Qiu's blade was already inches away from the man's neck when he managed to block it with his weapon.

"!!!"

It was an instinctual reaction towards danger.

The fact that her attack was blocked by the instinct of survival annoyed Qiu Qiu.

'I lost again!' She cursed in her mind.

Gritting her teeth, Qiu Qiu adjusted the grip of her blade, slashing up and breaking the man's guard. Just as she was about to stab with her sword, she noticed a stern gaze from the crowd.

Her master.

His gaze was clearly warning her not to get ahead of herself. To not lose herself in frustration.

Taking a deep breath to calm her mind, she aimed the blade at the man's throat.

"I win." She declared.

Despite not being an instant win, the victory was still rather quick with most of the audience now not paying their full attention. They understood that the interesting fights will only happen in round two when these monsters start facing one another.

As for the fourth fight, it was a lot longer than the other three with Cao Lian managing to pull a close victory.

Expectations were at an all time low for him but he was content. After all, this was what he wanted from the start.

Three strong adversaries for him to overcome as the 'underdog'.

Chapter 617 - 617: Alyss Vs Cao Lian

As round two began, Alyss couldn't help but stare blankly at her opponent.

She could see the confidence in his eyes, the way he was scanning her from head to toe.

No doubt, he was looking down on her.

"Care to not stare at me so much? It's disgusting." Alyss spat out with a slight glare while massaging her neck.

Cao Lian simply smiled before taking a defensive stance.

If the first seed was to lose here, how great would that be?

Granted, he would've preferred it if he was against the third or second seed first.

At least that way, the best fight could be saved till last.

'I should test the waters a little first. She's strong with that defence breaking attack she used against the big guy earlier but it's useless if it can't hit.' Cao Lian was confident.

She didn't even look that much older than he was nor did she have the aura befitting those with the state of Unity.

She didn't feel dangerous like the sect leader or a reclusive master.

Thus he concluded that she was probably proficient in parrying in order to achieve the results she got.

A task which he could do if he didn't want to stay low key.

As the announcer declared the start of the fight, Alyss rushed in.

Twisting her body, she aimed to finish this fight with a single kick.

Noticing Cao Lian's eyes following her attack trajectory, Alyss understood that he was acting weaker than he was.

Since that was the case, she wasn't going to entertain him.

Either go all out or lose!

***BANG!!!**

Her kick suddenly accelerated as Cao Lian leaned back in a panic.

The air cut against his forehead while blood flowed down.

He understood that if he didn't bend back in time, there was a chance that his skull could've been caved in by that kick just now!

Cold sweat dripped down his back as Cao Lian quickly created some distance between them but Alyss wasn't about to let him have the easy way out.

Phantom Shift!

In an instant, Alyss closed the gap between them, causing Cao Lian's eyes to constrict as he felt panic rising in his chest.

*BANG!!!

"Oh?" Glancing at her hand that was parried away, Alyss found herself a little amused at best. Opposite her, Cao Lian now had a pair of tonfa's in his arms as he barely parried Alyss's grab.

"Finally thinking of taking this more seriously?" Alyss asked with a slight shrug.

"Wouldn't be entertaining otherwise." Cao Lian forced a brave smile but his arms were trembling from her earlier attack.

He couldn't believe that this was the power generated by just pure martial arts and physical strength.

The principle behind each attack, the way she whipped her limbs to generate more force.

Cao Lian understood that it was his mistake to take things easy from the beginning.

"Honestly, I doubt you'd be entertaining even if you went all out. Here, I'll give you a slight advantage. Two free hits, that's all you get. I'll let you try and hit me twice without countering." Alyss taunted with smirk while looking down on Cao Lian.

Furrowing his brows, Cao Lian clicked his tongue before smirking.

"Fine, don't take back your word now."

Crouching down slightly, he rushed forward as he adjusted his grip on the tonfas. Reversing them into a strike.

However, everything seemed to be moving in slow motion for Alyss as she simply tilted her body to the side, avoiding the strike.

But the first was a feint.

The second strike came in from below as Alyss tilted her head to the side.

With both attacks now dodged, Alyss was about to attack when Cao Lian spun the tonfa to attack Alyss from above.

Catching it between her fingers, Alyss glanced down at Cao Lian without moving her head.

"That it?"

Widening his eyes, he shifted his body to try and go for a stomach kick but Alyss simply lifted up her knee, blocking his strike and dispersing the force by taking a step back.

