

Abyssal A 63

Chapter 63: Movement Beneath The Surface

Making their way back to the camp, the duo made sure to rest up while Ria made some notes about the Shasura and where they had found it. She had to document as much as she could remember so that she could give the most accurate information to the Guild.

Not only that, in her documents she decided to add some notes regarding the rumours she's heard thus far about the Cult and the strange figure the driver had seen towering over the forest.

While Ria was documenting their discoveries so far, Alice had gone to sleep. With nothing else to do for the rest of the night, she wanted to catch up on the rest she was lacking.

Before she fell asleep however, she recalled the feeling she felt when making her way down into the depths. She couldn't put her finger on that feeling but it kept gnawing away at her mind.

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Alice didn't know when she had fallen asleep but by the time she was conscious, she realised she was dreaming.

A myriad of clashing blades sounded out while silver lights flickered through the darkness. Her body was bound in place as a flash of light cleaved through her arm.

"ARG!!"

Letting out a cry of pain, Alice could feel the cut deep into her soul as though her own mind was being erased with that injury.

But the cuts didn't end there.

It slowly carved away at her flesh and with each injury, her consciousness would diminish continuously. In the end, she was left with nothing but a head.

Reality seemed to warp as a mirror like surface reflected in her eyes. It showed her who she was. She had a snow white hair, a different face, a pair of black eyes with purple irises.

Lifeless eyes stared into the mirror as the image shifted. It was now Alice's own face, dark purple hair and a pair of purple eyes.

The lifeless eyes stared back at her as 'Alice' reached out with her hand. Breaching the mirror like surface and gouged out her eye.

She could only watch as 'Alice's' appearance changed upon implanting the eye, becoming what she was familiar with.

This hatred that she felt, this anger, this fury. It did not belong to her.

"Leave."

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"!!!" Waking up in shock, Alice could feel cold sweat dripping down her back as she could still hear the cold voice commanding her to leave.

She didn't know who that voice belonged to but she knew she had to get some answers from Allura when they meet again.

Making her way to the river to calm herself, she took several deep breaths before looking at her reflection in the water. Seeing the right side of her being different to the left, she couldn't help but sigh.

Shaking her head, she made her way back and had some breakfast.

"So, the plan today is to scout out the main forest. It's just out of the area the mission gave us but it shouldn't be too bad. I'm hoping we can collect some information on the Charger. Honestly, the longer we stay here the more this place gives me to the creeps." Ria admitted as the driver laughed.

"Getting cold feet?" He taunted, causing Ria to throw some bones at him.

"Shaddap. You missed it yesterday, there wasn't a single beast in the forest except for one f*cker at leading to the Howling Depths." Ria rolled her eyes.

"So how many more days do you want to stay here?" The driver asked. With how things were going, it seemed like the trip was going to end faster than he initially estimated which was more than welcome.

"Probably one more day right? If we don't find any traces of the beast, we'll need to report it to the Guild along with everything else we found." Ria sighed while glancing over to Alice who seemed absent minded.

"Alice?"

"Hm? Oh sorry. Yes, one more day then let's go back." Alice nodded her head as she was preoccupied with the thought she had regarding her Sigils from last night.

"Alright, since we only have one day left, let's not dally." Ria nodded her head with a smile as she stood up and finished off her meal quickly.

Doing the same, the two approached the forest once more.

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Unbeknownst to Alice and Ria, several hooded figures roamed the underground of the forest. It was a similar cave entrance to the one that Alice and Ria descended the other night but far deeper into the forest.

As they descended into the Howling Depths, they arrived in front of a large set of doors.

Etched upon the door was a large four armed creature, demonic horns that erupted from its head, a skeletal body and what seems to be darkness permeating its body.

The design was reminiscent of the Titan that Alice saw beneath the Slaughter Docks.

Pushing open the door, the thick stench of blood erupted out from within as the hooded men ignored the smell before going down.

"That should be all of the beasts within the forest. I believe we can move locations after this right?" One of the men asked as the one in the lead nodded his head.

"There is one last offering to the Lord of Famine and then we shall be done for this location."

Hearing this, the first man nodded his head and went silent. There was a sense of nervousness in his eyes as he wished these cultists would leave already as he had spotted Alice and Ria entering the forest last night.

He had done as much as he could to keep them undetected as he guessed that they had been sent by the Guild. He too was an operative though one sent to infiltrate the Cult to see what their movements were like.

'They seemed to be sent by the Guild... I thought they had blocked all of the drivers from coming here. They might've found another way here. Either way, they need to leave soon or else no one is leaving.' He thought with a frown. He needed to find a chance to leave this place as well so that he could pass on all of the information that he had gathered thus far.

The movement of the Cult, their goals and what they have done in this forest. He needed to report so that the Guild could prepare counter measures.

Descending into the caverns, the man could see the familiar lake of blood that they had created in their time here. Every man and beast had been starved and forced to fight one another.

The blood that was spilled in this battle along with the aspect of famine created the foundation of their ritual.

Situated in the centre of this lake was the same monster that the door had depicted. Similar to the Titan, the beast had its lower half shredded apart now contributing to the pool of blood. Its limbs had been pinned down by large metal rods while an infectious bulb wrapped around the head.

"Oh? It seems like one of the beasts managed to outlast everything and it's still holding on."

Hearing this, the man looked down and noticed the Kata Charger bathing in the lake of blood while trying to escape. However, the blood acted like chains, locking it down and preventing the beast from escaping.

"How amusing. Perhaps we can make something special with that beast."

Upon reaching the bottom, they crossed a large bridge and arrived at the base of the Titan.

Standing beneath the Titan, a woman could be seen looking up at the beast. She had deep red hair similar to that of blood and words of the old language carved into her flesh. She wore a revealing outfit that only covered her chest and waist while the hooded cloak had been tossed aside.

She reached out with her hands and felt the blood that was oozing out of the beast and into the pool.

"Archbishop Mahri, there are no more beasts to be obtained from this land." One of the hooded men approached and bowed respectfully.

"Is that so? No matter. I can feel it, the essence of the Titan's blood has almost been fully absorbed. Once it is done, the fruits of our labour shall be born." She smiled while narrowing her eyes towards the bulb on the Titan's head.

While it may seem small on the Titan, it was in fact many times larger than the average beast and would tower over the trees in this forest with ease.

"But it we harvested more than we initially expected. To think a simple Charger would be able to bathe in the Titan's blood for this long without being consumed. For now, retrieve it from the pool so it will not hinder the metamorphosis." She ordered as a group of men made their way to the pool.

"Now I believe you have a second thing to tell me?" Mahri asked as she glanced back with a smile.

"We have spotted a group of people that arrived yesterday. Two girls and an old driver."

Hearing this, the Guild Spy froze up momentarily before sighing inwardly. He could only pray that they have left already to save him the guilt of having to hunt them down himself.

As much as he wanted to help them, he could not risk exposing himself!

"Ohya? Well I was wondering why no one approached this area at all. What to do... Well seeing as how you are also from the Guild, why don't you deal with them yourself?" Mahri asked as she turned her gaze towards the Guild Spy.

Hearing this, a chill rushed down his spine as he knew he had to leave now that his cover has been blown.