

Abyssal A 731

Chapter 731 - 731: Bidding Farewell To Suyin

The time it took for the transport to arrive was one day. During that day, there was a lot for Alice to do especially since Suyin wasn't coming with them.

Despite her genius and ideas regarding Eldritch Energy, she had her own responsibilities. However, there was also the fact that at the end of the day, she was still just a normal human. No matter how useful her inventions are, one strong gust of wind from a Hunter would be enough to kill her.

But just because she wasn't coming along for the ride didn't mean she was going to stop helping them.

Within this period, Suyin crafted a parting gift for the group.

Three keys, one for Alice, one for Jin and one for Isolde.

Staring at the keys on the table, Alice wasn't sure what to make of it.

"Thank you, this is. . . Exactly what I've been missing." Alice held the key in front of her.

"How do you know it's what you've been missing if I haven't told you yet." Suyin rolled her eyes. "A parting gift to make sure my inventions always reach you. You should be pretty familiar with the energy considering your. . .relationship with this 'realm ruler'." She waved her hand, gesturing for them to activate the keys.

Raising an eyebrow, Alice shrugged and injected some energy into the object.

The moment her energy entered the key, it began to unravel. Strangely similar to how Void Fang assimilates and reconstructs itself, the key transformed into a small door of sorts.

Of course, while there were similarities, Alice didn't even need to test out its durability. Void Fang was superior.

Opening the door, Alice peeked inside and saw a stack of empty Eldritch Crystals.

"Each of these are keys leading to a private vault in the Void. It's not a big vault but I'll restock it every now and then, maybe even fill it with some other babies I make in the meantime." Suyin chuckled, rubbing her nose.

Even though she can't follow them, that didn't mean she wanted to give up her research on Eldritch Energy.

She didn't want to question Alice's existence but that didn't mean she didn't want to find out more. Even if its dangerous, her desire for knowledge wasn't something that can be stopped.

"I have the master key so I can also access it. Though I'd appreciate it if you can leave some notes or samples of Eldritch Energy should you use the crystals to clean them up." Suyin showed them her own key. "Ah but I'm not saying you can only send me samples of Eldritch Energy okay? Feel free to give me samples of interesting things such as your blood or pieces of flesh belonging to anomalies. I can do some research and give you the findings."

During this, Suyin occasionally shot a gaze towards Jin and Isolde who's smile twitched from the implications.

"And if you have any specific requests, just leave me a note and I'll see if I can do anything about it."

With nothing else to say, Suyin paused.

She looked at the three that she's recently come to know. People who brought fresh air to her research, helping her push back the Cult and keep her city safe.

Their mission was far more important than a small city yet she was allowed to be given a role in their journey.

How many would kill for an opportunity like this? Especially researchers. A chance to glance towards the pinnacle, to fully understand the secrets of their world.

Perhaps this was her reward for all these years being unable to get a single Sigil.

Alice had a complicated expression on her face.

"Why are you making that kind of expression. What? Feeling soft hearted? Or. . . Perhaps I feels like I'm giving you this for free?" Suyin smirked, folding her arms while leaning against the door frame.

"Was it that obvious?" Alice smiled helplessly.

"I mean~ We've only known each other for a short while but even I can tell what you're thinking at times. When you relax, you practically show everything on your face like an open book." Suyin chuckled.

"She's not wrong, you are indeed quite the expressive one. Especially when it comes to your precious mead." Isolde laughed softly while Jin nodded in agreement.

Pouting slightly in annoyance, Alice let out a sigh and turned to Suyin.

"Thanks, truly. Even if it wasn't for this vault, the research you conducted has been a great help. If you're ever in trouble, don't be afraid to ask for help. I can probably link up the two keys and make a portal directly to you." Alice grinned.

Not expecting this kind of response back, Suyin smiled and nodded her head.

Reaching out, she gave Alice, Jin and Isolde a firm handshake while watching them load the last of their stuff onto the carriage.

She could see them joke around, knocking each other around and laughing.

If she had Sigils as well, would she be going on this kind of journey?

Well there was no point in asking these kinds of questions. There was no point asking the past, only looking towards the future.

"I should publish some new research soon otherwise my role of genius might be taken from me." Suyin chuckled, giving her body a stretch.

Recently, she heard news from the west that apparently a new duo has appeared in Extalia.

A duo by the name of Elara and Arunya.

Both publishing impressive research regarding Abyss Beasts and even making a rather large spectacle of it in Extalia. Their presence has. . . caught the attention of quite a few noble families including the Moon church.

With this kind of pressure, Suyin wanted to maintain her status as genius and make some of her research known.

The question now was what kind of research did she want to publish?

'Most civilians and even well known Hunters probably don't know about Eldritch Energy. Though if they start causing havoc anywhere else, I can probably publish information on these Eldritch Crystals.' Suyin wasn't naïve to think that the movement of the Eldritch was limited to just the East.

From what she heard from Alice, there were shipments being sent everywhere and even in the port city she was at before she arrived in the east.

Since that was the case, she might as well think about ways to counter Eldritch corruption for the masses.

Regardless, she was going to be quite busy for a while. Repair on the city and research.

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"???" Raising an eyebrow, Alice felt a strange. . . chill. A danger long forgotten, not close enough for her to sense it. But enough to give her this. . . unease.

"What's wrong?" Ria asked curiously, noticing Alice looking down at her arm.

"Nothing, just goosebumps for some reason. You know that kind of feeling you get when a creep is following you around?" Alice groaned.

"Not in particular no." Ria shook her head.

"They have to be a special kind of creep to follow you of all people. And even if they were that special, I'm pretty sure you'll kick their ass back from where they came." Rosalyn leaned back, looking towards Alice who shrugged.