Gritting his teeth, Cao Lian threw his weapons in the air, going for hand to hand combat instead.

A three punch combo aimed towards the rib, throat and finally an upper cut.

But Alyss only stared at him blankly.

Slapping away the first hit, she parried the second with her hand, preventing the fingers from reaching her throat before using the same hand to cup the final upper cut.

Grabbing his fist, she pushed it behind him, forcing him to wince in pain before turning him around and kicking him away.

"It'll be better for you if you surrender." Alyss sighed but Cao Lian didn't respond.

Instead, he adjusted his footwork with a focused gaze.

Since things were going to be like this, he'll go all out!

But just as he was about to lunge forward, Alyss had already appeared behind him.

"I gave you the chance earlier for two easy hits. You wasted them and now you want to drag this on? I think not." Two rapid strikes against the back of his knees to break his footing.

Twisting her body, she chopped against his neck, forcing him to fall back.

While he was still in mid air, Alyss pulled back her fist.

***BANG!!!**

Landing a punch against his chest, Cao Lian slammed against the ground, forming cracks as the wind was knocked out of his lungs.

Alyss had even held back during that final strike as well otherwise there was a chance that his ribs would just break apart and stab into his lungs.

This was a competition, not a murder house.

With Cao Lian twitching on the floor, Alyss dusted her hands before stepping down.

Meanwhile Cao Lian glared at her with bloodshot eyes.

The next fight was between Jin and Qiu Qiu, both of which had certain aspects of the zone so the winner was entirely determined by whoever could create the most advantage.

###

Taking deep breaths to calm his mind, Jin stepped up to the arena.

He knew that his opponent wasn't going to be easy.

'Focus on what I can do. Trust in my instincts, trust in Alyss's martial arts.' Jin repeated to himself.

He needed to let things flow naturally in order to tap into the Zone.

If he's too bothered by the process or the outcome, his mind won't reach the state required.

Which only reinforced his perception of Alyss and Alice who could tap into the state whenever they wanted. Being able to consciously flow into the Zone, absolute Zone at that, seemed godly to him.

As he stood on the arena, he could see Qiu Qiu standing with her sword sheathed next to her.

There was focus and determination in her eyes.

Yet beneath that, he could also see hints of anger and frustration.

There were no needs for any words between them.

On the arena, there were only two fighters. Whatever he's concerned about or thinking about, he'll leave it for when he steps out the ring. But while he's in the ring, he'll give Qiu Qiu his full attention.

*BANG!!!

As the announcer declared the beginning of the battle, both fighter rushed in at full speed.

Their weapons clashed with each other, creating sparks as Jin took this time to whip the chain behind Qiu Qiu.

However, she pushed his guard away before performing a no look guard into a horizontal slash that he blocked with his chains.

Flicker Strike!

*CLANG!!!

Despite using his footwork to try gain an advantage, Jin's slash was parried as Qiu Qiu's eyes were locked onto his positioning.

Falling Shadow!

Trying to use the same trick he used on the first fight, Jin expected Qiu Qiu to take her eyes off him but she didn't.

Instead, she took a step back, avoiding the strike before grabbing the chains herself.

Pulling him towards her, she went in for a slash so that he couldn't use the range to his advantage.

For his chains to generate the most power and momentum, he needed the travel time.

However...

*CLANG!!!

Pulling out the blade from the ground, Jin parried her downward strike before twisting his body, unleashing a vortex of slashes.

Since they were unable to use their Sigils, Qiu Qiu forced herself to take a few steps back, only blocking what was needed and conserving her stamina.

'She's keeping her calm.' Jin took a few deep breaths to calm himself.

He could sense her focused gaze, observing and picking away at his martial arts. Trying to find the weakness and gaps that she could exploit.

As expected, she wasn't an easy opponent.

If he wanted to win, he had to create a path himself.

The newly modified Eclipse Reaver only had three movements that Alyss created. These three could be combined with natural movements to create a 'flow', a patten of attack.

Whether or not he could take full advantage of it was completely up to him.

Flicker Strike!

Throwing both blades into the ground, Jin rushed towards Qiu Qiu while adjusting his trajectory by changing the positioning of his anchors.

He wasn't in a rush to attack and neither was Qiu Qiu in a rush to defend.

She was observing his movements.

Silently, carefully.

