

Abyssal A 721

Chapter 721 - 721: Party Aftermath

Isolde woke up with her skull pounding like a war drum. The world spun, slowly, but it spun nonetheless. A carousel from hell in which she could still hear the demonic chanting from last night.

In distant echo that rang out over and over. A drunken voice shouting the words Chug in rhythmic fashion. Was that voice. . . Alice?

She wondered if the world will stop spinning soon but then realised 'why' it was still spinning.

Somehow, she fell asleep atop a chandelier thus the world spun.

Looking to her right, she shielded her eyes as light filtered through the curtains aggressively, each streak threatening to burn her eyes with malicious intent.

'The happened last night?' Isolde wondered, clutching her head in pain.

Her memories were a blur, distorted images like a hazy illusion in the desert. Laughter, music, off key singing, mugs clattering, more laughing and for some reason. . . Alice was her biggest impression.

Relaxing her body on the chandelier, Isolde closed her eyes and tried to sooth the pain. She wanted to figure out exactly what happened last night, why does the name Alice now suddenly give her such chills?

Then she remembered. . .

###

"Hyahahaha! Behold! A new discovery on what I can do with my Sigils!" Alice declared, her voice high with glee as Abyssal energy rippled across her body. "I know all of you have some tolerance to being drunk but we can't have that tonight! Tonight! We party! Tonight, we drink!!!"

"Did I accidently hit you on the head too hard? What the hell are you even talking about you brat."
Rosalyn scoffed in disdain but Alice simply wagged her finger and shook her head dramatically.

"Tsk tsK tsK~ You shall be my first victim then. For you see, as explained before, my Sixth Sigil lets me overlay experience and understanding. Now what do you think I can do if I were to overlay Kaden's experience, his knowledge of curse crafting and casting with a few interesting Sigils?" Alice revealed a wide grin that stretched from ear to ear.

Her voice was filled with a certain smugness.

Rosalyn wanted to dismiss it before pausing. Her face turning pale and cold sweat began to drench her back.

"You wouldn't!" She hastily stood up, wanting to put up her defences but Alice was faster. She appeared behind Rosalyn like a wraith.

"I would!"

Crushing a blood bead, blood mist enveloped the two as silence dawned on the party.

As the mist disappeared, Rosalyn stood with her hair hiding her expression.

"Horaaa~ Come on~ Drink up~" Alice whispered from behind, pushing a mug of mead in front of Rosalyn.

As for the Abyss Lord, she snatched it up without hesitation and drank it in one go.

Energy converged towards her hand as Rosalyn tossed the mug infused with energy into the wall!

*BANG!!!!

A hole was created as everyone could see Rosalyn's face being flushed with crimson. Her eyes dazed and a drunken smile on her face.

"More!" She shouted while Alice clapped her hands in encouragement.

"Yahoo! That's what I'm talking about! Let's get this party started!"

###

Isolde's smile twitched remembering up to this point. She recalled how Alice was forcefully erasing everyone's tolerance to being drunk. And with her abusing her power of locking down this space, no one could run.

Ria and Luke ranted at Alice, asking her why did what she did in the Inverted world. Leaving without a word and so on. Though after a while the two seemed to be lost in their own world, chatting to each other.

Jin drowned himself in alcohol, venting about how he had to go through the things he did and even had his body modified to this extent.

Though. . . Isolde remembers herself comforting him saying that it's not as bad as what could've been. He kept his original appearance after all. If he had mutated. . . The thought sent Jin into a drinking frenzy with tears pouring like waterfalls.

Suyin was dazed in the corner, her mind wasn't quite there. She simply smiled while wobbling from side to side. Every question aimed to her was replied with a 'Hehe~'.

After a while, under the encouragement of Alice, people started to perform.

Isolde's face blushed in embarrassment with the memories of the performances manifesting in high definition.

It wasn't the other's performance that embarrassed her but more so her own. Slowly removing her outfit slightly to show her back. . .

Then using her multiple arms to rapidly drink barrels of mead in a frenzy.

Not only was she embarrassed by showing a bit of her skin, but to act so indecently when drinking the mead. . . Isolde wanted to bury herself.

Next time she'll reject the alcohol if Alice offers!

Although. . . She couldn't help but recall that at a certain point, Rosalyn had slammed her foot into Alice's stomach at full power.

Slowly looking to her left. . .

Isolde saw Alice's body deeply embedded into the floor vertically. Her legs pointing into the air. There was the soft sound of breathing so Isolde was sure that Alice is alive.

Naturally, Alice wasn't the only victim. She was simply the last one as she had helped Ria and Luke restrain the Lord.

Turns out that after drinking, Rosalyn was the violent drunk. And having an Abyss Lord going on a slight rampage. . . Not ideal.

Despite the headache, Isolde slowly climbed down from her chandelier and observed the place in its entirety.

The entire left side was missing with it barely being held up by pillars of metal, holes through walls and the ceiling. Craters and broken barrels.

The place was a complete mess.

Since everyone was still passed out from the partying, Isolde let out a helpless sigh. However, a smile was on her face.

It was a strange feeling.

All these years. . . Continuously chasing after revenge, even going as far as to join the Eclipse for a period then abandoning everything once Zal-Ka'Rith offered her a contract.

This kind of chaotic party reminded her of the good old times. When the children would play late into the night, leaving her with a mess to clean up while they were sleeping.

A tiring yet fulfilling time. And now she's experiencing it again.

"Now then, what should I organise first." Isolde muttered to herself. Since the building was barely supported by the metal pillars erected on the side, having a stable wall was probably the best idea.

She may not be the most knowledgeable when it comes to woodworking but she can probably make something for the time being. Then there's also the cleaning around the main hall. Ideally, she wanted to do everything without waking the others up.

###

Alice found herself waking up with a strange headache. Not the kind from drinking where it came from a sense of dizziness but rather. . . something more akin to blunt force trauma.

She knew that a party was going on and that Rosalyn got a little out of hand. As for what happened afterwards. . .

'You got planted by Rosalyn into the floor as if you were a piece of veg.' Alyss folded her arms with a chuckle.

'Yikes. Well at least I didn't die on impact.' Alice massaged her aching neck.

Sitting up, she found herself laying on a bed and the room was somehow. . . untouched?

No, calling it untouched wouldn't be quite accurate. There were clear signs of things being repaired, pieces of wood that's a different colour.

And behind the counter, Isolde could be seen with her hair tied up in a pony tail.

Her multiple arms working on fixing different parts of the room while her main two took care of the delicate work.

"Mornin~" Alice yawned, climbing out of the bed that Isolde seemed to have personally crafted.

"Good morning, are you sure you don't want to sleep a little longer?" Isolde asked, glancing back at Alice as she retracted her arms.

Shaking her head, Alice found herself a seat not far from where Isolde was standing.

"You don't have to busy yourself like this ya know? We're quite used to waking up to a mess." Alice chuckled with a grin. "A while ago, when I was studying at Rosalyn's academy with Ria and Luke, our parties often had us waking up to a bunch of sh*t on the floor."

"That sounds tame compared to the state of this building. Half of it was missing." Isolde laughed.

Seeing her like this, Alice rested her chin on her palms.

"Yep, a good party solves a lot of things. Seems like you've relaxed a little compared to last night. Keep it up." She gave the nun a thumbs up.

Rolling her eyes, Isolde started to clean up rest of the wall.

"Next time I'll have to decline if you give me alcohol. Losing control of myself like that was. . . rather embarrassing. Something I'd much prefer not to go through again."

"I'll keep that in mind." Alice waved her hand.

That was a lie.

"Now that Kazira is gone, are you planning on leaving the East?" Isolde asked curiously.

"Funny you ask that because that is an excellent question." Alice snapped her finger. "I have no f*cking clue."

". . ."

Looking at the seriousness on the girl's face, Isolde understood that Alice wasn't kidding.

"Do you let life take you wherever the wind blows?"

"I mean. . . If you put it that way." Alice shrugged.

*Sigh~

"From my time as being a member of the Eclipse, I'm pretty confident in that even if Kazira's dead, the remaining cultists won't stay low. Most of them don't care about the bigger picture since it's just a bunch of criminals." Isolde recalled. "You can even ask Jin about it considering his identity."

Yet before Alice could reply, someone else spoke up first.

"Alice, what did she mean by that?" Ria sat next to Alice with a deep frown on her face. Her voice colder than the frosty northern winds.

"F*ck."

Chapter 722 - 722: Isolde And Ria

"F*ck." Alice's pupils constricted.

She could see it, the storm brewing beneath Ria's expression. Her eyes were locked on Isolde, her body tensed and ready to act if she made a single move.

With Ria's past, it's no wonder she would be sensitive about this kind of information yet it completely slipped Alice's mind.

Then there was also Jin who was in the cult since he was young.

If there's anything to be thankful for, it would probably be the fact that Jin got modified so Ria couldn't tell at first glance.

"Erm. . . They used to be part of it but actually. . ." Alice paused. She couldn't say that it was outside of Isolde's choice since she probably accepted their offer on her path to revenge.

"I was part of the Eclipse for my own benefits and stayed there for a while until my previous Lord, Zal-Ka'Rith, offered me a contract which I accepted. Now I am no longer part of the cult." Isolde admitted honestly.

She could see the displeasure on Ria's face. However, her past was something she must take responsibility for.

Just because she's on the path of revenge doesn't mean she's excused from what she's done. Isolde understood that and even before taking this path, it was something she vowed to accept rather than deny and reject.

Atrocities? She committed them.

Was she a sinner? Most definitely.

Does she regret it? To some degree but to say that it deeply affected her would be a lie. She does what must be done in order for her to reach her goals.

Ria was silent. The veins on her neck bulged as she could see the lack of remorse in Isolde's eyes.

Alice could practically see the sparks dancing around Ria's body as she seemed ready to strike.

After what seemed like forever, Ria gritted her teeth and let out a sigh. The energy coursing through her body slowly fading away.

"I want to hope that you have your own story, why you joined the Eclipse. If this reason is also why you've left them in favour of this. . . Zal-Ka'Rith or whatever his name is then so be it." Ria spat out, looking down at the table before glaring at Isolde. "But most importantly, the fact that Alice finds it safe enough to let loose and drink around you means you're trustworthy."

Alice was about to shed a tear when she blinked her eyes.