She wasn't exactly wrong.

Any creep that aims for her will have a rude awakening.

Though. . . that didn't include creeps like Nyer. For those people, getting rid of them was going to be far more annoying.

"Anyways, we should probably set up a disguise now. Give me a cute looking one okay? I won't forgive you if you make me look ugly." Rosalyn narrowed her gaze, pointing her parasol at Alice.

Coughing awkwardly, Alice snapped her finger and created an orb of blood.

When it comes to making a disguise, one can easily modify the height and shape of the person. Though taking an attack, causing any kind of damage to the disguise would shatter it immediately.

Since Rosalyn was going to be carrying her parasol, Alice wanted to make a disguise fit for that kind of weapon.

An idea appeared in Alice's mind as her lips curved up into a smirk.

Snapping her finger, mirror like fragments appeared around Rosalyn as her disguise slowly manifested.

Her height remained relatively the same, maybe slightly taller. Instead of her usual white hair, she now had long black hair that reached her lower back.

A pair of dark black eyes to match and a similar gothic outfit with some slight differences.

"Hmm, I thought you would give me something different to my original appearance. But this isn't too far off." Rosalyn looked at herself through a blood mirror with a frown.

"Oh don't worry, it's plenty different enough." Alice winked before turning to Isolde.

Snapping her finger, Alice went for a disguise that was different to her nun appearance.

Something more. . . revealing.

She now had long blonde hair and a light blue eastern dress. Only this time the dress was cut off a little earlier than usual, turning it into a short skirt. A pair of soft blue eyes and porcelain skin.

Isolde tugged at the hem of her skirt with a blushing expression.

"Is this really necessary?" Isolde struggled to keep herself covered.

"Yep! Now then. . . You two." Alice rubbed her hands together, turning to Ria and Luke who shivered.

They realised that Alice was in a mischievous mood right now! They couldn't trust the disguise at all!

"YOU M*THERF*CKER! ALICE! WHY THE HELL DO I HAVE A D*CK?! WHY AM I A GUY?!" Rosalyn shouted in anger as blood erupted around the carriage.

Her eyes bloodshot with fury and murderous intent. Despite looking like a young woman, this disguise was actually that of a guy!

Chapter 732 - 732: Compiled Knowledge

Caelan has seen many things in his years alive.

He had lived long enough to see the passing of the eras. A new generation rise and fall.

He has seen the world reshape itself from the ashes only to burn down into ruin.

He has witnessed the birth of cities promising grand gestures now a forgotten name carved into the annals of history. He walked the marbled streets, watched the crowning of kings and queens.

He has seen the era of a genius, tales and songs of his achievements sweeping the realm. He has seen the death of one, falling into obscurity.

He has seen the ascension of Extalia through the flames of the old regime.

He's seen the battle between the Gods, the calamity brought forth by the collision of realm rulers.

The collapse of the barriers to the realms themselves.

He's seen the mutation of beasts, experiments done to humans, the creation of what shouldn't be. The invasion of the Outer Gods, Eldritch energy plague their deserts.

The haunting lullabies of sirens that brought a nation to ruin, the cunning of a fox that drove man insane.

He thought himself immune to such surprises after seeing so many things in his life yet now he found himself unable to utter a single word.

His dearest sister bringing more friends over as she had mentioned in her letter.

But this? This was. . .

"Rosey, can you explain why you have. . ." Hesitating on what to say, Caelan looked towards Alice.

His view of the world was different to normal people.

Some saw it through colours, some saw it through sound. Some through touch and some through other means such as energy.

Caelan was someone who could see the world through a special light.

And the moment he laid his eyes on Alice, her understood one fact.

The gears of the world was turning.

Nyer's experiment was a success.

And the product of that success was now in front of him.

However. . .

"Why is she hanging upside down atop the carriage like a ship mast? I thought you told me you wanted to travel inconspicuously. I don't think this counts as inconspicuous." Caelan's smile twitched as he tried to maintain his composure.

Having such an. . . abomination tied upside down like this was certainly a sight to behold. And more than that, the fact that the girl was actually accepting it.

"Don't even f*cking remind me!" Rosalyn stormed off past Caelan, still angry while the rest of the group smiled apologetically.

While Alice may have tried to escape at the start, she learned to accept it and sleep instead.

With the carriage suddenly coming to a stop, she opened her eyes and gave her body a stretch to the best of her abilities.

She noticed a man looking towards her with a faltering smile while trying to maintain his calm.

Judging by the way he looks and his energy, Alice summarised that he was probably Rosalyn's brother.

Although. . . Seeing the different strands of energy emanating from his body, Alice couldn't help but furrow her brows.

A strange and eerie feeling.

That's what she felt from Caelan.

"The journey must've been rather exhausting. If there's anything you desire to eat, let me know and I will have the chefs prepare something for you. And as for Ria and Luke, I'm glad to see that you two are still alive." Caelan chuckled, ignoring the fact that Alice was frowning at him and turned to the duo.

Before the two could reply, Rosalyn popped her head out from around the corner.

"By the way, Cael, if you tease Ria and Luke too much like last time, you'll get a rude awakening. The upside down b*tch with the split hair is Allura and Kaden's adopted kid."

"I'm well aware." Caelan chuckled, causing Rosalyn to pause with a raised eyebrow.

"You are? Why am I even surprised." She sighed, leaving Caelan to do whatever he wanted.

It's not like she can say much else other than this. And even if she did, he probably won't listen as per usual.

Like last time, he'll probably tease Alice using his own methods and get burned.