Passive Zone!

Expanding his boundary, Jin focused on the instant where Qiu Qiu's gaze would lose track of him.

It wasn't a perfect Zone and had limited range. But for this specific task, it was sufficient!

However, the instant he expanded his Zone he felt a chill.

Qiu Qiu sheathed her blade as her gaze was focused on his every move.

There wasn't a gap he could exploit and worst of all, he was already in her range!

Offensive Zone!

Chapter 618 - 618: Jin Vs Qiu Qiu

Sensing Qiu Qiu's Zone washing over him, Jin understood fully what kind of opponent he was dealing with now.

Making the immediate decision to discard one of his weapons for now, he barely managed to bring his blade back before his guard was broken by her slash!

'Sh*t!'

Seeing Qiu Qiu ready for a downward slash after breaking his guard, Jin began to panic.

*CLANG!!!!

Scrambling to block the second strike with the chains, he wanted to retreat to calm his mind but Qiu Qiu wasn't giving him the chance.

The difference between the offensive Zone and passive Zone was small yet decisive.

The offensive Zone excelled at attacking! But if the opponent was to break their guard, their defence crumbles rather quickly.

But for the passive Zone, it was good at everything, but at the same time, not great at anything.

It allowed Jin to be defensive and adapt to the changes.

Unfortunately, Alice only knew these two Zones outside of the Absolute Zone. There were other defensive stances that she had a chance to learn but never did since she didn't want to give away her disguise.

While Jin was scrambling to keep up the defence, Qiu Qiu was focused.

Her attacks were methodical, not rushing nor was she too lenient.

Just the right amount of offense to keep up the pressure, causing Jin to slowly break down.

If he did nothing else, this match would be hers.

Falling Shadow!

Trying to force a gap between them, Jin watched as Qiu Qiu stepped back to avoid the attack before lunging forward once more.

Even after using Flicker Strike, her eyes were locked onto him.

'Think!' Gritting his teeth, Jin wanted to figure out a potential way out for him to take advantage of.

As it stands, the longer he stays on the defensive, the worse it'll get.

While Passive Zone could indeed work on the defence to a certain extent, it wasn't a great solution.

However, as he continued to defend, he noticed some overlaying patterns in how Qiu Qiu was attacking. The shadow of Alyss could be seen on top of her movements.

Faster, fiercer, deadlier.

'Did Alyss steal her martial arts in the past?' Jin wondered, not knowing that Qiu Qiu's martial art was one of the first ones that Alyss stole.

But since he could see Alyss's movements, he slowly regained his calm.

After all, Qiu Qiu wasn't as fast as Alyss!

*CLANG!!!

"!!!"

Widening her eyes in shock, Qiu Qiu didn't expect Jin to counter just as she was about to break his guard once more.

He pinpointed the exact moment a slight gap appeared with her looking to make her move.

'There!!!'

Flicking his arm, Jin took this chance to swing his spare blade towards Qiu Qiu as she gritted her teeth and guarded the attack.

She could feel the force traveling through her arms, turning it numb while he followed up with another fast strike from above.

It was now her turn to be on the defensive!

Immediately, her defensive Zone broke apart as her boundary disappeared.

Jin noticed this shift as well and pressed his advantage!

Flicker Strike! Falling Shadow!

*BANG!!!

Rolling across the arena to barely dodge the attack, Qiu Qiu couldn't even recover properly before Jin launched his next attack.

Forcefully parrying it into the sky, she glared at him in anger.

Was she... About to lose?

Lose?!

To this nameless bum?!

Never!!!

Instant Draw – Killing Arc!!!

Jumping back, Qiu Qiu gritted her teeth in anger as she deployed her offensive Zone once more.

Her body flickered and she struck!

*CLANG!!!

"!!!" Her pupils constricted in shock seeing Jin block her strike.

Sparks flew and she saw his eyes completely locked onto her body.

Every emotion, every action, every desire felt as though it was an open book to him!

"ARGGG!!!" Letting out a shout of anger, Qiu Qiu cleaved up as Jin blocked the strike once more.

Before even letting him land, Qiu Qiu rushed towards him once more.

Soul Chaser!

*CLANG!!!

Even her follow up strike was blocked as Jin felt calm.

Once he saw Alyss's shadow, all of his panic and fear disappeared.

He has seen these moves countless times during their spar. In fact, he shouldn't have been so worried to begin with.