Was drinking around someone really a sign that she trusted them??? Was her trust that cheap???

"So I give you only one warning. If you join the Eclipse again, I will personally rip out your spine and use it like a whip. Don't you dare betray this trust Alice has given you."

A moment of silence was drawn out between Isolde and Ria as neither of them spoke a single word.

The first to break this silence was. . .

"Riaaaaa! So you were mad because you didn't want me to get hurttt. Uuuu~ you're gonna make me cry in joy Riaaaa!" Alice hugged Ria from the side emotionally while Ria tried to push Alice off her, avoiding the tears and snot.

Having her serious face and warning shattered by Alice crying out her name gave her a new sense of embarrassment. And right now, Ria wanted nothing more than to hide her head in the ground.

"Alright alright! I get it so get off me!" Ria begged.

"Pft~ Ahaha." Isolde laughed, seeing Alice rubbing her face against Ria dress, staining it.

"Don't worry, you have my word. I will not harm Alice nor betray this trust she has decided to give to me." Isolde reassured with a smile, handing Ria a napkin to clean up the mess on her dress for the time being.

"You better not. And honestly, this goes for you too Alice. First with Selen from the Zenia family now with Isolde and Jin. Are you going to keep picking up stragglers from the different religions or what?" Ria sighed helplessly.

At this point, Alice was going around collecting people from different backgrounds.

Alice wanted to refute but paused.

Especially considering her. . . connection to a certain cardinal of the Moon. Surely Isolde and Tristan wouldn't try to kill each other on sight right? Right???

Isolde's smile twitched seeing Alice deliberating her answer while occasionally sneaking glances towards her.

"You've got to be kidding me. . ." Ria was dumbfounded.

"I mean. . . Everyone's got their own circumstances okay? It's not like I go out of my way to befriend them. It just kind of happens." Alice pouted while Isolde sighed.

"The one I have a grudge against is the Goddess herself. Even if you have friends in the Moon church, who am I to stop you from befriend people?" Isolde chuckled.

Hearing this, Alice sighed in relief.

"Phew, Tristan is a Cardinal but honestly he's not that bad of a guy. Cares for his sister." Alice scratched her hair, remembering her time by the port city. "In the first place, he only joined because the Moon Church offered him a way to help his sister but I sorted that out for him."

Isolde almost fell over.

The more Alice talks, the more she's reconsidering this partnership.

"You mean to say. . . You and Cardinal Tristan are friends?" Isolde supported her weight on the counter.

"Something wrong?" Alice tilted her head.

"The thing that's wrong is that head of yours. It'll be more surprising to see someone that doesn't know about Cardinal Tristan." Rosalyn stumbled over to the table while clutching her head.

She was still suffering from a headache thanks to a certain stunt a certain split haired mead addict pulled last night.

Shooting glares at Alice, Rosalyn continued.

"Cardinal Tristan, also known as the Favoured Son of the Goddess. Someone whom the Goddess has put special attention into helping. Not only is the Goddess fond of him but he's a good saviour for the people." Rosalyn recalled.

"Often times you'll see him out and about, helping people when he can. What I didn't know was that he has a sister, probably something he wanted to keep concealed."

Hearing that Tristan was known as the Favoured Son of the Goddess, Alice folded her arms. Looking back, the favours he did for her seem more impressive now that she had this context.

Even though he was the favoured son, he still concealed her existence from the Goddess.

Essentially saving her life or a bunch of trouble depending on how the Goddess would've reacted.

Regardless, Alice knew that he was pretty important but not to the extent of favoured son.

"So anything else you failed to mention before we had the drinking party? I'm feeling rather forgiving right now so you should probably tell me all of it at once." Rosalyn sighed.

She'll admit that last night was rather fun. Being able to let loose and get drunk like that was a new kind of feeling for her, especially since Alice essentially disabled her passive resistance for a brief moment.

Crossing her arms, Alice scrambled her mind but couldn't quite think of anyone. Darrow while strong, wasn't exactly a unique existence like Tristan.

"Ah!" Alice shot up.

There was one person who'd given her a hand and tolerated her antics. But calling her a friend is. . .

"Feris. Realm ruler of the Void, I'm rather acquainted with her."

"PFFFFF!!!" Spitting out her drink, Rosalyn shot a glare at Alice.

"You're friends with a realm ruler?!?!"

Yet before Alice could answer, the Void tore in half as a tall woman stepped out holding a pipe in her hands.

"One. No the f*ck she is not. Two, acquainted we may be I've definitely saved her ass more than she has done me favours. Three, I'm here to cash in a favour you owe me." Feris scoffed, pointing her pipe at Alice.

No one else could speak with Feris in the room. It felt as though a seal was forcefully placed over their mouths and even Rosalyn had cold sweat dripping down her back.

One wrong move and this entire space would be erased!

"Ehh??? I owe you?" Alice furrowed her brows.

"!!!" Rosalyn's bloodshot eyes darted to Alice as Ria hastily held her back.

She was practically screaming bloody murder with her glare and the only reason why she hasn't said it out loud was the REALM RULER next to them.

"You. Owe. Me." Feris reaffirmed with a glare.

After all the sh*t she's pulled and the mess she's been causing to the Void, even going as far as to pretty much permanently destroy a part of it thanks to her scuffle with the Zenia family, owing Feris a favour was putting it lightly.

Anyone else and Feris would've just erased them where they stood.

Scratching her hair, Alice sighed and nodded her head.

"Fine. So what kind of favour do you want to cash in? I ain't got much unfortunately unless you want some mead."

Rosalyn was holding back her urge to throw her parasol at Alice.

Leaning against the table, Feris took a deep breath of her pipe before exhaling a large cloud of smoke.

"Show me that weapon of yours, the one on your wrist."

Alice tilted her head.

With the way that Feris was phrasing things earlier, it seemed like the favour was going to be something bigger than just. . . showing her the weapon.

However, she had no reason to reject it.

Injecting energy into the bracelet, Alice transformed Void Fang into its blade form. Its obsidian blade reflected a lightly violet hue with energy reinforcing the whole weapon.

Observing it in silence, there was a flicker of hope in Feris's eyes before it crumbled apart into disappointment.

"I see. . . Never mind, I thought it was something else. Don't corrupt my realm with Eldritch, you know the drill."

Not wanting to stay longer, Feris turned around and stepped back into the Void.

For a moment, Alice felt like she saw a teardrop in the corner of Feris' eyes.

Chapter 723 - 723: Plan To Leave The East

Blinking in confusion, Alice glanced at the others after Feris left.

She simply arrived, stated what she wanted then left. Nothing more, nothing less.

Once Rosalyn was sure that Feris had left, she lunged forward in a flash, grabbing Alice by her collar.

"What the hell is wrong with you?! Talking to a Realm Ruler like that?!?! Do you want us to die?!?!"

"What do you mean? I've always been like that to her though." Alice felt wronged.

Sure Feris gets annoyed at times but she was never one to lash out and kill without reason.

Even when she brought Eldritch energy into Feris' realm, the most she got was a scolding. Of course, doing it again would simply be pushing it.

"Yeah well that's because you didn't see her a few hundred years ago! Turn your eyes to the f*cking map." Rosalyn's smile twitched.

She could still remember running for her life while her brother protected her back.

Back then, she couldn't do anything to protect herself and seeing a pissed off Realm Ruler was something else entirely. Even if they aren't classified as Gods, they may as well be one.

The Abyssal Realm Ruler is a unique case while the Void has Feris and their current realm HAD one in the past. But because of the battle between Feris and the Realm Ruler, the three Gods are now acting as Realm Rulers.

"Notice how there are quite a few large empty spots on the map? Places turned into the sea? Yeah I wonder what kind of battle could possibly leave a scar like this huh? Makes you think doesn't it?" Rosalyn gestured at the different sections of the sea.

Most are ignorant about the true nature of the battle but many know of it as a calamity.

One that practically reset the world in its entirety, causing a large scale redraw of the world map.

"For real?" Alice stared at the empty plots of land in disbelief.

She's seen hints of Feris' true power considering she permanently erased a portion of space. But seeing the markings and consequences of her power was something else entirely.

"For real. If not, why do you think I was even hesitating on breathing near her!" Rosalyn spat out in anger.

Despite all of this, Alice was still talking to Feris with a relaxed tone and even going as far as to annoy the Realm Ruler at times. If that wasn't asking for a beating Rosalyn didn't know what was.

"Hey! Ow! Ow! Okay I got it so stop hitting me!" Alice frowned while Rosalyn kept hitting her butt and head.

"Nope I'm doing Allura a favour right now considering the kind of sh*t you keep pulling!"

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Returning to the Void, Feris sat down by a large rock and looked out towards the cosmic horizon.

The floating islands drifting alongside the large creatures that swam from the waterless sea.

It was times like these where Feris wished she could just close her eyes and sleep forever. So that this ache in her chest could disappear. Her vengeance was achieved yet she felt no satisfaction.

For the life that has left her side will never come back.

All that remains is the hollow, empty void where they used to occupy.

An endless darkness that can't be filled no matter what.

She thought that maybe. . . Maybe a sign of them still lived in this world. A trace of their existence.

Feris thought that Alice's weapon was received from them. The way it was channelling Void energy was similar. . . Yet it wasn't what she was looking for. Similar, not at the end of the day, different.

She had kept to herself and slept in an unknown corner of the Void until recently.

When Alice woke her up.

Ever since she gained access to this realm, she kept on disturbing the peace that helped her forget about the past.

The silence that allowed her to drift off into sleep and forget about everything.

But now, thanks to Alice, she spent every waking moment of her life being conscious of this void gnawing at her chest.

This emptiness that stood in front of her, refusing to move.

"Tch!" Clicking her tongue, Feris felt her anger rising as she wanted to destroy something to vent.

Yet just as she raised her fist, she hesitated and sighed. She lost the urge and simply allowed her arm to slump next to her.

She'll simply sleep.

Drifting off into blissful ignorance of everything that had happened. To allow herself to become one with this realm and forget about existence.

This sense of lethargy polluted her mind.

She hoped that only silence would continue to exist in this realm. She didn't care about what happened to the main realm, what happened in the Abyss. They can be destroyed for all she cares.

But this silence, let her keep it.

Closing her eyes, Feris drifted off to sleep once more.