As for how much he'll get burned. . . Rosalyn was a little curious. During their spar, even if Alice didn't go all out with the intention to kill, it still forced her to take the fight a little seriously.

As a Lord against someone who hasn't even used their Second Resonance.

So what kind of power would Alice be able to force out of her brother?

Regardless, that was the least of her concerns right now.

Looking at his sister that left a warning then left, Caelan shook his head with a chuckle.

"Please, make yourselves at home." Caelan glanced back at the group before disappearing with a spiral of blood.

Ria and Luke were a little used to what Caelan was like while Alice simply shrugged.

They were strangers to begin with so she wasn't exactly expecting a grand welcome.

Undoing herself from the bindings, Alice yawned.

Rosalyn wanted to take advantage of her brother's information network to get some info about the movement of the churches before they plan their next move.

Ideally, Alice wanted to visit Darrow before going anywhere else. Though it might be a little risky considering the fact that Tristan is there and most likely, the Moon Church.

Another option would be going back to the north so that they can meet up with Selen and Egil.

[Going to the north has its own set of problems.] Cayla spoke up as Alice nodded her head in agreement.

First of all, since the north is connected to Extalia, there's a high chance that the family was still keeping their eyes there.

Second of all, she still wasn't entirely sure of how to confront Caera regarding her usage of Eldritch energy.

Which Outer God did she make a contract with? Why did she accept a contract even though she knew that Velouria wanted to keep them out of the realm?

Or was her hatred towards the Will and the Gods so potent that she'll abandon everything in pursuit of revenge?

'Where do you think would be ideal?' Alice asked curiously.

[Depends on what you want to do. Different places will help you achieve different goals. If your goal is purely on growth, I suggest going to the Abyss and looking for Allura again.] Cayla suggested.

Now that she was partially unsealed, there were certain things that she could. . . sense as the Eye of the Abyss.

A connection to the previous holders of authority.

It's a sense that Alice wasn't quite in tune with yet considering her senses are being permanently overloaded by energy and other factors.

She didn't want to say it outright but Allura wasn't in a great condition. If she was to tell Alice straight up. . .

Plus, it wasn't like Allura didn't have a method of communication. Rosalyn was here.

But if she chooses not to say anything, Cayla didn't think it was right of her to make a choice for Allura.

Folding her arms, Alice leaned back.

She wanted to see Allura again and soon. Especially since she might be able to figure something out with Restriction.

Though with Allura injured, Alice felt like going to see her without making the right preparation was going to do more harm than good.

The churches are after her. With Allura's injury, Alice doubted she'll be able to fight at full power. And if she was to bring Apostles to Allura while she was like this and something was to happen. . .

Alice would never be able to forgive herself.

'Let's take it slow for now. Rushing into things blindly won't be good for anyone.' Alice shook her head as Cayla nodded with a smile.

'Actually, do you think we can get a clearer picture of what happened to Ayr from Caelan? Since he deals with information, he should be privy to knowledge that a new lord like Rosalyn wouldn't know.'

'Plus if Rosalyn was around during the time where Feris killed the Realm Lord, he should know a bunch of stuff from that era.' Alyss suggested.

'You're not wrong. . . but he gives me the creeps. Something about him feels a little unnatural?' Alice couldn't shrug this feeling off.

[Caution is always good to have. From what I've seen, Rosalyn holds a spot in his heart. So maybe if you were to talk to him while Rosalyn is around, you might be able to eliminate this uncertainty.] Cayla suggested.

Nodding her head in agreement, Alice followed the rest of the group inside the building for now.

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Sitting behind his table, Caelan pulled out a lock for one of his drawers and opened it. A strange gateway leading into the darkness opened and he reached in.

"Pay...ment." A voice gurgled from the darkness.

"A hand." Caelan smiled, expecting this.

*CRUNCH!!!

The sounds of bones breaking and flesh tearing echoed out as he slowly pulled out his arm. The hand was now missing but Caelan wasn't phased.

Little by little, the hand began to regrow.

"De...sire?"

The voice asked.

"Records. Topic. . . Hmm. . . Let's go with the Era of the Great Hunt. Subject classification, Nyer." Caelan rubbed his chin.

From the darkness, a mound of flesh began to grow as a single split opened up.

Teeth began to invert as it transformed into a mouth, regurgitating a file for Caelan to grab.

Once he received the file, the mouth disappeared and the drawer shut itself.

As a long living individual, memory was always going to be a challenge no matter how much he believes he might remember. Thus he has split his knowledge into certain. . .files.

Opening the file, there were several thin sheets of blood, split into different classifications of knowledge.

Finding the one he wanted, Caelan traced his finger along the sheet and a smile grew on his face.

"How interesting."

Chapter 733 - 733: V-501-C

After finding their assigned rooms, the group split up to do their own things. Isolde wanted to refresh her memory on certain skills so that she could better support the group.

Jin wanted to do some solo training. Alice wanted to assist him but he rejected it, saying he needed a moment for himself.

Naturally, as his master, Alice accepted. Knowing that sometimes having a quiet moment solo was what one needed to reach the next level.

As for Alice herself. . .

She simply sat on the second floor lounge. Caelan's house was strange to say the least. Some rooms were far bigger than what the layout suggested while some doors may even lead to a different place entirely.

She had even stumbled upon a bar on the first floor, dimly lit, filled with hazy smoke and the sound of clinking glass, where scantily clad women served drinks to wandering guests.

Closing her eyes, she focused on the array of sounds echoing through the establishment.

The myriad of conversations merging together and forming a discordant harmony.

By focusing her attention on certain words, she could drown out the other conversations, listening in onto what people were speaking about.

Most of the information she gathered were drama or dealings focused on the east. Information that she didn't need to focus on.