Win or lose, his goal was never the title. It was to find a way to consolidate his spars with Alyss and fully open his mind to the Zone!

'Focus. Let my instincts make the decisions. I have all the tools I need, focus and strike.' Jin thought to himself as he took a deep breath to calm his mind. Stomping down heavily, he stabilized his core as he whipped the chains towards Qiu Qiu.

Raising her sword expecting to parry, her face contorted in shock as the weight of his attack crashed into her, breaking her footing.

She was barely able to push the blade to the side before Jin appeared in front of her.

Twisting his body, he kicked her in the stomach, sending her crashing and rolling across the arena floor before whipping the chains once more.

Falling Shadow!

'I won't lose. I won't let this nameless bum win! I refuse!!!' Qiu Qiu gritted her teeth, using the momentum to force herself to stand up before unleashing Killing Arc into Soul Chaser to push away the two attacks.

With the blades now forced to the side, Qiu Qiu glared at Jin like he's her mortal enemy and rushed towards him.

Even if he pulls back his chains now, she'll be faster!

Her strike will land first!

'I win!!!'

"No, you lose." Jin interrupted her thoughts as he could see her joy in thinking she won.

The modified Eclipse Reaver wasn't simply a case of using the blades. The chains were part of the attack as well!

Flicking his arms, a portion of the chains whipped out in front of Qiu Qiu, cutting off her path as she ducked under the chains to her right and tried to go for a downward strike.

Unfortunately, this move allowed the blades to catch up as Jin stomped down against Qiu Qiu's foot, preventing her from adjusting her footwork.

*CLANG!!!

The first blade parried her strike while the second targeted her neck.

Instinctively, she wanted to step back but with Jin standing on her foot, she fell backwards instead.

Unable to recover, she looked at the blade aiming at her neck with Jin standing over her.

Before her mind could even come to a conclusion, the deafening roar of the crowd and the announcer declaring the winner shattered her illusions of fighting back.

'I... Lost? No... no, no, no, no, no, No, NO, NO!!!' Wanting to get back up, she felt Jin's glare dig into her.

"Stop, take your defeat honourably. The match has been decided, it was close. Thank you for the fight."
Jin stopped her, not wanting her to make a fool of herself further.

Withdrawing his weapon, Jin turned around and left the arena while Qiu Qiu lay on the floor. Her mind in turmoil as she recalled the fight.

Where did she go wrong? He should've stayed on the defensive!!! How did he break out?!

How did she... Fail?

I failed? I failed. I failed, I failed, I failed, I failed...

###

Looking at his disciple's downward spiral on the arena, the leader of the Demon Extermination Squad let out a deep sigh.

He could see that she didn't drop her fixation on the outcome rather than the process. No matter what he says, no matter how many times he says it, if she cannot drop the fixations herself, then there's nothing he could do.

*Sigh...

"What do I even do with this disciple of mine." Despite being one of the strongest in the region, he felt lost.

A seed of doubt sprouted in his mind.

A doubt that despite Qiu Qiu being a genius, she couldn't pick herself back up after so many defeats.

He could only hope that his doubts were unfounded but considering how things were, it was unlikely.

Unless she claims victory over Jin or Alyss who defeated her before, this heart demon will persist.

And in her current state, as much as he hated to admit it as her master, she has no chance in defeating Alyss. Even Jin was starting to surpass her.

If they were talking about pure power, talent and experience, this fight should've gone to Qiu Qiu. But she failed to adapt in the face of change, the moment Jin's movements shifted and she became fixated on winning or losing was her blunder.

She needed to drop that fixation and focus on the changes within Jin, to understand her opponent and fight back.

But she didn't and she lost. She lost her composure.

And in this battle where even the smallest advantage could make a big difference, she exposed herself.

###

Watching the battle, a figure could be seen smiling as he saw the dark emotions looming over Qiu Qiu. He could see her despair, her desperation, her anger and indignation.

To think that he'd find such a good seedling, perfect for germination, the winds of luck were blowing in his favour.

And here he thought he was going to be picking up scraps.

All that's left now was for him to make the proper preparations so that this opportunity didn't go to waste.

Under the watchful eye of the sect Leader and Lord of this region, he had to be meticulous. A brewing cancer beneath the surface, only discovered once it was too late.

Giving the sect leader perched on his throne one last gaze, the man chuckled before making his way out of the audience.