###

Once Rosalyn was satisfied with beating up Alice, they finally got to the important matter at hand.

Planning out their next steps.

"I suggest we go back to my brother before we leave the nation. With his information network, we should be able to figure out the rough movements of the other powers before we make any last minute changes." Rosalyn suggested.

"Now that Alice has killed an Apostle, the gap in power isn't something we can avoid. And if I recall, Solaris seems to know what Alice looks like." She shot Alice a sideways glare that Alice avoided. "It's safe to assume that the Sun is probably making its way to the East as we speak. And even if he isn't, securing the border is almost a guarantee."

Marking red circles around certain points on the map, Rosalyn then drew a dotted line around the border.

"Even if we try our best to avoid the main ports, I don't think we can completely avoid their detection."

"What if we just travel through the Abyss? I'm pretty sure there should be an entrance leading down somewhere in the East." Alice interrupted while Rosalyn took this time to draw purple circles around other points of the map.

"These are the portals that I know of. Taking them is an option but both Religions are probably keeping an eye on the Abyssal passage. If we want to make it through without arousing suspicion while keeping most of their manpower in the East, I suggest taking a boat."

Hearing her suggestion, everyone turned their gaze towards Rosalyn with a look of confusion.

"As dangerous as it may be, smuggling through using the boat is far easier than taking the abyssal path. Especially since chicken sh*t over here gained the power to learn from souls." She explained as Alice pointed at herself.

"Me?"

"Yes you, who else? I'm pretty sure you can figure out a way to disguise all of us at once, especially if you can access Raven b*stard's knowledge. I'm not sure how much knowledge you gain from the souls but regardless, it should help you figure something out." Rosalyn nodded.

Scratching her hair, Alice sighed before nodding.

"I'll try and figure something out while we're going to meet your brother then."

While she may call what she gains from the sixth Sigil 'knowledge', it's a little more. . . weirder than that.

When she overlays the 'soul' over her physical body, it's like she loses all control.

'Something else' controls her body, putting the experience to work. While she can talk and make certain gestures, her control is limited.

Of course, once the period of time passes, this information is retained to a certain extent.

To put simply, Alice stops fighting and the 'Soul' takes over.

It's why Rosalyn felt like she was fighting Allura, Kaden or herself. Because in a sense, she was.

But that's putting it simply since it wasn't a full case of puppeteering either, otherwise she wouldn't be able to make small adjustments mid fight.

Regardless, if she wanted to figure something out with the disguising the group, she'll have to experiment quite a bit with how Revenant Recollection synergises with the rest of her powers.

Of course, this was something she would've done last night if they didn't party.

"That's not your only job though." Rosalyn added.

"While you're doing your experiments, I want you to familiarise yourself with how Ria and Luke fight. Their styles have changed a bit since you last met and most of all. . ." She trailed off, staring at the two.

"I want you two to get used to how Alice fights. Since you've reunited, you'll be facing danger as a group. And as a group, you need to understand each other."

It was an obvious decision but one that needed to be stated regardless. There was a good chance that Alice will get distracted, focusing on drinking or experimenting.

"We set off tomorrow morning. Take the rest of today to fulfil these tasks and for the love of Gods, please don't tell me you've fucked up anything else by tomorrow morning. If you do, I don't think I can hold myself back." Rosalyn let out a deep sigh.

That last part was most definitely aimed at Alice as she coughed awkwardly.

Once everyone understood what they must do, Rosalyn excused herself and stepped out of the room.

'Neither Kaden nor Allura can be reached. What the hell are they even trying to do?' Rosalyn scratched her hair.

She wanted to make a report but couldn't contact anyone. A phenomenon that every Abyss Lord sensed wasn't something that can just be ignored.

No matter how powerful she is, she is still the only Lord in the group. Two if Alice was to drink their blood.

But even with that kind of power, Rosalyn was worried. Killing enemies was one thing but doing so without losing anything? Difficult.

Which is why she absolutely wanted to see her brother again before they left the East.

To Rosalyn, her big brother, as annoying as he may be, was the most reliable person she could think of.

Chapter 724 - 724: The Power Of Restriction

Before familiarizing herself with the newly improved fighting styles of Ria and Luke, Alice wanted to do a little bit of experimentation with her Sigil.

To figure out what she can do in terms of physical resonance as well developing her other Sigils.

And first on the list was naturally Duality.

Finding a space to sit down alone, Alice closed her eyes. The Sigil on the back of her neck burned as she overlaid the Soul of Duality over herself.

From what Tristan had told her, Esse was able to use three powers when manipulating Duality.

First was Inversion, the most basic functionality. What's up is down, what's left is right.

It's what Alice was most familiar with and the thing she uses to create two forms of Tiamat. One that absorbs energy and one that expels all of it in one go.

The second usage that Tristan spoke about was the power of Synchronisation. A link between the mind and soul, an aspect that Alice wasn't too familiar with.

And lastly was Restriction. By hindering one part of what you can do, you gain benefits on another.

Alice was most interested in the power of Synchronisation since it sounded similar to how Resonance works.

If so, what if she was to form a synchronised power between her normal Resonance, Artificial Resonance and Physical Resonance? Or better yet. . .

Her Second Resonance that she hasn't shown to Rosalyn yet.

As the soul of Duality took over, Alice felt like she was floating on the surface of a lake. She knew that wasn't the case but this. . . sensation while having her eyes closed, it was one that tricked the mind.

When she overlayed Allura, she felt this itch to bite on something like a cigarette otherwise she couldn't fight comfortably.

For Duality, she's alternating between floating on the surface and being face down into the water.

As a conceptual power, Duality wasn't something with a definitive form. It's not a towering blaze not a land of ice.

It simply. . . is.

And even with just a fragment of the full power, Alice felt as though countless branching paths were laid out before her.

Immersing herself in this feeling, Alice slowly opened her eyes. For targets she wasn't quite familiar with and didn't know where to start, this overlay stage took far longer than usual.

While Kaden and Allura was done practically instant.

Exhaling deeply, there was now a new gleam in Alice's eyes. Her gaze was colder than the northern winds while black and white energy swirled around her body.

Glancing down, Alice clenched her fist and golden chains whipped into existence. However, unlike before, this time it only occupied her right wrist.

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

"Weird isn't it?" Alice chuckled.

"Yeah no sh*t. This feels f*cking weird as sh*t. The hell did you do???" Alyss frowned.

"Synchronisation. Well. . . an application of it. Since we often swap controls or what not, I wanted to see if it's possible to take control at the same time. And gotta admit. . ." Alice trailed off.

""This f*cking sucks."" Both of them spoke at the same time before letting out a laugh.

Having two souls control one body at the same time didn't work exactly as how they had initially planned. Instead, it randomly switches controls for parts of the body at random intervals.

One moment, Alice might be controlling the right hand and in the next moment, the left leg.

While it might not be so helpful for them, against someone with multiple souls in them, specially Apostles belonging to the Moon, this could serve to be a great weapon.

The sudden confusion of having your motor functions ripped away could prove to be a fatal mistake.

Cancelling the Synchronisation, Alice regained control for her whole body.

'What else can you do? I doubt Synchronisation is entirely limited to just making us two scramble over the controls.' Alyss asked curiously.

Rather than explaining, Alice decided to demonstrate instead.

In her right hand, she conjured a ball of Abyssal energy while in her left, a ball of Void energy. Bringing the two towards each other, the colours started to blend, contorting the realm around them.

"Resonance stabilises the power of three energies, turning it into something else to be used. Trying to perform a resonance with two powers simply causes an imbalance and f*cks up things inside the body. However. . ." Alice smiled, clasping her hands together and compressing the orb into a size small like her thumb.

"With Synchronisation, it forms a balanced structure between two powers. While not being as stable as three, at least it won't break itself apart without people interfering." She shrugged.

And then there was the final power, Restriction.

Restriction was rather self explanatory thanks to the name.

Yet when activating the power, Alice found herself inside a strange realm. Surrounding her was a boundless grey desert and a starless sky.

No wind, no sound.

Only one thing occupied this space and it was a robed figure sitting in front of a giant scale.

Despite trying to peer under the hood, Alice found herself unable to see his true face.

"State your desire. . ." He spoke slowly. His voice dry and crackly yet carried the words with such clarity that it was impossible for Alice to misunderstand.

Folding her arms, Alice decided to test something out first.

"I want my Void Axis to hold the full concept of severance to ensure that it can cut through anything and everything."

She wanted to see how this robed figure would react to her words, what kind of restriction it would give her.

*RUMBLE!!!

Feeling the sudden surge of energy and the ground trembling beneath her feet, Alice stumbled back in the sand and saw a singularity placed on one side of the scale. It pulsed out with a malevolent energy, discharging arcs of energy in rhythmic fashion.

"A desire full of greed. . . As such, the price must match thy greed." The robed figure let out a dry laugh.

Watching the man hold out both his hands, Alice paused with a slight frown.

Information about the price was directly injected into her mind with the man waiting for her response.

The first option was obvious, to take the authority of Severance for herself. Once she does so, even if she can't control it well, it'll allow her to accomplish the attack. However, doing so will take her out of combat for around 2 days as her body can't handle that kind of forceful discharge without proper preparation.

As for the second option. . .

Permanently give up the fragment of Severance that she has stolen.

If she does so, she'll be able to unleash its full power for a single attack.

Usually, Alice would try to find a loophole. But she knew that this wasn't possible for this exchange.

Once she burns the fragment, even if she was to drink Allura's blood again, it'll be impossible for her to use severance.

After this attack, her body will become completely incompatible with the power unless she is able to receive the power of Severance in its entirety.

Scratching her head, Alice glanced at the robed figure and rejected the exchange.

Then again, it's only to be expected since her desire was an attack that wouldn't miss. To utilise the authority bestowed by a Goddess even though she wasn't an Apostle.

Glancing at the man, Alice wondered for a moment before opening her mouth.

"What if I want to use my powers to completely get rid of the side effects plaguing someone's body?"

So far, she's been able to temporarily get rid of visible effects and corruption. But to truly cut out side effects? That was still outside of her reach.

"To use one's power for others, to relieve them of their burden, one must carve off thy flesh." The robed man chuckled.

The restriction was clear. To completely rid someone of their side effects, Alice had to use herself as sacrifice.