After a while, Alice let out a sigh and slowly opened her eyes.

She crossed her legs and looked at the glass of alcohol in front of her and without turning around, she opened her mouth.

"You've been staring for a while. Can I help you?"

Behind her, Caelan smiled. He leaned against the sofa and folded his arms.

"I'm simply making sure that my guests are comfortable. Everyone seems to be occupied for now except for you." Caelan shrugged.

"Just a girl finding some time for herself to calm down. Is there something strange about that?" Alice asked, grabbing the cup and taking a sip.

"Not at all. But that's only if we consider things usually. But you. . . You are the furthest thing from usual aren't you? Standard ideals don't apply to you."

Looking forward, Alice froze for a moment as a strange creature with one eye and tiny wings hovered in front of her.

An extension of Caelan's power, proven by the strands connecting the two together.

"So dear master of this house, pray tell what do you want with an unusual girl like me then." Alice sighed, pushing the familiar off to the side while Caelan swung himself around to sit next to her.

But before he could plant himself into the sofa properly, a Void portal opened and he was teleported to sit opposite her.

"I don't believe we are close enough for you to take the place next to me." Alice didn't even bat an eye while Caelan let out a soft laugh and rested his elbows on his knees.

"I see. . . Then it seems it's as I guessed. Your mind is empty of the knowledge prior to your. . . bestowal to the body of this girl."

*CLANG!!!!

Pinching the air in front of him, Caelan curved his mouth into a grin as he pushed the blade tip away from his face.

Alice's eye twitched.

Even though she wasn't planning on stabbing him and merely going with threaten, the moment he pinched her blade it felt like an unbreakable grip had grabbed her sword.

No matter how much strength she tried to exert, the blade didn't follow her instructions.

"Tsk tsk, so hasty with your attack. One can see that Allura has clearly influenced your personality."
Caelan shook his head. Keeping his grip on the blade, he tapped his finger against the face of the metal.

A shockwave travelled up the blade, forcing Alice to loosen her grip for a slight moment and that moment was enough for him to seize the blade.

Holding it in front of his eyes, Caelan examined the weapon before focusing his gaze down the face of the blade.

"Craftsmanship of the north. A good choice."

Tossing the blade back, he relaxed on the sofa while Alice furrowed her brows.

"What do you want?"

"Pft, you make it sound like I'm the one threatening you when you're the one who swung first. A little ironic, don't you think?"

"I'm not the one who casually decides to speak about something 99% of people shouldn't know about."
Alice glared, her aura slowly rising. "So what's your connection with Nyer?"

Instead of answering her question directly, Caelan pulled out a glass of wine and took a sip.

"Demanding answers is a privilege afforded to the strong. So tell me, are you strong?"

Alice's smile twitched but she didn't charge in head first. After all, she could see the energy around this man and the power he holds within his body.

Even if he tried to keep everything bottled up and concealed, Alice could tell. This man wasn't someone she could beat!

Even if Kazira was in her peak, Alice doesn't think she would be able to easily kill this man. In fact, he might even be able to leave with his life unharmed.

The strongest Lord that she's laid her eyes on.

With the period of silence stretching on, Caelan shrugged and took another sip.

"I suppose this aspect of you was inherited from Kaden. Neither of you like to charge into things blindly once you notice that something was wrong."

*Clink. . .

"!!!"

Right after Caelan placed his glass down, Alice realised her entire body was frozen in place, unable to move a single muscle with him grabbed her right shoulder and pointing his finger at Cayla.

"Eye of the Abyss, a troublesome little thing that shows secrets that even I wish to hide." Caelan was no longer smiling and Alice felt cold sweat down her back.

There was no killing intent, no desire to harm. But just his presence and showcase of pure domination sent chills down her spine!

Gritting her teeth, Alice was about to fight back when the pressure disappeared and he was back in his seat.

"Well that's enough of that. Any more and my dear sister might take her anger out on me." Caelan laughed, offering Alice a glass of wine but she rejected.

"I hope you don't hold this over me. Consider it a little. . . warning. That even with the Eye of the Abyss, you can't simply threaten people the moment they find your secret." He smiled. "This is a web that Nyer

has spent centuries weaving and you have only just started to see its frayed edge. This man has collaborated with quite a few people through the ages. Me included."

Taking a deep breath to calm her mind, Alice sat back down with a frown.

"Are you still collaborating with him then?"

"Me? far from it. I've stopped my exchanges around 150 years ago. Though I can't deny that a method of contact still exists between us. If he requires my aid or vice versa, we can get a hold of each other rather easily." Caelan admitted.

"Now I have a little proposition for you dear subject V-501-C. Or do you prefer to be called your current name?"

"Alice Agnelia will be fine."

"Perfect. To begin with, I'm not even sure if you are truly V-501-C. V-501-C was simply the last subject that I saw. Who knows if he has made more versions after you or not. But dear Alice, do you want to play a little game?" He offered, confusing Alice for a moment.

"A game?"

"Indeed. A game where you can get some information from me if you wish. We will take turns asking two questions. You are allowed one lie and one truth. It is up to you to determine what is truth and what is false." Caelan narrowed his gaze. "Of course, you may certainly try to respond with two lies or two truths but I wouldn't recommend it."

Furrowing her brows at this ominous warning, Alice contemplated on whether or not she should play this game.

Based on how Caelan was acting, he wasn't going to give her the answers to her questions if she refused to play this game.

One truth one lie. . .

She had to think about her questions carefully so that she can extract the most amount of information with both questions, even if one is a lie.

[I don't think you should accept. Who knows what he's after, especially since he was allies with Nyer in the past.] Cayla furrowed her brows.