After all, it didn't seem like Alyss or Jin could be corrupted.

Chapter 619 - 619: Ye Shen

Unlike the other rounds, the final round didn't continue immediately.

Everyone was given a two hour break before continuing so they could enjoy the festival some more.

Since that was the case, both Alyss and Jin looked for a place to eat and banned Alice from drinking.

At least for now.

Naturally, she protested with all her strength but with both Cayla and Alyss stopping her, there wasn't much Alice could say back to them.

###

Walking out of the arena with a defeated look on her face, Qiu Qiu glanced at the ground, trying to figure where she went wrong.

That fight should've been hers.

He was on the defensive and it was clear that her Zone was better than his. When it came to attacking.

In fact, looking back, victory was right in front of her.

One more attack, one more step, that's how close she was.

But she missed the chance and he managed to recover and fight back.

She recalled all the times where she's looked down on people her age, thinking that they didn't try hard enough or that she was simply better.

Chosen by the heavens.

Their resentful gazes and anger, was this how it felt?

She wasn't special. She was simply someone who could fight a little harder, move a little faster.

Compared to actual geniuses, she fell short.

'I'm not a genius after all. Best talent of the new generation... What a load of crap.' She smiled self mockingly as frustrations welled up in her chest.

"Qiu Qiu." Her master called out as she glanced up.

She saw his concerned gaze, clearly worried about her wellbeing.

However, she didn't want to see anyone right now.

She wanted to be left alone.

"Master. Can I be left alone for a little while?" Qiu Qiu forced a smile.

The leader of the demon extermination squad hesitated for a moment, clearly wanting to say something before shaking his head.

"Alright. You know where to find me."

Nodding her head, grateful that he didn't push for more, Qiu Qiu wandered around the market with no goal in mind.

No destination and no thought.

She didn't think about the fight, she didn't think about anything. She simply allowed her body to carry her around.

Before she knew it, she was already by a small cliff near the beach, overlooking the sea.

Taking a deep breath, she let out a sigh.

It was a strange sensation. Not thinking about anything. By simply allowing herself to daydream, she felt herself free of her burdens. If only she could feel this kind of feeling more often.

"A unfortunate loss. It was quite a close match, well fought at that."

Hearing a voice not far away from her, Qiu Qiu frowned as she didn't sense anyone approach.

Standing up, she glanced back and saw a robed figure.

It was faint but she could sense the energy of the cult lingering on him as she immediately summoned her sword.

"You've got a lot of guts to show yourself in front of a Demon Exterminator." Qiu Qiu warned as killing intent began to spread out.

"I'm here simply to tal-"

Before he could even finish his sentence, Qiu Qiu lunged forward.

Instant Draw – Killing Arc!

*CLANG!!!

Seeing her attack ward off by a pair of chained blades, Qiu Qiu's pupils constricted as she felt a sense of déjà vu. The way he parried the blades, it was just like Jin whom she fought!

However, she knew it wasn't him since the energy didn't match!

"Who are you?!" Qiu Qiu immediately activated her Resonance, looking to end this fight as soon as possible.

Unfortunately for her, the robed figure wouldn't let that happen.

*BANG!!!

Stomping down, a ritualistic circle expanded in an instant as Qiu Qiu felt her vision overcome with crimson

She felt a weight crushing against her back, pushing her to the ground and forcefully dispelling her Resonance.

"Hmm, this is a little different from what I envisioned. I thought you'd be eager to get revenge against the man who defeated you." The robed figure squatted down in front of her, scratching his chin in confusion.

He clearly saw the darkness looming over her, her doubts and her despair.

Yet the moment she saw him, she dropped all of that in an instant.

"You thought? Ah I see how it is. You thought you could dig your filthy claws into me right?" Qiu Qiu revealed an angry smile as veins bulged on her neck.

*PU!!!

Spitting in his face, she revealed a taunting glare.

Wiping the spit away, the man raised an eyebrow before letting out a sigh.

*BANG!!!

Punching her in the face, the man flicked the blood away as he stood up.

"Seems like I misjudged. And here I thought I found the perfect seed." The man sighed.

He couldn't let her unleash the power of her Resonance otherwise the troublesome people here would sense it.

"If you think... Losing in the arena... Will make me turn into a vermin like you... Think again!" Qiu Qiu gritted her teeth, trying her best to push herself off the ground but it felt impossible.