If she was to accept these restrictions, the power of Duality will erase someone else's side effects.

Powerful but indeed the drawback made one think twice.

Asking a few more questions, Alice understood that this 'restriction' was one that told her whether or not something was achievable using her current powers.

Asking questions such as give her a skill that can kill a God in one hit from this distance was impossible, she simply lacked the power and information to make this a reality.

To complete an exchange, knowledge of the task was also necessary. Otherwise not even the power of restriction can figure out a path for her.

Of course, there was a leeway in that by sacrificing something, she'll be able to exert more power than normal.

To go above and beyond.

Just as she was about to end the questioning session, her pupils constricted.

If it could go above and beyond. . .

There was one last burning question in her mind.

A topic that she had knowledge of to some degree. Whether or not it was sufficient was another question entirely but regardless, Alice had to ask.

On the off chance that this robed figure could tell her the answer.

"Allura the Apostle of Severance suffered a hit from the Apostle of Famine. Using my powers and the souls that I've stolen, can you create a skill to erase the wounds on her body?"

A silence that felt like it stretched on for eternity ensued. Alice could tell the robed figure was contemplating whether or not it was possible. It was going through all the possibilities to see if she had the power to complete a task like this.

Then, he opened his mouth.

"To erase the mark of Famine, a mark of absolute suffering, thou does not have the power."

Even though she was prepared, hearing it still gave her a sense of sadness. Even after gaining this much power, there still wasn't anything she could do. She couldn't help Allura nor give Kaden a hand.

All she could do was cheer from the side.

"However." The robed figure continued. "Thou does not have adequate information. The passage of time changes many things, this is no exception. What you saw was the origin point, a memory of the wound. See the real wound and an exchange may be achieved."

Chapter 725 - 725: Faceless Of Many faces

Alice stood frozen in place. She couldn't quite believe what she heard and forced herself to calm down.

Nothing was as easy as it seemed. She couldn't get herself too excited, otherwise she'll be disappointed by the reality of the situation.

After all, the robed figure didn't say it was a guarantee. Rather, an exchange MAY be achieved.

It's simply keeping the option open for a second evaluation once she sees the wound with her own eyes.

A possibility instead of a guarantee.

Shaking her head, she gave the robed figure one last glance and deactivated the ability.

Opening her eyes, she wasn't sure how much time had passed. But considering the fact that Alyss was now chilling in her bed, she could assume that time probably passed at the same rate in the other realm.

During that time, if Alyss wanted, she could probably take over the body.

Folding her arms, Alice made a mental note on what restriction could do.

Now it was the case of experimenting with using her sixth Sigil and Mirror Jester.

Using the power of 'overlay', Alice wanted to see if she was able to transfer the mirror Jester's appearance manipulation to others. One that wouldn't arouse suspicion nor be detected.

'Hmm. . . First Sigil, Mirror Jester and Sixth? Actually. . . No, that wouldn't work.' Alice frowned.

The key detail with the overlay on the sixth was not appearance. Rather, experience. Therefore, if she tries to make a Physical Resonance with this, it'll wouldn't change their appearance at all. Rather, it was probably more likely that they adopt Alice's habits and so on.

Therefore, in order to actually create a skill that can disguise everyone, Alice figured that she probably needed something else other than Revenant Recollection.

However. . .

There was another method using Revenant Recollection that she could use.

To overlay the Mirror Jester over herself!

With this, she'll be able to learn more about the power of disguise.

The back of Alice's neck burned. She created a tether between herself and Sigil of the Mirror jester.

Yet strangely, the 'experience' she gained this time wasn't one that took over her body.

Instead, it was a sequence of memories.

###

I was once a jester, a faceless of many faces. A servant of kings and queens alike.

A performance to draw out the laughter of royalty beneath the chandeliers.

I could become anyone they wished me to be.

A son for a grieving queen.

A villain for the king's drama.

A lover for a widow who lost her love far too early.

A father for the prince who never felt his father's affection.

But as the faceless of many faces. . .

Who was I?

Am I. . . A son? A daughter? A father? A mother?

One mask, ten masks, a hundred masks.

A thousand masks.

I peel. . . peel and keep peeling away.

Yet the number of masks only increased.

For how long have I acted as others?

Who was I? The jester, the faceless of many faces?

I looked towards the mirror. A splintered reflection.

A smile, a cry, gnashing teeth of anger, a seductive bite,

But. . . which one was mine?

What was my name? Or am I simply. . . A jester? A faceless?

One with many faces.

Perhaps. . . I simply haven't found one that resonated with me. Maybe, if I keep taking, I'll be able to figure out who I was.

An innocent child, calm old men, a loving wife, a furious husband, a cruel teenager, a demonic old woman.

But it's all wrong.

If. . . the face of man is not my desire. . .

Then perhaps it's the face of a beast?

A wolf? A bear? A dragon?

I will partake in the dark mother's blessings. I will drink till I am full and cannot drink further.

For I am the Mirror Jester, the faceless of many faces.

Tell me. . .

Have you seen my face?

###

Blinking her eyes, Alice found herself back in reality. There was a deep frown on her face as that was the first time this kind of reaction occurred.

Was it because changing appearance was similar in nature to overlaying experience? Or was it because the Sigils had a high level of compatibility thanks to their abilities?

Regardless, Alice wasn't sure of the answer. Instead, she understood what she could do with the Mirror jester Sigil.

There was two abilities.

First, Reflection. An ability that Alice has been using since the beginning.

The second was something called Make Up.

With Make Up, she'll be able to apply a disguise to someone else. At a lesser effectiveness than Reflection as it is something she'll have to keep reapplying after a certain amount of time.

However, applying disguises wasn't the only thing that Make Up was good for.

This ability could reach outside of just appearances and even change the looks of attacks!

Creating a spark above her palm, Alice narrowed her gaze and watched as mirror-like surfaces began to appear around the spark. Little by little, it was changed to look like a normal ball of fire.

Depending on the intensity of the attack, the time it takes to apply the disguise varies. Same with the duration.

If the attack is too strong, the Mirror Jester Sigil struggles to maintain the shell around it.

Thinking about it for a moment, Alice glanced at the tree to her side.

She wasn't sure if this idea will work, especially considering the nature of her blood. But if it works. . .

From her palm, blood began to pour out as it formed a thin stretched-out layer around the tree. Everything was coated without exception yet before the disguise could take place, the tree was already falling apart.

*Sigh. . .

Withdrawing her blood, Alice decided to just stick with using Make Up for now. But that meant maintaining it for everyone which will no doubt be pretty exhausting.

Exhausting in the fact that she had to keep remembering rather than physically taxing.

"Alice!" Ria called out while jogging over.

"What's up?"

"Nothing much, just wondering why the tree suddenly broke apart." Ria peaked over Alice's shoulder and saw what remained of the tree.

"I've just been testing what I can and can't do. But I don't think I can apply disguises directly like I do to myself otherwise that happens. Instead, I'll have to apply 'Make Up' and refresh the duration every so often." Alice scratched her hair with a sigh.

"You don't say. . ." Ria muttered. Just imagining what a direct disguise could do to their bodies gave her chills down her spine.

"Anyways, Rosey has finished constructing an arena for us to get used to fighting. Shall we go?" Ria suggested with a grin.

Even though she saw how Alice performed against Rosalyn, she still wanted to put herself to the test. How would she react when put against a wall?

Will everything she learned thus far help her reach Alice?

"Sure." Alice nodded her head with a smile. She could see the burning fighting spirit in Ria's eyes and knew that her friend was looking forward to this.

And in that aspect, Alice was the same.

###

Standing at the arena, Alice stretched her body while Ria and Luke discussed strategy.

There were going to be two stages for this spar.

First was a two on one. It was the best way for Alice to see how these two fought and what their strategies were like to fight against.

The second would be a team battle. The three of them against Rosalyn, the rules being if one of them were to be marked as 'out' the team loses.

'It's pretty interesting. Forcing you guys to be defensive in some aspect rather than going all in on attacking.' Alyss spoke up.

'We need to be able to pinpoint weak points after all. If we're fighting as a team, we have to be able to cover each other's backs. That and I won't be able to evade as freely when I'm with others.'

When fighting alone, it didn't matter where Alice dodged as long as she can evade the attack.

But in a team, if an ally was behind her, Alice will be forced to face the attack unless they could dodge or Alice didn't care about their safety.

Alice needed to figure out what kind of role she was comfortable in taking while also maximising how useful she was in a fight.

"Ready?" Rosalyn asked as Ria nodded her head.

She had just finished discussing the strategy with Luke and they have a new idea regarding how he could use his pieces.

With both parties ready, Rosalyn snapped her finger and created a blood orb in the centre and took a step back.

Flicking her wrist, Alice created a blood blade and took an offensive stance.

Her goal was simple for the two vs one. Take out Luke!

As a support, his utilities are one that couldn't be overlooked. If he isn't take out early, things can quickly get out of hand.

"Begin!"

*BANG!!!

The moment the blood bead detonated, both sides sprung into action.

Full buffs!

Void Steps!

Luke's first action was to apply every single buff he could on both him and Ria while Alice's was to close the gap.

Appearing in front of Luke, Alice was able to slash up when she felt danger from the side.

Raikiri – Two Fold Lightning!

*RUMBLE!!!

Quickly taking a step back, Alice could see a single burning line crackling with electricity.

While the attack motion was rather standard, the speed of the attack itself was far quicker than what Alice had expected!

The mismatch of motion and action was enough to throw most people off in a life or death situation.

Jumping back quickly before she could be caught in a follow up, Alice adjusted her mental notes on Ria's fighting style.

She could tell that neither of them slacked off during their time apart. Since that was the case, she'll stop playing around as well.

Resonance!

Physical Resonance!

Artificial Resonance!

"Let's see if you can keep up with this!"

Chapter 726 - 726: Rematch Between Alice, Ria and Luke

Ria had witnessed this before, albeit only a small sign of the true power.

A harmonisation of multiple resonances outside of the traditional three Sigil Resonance that most Hunters could use.

Each Resonance held a power of its own, whether that is to bolster her power of control or to change the properties of her body. All three layered and woven in perfect harmony.

The realm held its breath, the flood of energy erupting from Alice's body cast a trembling shadow behind Ria and Luke.