Caelan was giving her an ominous feeling. Not a dangerous one, simply ominous. A man with far more information than they could expect, knowing secrets that shouldn't be known.

'I think we should. Family with Rosalyn and information on your past? It's a good opportunity that would be hard to come across.' Alyss had a different opinion.

As she mentioned, this was an opportunity that was hard to come across. If he can help her fill the gaps in her knowledge. . .

But then there was the question of what he wanted from her. This was not a one sided exchange. While she gets knowledge, this agreement will also let him find out stuff about her.

The question now was what he could possibly want to know about and what she wanted to hide.

One lie one truth. If she lies about the first answer, the next will have to be the truth.

"Can you ask a question twice and get the answer you want?" Alice clenched her fist.

"Ah~ Is that what you're worried about? If that's the case then let's add this." Caelan chuckled.

"You cannot ask the same question twice nor can you modify the second question to force out an answer that would be the truth for the first question. Two questions have to be unrelated or have different answers. Satisfied?"

Seeing him being this generous, the bad feeling in Alice's chest grew.

However. . .

"Alright, I accept."

This was too good of an opportunity to pass up.

Thus a game of one lie one truth began.

Chapter 734 - 734: One Truth One Lie

With Alice accepting the game, Caelan smiled and tapped his finger on the table.

In that instant, shadows and blood bled out from his finger tip as if it was ink in water, rippling out and weaving together with the realm around them.

Darkness enveloped the two and they were isolated from the rest of the world.

It was just them, their seat, a table and a scale on the table.

"Now that the game has been established, why don't you ask the first question. Or would you like to give that honour to me?"

Alice narrowed her eyes, her gaze drifting to the scale, then back to him. She wasn't just thinking of what to ask, she was also weighing the risks of each question.

The more she thought about it, the harder it became. After all, the same question can't be asked twice. So if Caelan decided to lie about it, she won't be able to get the truth.

The main difficulty of the game was finding two questions she wanted answers to while also being able to figure out the truth of the lie.

"I'll go first." Alice closed her eyes before turning her gaze towards Caelan.

"If Rosalyn were to fight against Nyer and the Outer Gods, would you help her?"

She couldn't start with the hard hitting questions just yet.

"You seem rather suspicious of my involvement with my sister. Perhaps it's because I sat around when she was fighting against the descent of Enris? Regardless, the answer is no. I will not help her."

Alice made sure to observe every single minute detail and movement on his expression but his poker face was perfect. She could not tell if that was lie or truth. A part of her wanted to believe that it's a lie but it was a complete coin flip.

"Second question. Are we playing a game of one lie one truth proposed by you?"

Blinking his eyes, Caelan let out a hearty laugh before calming down.

"Immediately using a question that can determine truth from lies. Seems like you want an accurate judge of my character. The answer is no, we are not playing a game of one lie one truth proposed by me."

Hearing this, Alice froze.

If his previous statement was true. . .

Then it meant that he will not lift a finger to help Rosalyn if she's in danger.

"Some brother you are if you won't help your sister when she's in danger." Alice narrowed her gaze as Caelan shrugged.

"Different circumstances. I simply work with mor- oops, almost told you valuable information." Caelan chuckled with a wink.

"Tch." Alice clicked her tongue. She could tell that Caelan was fooling around.

"Now then, I believe it's my turn. What should my first question be?" Pretending to be struggling with a question, Caelan turned to Alice.

"Are you aware of the VC8 protocol and what it means?"

Alice kept her poker face.

Should she lie? Or tell the truth?

There was a chance that this is probably related to Nyer considering the naming convention. If she was to tell the truth, she'll be exposing how little she understood.

But if she was to lie, her next answer will absolutely be truth.

To lie or to tell the truth. . .

"I do not know what the VC8 protocol is and what it means."

Alice decided to tell the truth.

"I figured as much. After all, it's a protocol that doesn't exist. So your next answer is most certainly a lie." Caelan squinted his eyes.

'Sh*t.'

"Are you aware of the full relationship between me and Nyer?"

"Yes, I am aware." Alice furrowed her brows.

A perfect chance for him to ask a very specific question yet he's asking something he already knew about? The fact that she lashed out earlier proved that she didn't know the two were connected.

"Just think of it as a slight warning and a demonstration of what you can do. It's a little unfair since I've played this game before after allahaha~" Caelan explained, taking a sip of his wine.

"Now go on, ask your questions."

Closing her eyes, Alice thought about the next question.

Vague questions needed to be saved for later when she can determine if his previous answer was truth or lie.

However, asking a vague question to begin with can also help her determine the answers of what she's looking for.

"First question. Are you aware of the presence of Outer Gods that have invaded our realm and the connection they have with Nyer?"

As one of the strongest people that Alice has seen, the chances of him not knowing about Outer Gods are exceedingly low.

Therefore, the chances of her being able to determine whether or not his answer was a lie or truth was very high! Practically guaranteed.

"I do not know about the presence of Outer Gods who have invaded our realm not their method of entering. I do not know about the connection they have formed with Nyer nor the rough idea of their contract."

Alice's mind shut down for a moment.

All of that extra information was linked as part of the main answer so it was all a lie!

Meaning. . . he knew their presence, how they got in, their connection with Nyer and even an idea of the contract between them.

Suspicious.

"Why did you give me that much information?" Alice frowned.

"Is that your second question? Or simply asking me as a person who's curious about I gave away such a big freebie?"

Alice hesitated. Wasting a precious chance at truth to verify why he gave her that answer was. . .

Just as Alice was about to say no, she noticed a flicker of disappointment in his gaze and stopped herself.