"Why the hatred? Even going to the extent of calling us vermin." He sighed, lifting Qiu Qiu's chin effortlessly and staring into her eyes.

This hatred from within, it wasn't normal.

However, there was no need to hear her answer.

"Well I didn't want to resort to this but you're too good of a seed to give up. I'll apologize before hand."

Watching the man dig his hand into his mouth, Qiu Qiu's eyes widened in disgust and horror.

From within, he pulled out a pulsing lump of black flesh.

It looked like a miniature heart yet at the same time, different. Veins bulged across its body while a dark murky energy drifted from it like a mist.

Every fibre of Qiu Qiu's body told her to avoid that flesh at all costs.

But despite her desires, she couldn't move her body.

Seeing her fear, the man's lips couldn't help but twist up in sadistic joy.

*BANG!!!

Before he could implant the seed inside Qiu Qiu's body, the man frowned and glanced to his right.

He had caught a flying blade between his fingers but the force still caused the ground beneath him to sink down ever so slightly.

"I knew I didn't see wrong. What the f*ck are you doing here?" Jin narrowed his eyes in anger as his spare blade hung by his side.

He clearly saw this man before in his peripheries but he disappeared before Jin could make heads of tails of it.

Which is why whenever he was roaming around in the festival, he would keep an eye out for this man.

"Who knows? Why don't you find out?" He narrowed his eyes, flicking his wrist and striking back with a familiar attack.

Eclipse Reaver!

Clicking his tongue, Jin took a step back before parrying the strike. Before he could even link into his next strike, Jin watched as the man lung forward, ignoring any potential damage to his body and slashed without care!

"!!!"

Flicker Strike!

Jumping back, he whipped his blade at the man who managed to push it to the side.

A burst of energy erupted from the man's body, forming a momentary barrier to stop the attacks from reaching him.

Pulling back his arms, he aimed both blades.

Twin Fangs Collapsing Meteor!

*CLANG!!!

Hastily parrying the strike, Jin came face to face with Ye Shen, someone he would've considered an acquaintance. A person he sparred with often when he was still in the south, another candidate of the ritual.

After the coup, all the candidates should've been hunted down.

"Why are you here?!"

"You know we don't give away answers so easily." Ye Shen laughed, going into a handstand and breaking Jin's guard with a kick.

Gritting his teeth, Jin lunged forward for a slash but Ye Shen parried it effortlessly.

As long as he was to continue using this weapon, Jin understood that he won't win!

Without hesitation, he discarded the blades and chose hand to hand instead.

*BANG!!!

His punch was blocked by Ye Shen's blade but Jin used this chance.

Pushing it off to the side, he went in for an eye gouge but Ye Shen dodged to the side.

This didn't fluster Jin.

Instead, he adjusted his hand, turning it into a grab as he thrust Ye Shen's head down into a knee strike.

"!!!" Quickly pulling back his leg before it gets cut in half by Ye Shen's blade, Jin adjusted his footwork, trying his best to break Ye Shen's stability.

'Heavy!'

Unmovable was the only thing Jin could think of when his kick landed against Ye Shen's leg.

"Oh it's not going to be that easy Jin." Ye Shen chuckled.

Stabbing his blades into the ground, flames began to erupt as rusted chains burst out, whipping against his limbs and searing his flesh.

Falling Shadow!

His blades came crashing down from above, breaking the chains and freeing him.

Ye Shen could see that Jin has modified the martial arts that was taught to them. However, there was still signs of the old movements.

And if there was signs of the old movement, Jin's habit will appear!

*CLANG!!!

Chains and cages erupted around Jin as he stood in Ye Shen's trap.

But despite this, Ye Shen felt that something was wrong since Jin wasn't concerned.

Then he felt the chill of death behind him.

Instant Draw – Soul Chaser + Killing Arc!

*BANG!!!

Jumping to the side at the last moment, Ye Shen looked at the wound on his arm before looking at Qiu Qiu.

Since there were now two, keeping things under wraps was going to be annoying.

"See you soon Jin." Ye Shen waved as rusted chains wrapped around his body, dragging him into his shadow and disappearing.

With his departure, the cage around Jin broke apart as he massaged his shoulders.

Just as he wanted to leave, he felt Qiu Qiu's killing intent lock onto him.

"Where do you think you're going?"