What was a calm flow of energy within Alice now transformed into a chaotic surge, a wild tsunami of destructive potential restrained within that small frame.

Ria felt herself subconsciously taking a step back.

The sheer density of energy surrounding Alice was enough to choke a man, stopping them from breathing out of fear. Cold sweat rolled down Ria's cheek as she forced herself to smile.

Despite calculating this possibility, seeing it head on now left doubts of their plan.

Thankfully, Alice was allowing them the first move.

Resonance!

Activating her Resonance, a set of armour manifested around Ria while Luke activated the King piece on her.

Passive bonus – Resonance enhancement!

Her eyes shifted to an electric blue as she began to gather charges around her body.

She didn't know how much Alice has improved overall. But she got a slight idea thanks to her spar with Rosalyn.

But even if she got a slight idea, facing it head on was still a daunting task.

Regardless, she'll face the challenge!

Taking a deep breath, Ria placed her hand against the hilt of her blade.

"Alice, how confident are you at surviving hits?" Ria asked.

This was a spar but if she holds back, she won't be able to tell how she measures up to her friend.

"As long as my head is intact and you don't have anything to stop my regeneration, I should be okay."
Alice reassured.

Hearing this, Ria nodded her head before closing her eyes.

All Sigils active!

*RUMBLE!!!

Different to a Second Resonance, arcs of lightning began to crackle around them as Ria began to impose a realm onto her surroundings.

The Sixth Sigil that she obtained after Nyzel allowed herself to be defeated. A Sigil that allowed Ria to construct a realm that benefited her!

Lightning Sovereignty!

*BANG!!!

As Ria's eyes snapped open, the realm was opened in its entirety. Thunder clouds loomed overhead while a water like surface expanded below.

Taking a step forward, Ria's entire body transformed into lightning.

Shinsei Raikiri! Two Fold Lightning!

However. . .

"A straight line is pretty predictable!"

*CLANG!!!

Catching the first strike using her hand covered by Void Fang, Alice pushed it to the side before dodging the Two Fold Lightning strike that came afterwards!

The fastest part of Ria's strike was the second part, that instance when the afterimages overlap the weapon. Dangerous but not unavoidable.

"I know. But that's why Luke is important."

En Passant!

*KRK!!!!

Alice widened her eyes as a slash cleaved through her left shoulder!

Snapping her fingers, a singularity spun to life between them, forcing Ria to retreat.

In the time it took for Ria to retreat, Alice had already regenerated her arm.

Energy funnelled into Cayla as Alice's vision shifted.

Rather than strands of energy, there was a faint echo around Ria's blade.

One that causes the surroundings near the blade to suffer the same kind of attack.

In essence, a guaranteed hit even if the main weapon misses.

But more importantly, the chessboard that Luke set up the moment Ria activated her Sigil!

It wasn't like a standard second Resonance. Like how Restriction works, Alice could see that Luke must've reduced some of the functionality in order to impose the chessboard outside of his personal Realm.

Before she could fully note this down in her mind, Ria acted once more!

Shinsei Raikiri!

*RUMBLE!!!

Appearing from behind, she cleaved up with Alice forcing her body to transform into blood.

Yet despite the main attack missing, she could still feel the lightning striking the other parts of her!

Even though her attack 'technically landed', Ria wasn't feeling enthusiastic. She could tell that this method of attacking won't defeat Alice in this spar.

The key to defeating Alice to beat her before she can analyse everything!

The moment the fight starts, an invisible timer is activated. During this time, Alice is mostly focused on using her instincts to dodge, her skills to counter and deal damage.

But once the timer finishes and she analyses what she needs, the fight is basically over. She has a counter for everything you want to do and more.

At that point, you simply have to run and hope you never run into her again!

However, it hasn't reached that stage yet!

'I still have time!'

Adjusting her grip, Ria unleashed a flurry of slashes with Alice being forced to create some gap between them.

Slamming her palms down, Alice created a surge of blood to give her some much needed space!

Shinsei Raikiri! Two Fold Lightning!

*RUMBLE!!!

To Ria's shock, she watched as her second strike was swallowed by a precise cut of Void, including the area affected by En Passant!

"Triggered Cast. Once I get enough information, I can set up a passive set of skills that will only trigger if the conditions are met." Alice explained with a grin.

Now that her Triggered Cast was in place, Ria's Shinsei Raikiri won't work anymore!

"So it's just for Two Fold only right? What about this one?"

Jumping back, Ria aimed two fingers at Alice and slashed down!

Every attack, every hit, every passing moment during Lightning Sovereignty would charge her opponents with 'static'! And once Ria was satisfied, it could be discharged all at once!

Raijin!

Alice's pupils constricted as her senses warned her of an overwhelming amount of danger coming from all directions! Countless slashes all concentrated into a single area!

But that wasn't everything. Each slash was also enhanced by the power of En Passant so dodging it was futile!

Except. . .

Opening her palm, a singularity spun to life, whipping Alice's hair in all directions.

The pattern in her eyes have shifted to match her adjustment of power.

Against an attack that targets the space itself, the best way to counter would be to interact with the space it's targeting!

Spatial Lock!

Clenching her fist, Alice crushed the singularity and froze the space around her. Anything that approached would be frozen in mid air!

Before Alice could say anything, Ria smiled, flicking her finger and turning all the attacks to herself instead.

"!!!"

Alice panicked, Ria didn't have regeneration like she did. What was she looking to achieve by aiming the attacks on herself?!

Seeing all the attacks change direction, Alice decided to trust in her gut feeling.

Slamming her palm down, blood mist began to envelop her body.

Castling!

Alice and Ria swapped places!

*RUMBLE!!!

Countless slashes intersected, creating a densely packed network of cuts that left behind crackling lightning and burn marks. Yet to both Ria and Luke's surprise, Alice wasn't there!!!

"Aiya~ That was a close one. I'm glad I'm made an illusion using Mirror Jester otherwise that would've been pretty bad." Alice's voice rang out behind Luke.

During that last moment, Alice created an orb of blood to act as the main node then wrapped it with her blood mist. Creating an illusion after that was simple.

What she didn't expect was to see the two of them swap places. Had she ignored her gut feeling. . . This spar might be over.

But now that she's behind Luke-

"I've been waiting for the moment you tried to go for me."

Promotion!

Beside Alice, two bishop pieces appeared and transformed into silhouettes of herself!

Quickly ducking down, Luke had them fire two Void Fluxes at point blank!

"Yikes, looking back, my old Void Flux's are pretty damn weak and flimsy." Alice sighed, creating two tiny sparks and flicking it towards the Void Fluxes.

Piercing the centre, her spark dismantled the Void Flux in an instant!

Shinsei Raikiri! Two Fold Lightning!

*RUMBLE!!!

Two void cuts appeared above and behind Alice as her triggered cast swallowed Ria's attack once more.

As she swallowed these attacks, she couldn't help but feel a little disappointed.

Surely. . . This wasn't everything right?

Selen managed to discover a skill to prolong perception to defeat her.

While Ria's slash was impressive, it hasn't quite left the same impact as Selen's skill.

As her friend, Alice had high expectations for them.

Rolling across the ground, Luke summoned another Bishop piece and overlayed it with himself.

Aiming two fingers at Alice, a spark was created.

"I thought I told you my old Void Flux was flimsy, shouldn't you update it already?" Alice sighed, scratching her hair.

Dashing forward, she was about to extinguish the spark when Luke grinned.

"Who said I haven't done so already?"

Behind him, 8 pawns were promoted to Bishops along with a King and Queen piece!

The veins on the back of his hand bulging as Luke could feel the obscene amount of power coursing through his body.

Even with all of this, he still couldn't mimic the full power of Alice's attack.

8 Pawns all transformed into Bishops to fully enhance casting, the powers of the King and Queen to multiply and boost.

And yet it still fell short. His body simply couldn't handle this much energy.

However. . . The most impressive attack he's seen to date. He'll recreate a fraction of its power!

Void Axis!

*BANG!!!!

A misfire!

The blood vessels in Luke's arm burst apart as he held back a cry of pain.

Even though the set up was correct, he was still lacking!

But even though his attack wasn't successful, his goal was still achieved.

He bought some time!

Ria hovered in the air, her blade in hand, her eyes closed in concentration.

Second Resonance!

Chapter 727 - 727: Crowned Tempest, Heaven's Rift

Second Resonance, the personal realm in which a Hunter is in their most optimal environment.

An ability that allows them to turn the tides of the fight in their favour.

Usually, one would only get a realm skill at six Sigils due to this resonance.

But if a Hunter gets a realm skill ahead of time, this Resonance would then enhance that realm skill further while optimizing it for the Hunter!

Lightning Sovereignty, the Realm skill that Ria got from Nyzel was one that enhanced her power with lightning.

Not only did it boost her speed and power, but every strike she unleashed would apply a charge to her enemy and after a certain point, she'll be able to unleash the attack Raijin.

With this as the foundation, her second Resonance began to change her realm!

Second Resonance - Crowned Tempest, Heaven's Rift

Above them, the clouds parted to reveal a lightning halo suspended in the air. Rings that crackled with raw destructive energy, filling this realm with a lightning energy.

Reaching out with her hand, her blade shattered into countless fragments that transformed into bolts of lightning.

Converging together, it formed a lightning blade with an ever changing shape.

Ria's hair turned to a neon blue, fading off into crackles of lightning on the tips. Her eyes gained a new purple glow while glowing markings appeared on her shoulders.

This was her best chance to defeat Alice!

An attack that takes her by surprise. The culmination of everything she's worked towards.

An unceasing onslaught of attacks like that of a never ending storm!

"GO FOR IT RIA!!!" Luke shouted, clasping his hands together.

The board beneath him expanded to encompass Alice as the chess pieces unfolded to become chains that wrapped around her body.

Throughout this entire fight, both him and Ria have been adhering to the movement of chess pieces!

This was the strategy he told her at the start! As long as you follow the movement, the buffs will remain. But if you don't, once he triggers this move, an inversion will occur and the buffs become debuffs!

Decrease all base stats!

Attack down!

Spell power down!

Speed down!

Defence down!

All stats down!

Increase debuff potency by 30%!

Resonance debuff!

Feeling all the chains injecting their debuffs into her, Alice could feel her triple resonance fading with parts of it already peeling away.