It was just for a moment but he definitely realised he wasn't about to use her second question for that. So why was he disappointed? Was this an indirect way of him giving her the answers that she wanted?

Or was he under some kind of contract that prevented him from saying certain things?

Clenching her fist, Alice decided to gamble.

"Second question. Why did you give me so much information in such a roundabout way?"

With Alice asking this question, Caelan's smile curved up ever so slightly.

"Because my ascension to a Lord was an anomaly. My powers are not traditional in the sense that the Abyss didn't 'choose' me to be a Lord at the end. The ascension was forced. And with force, certain restrictions are bound to be formed, restrictions between me and certain individuals including Nyer. Certain. . . fragments of my knowledge can't be shared unless through roundabout methods such as this game."

Alice narrowed her gaze.

Since that was the truth, it certainly verified why Caelan decided to play this game. Was there certain requirements to be met before he can answer in this roundabout manner? Or was it perhaps due to the first few questions that he asked?

"Your turn."

Nodding his head, Caelan opened his mouth.

"First question. Are you able to consume souls via blood or core extensions of power and use it for yourself? Effectively stealing a portion of their soul."

Alice's eyebrow twitched for a moment.

"Yes I am able to do that."

"Hou~ Seems like Nyer's experiment was a success after all." Caelan chuckled, rubbing his chin.

"Second question. You have found yourself coming into contact with high profile beings such as Realm Lords, major Outer Gods, Sealed Abyss Lords or even current Lords at the pinnacle excluding me. Is that correct?"

This question was far more specific than Alice had expected. Why did he want to know this?

If he was helping her by giving her roundabout answers, surely he could've asked her something simple.

Yet he's gone as far as to get answers to such a specific question. . . Why?

Alice needed to remember the fact that even if he was helping her in a roundabout way, they weren't friends. She needed something from him and he needed something from her.

Nothing is free.

"That is not correct."

She had to lie for her second question.

As for Caelan, after hearing her answer, his smile faded slightly.

He held his chin and fell into thought.

"!!!"

Jumping up to her feet, Alice held Void Fang in her hand. She positioned herself in an offensive stance with her blade aimed at Caelan who was still sitting down.

She felt it.

The desire to kill.

A chilling intent positioned at the 'core' of her being. Aiming for something 'hidden'.

Alice didn't know what that core or hidden thing was but the sense of dread was real. If she had been struck there. . .

No more regeneration.

No more revival.

She'll die.

What she sensed at that moment was death.

Caelan had the full capabilities to kill her!

"Sit down. Shall we continue?" Caelan gestured with the same smile, acting as though he hadn't thought about killing her for good a moment ago.

Swallowing her saliva, Alice slowly sat down.

This game of one truth one lie. . . was far more dangerous than she thought.

The next two questions will be her last.

After that, she didn't want to play this game anymore.

"The next two will be my last questions."

Caelan nodded his head.

"I'll ask them both at the same time, I'll let you choose which one you want to answer as the truth."
Alice narrowed her gaze.

Two questions that she wanted answering. Even just getting the truth for one of them was good enough for her.

"Oh?" Caelan was interested.

"Question one. I know Nyer has access to Velouria's Corpse. How does he plan on reviving her and to what extent is he willing to go?

"Question two. . ." Alice trailed off.

"What has Nyer done to complete the experiment known as 'Alice' and what does he wish that I become/accomplish?"

Chapter 735 - 735: Caelan's 'Truth'

The first question lets Alice know what Nyer's plans are and to what extent he was willing to burn the world for it.

His ambitions.

Meanwhile, the second question lets her figure out what kind of plan he has for her.

Regardless of what's answered, a huge gap in knowledge will be filled. And from that, she'll be able to make more guesses towards what Nyer is doing and what she should be doing in the meantime.

Scratching his chin, Caelan smiled.

"First. Nyer plans on resurrecting the fallen God through sacrifice and a ritualistic approach. The countless deaths that's accumulated through the ages, his pact with the Outer Gods, agreements with Gods and Apostles alike are all part of the process. He will watch the world burn if it means Velouria returns.

"As for question two. . . Through countless years of experimentation, soul research, catalyst research and even dabbling in reincarnation/incarnation, Nyer has implanted a seed that can germinate into 'Velouria'. A second life for her while the mind that you are now is erased to make space for her. As for what he wishes for you to become. . . Nothing. He has no plans or expectations for you, he simply wants to observe what you become without his interference."

Alice was silent. Both sound plausible yet at the same time, incorrect to some degree. So what was true and what was false?

"Even if an answer contains truth, if it contains a speck of false information, it will be classified as a lie. Interesting isn't it?" He stood up with a smile. He could see that Alice didn't want to continue this game so there was no reason to keep this realm intact.

"In this game, truth can be disguised into lies but lies can't be disguised as truth. The information that can be shared this way essentially doubles, provided the listener is one that can figure out the clues."

Waving his hand, the boundaries of this realm started to crumble apart.

"You're a strange one aren't you. One moment you're thinking of killing me permanently and the next you're giving me information on what Nyer is planning. What exactly is your end goal? Someone of your strength doing all of this seems. . ." Alice narrowed her gaze.

"Unlikely?" Caelan turned to her, finishing her sentence.

"Something like that."

"Are you aware of the impact that immortality can do to a person? When death is never and option even if you seek it out?" Caelan smiled a sad smile. There was a sense of helplessness in his expression as Alice felt her heart tighten for a moment.

Immortality when death isn't even an option. . .

She was all too familiar.

Her fingers subconsciously traced her neck for a moment.

During those painful 10 years, she couldn't end it even if she wanted to. No sign of hope, only more experiments and torture to look forward too.

