

Abyssal A 62

Chapter 62: Caves Leading Down

Jumping through the forest at night, Alice had a serious expression on her face.

With the camp now set up properly near the ruined village, both Alice and Ria had made their way to the forest early to see if they could scout out any beasts that were asleep.

They wanted to keep a rough track of what's around but the more they scouted around the forest, the deeper their frowns.

Ria's sense of direction was bad but that did not apply to her knowledge of the beast's habitats and where they usually rest. They had heard the calls of beast hours prior but now that they were here again, the forest was dead silent.

Landing roughly against a branch, Ria stabilised herself by holding onto the trunk before gesturing for Alice to stop.

"This is too weird. We have already scouted out main area around where the Charger should be yet there's no beasts around nor are there any corpses or signs of battle. There are definitely signs that there were indeed Abyss Beasts roaming at some point but no more." Ria frowned.

"Do you think its because Charger is foreign?" Alice asked.

There was the possibility that with the arrival of the Kata Charger, most of the native beasts had fled in fear.

"Maybe, but that still doesn't explain the lack of damage to the surroundings. The Kata Charger is a pretty violent beast so in theory, it should've broke several tree's while hunting. The most we've seen are a few grooves but nothing that showed there was a hunt. It's as though the Charger just disappeared from this area." Ria scratched her hair.

"Let's see if we can find a 'home' of sorts. The Charger should've made a resting place somewhere nearby. If we can find it, it might give us some clues." Ria suggested.

Thinking back to the books that she read at the library, she remembered that the Kata Charger preferred to have some walls when resting thus would opt to either sleep in a cave or under a rockface.

With this in mind, there were only a handful of locations that could match this description. On their way here, they had passed by several cave entrances that seemed to be leading deep into the earth. Due to the risks of entering the caves, they had set them aside for later.

Now they were presented with two options.

They could either scout out further into the forest to find the 'home' or they can descend underground.

"I think it's a bit too risky to go deeper into the forest right now. We still don't know what that large figure the driver saw is. If it's deeper in the forest, we might be biting off more than we can chew." Ria suggested while glancing back at Alice.

"Mnm. Let's check out that cave."

Agreeing with one another, they turned around and made their way to the caves.

The entrance of the caves were unlike anything they have ever seen. While the opening was rather small, once they got through, a seemingly endless pit to the bowls of the Abyss revealed itself with a myriad of makeshift bridges created from large fallen rock.

It created a path down with luminescent moss lightning up the area.

While the lightning was rather poor, it allowed them to get a rough grasp of where they're supposed to walk.

As they descended, Ria made sure to create markings so that they can find their way back in case they get lost.

"I don't even know if the Charger will be able to get down here at this point." Ria muttered while glancing up.

There was a small area the Charger could've used to sleep but they've already passed that point.

However, Alice didn't reply. She didn't know how to explain it but there was something calling her from below.

In the darkness, there was something that resonated, urging her to keep going, to find out what's underneath the veil of darkness.

As they continued, purple and blue lights started to illuminate their surroundings as strange mushrooms with glowing undersides started to appear. At first they were small but soon, their sizes started to increase to the point they could be used as footpaths leading down.

The temperature started to decrease the deeper they went. Cold mist escaped their mouth with each breath.

Slowly, the cave started to open itself up as mushrooms pushed against the ceiling of the cave, lightning up the entire area.

With the entire area now basked in an ephemeral purple and blue, Ria widened her eyes in awe at the sight.

"Who knew this was underneath this place the whole time... There were no records about this." Ria muttered while taking in the sight.

Cold blue mist floated across the floor while a faint layer of ice could be seen on the rocks. With the base of the large mushrooms extending to the ceiling, it looked similar to a distant city frozen by ice.

"Maybe it was recently opened up." Alice shrugged as she noticed something in the mist.

Jumping down carefully, they could feel the chill invading their body as they explored this strange frozen mushroom forest.

"We'll explore for a little longer then head back. This is uncharted territory and we're getting distracted." Ria reminded while keeping a lookout for any beasts that might appear.

Nodding her head in agreement, Alice was about to continue when she paused mid step.

Slowly revealing itself within the mist, a large shadow could be seen as both of them held their breaths while preparing to either fight or flee.

As the mist cleared, they could see that it was the frozen corpse of a colossal mushroom beast. It had four limbs similar to a humanoid but its entire body was made from the same material as the mushrooms around them.

Noticing cracks across its body, they realised the layer of ice had been broken.

Despite the urge of wanting to go deeper into the caves, Alice's instincts were telling her to leave.

Fighting against the urge, she slowly took a few steps back with Ria doing the same.

'If the ice is cracked, that means something was here to crack it. It looks recent so they could still be around.' Alice thought with a deep frown on her face.

*CRR!!

Hearing the ice crack once more, both of them widened their eyes as a long elongated shadow reared its head from the corpse of the beast.

They couldn't see the details clearly due to the mist wrapping around its body but both of them knew instinctively that this was not a beast to be trifled with.

Holding their breaths, neither of them made a single move, hoping this beast will just ignore them.

At first, they thought this beast was merely long but that was not the case. Slowly unfurling itself, the beast had long spider like limbs connected to each other with a thin web of skin. Its shadow was a net of flesh and bone that slowly covered the area.

Seeing this trait, Ria recognised the beast and immediately grabbed Alice by the arms before bursting into lightning and dashing away from the area.

Feeling the sudden force yank her away, Alice flinched from the lightning and glanced back. Pausing at the sight of panic in Ria's eyes, Alice knew that they had messed up.

Just as Ria dashed away, the beast slammed down on the area they were just in and started to chase after them.

"Sh*t sh*t sh*t sh*t!" Ria cursed out while twisting her body. Throwing Alice as hard as she could towards the path, she turned around and kicked up with her leg, creating an arc of lightning and clashed against the skin of the beast but it only bounced off, causing her to widen her eyes in shock.

Gritting her teeth, she dodged the beast as best she could and caught back up with Alice as the two ran to the exit of the cave.

Once they reached the top, they collapsed against the walls and sighed in relief while trying to catch their breaths.

"What *pant* the hell *pant* was that???" Alice asked, still feeling chills when she saw the giant form of the beast.

"That was just, the damn tail of the thing."

"The tail???" Hearing this, Alice sat up straight in shock as Ria nodded her head.

"That beast is called the Shasura. Once it catches you with its tail, you can forget about getting out. It's laced with a reflective material that will reduce the effectiveness of your attacks. Its primarily known for its large size and the distinct tail shape." Ria sighed as she knew it was a Shasura once she saw the tail unfurl itself.

"Say Alice, do you know the layers of the Abyss?" Ria asked, surprising Alice.

"A little."

"I'm sure she's told you about Reflection Layer, where most will travel between the surface and the Abyss. The Twilight Layer, where we are. Let's just say Shasura only appears in the Howling Depths. This is a cave to the next damn layer of the Abyss. An unregistered entrance at that." Ria sighed while scratching her hair.

"We'll need to report this to the guild once we get back. This'll put more priority on sorting out this area once they realise there's a path further down."

Remembering the sight of that giant tail, Alice wondered about what she'll need to do in order to defeat such a beast.

'Poison might work but I don't want to do the same thing Leoric did. It's too dangerous. Physical reinforcement doesn't match me... Allura mentioned I should think about the conduit of my power, which is my blood... Perhaps I should get a blood related Sigil.' Alice mused to herself but eventually shook her head.

"Let's go back for now. If a fight breaks out, the Shasura might come up from below." Alice suggested as Ria nodded her head in agreement.

"Let's see what we can find tomorrow if we go deeper in the forest."