"Damn. . . I got played like a fiddle." Alice chuckled while shaking her head.

She could see that Luke couldn't fight anymore, especially with that arm of his.

Since he was out of the fight, it's only Alice and Ria left.

'With the debuffs on your body right now, I doubt you can activate your Second Resonance in time before Ria blows half your body away.' Alyss laughed, folding her arms.

'Yep, that's quite the storm of energy around her. To be fair, I have been cheating a little. If we count the moment I took 'fatal' damage, I would've lost a while ago.' Alice scratched her cheek.

She had already 'lost' an arm to Ria's attack with Luke's En Passant.

However, at this point she simply wanted to see how far Ria and Luke can go.

There was no guarantee that the future enemies they face won't have a regeneration as monstrous as her's. Especially if they consider the fact that the Zenia family will definitely be involved.

Looking up at Ria, Alice transformed a portion of her body to blood mist and defended herself with Void energy!

*RUMBLE!!!

Stomping down, Ria appeared in front of Alice looking like a wrathful thunder god. The lightning blade in her hands split into two, turning into a pair of gauntlets for her!

*BANG!!!

Two rapid jabs towards Alice's chest, both enhanced by two fold lightning!

Alice's form was immediately torn apart but since she was prepared using blood mist, no harm was done.

But Ria was far from done.

*KSH!!!!

Lightning crackled and Alice was tossed into the air from behind.

Markings appeared around her body with each successive hit. The blood mist around her body was being vapourised with each strike of lightning. Too fast for the Void to catch up unless Alice was to try and predict where it'll land!

But once Ria notices the Void unfolding, she was able to change the direction of her strike.

*CLANG!!!

Alyss took over as she noticed Ria using martial arts! Seeing Alyss parry one of her strikes, Ria held her breath and followed up with an uppercut that Alyss caught.

Neck! Ribs, back of knee!

Each strike would be blocked, dampening the blow!

"So it's Alyss this time." Ria smiled.

"Of course. If the chains are there, that means I'm in control." Alyss chuckled, whipping her body around for a roundhouse kick that Ria dodged.

Jumping back, Ria hovered in the air as lightning coated her arm. Taking aim, she pointed her finger towards Alyss who felt a sudden sense of danger.

Along her arm, lightning formed a pattern as energy began to flow towards the fingertip.

*BANG!!!!

Quickly shifting her body to the side out of instinct, Alyss widened her eyes seeing her right arm vapourised from the shoulder down.

Her smile twitched as she took a defensive stance.

*BANG!!!

Destruction point!!!

Slamming her fist into the lightning bullet, the two attacks neutralised each other as Alyss's body was flung back.

Having fired the second shot, Ria's arm was now beginning to show signs of damage. Her flesh hissed with clouds of steam emanating from her arm.

Taking her knowledge of two fold lightning, Ria condensed lightning into a single node and used her arm as a firing platform.

By reinforcing her arm with as much energy as she could, she formed an acceleration path. And by allowing the node and the after images to collide right before firing, it created a bullet enhanced by both two fold lightning and her natural powers granted by Resoannce.

The destructive potential is great as it boast the strongest armour piercing capability.

As for accuracy, that wasn't an issue as long as Ria 'charged' her opponent with enough marks.

Aiming without the marks is also possible but last minute adjustments were impossible.

Alyss may have dodged to the side but the bullet curved to ensure a hit connected.

'Right arm can handle one more shot at most, left can handle three more. Though it probably won't work anymore.' Ria's breathed out as she noticed Alyss recovering from the collision.

While Alyss may be in control, that didn't mean Alice stopped working.

Therefore, the likelihood of a triggered cast countering her bullet was very high.

But that's fine, her preparations were done.

She's charged Alyss's body with enough charges, made sure her lightning was guaranteed to hit along with its offensive capabilities.

Now it was time for the true face of her attack.

This entire time, she has shown herself to be only capable of two fold lightning.

Normally, three fold would be outside of her capabilities as she hasn't been able to stabilise the output.

Normally.

But this wasn't a normal scenario.

All the requirements have now been met and she was confident that she could bring out the full potential of her attack- no! She'll go beyond her current limits!

Raising her hand above her head, lightning converged into a single orb before shooting upwards!

In an instant, a light of raw energy pierced the clouds and linked up with the halo of lightning that had been gathering power since its deployment!

As the link was formed, the entire realm was flooded by a wave of lightning energy, causing Alyss's hairs to stand on its end.

Taking over, Alice turned her gaze towards the sky and cold sweat filled her back.

This amount of energy that she was gathering. . . Yeah there was no doubt about it.

After seeing so many Hunters and beasts alike, Alice noticed a certain. . . sensation whenever she laid eyes on them. A gut feeling. . .

And right now, that gut feeling was stronger than ever.

Ria had the makings of a Lord!

"Removing restraints." Ria spoke each word with calm authority.

*CRACK!!!

Above her, the ring shattered! The fragments of energy spiralled towards Ria in countless strands, forming coils of power above her palm.

And hovering in the centre was a single spear.

"One fold. . ."

The spear began to tremble as a single afterimage began to split from the main body.

"Two fold. . ."

A second after image manifested, the coils around the spear expanded as Ria adjusted her grip.

She pulled her arm back, lightning crackling along her arm and searing her flesh but she took aim.

The coils around the spear positioned themselves in front of it, turning into acceleration coils.

"Three fold. . ."

Gritting her teeth, a blood vessel popped in Ria's eye as it became bloodshot.

She could feel the calamitous storm of energy raging in her hands. It threatened to burst apart but she clenched her fist, wrangling the power under her control.

Arching her body back, she held her breath... Then snapped forward!

Three Fold Lightning Tribulation!

*RUMBLE!!! BANG!!!

The instant the spear left Ria's hand, all three after images snapped forward, combining with the main body of the spear as it burst forward!

Each ring that it passed enhanced the attack further! Boosting its speed and power to the point it encompassed the entire area!

An attack that destabilised the entire space just from the raw turbulent energy being kicked up by its approach.

Seeing this kind of attack, Alice felt excitement welling up in her heart.

And since Ria has shown her such a magnificent sight, Alice wanted to do the same.

Clasping her hands in front of her chest, Alice condensed a single droplet of blood swirling with a strange darkness confined within. A darkness that seemed alive.

"Second Resonance."

As the droplet of blood fell towards the ground beneath her, Alice's smile widened as it reached from one ear to the other.

The edges of the droplet burst apart and darkness encroached on Ria's domain of lightning.

Chapter 728 - 728: Reverie Of Ruin: Litany Of Dual Horizons

When it comes to Alice, she was always an anomaly.

Her first resonance has two states, one with Alyss and one with herself. Both undergo certain amounts of transformation throughout their journey.

As her 'body' changes, so does her resonance. From her awakening manifesting in the form of red spider lilies to the Eldritch energy that turned the lilies black.

But second resonance doesn't quite follow that rule. Instead, it takes into account of everything before crafting a realm most suitable for the Hunter.

For Rosalyn, that's the Crimson Walpurgis, a land beneath the scarlet moon. A realm that bolstered all of her powers and even removing limiters for certain skills.

Ria had her Crowned Tempest, Heaven's Rift, a land charged to the brim with electricity, allowing Ria to use the entire realm as a catalyst rather than just her own body.

Increasing the output of her strongest skills by leaps and bounds.

Luke's resonance, Checkered Fate, imposed a chessboard onto reality. Further enhancing the rules and actions that his pieces can do while also imposing certain restrictions.

So what kind of resonance would Alice awaken? What kind of realm was suitable for a being like her. The amalgamation of four energy sources, a host of a myriad of souls and the duality of two wardens. The holder of the Abyssal Relics and the future Queen of the Abyss?

Second Resonance – Reverie Of Ruin: Litany of Dual Horizons.

The droplet unfolded like a flower. The ripples of darkness flickering across the water surface before transforming into a cage that swallowed the entirety of Ria's second Resonance.

Reality twisted and the ground beneath them shook.

As the spectator of this fight, Rosalyn had already sent Luke away to safety. But now that she was facing Alice's Second Resonance personally, she almost struck out instinctively, refusing to let such a realm unfold.

Just the fact that it managed to overwrite the surroundings so quickly proved how dominant it was!

When two Second Resonances are activated, they clash for dominion. Both sides battling for absolute control over this specific area.

But Ria's personal realm lost!

'No. . . losing isn't quite accurate. It got swallowed.' Rosalyn frowned.

From the darkness, a broken city unravelled itself.

Like a distance dream or rather, nightmare, the memory clawed its way to the surface. Almost. . .

Alive.

Towers of scorched stone pierced towards the heavens, their ashen silhouettes swallowed by violet flames. It didn't consume the tower, it didn't fade. The flames wrapped the towers in their twisted warmth.

Cinders and ash fell like snow, blanketing the city in the colour of ruin.

Cathedrals crafted from jagged material, twisting into agonizing arches and domes that split like ruptured skulls freshly carved open by a blade. Broken windows mimicking sharpened teeth and spires that fused with an unholy mass of flesh.

Parasites that burst out from within, wrapping stone with flesh and twitching tendrils that spilled out through the gaps.

Thick currents of crimsons filled the streets, a river of blood drowning those that would step amongst the ruins. Hidden within the river were obsidian briars, filled with jagged spikes. Spider lilies that blossomed atop the thorns in twisted beauty.

A garden of destruction, blood and ruin.

Piercing up from the surface of the river, surrounded by lilies, were countless gravestones. Some bigger than others, some twisting over like ribcages.

No names were carved upon their surface, no memory of who they once were. Only the markings of Sigils could be seen etched upon the stone.

And above all of this carnage, far into the bleeding horizon hung a sphere. A false moon radiating a sickening glow. Cracks spread across its surface, gathering at the bottom where rivers of blackened ichor streamed down from its open wound, splitting the sky in two.

Where the black blood touched, flames would erupt. And from within the flames, birthed twisted mounds of flesh.

However, to one's shock, this realm does not only contain visions of destruction.

Through shattered glass, pools of blood and polished stone, within the reflections of this ruinous realm, another world was present.

The other side of the horizon. An overlap of the current cruel vision.

A city that stood unbroken, towering structures untouched by flame nor flesh.

Their marbled surfaces glowing beneath the silver luminance of an unbroken moon. Spectral arcs of light that drifted around the moon, illuminating this city in a serene glow.