The cold emptiness that polluted her heart and the collar that bound her to the cursed room.

Having felt the warmth of freedom, the coldness of that desolation felt all the more scary for Alice.

She didn't want to lose it all and go back to a time like that.

"I've watched kingdoms come and go, eras shift and powerful hunters crumble to ash with my very own eyes. I've seen, heard and even experienced what you call history. My body is an archive of experience and knowledge that has persisted over the ages and yet death is forever out of my reach." Caelan held his hands behind his back.

"I sought out the Lord of Death, asked for the grim reapers scythe yet here I stand, alive. The reaper of the forgotten era dead by my feet. Not because I sought to kill him but because my immortality could not be severed." He clenched his fist. "And to summon the reaper's scythe, a price had to be paid. If I could not be killed, he had to give up his life."

Turning around to face Alice, he smiled.

"So when you ask me why I'm doing the things I'm doing, a whim would be rather accurate. I do this so that perhaps my family member, who is still bound by the coils of mortality, can enjoy herself until it is time to depart this mortal realm.

"I may have suffered the curse of longevity but that does not mean I wish for life to end prematurely."

Without waiting for Alice's response, Caelan stepped into his own shadow and disappeared, leaving her all alone to contemplate the answers he's given her.

After a long, long silence, Alice let out a sigh.

"F*ck. . ."

That was all she could say. Immortality is never a boon only a curse. The mind cannot comprehend the passage of infinite time. Life is the way it is because an end is in the distance. But if there is no end, life will gradually slow down to a near halt.

It hasn't stopped yet it barely progresses. The death of one's mind while the body persists.

Alice already felt insane after 10 years of this kind of suffering. Yet Caelan has experienced centuries.

The fact that he hasn't gone completely batsh*t insane is impressive in itself. Or perhaps he's already a madman and she couldn't tell the difference.

'What do you think was the truth regarding his final two answers?' Alice asked as Cayla furrowed her brows.

[It's complicated. One side should hold nothing but the absolute truth yet based on my knowledge and information that I can access, neither seems plausible. First, resurrecting a fallen god.

[While yes, the method mentioned could technically work with centuries of effort but I doubt that is the resurrection that Nyer desires. A pact with Outer Gods should, in theory, be one that helps him inject life into a subject. Twisted while it may be, Eldritch energy is frighteningly tenacious when it comes to clinging onto life.

[But his second answer doesn't sound like the entire truth either. First, without his interference. That's already incorrect since he has interfered indirectly in various scenarios. Second, a seed to germinate into Velouria. That's already been proven to be incorrect thanks to Velouria disappearing from your sea of consciousness. What little remains of her is gone. This Seed is at most the foundations for a vessel rather than Velouria herself.] Cayla shook her head.

'So the second is absolutely a lie?'

[I think both are lies. Or at least partially.] She furrowed her brows.

'Oh?'

[He mentioned that truth can be disguised as a lie by injecting falsehood into the statement. Yet he says lies can't be turned into truth. But here's the funny thing about truth. It is subjective and opinionated based on the topic. 'Truth' is manipulated by the access of information.

[Let's say I know that you are not the original Alice but you don't know that. Your truth will be that you're the original while my truth is that you're not the original. Objectively, I'm correct but through perception, you are also correct.

[After all. . . Caelan never said it checked Truth through objective means did he? I theorise that the truth he speaks is based solely on perception. Even if he has some hints that it may not be the case or that things may have changed over time.

[Without verification, outdated knowledge is technically still truth. Just at a different time.] Cayla proposed as Alice folded her arm.

Even if that was the case, part of what he said was still 'truth' at a certain point. Meaning that was indeed what Nyer was planning.

Instead of taking his words at face value, it's now simply her job to figure out what was real and what was false outdated information.

"What a pain in the ass. . ." Alice muttered, scratching her hair.

Caelan was like a river surface. One droplet and the ripples reveal something beneath the surface.

One moment he can be peaceful and helpful and the next filled with the desire to murder.

###

Seeing Alice piece together the hints he sprinkled throughout their little game, Caelan chuckled while drinking some wine.

Even if he's being roundabout with his answers, his restrictions still don't allow him to speak so freely. He needed to manipulate Alice's perception of the situation and other factors before his 'sealed information' can be passed on.

And even then, it's in the forms of hints and nudges. What ifs, maybes and perhaps.

They are also less likely to 'believe' these things if it comes from an enemy.

Caelan lied as naturally as he breathed. All the information he gave Alice, around 40% was outdated, 30% was false/incorrect, 10% was made up and the last 20% was truth.

What he did was essentially nudge her towards the starting line while she walked the rest of the way there.

He was dancing a little too close to what is allowed and what isn't but this kind of danger also helps breath a bit of vitality into his life.

"What are you doing? Snooping around and keeping an eye on dear Alice and me?" Caelan opened his mouth with a soft chuckle.

"Tch, sensitive b*stard. I didn't even hear anything." Rosalyn pouted, stepping out.

She felt something was off and came to look but by the time she arrived, everything has finished already.

Knowing what her brother was like, he was definitely pulling at a few strings in the dark.

"Don't worry about it. I'm not looking to harm her. I only gave her a few what if scenarios since she looked like she needed something to occupy her mind." Caelan chuckled, patting Rosalyn's hair before departing from the area.

Furrowing her brows, Rosalyn sighed with a hint of sadness in her eyes.

They were family yet he refused to tell her anything until she dug it out herself.

He was also the one who introduced her to the man made Outer God that handles Eldritch corruption in the main realm.

'What are you planning Cael. . .'

Chapter 736 - 736: Zetherion

"Well this is probably the best and absolute f*cking worst case scenario that I can think of." Rosalyn grumbled in front of the group. Her heel tapped against the ground repeatedly while she observed the map that she laid out on the table.