Chapter 620 - 620: Two Abyss Lords

Glancing back, Jin could see Qiu Qiu aiming her blade at him with a thick killing intent in her eyes.

"May I ask why you're wanting to kill me? Didn't we just push the cultist away?" Jin forced a smile.

"Do you think I'm not aware? Your move set was similar to his. Not to mention the fact that you two seemed familiar with one another. Am I wrong to assume that you're part of the Cult?"

"I already had my suspicions during the first test. So tell me, why are you here at the festival?" Qiu Qiu asked as Jin scratched his head.

No matter how much he may have helped her during the battle, Qiu Qiu couldn't trust someone from the cult.

Absolutely not.

Everything she knew about them, how they operated, she'll never forget.

Just thinking about it caused a vein to bulge as she tried her best to hold back her anger.

"Look, I'm just here to enjoy a fun time, get some experience with my master. Not here to cause trouble so why are you trying to kill me? I haven't even done anything?" Jin asked, scratching his hair.

"Bullsh*t. Vermin like you bring destruction everywhere you go. I'm taking you with me whether you like it or not!"

"Tsk, you haven't even asked if I'd let you do it." Alyss's voice rang out as she appeared next to Qiu Qiu.

"!!!"

However, before Alyss could knock her out, a gourd came flying towards her head, forcing her to catch.

"If you're going to show up, I can't sit back at all can I?"

Glancing over, Alyss saw the alcohol thief walking over. This time, he was dressed up in much finer clothing than he was wearing before.

Seeing her master's arrival, Qiu Qiu wanted to run over but blood chains whipped around her limbs, holding her in place.

Alyss was on guard.

She didn't notice it before but now that she had increased her knowledge on martial arts, she could tell that this man was dangerous!

"Is there a need?" The old man smiled bitterly seeing her hold his disciple hostage.

"There is when you're doing the same to my disciple." Alyss gestured with her chin.

Even though he wasn't making a move, the moment she did something wrong, he could easily kill Jin in the blink of an eye.

"How about we all just take a step back and be civil. How does that sound?" He offered, stepping away from Jin as Alyss frowned before letting Alice take over.

Sensing the energy coming from Alice's body, Qiu Qiu's eyes widened.

"It's you!"

"Ap! Hush now, let's not talk about secrets so openly okay dear?" Alice winked with a grin as she snapped her finger.

In an instant, portals opened, swapping Qiu Qiu and Jin's position.

"Now then old man, alcohol snatcher, don't tell me you're here to steal some more alcohol." Alice asked, summoning a blood sword.

Coughing awkwardly, the old man scratched his chin.

"This one is called Mo Xincheng, what you saw was simply a prank between me and the establishment owner. As for why I'm here, I'm simply here to ensure the safety of a disciple just like you." Mo Xincheng adjusted himself while Alice raised an eyebrow.

"That so?"

With an Abyss Lord in the sect and this old man that seems to be extremely dangerous, Alice didn't want to risk fighting two Lords.

In fact, she got an idea.

"Then how about we let bygones be bygones. But shall we do a small exchange? Since your disciple has slandered mine, don't you think it's only fair to compensate?" Alice grinned.

Hearing this, the old man Mo furrowed his brows with a frown before sighing.

Indeed, they wouldn't need to come to this point had Qiu Qiu simply allowed Jin to leave.

"Dare I ask how you want me to compensate you?"

"Blood. Why don't you give me a bit of your blood." Alice pointed at him.

"I knew it! You're definitely part of the cult!" Qiu Qiu shouted, hearing Alice wanting blood.

However, a glare filled with killing intent from Alice shut her up.

"My blood? That's a rather strange request. Though my disciple isn't wrong. Blood is usually required for followers of the cult." Old man Mo narrowed his gaze as his energy began to rise.

"You want to go old man? Let's go! Who's faster? Me or you?" Alice immediately pushed Jin back as her energy erupted around her.

Fractures manifested around them as motes of Void Flux filled the area.

While talking, she was already preparing to fight in case he wanted to use power to turn things in his favour.

Seeing her activate her powers, Old man Mo narrowed his gaze as the energy of the Cult was now in full bloom. It was impossible to mistake this kind of energy.

The only question now was why she seemed to be their enemy despite having their energy.

"Esteemed guest, old friend, can we not cause a ruckus during the festival? You'll scare the civilians."
Another voice interrupted as both Alice and Old man Mo glanced over to see the sect leader of the
Empyrean Dragon sect, Jian Luoyan.