A city free of the destruction and ruin that plagued the current realm.

And despite its perfection, despite its peace, it was utterly. . .

Lifeless.

While the ruined city burned, signs of twisted life existed.

While the perfect city stood, its cold isolated perfection ripped the realm of all life.

This was Alice's second Resonance!

Reverie Of Ruin: Litany Of Dual Horizons!

A reflection of two potential futures!

Hovering in the air, Ria grasp her shoulder in pain.

Three Fold Lightning Tribulation, the strongest attack she can muster with every buff given by Luke. One that required stringent requirements before it could be fired.

Yet it was swallowed by the transformation of Alice's Second Resonance.

Looking around her, she couldn't believe the sheer scale of this Resonance.

How much space did it displace? What did it look like from the outside? Was this still within the boundaries that Rosalyn set up?

"You just keep piling on the surprises don't you? How do you expect me to catch up when you pull this kind of stunt?" Ria smiled helplessly as Alice drifted next to her.

"I have to be fast in my growth otherwise it'll be pretty difficult to survive ya know?" Alice laughed.

She didn't expect her second Resonance to look like this either. She simply had a 'feeling' in her heart and she reached out towards it. By condensing that feeling into a single droplet of blood, she imposed her world into reality.

And that world was this realm of contradictions.

Destruction that births life, creation that births death.

A paradox.

"So what exactly does your realm do?" Ria asked curiously. She already knows that this battle was her loss but she still wanted to know what it was capable of.

"Well. . . A lot of it is still a mystery to me. I'm not sure that's supposed to be the case for Second Resonances but mine's not exactly normal so it's to be expected." Alice shrugged.

Raising her hand, she snapped her finger.

*Click!

In that moment, the realms inverted.

At the forefront was the lifeless perfect city, showcasing the signs of ruin through countless reflections. The two cities that overlay each other had swapped places.

"The two cities have their own benefits. This city boosts my Void and Holy attributed skills while the ruined city boosts Eldritch and Abyssal. As for what the gravestones are used for. . . Well it's easier for me to just show you." Alice smiled confidently as she gestured for Ria to follow her.

Landing near a gravestone, Alice tapped her finger on the surface.

Strands of energy began to unravel from the gravestone, transforming into a Sigil.

Using her spare hand, Alice crafted a spear and overlayed the two together.

"Here, catch." Alice tossed the spear over.

There were two markings on the weapon, one from the gravestone and the other resembling Alice's sixth Sigil.

"Huh?" Catching the spear, Ria froze as a flood of knowledge rushed into her mind, causing her to stumble back.

"You're joking. . ." Ria muttered, realising what this meant.

"Nope. Give it a try."

Nodding her head, Ria took a few steps back. There was a hesitant expression on her face.

*RUMBLE!!!

Focusing her gaze, she imbued the energy into the weapon and swung!

*KRKK!!!!

In front of her, a wall of ice was formed! Twisting her body, Ria slammed her heel into the wall, shattering it and transforming the fragments into smaller ice weapons that hovered around her.

Each slash would cause the weapons to follow up in synchronicity. This information in her mind. . . It felt like this was always part of her!

Adjusting her footwork, lightning crackled across her body and manifested on the ice weapons!

Perfect harmony.

That's that this was. There was no sign of rejection between her Sigils.

"One of the main uses of my Second Resonance right now are these Sigils. Think of them as. . . personal relics in the making. If I create a catalyst, I'll be able to turn that catalyst into a relic for you to use." Alice explained.

"Meaning, it's essentially another Sigil for you. But like with all things, there's a drawback when I use it on people other than myself. For the duration of the Resonance, you can only synchronise with one relic. If you get another one or try to replace the one I've given you, it won't work." She shook her head.

"So I'm stuck with this ice power unless you redeploy your Resonance?" Ria asked, playing around with the spear.

Thanks to Alice's sixth Sigil, she was also given information on how to use the Sigil.

"Pretty much." Alice nodded.

"Then what about for you?"

"Fufu~ Even for my standards I'm pretty damn impressed. You see, each side of the horizon counts as its own. . . realm in a sense. An isolated space.

"What happens in one realm stays in that realm. Though the best way to explain would be what happens to my Sigils if I were to swap." Alice chuckled.

"Let's call our realm, Realm A. The one on fire as Realm B and finally, this realm as Realm C. in Realm A, I have my default Sigils. In Realm B, I can swap them out for Allura's power. But as I switch to Realm C, it resets to default and I can choose new ones to swap out. But going back into Realm B swaps me back to Allura's power." Alice explained.

Furrowing her brows, Ria was a little confused when she realised the implications.

In effect, Alice was now in possession of three different sets of six Sigils! One for each realm!

Chapter 729 - 729: Alice's Evaluation Of Ria And Luke

"But as great as this is, there's a slight drawback to switching Sigils too much." Alice let out a sigh.

"Oh?"

Ria raised an eyebrow. That tone. . . It was rather surprising that even Alice found the drawback to be rather substantial. Enough for her to sigh in such helplessness.

"Yep, once my Second Resonance breaks, runs out or I choose to deactivate it, I lose around 80% of my power? So for the next few hours, I'll be functioning at around 20% while I gradually return to full strength." Alice explained.

Her second Resonance, Reverie of Ruin, was essentially forcing her body to go into debt in order to fight using three different sets of Sigils. An overcharge of power that her body wouldn't normally be able to exert.

"So the fight must end during this time. A last resort then." Ria frowned.

If Alice is forced to use her Second Resonance, then that means it's an opponent she can't kill at full power.

"Ideally, I shouldn't even enter a battle of the second Resonance since I have my personal artifact to destabilize the space. But there are always methods to work around it." Alice shrugged.

The best case scenario would be to avoid a Second Resonance clash no matter what. But if the enemy is successful in deploying the Resonance then the only thing she could do is match it.

Preparing herself for the weakness that'll flood her body, Alice waved her arm and withdrew her Resonance.

Watching the city crumble little by little was. . . a strange sight to say the least.

Little by little, bit by bit, the city unravelled. The sky collapsed along with the moon, melding together into the same darkness that birthed this realm.

Alice didn't have any words. She simply watched the city disappear. A reminder that no matter how grand, no matter how eternal something may seem, it was not immune to the cruel grasp of time.

It doesn't matter if you're immortal, time will prevail. Your body may not die but your mind is corroded with every waking second for an immortal being.

Until the point where you give up.

You can keep running, you can hide.

But time? Time just has to wait.

It will continue to wait until the day you can no longer continue.

Once the final speck of this city disappeared, Alice was hit by a giant wave of fatigue.

"Blerg. . ." Falling backwards, Alice sprawled out on the ground.

While 20% of her power was still relatively strong, enough to defend herself from average dangers, having all of that power leave her body left her weak in the knees.

Similar to the moment when a person working on their leg muscles for a full day bends their knee for a single step down. All strength leaves the body and they'll simply collapse.

"Need some help?" Ria chuckled, seeing Alice sprawled out on the ground.

"Yes please..." Alice raised her arms into the air.

"Ria, you should rest that arm." Rosalyn spoke out, walking towards the two with Luke under her arms.

But due to the height difference, his legs were being dragged along the ground.

Nodding her head, Ria watched as Rosalyn threw Alice over her shoulder.

". . ."

". . ."

"If you got something to say just say it." Rosalyn furrowed her brows.

"You know. . . I'm aware that I'm the one requesting to be picked up. But can't you. . . Ya know. . . choose a better method?" Alice's smile twitched.

Since she had trained with Kaden and Allura before, she wasn't unfamiliar with being carried like a limp sack of potatoes.

However, the only issue was that she was hoisted over the shoulders facing the sky instead of the ground.

It felt as though Rosalyn was trying to break her back or something along those lines.

"It'll be fineee~ Isn't that what you always say when you speak about the literal Realm Ruler of the Void? Or are you suggesting that you have an issue with someone giving you a hand?"

". . ." Letting out a slight groan, Alice tried to make herself comfortable but Rosalyn made sure it's as uncomfortable as possible.

"So how was it? Did you get a good grasp on how Luke and Ria fight?" Rosalyn asked.

If it was up to her, her evaluation of the two was rather high.

Both of them have far exceeded the talented students she's had in the past.

Alice folded her arms.

"In terms of lethality, Ria definitely has the makings of a Lord. Especially if you include the buffs that Luke provides. I was pretty surprised that you could impose debuffs if they don't follow chess rules.

"Guaranteed hit was also a surprise. If the three of us fight as a group of three. . . I think I'll have to play the role of support rather than acting as the vanguard. Ria is a glass cannon and Luke's defensive capabilities are. . ." Alice trailed off, trying to find the right words.

"Sh*t?" Luke sighed.

"Your words not mine." Alice nodded in agreement.

It was tricky to catch him no doubt, especially with Ria covering for him. But by covering for him, she's also limiting how much damage she can do.

So if they were to fight as a group, there's no doubt that Alice will be forced to drop back in order to help Luke survive the fight.

"I see. . . It's a pretty accurate assessment of where you three are right now. What if you add the others into the mix? Minus me since I don't think we want to make it a fight where Lords intervene." Rosalyn changed the question.

"Hmm. . . If I include the people we have on hand. . . Jin is a standard berserker like vanguard. Defence isn't that high but he can tank a lot and heal a lot. Isolde is a standard assassin. However, her offensive power isn't that high. She's good at setting up traps and finishing off those that are weak enough.

"In this situation, I still have to be a supportive all rounder, helping out wherever we are lacking at the moment." That was Alice's assessment of the group as a whole.

They got a little bit of everything. Balanced but requires reinforcement.

"So what you're saying is. . . The group is still too weak for you to trust your back to them completely?" Rosalyn furrowed her brows.

Alice wanted to reject the notion but it was the brutal truth.

Ideally, Alice wanted to be able to focus on casting and dishing out as much damage as she can.

But with the structure of this group right now, she couldn't quite put her entire focus on attacking.

If she did, the chances of injury or death was high.

Luke glanced down at the ground. He knew that he was acting as the weak link, no matter how good his buffs may be.

He realised during the spar that even if he tried to defend himself, he simply didn't have the Sigils or skills to do so. His tricks and promotion pieces can only do so much.