Seeing the Abyss Lord now here to join the fray, Alice frowned ever so slightly as things weren't looking
great.

Does she fight? Does she not?

'Let's fight. We can take their blood during the fight if we have to.' Alyss wasn't backing down.

As long as they could get the first move in, they have a chance to win.

[Don't be so hasty. We have zero information about them and what they can do. Since they know each
other, we have to assume the worst.] Cayla was the opposite, warning her not to risk things.

"I don't think she classifies as a guest if she has the energy of the cult running through her veins." Old
man Mo shrugged.

Since there were two of them here, to him, Alice had no chance of escaping.

"Again with this energy bullsh*t. Your disciple said the same crap when she ambushed me in my tavern
and now you're saying it too." Alice folded her arms, acting as though she wasn't worried about the
current situation.

The Sigil switches were already on standby. Once a fight breaks out, she's immediately swapping out her
Sigils to make false Resonances using Tiamat and Duality.

"Let's speak elsewhere. I don't think the cliffs are a suitable location for this kind of discussion." Jian
Luoyan was about to transport them using his resonance when Alice summoned her personal artifact.

*CRACK!!!

Watching the space around them destabilise, Jian Luoyan couldn't help but raise an eyebrow in surprise while Alice scoffed.

"What? Two old b*stards trying to take a girl like me away, obviously I wouldn't want to go."

Meanwhile, Jin had cold sweat rolling down his back as he watched Alice antagonising the two people in front of her. One was the sect master and the other introduced himself as the record holder that did better than the sect master!

There was only one thought in his mind.

His master was bat sh*t insane!

Letting out a chuckle, Jian Luoyan nodded.

"Indeed it's as you say. However, this is my home, it's only natural that I show the guests where to go." He narrowed his gaze as his energy surged out, disrupting the barrier created by Alice's artifact.

Yet before it could take hold, the energy dispersed to his shock.

"If that's how you operate then I must apologise, I'd rather not be your guest." Alice retorted, using her blood mist to dispel the energy around them.

"I never get why you always act like this. It's much easier to just ask her directly." Old man Mo shook his head.

Originally, he was planning on taking it easy but if she's part of the cult, then he had no tolerance for their bullsh*t!

Immediately switching in, Alyss slapped Old man Mo's grab to the side.

Now that she had access to her Sigils, her strength returned to what it should be!

*BANG!!!

Each of their punches and parries sounded like cannon shots as Alyss tried to disrupt the Old man's footwork but he was nimble.

Both were expanding their Absolute Zones as Alyss threaded in the power of her Sigils and darkened limbs to no avail.

Taking over momentarily, Alice activated Void Steps as her body disappeared from sight.

"Targeting a disciple is rather underhanded, wouldn't you say? If the masters are fighting, keep it that way!" Old man Mo managed to intercept Alice as he was about to slam his palm into her chest.

However, his vision began to blur as Alice activated her first Sigil, sending him into a brief hallucination.

Just as she wanted to get away, Jian Luoyan made his move.

He came face to face with Alice as the energy around them came crashing down on her.

Void Flux – Cleave!

*BANG!!!

Letting Alyss execute the attack while Alice powered the spell, Jian Luoyan was forced to step to the side as an arc of destructive energy rushed out far faster than what Alice could've launched it if she was on her own.

However, she wasn't done.

Slamming her hand down, a wave of blood erupted with her in the centre before erupted with violet flames.

Both Jian Luoyan and Old man Mo found themselves unable to fully use their energy as Alice immediately created a portal to the Void, dragging her and Jin away from the location.

As the blood disappeared, Jian Luoyan could feel his strength returning to his hands as a frown appeared on his face.

"Are you going to chase her?" He asked, noticing his old friend was about to rush after her now that he could access his energy again.

"Why? Do you want to tell me to give it up?" Old man Mo asked with a frown.

"No but I'd be careful if I was you." Jian Luoyan raised his arm, showing a slight wound.

Blood rolled down his forearm before healing but this wasn't the issue.

The issue was that old man Mo had the same wound!

He realised it must've been during the brief moment where he began to hallucinate.

In the end, the girl got what she wanted.

The biggest question on his mind was how she managed to stop them from using energy. And if she's part of the cult, does the rest of them know how to do the same? If they did, this war was about to take a turn for the worse.