In order to properly survive, he'll need a dedicated frontliner who can focus on keeping him alive.

And that's the role Alice was thinking of taking if they were to fight as a group. However, doing so meant that she was wasting a lot of her offensive power in keeping him safe.

"A little brutal but I can't deny it. With the offensive power shown by Kazira, it's only natural to expect that the other Apostles can do the same. You also have to remember that she was in a temporary vessel that was crumbling apart.

"Yet with a body that can't handle her power, I still pretty much lost to her. Had it not been for Cayla. . . Yep I don't wanna think about it." Alice let out a sigh.

Fighting Famine was a must. Either she finds her first or Kaden finds her.

Regardless, if she's spotted, a death WILL break out.

The Apostles belonging to the Sun and Moon are. . .Debatable for now. It's entirely dependent on their stance but knowing the two of them, a fight is unavoidable.

So with that in mind, Alice needed to make sure they had enough power to survive against Athe postles.

"The fact that you even survived an encounter with one is a miracle already. But defeating them is another matter. You're lucky that Enris doesn't really care about what happens." Rosalyn sighed.

Had it been Solaris or Lumiria. . . Well, Alice will need to fight the avatar of a God on top of everything.

"Although. . . I do have to more candidates when it comes to being part of the team. Selen and Egil, the two I met in the north. Neither of them are Lords yet but Egil is a fantastic front liner and Selen is a support that doubles as an attacker.

"If we recruit them into the fight, it'll make things 100 times easier."

With Selen's power of time manipulation as well as perception manipulation, any fight against her was at a huge disadvantage. Especially when you don't know what's happening. And Egil? Well. . . He's a frontliner that can withstand heavy beatings.

If she was to include those two, the group formation would be as such.

Alice and Ria acting as damage dealers, Egil as the main tank, Jin as the off tank, Isolde is the assassin/scout and finally, Selen and Luke acting as support/sub damage dealers.

Luke can copy her skills and 'store' them as pieces. Of course, whether or not he can cast them was a different question entirely.

And with everything now laid out, it was clear what they were lacking.

A dedicated healer.

While Alice may be able to regenerate her own wounds, the others don't have that luxury.

It would be best if they had someone who can fix them up on the fly.

Once they get a healer, this party was complete.

Chapter 730 - 730: Potential Healer

As for any candidates who can act as the healer, Alice had one in mind. A healer she met in the north that had a . . . unique personality.

Outside of the med bay, she was a timid rabbit. Yet the moment patients start rolling in, she became a warlord who sent fear down both Alice and Egil's spines.

Alfva, the best healer in the North.

Someone who could regrow limbs for you using her Crystal Flies and slap a regeneration mark on your face.

There was only one issue though.

She wasn't exactly suited for on field healing. Most of her 'healing' was done through surgery which is rather time consuming.

Especially if there's someone trying to kill them at the same time.

In this regard, Alice needed a healer who could do quick first aid on the field then surgery off field.

So while Alfva is good, she's unfortunately not possible.

Plus, Alice doubted she'll come along if she knew what kind of dangers they'll be fighting.

Although. . .

'Do you think I can use the power of Synchronisation to share my regeneration?'

If she could make this a reality, her party would effectively become immortal.

'Maybe. But it's not like our regeneration isn't without side effects. Since it's well. . . closely tied to our physique. And with our physique basically being the most potent Abyss Blood there is, I don't believe our friends would be excited by the prospect.' Alyss folded her arms.

It was a good idea but they know too little about Synchronisation and their own body to properly put it into practice. It's similar to the case where she tried to use the Mirror Jester Sigil on the tree only for it to corrode.

Arriving back at the tavern, they could see Isolde preparing something behind the counter as Rosalyn threw both Alice and Luke on a stool and sat down.

"A little rough don't you think? We're injured patients here." Alice pouted while Luke only let out a single groan.

"Don't complain. Your injuries are self inflicted in the first place. This stupid f*ck thought that a realm bisecting skill was exactly the thing his body can withstand and tried to fire it. Would you look at that? He f*cked up his arm." Rosalyn grumbled while rummaging through her stash of goods.

After a while, she pulled out an extractor and stabbed it into her own arm. Mixing it with another vial of blood, she injected the new mixture into Luke and his arm began to heal.

"Here's yours." Rosalyn tossed over a vial to Ria who caught it and stabbed it into her own arm.

With their injuries now healed, they let out a sigh and sat properly by the counter.

"If you keep sighing, your youth will disappear along with the sigh." Isolde chuckled, placing a cup in front of them.

Seeing this, Alice excitedly peeked over the edge expecting to see mead but groaned once she noticed it was juice.

"You're not drinking when it's still this early in the day." Isolde smiled.

She already knew what kind of danger Alice posed once she got drunk. It was relatively acceptable at night but during the day? Not on her watch.

"But-"

"Don't hate it till you try it." Isolde cut Alice off.

Furrowing her brows, Alice relented and nodded her head.

Bringing the cup to her lips, she took a sip.

"!!!"

"See? I made a note of what kind of mead you seemed to like during that night at the party and combined the needed flavours. It's nothing too special but it should be what you've been drinking minus the alcoholic taste." Isolde smiled, handing Alice another cup since she finished her's in one go.

"How did you even make this???" Alice blinked her eyes in disbelief.

"When I was running the orphanage, we didn't have much and knowing how to make full use of the fruits that we gather played a rather big part. The rations we got was enough to 'survive' but not enough to live."

Back then, Isolde had learned how to make candied fruits and drinks to keep the children happy. Seeing Alice's reaction towards the drink, she was glad she hadn't lost her touch after all these years.

Ria and Luke got the same while Rosalyn received a drink similar to that of blood by her own request. It wasn't exactly blood, merely juice that had the viscosity, colour and a similar taste albeit on the sweeter side.

"Honestly if you and Tristan worked together to make a ba-" Before Alice finished her own sentence, she paused and shook her head.

The favoured son of Lumiria working with Isolde who hates the Goddess' guts? Yeah that definitely won't turn into a ball of flames at all.

"Where's Jin? I figured he would be here?" Alice asked curiously, changing the subject.

"He's upstairs right now, stabilizing his mental state and getting used to Eldritch powers. Even though he's been modified into a vessel for this power, he is still ultimately human in the end. His mind can't handle the myriad of voices unless he takes a break every now and then." Isolde explained.

It was the same for her at the start. Even with Zal-Ka'Rith helping out, she still had to figure out her own way to cope with the whispers of the dark. The tendrils of corruption that drilled into one's mind the more they used this eldritch power.

"Actually that brings me to another question. Do you not hear any voices when you use Eldritch energy?" Isolde tilted her head in confusion.

"Aside from the voices I already have in my head? Nah not really."

Alyss and Cayla were kind of there since the beginning. Though Alyss was more of a 'hunger'? No that wasn't quite accurate.

Alyss was dormant, showing up every now and then. Alice has mistaken Alyss for the hunger that she felt thanks to Eldritch but she was fully awakened thanks to their journey to the Inverted World.

Therefore, in terms of hearing the voices of corruption, Alice can't say she's heard them on her own without outside influence.

But hunger? She's definitely felt it.

"Hmm. . . Then do you think that perhaps you are your own source of Eldritch energy? I've been thinking about this for a while now. You mentioned you have divinity in your body thanks to the Abyss but isn't there a chance that you can become an Outer God as well?" Isolde mentioned.

The group fell silent as they turned their gaze towards Alice.

Even Rosalyn was a little intrigued now that Isolde phrased it as such.

With everything she knew about Alice, there were several paths she can go down.

First, the path of Divinity. Velouria's path and one that leads her to the Will of the Abyss.

Second, the path of Eldritch. To become an Outer God foreign to their realm.

Third, the path of the Realm Ruler. With the main realm now missing a Realm Ruler, it wouldn't surprise Rosalyn if Alice was to take her place. Especially considering her control over all the sources of energy.

Though this path is very unlikely due to Alice wanting to help the Abyss instead of becoming a Realm Ruler.

And the last path, one that corresponds with the energy that she controls, would be taking over as the new Realm Ruler of the Void.

Alice's mastery of the Void has been far better than any that Rosalyn had seen in the past. Especially considering the fact that this power was rather rare. Outside of Feris, Rosalyn didn't know who else can manipulate the Void Space like Alice can.

"Well. . . I guess it's not impossible. But I don't really want to become an Outer God." She pulled a face of disgust.

"Is it because they look weird?" Ria chuckled.

"Well that's part of it." Alice nodded.

"Though the main reason is probably because becoming one means she's exiled from this realm. Which also means no mead for her." Luke grumbled, enjoying his drink.

At first Ria and Isolde thought it was a joke but seeing as how Alice wasn't saying anything, they became speechless.

No wonder the Will wanted to give her the title of Abyss Lord of Mead!

This girl's got nothing but mead in her mind!

"Setting aside what this alcoholic is thinking, I've contacted my brother and he should be sending someone to come pick us up. We'll be travelling rather quickly and inconspicuously okay? Remember that word. Inconspicuously." Rosalyn emphasized, tapping her finger against Alice's head.

"That means no spikes of energy, no drunken rages, no sudden tears in space no nothing. Act like a civilian while we make our way to my brother. Understood?"

Alice blinked innocently.

"It's not like I want to attract that much attention." She pouted, feeling wronged.

"Bull motherf*cking sh*t. If I so much as see a single speck of energy being released when it shouldn't be, I will personally empty more of your stash! Oh and don't think I don't know about your little agreement with the Queen of the North." Rosalyn held a single sheet of paper as Alice's eyes constricted. "My brother was kind enough to let me know what the North has been up to. I thought they would be preparing for battle or something along the lines. NAH! Instead, some split haired freak decided to cash in her favour with the Queen and use it to recreate forgotten mead!

"You have the whole f*cking nation trying to reverse engineer this sh*t!"

Hearing this, both Ria and Luke choked on their drink while Isolde almost fell over.

A favour from the Queen of an entire nation. . .

And she chose mead.

Feeling the eyes on her, Alice felt a little embarrassed and hide her face behind her mug.

"Fine. . . I'll behave. . ." She muttered meekly. If her efforts in trying to recreate Ayrian mead is ruined then she would truly cry.

After all, she was now running low on bottles. Once that reaches zero. . .

Alice shuddered imagining the possibility.