Red markings and notes of intel were spread everywhere.

Sightings of Church members, strong Hunters and even potential whereabouts of Apostles.

The Sun was pulling out all stops in order to surround the East.

As for the moon, they were still relatively passive, only sending over a bit of help rather than a whole force like the Sun.

"I'm glad we didn't rush into leaving through the Abyss." Alice mumbled, seeing the sheer size of the reported numbers.

Had they tried to travel through the Abyss, a fight will no doubt break out turning all eyes towards them.

And in case it was a distraction, the moment a fight had broke out in the Abyss, the security in their realm tightened as well, making sure that nothing slipped through their notice.

"I can see why you would say this is the absolute worst case scenario. But how come it's simultaneously the best?" Isolde asked curiously.

This kind of encirclement. . . even with Alice's disguise skill felt difficult to break out of.

"It's good because even with this kind of net, they've split their power on two fronts. Breaking through on one should be relatively easy, provided the information on Apostles are accurate." Rosalyn pointed at the note placed in the middle of the sea.

Right now, both Apostles were apparently just observing the situation, not making a single move.

They didn't give out instructions nor did they make things hard for the common people. All they're doing is sitting around.

Alice narrowed her gaze. She suspected that they're probably around to look for hints of Divinity. For those who are familiar with Divinity, it was unlike the other three sources of energy.

Radiant and holy, that's what it felt like. Something that's hard to cover up or disguise.

"Moving as a big group, even if we're disguised as merchants will be stupid. They'll do an even more thorough examination. I suggest we split up into groups temporarily and regroup the moment we reach port.

"I know it's a little. . . uncomfortable for you but Port Caethis is our best location. Not only does Alice have a connection with the Pirate King there, but we can also get some information from Tristan if things play out well." Rosalyn suggested, glancing towards Isolde.

With her connection to the Moon, there's no doubt that this choice was going to be one that annoyed her.

"Do not worry. I'm sensible enough to know when to contain myself." Isolde reassured.

Nodding her head in relief, Rosalyn split them into three groups.

The first group was herself, Isolde and Jin.

The second group was Ria and Luke while the final group was Alice.

"Huh??? Why am I alone???" Alice pointed at herself in disbelief.

"Let me break it down for you then. First, Jin and Isolde have too much Eldritch energy in their body. At least with me, I'm able to disguise it to some extent since they'll be more focused on the fact that I'm a Lord than these two.

"Ria and Luke have been travelling together for a while now, no one knows about them so they are clean.

"You, you're the f*cking anomaly here. Travelling with anyone else would implicate them with you needing to reapply your disguise all the time. As amazing as it is, the disguise itself isn't stable, energy still leaks out from time to time when you use the skill on someone else.

"Trust me when I say this but it's 100 times easier for you to travel alone than it is for you to travel with any of us. Plus, you know the way to Caethis don't you? Just be careful about using any spatial skills since the Apostles are on the lookout for those." Rosalyn warned.

Slumping in her chair, Alice let out a groan.

They just reunited and yet they're separating again. Even if they're reconvening in Caethis, Alice still didn't want to leave the group.

"Stop complaining. If you didn't kill the Apostle then maybe we wouldn't have the Sun Church surrounding this place." Rosalyn knocked Alice on the head.

"Not my fault the Will made her my target. It's either I die or she dies." She pouted.

She wasn't intending on killing Kazira either. In fact, her choice for the sixth Sigil wasn't anything remotely close to an Apostle.

Yet here she is, she Kazira as her sixth Sigil.

"Regardless, we can't change the past. We'll depart tonight so take this chance to get as much information from Cael's library as you can. It's a bigger than most libraries so finding your way around it is a little complicated.

"Take this token and it'll help you find a way out if you ever get lost."

Rosalyn handed each of them a crimson dagger, far too small to be used as a weapon.

"You should be able to find some interesting stuff in their based on what you want to find. He's been alive for a long time so he keeps most things well documented. Just make sure you don't tear or damage any of them or else the security will go ape sh*t." She warned.

After saying that, she dispersed the group. She needed a bit of time for her own preparations so hide the fact that both Isolde and Jin were Eldritch in nature.

###

'Is there anything I should be looking for in the library?' Alice asked curiously.

They were currently walking around the inside of Caelan's library which Rosalyn mentioned.

As she had stated, what could've looked like a modest book room from the outside was in fact a boundless library of impossible sizes. A space that defied logic.

Countless columns of books stretched as far as the eye could see, some hanging upside down with gravity shifting in a multitude of ways.

Steps that spiralled overhead, pillars that arched and halls that looped back in on itself.

There seemed to be no sources of light yet a stable lamination filled the entire room.

Alice traced her fingers along the shelves, looking for books that she wanted to read.

Outside of the usual important stuff such as beast compendium, Abyss Bloods, artifacts and a list of famous alcohol, she wasn't sure what else she should try and find.

Strangely, while she was in this space, the moment she wanted to find a certain book, a instinct would wash over her. Informing her where she could potentially find the information she needed.

And as for the security that Rosalyn mentioned. . .

"Honestly, calling it security is a little insulting don't you think?"

'Agreed. But then again, he's also strong as sh*t so it's only to be expected that he managed to tame something like this.' Alyss was of the same thought.

[Zetherion - ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦]

A nine star beast that hovered in the airspace above the library. Floating as though gravity didn't exist. A large serpentine beast that kept its body coiled with strange shimmering silken strands of flesh on its body.

The strands shifted ever so often, turning from flesh to strange fractured geometry resembling that of glass. A prism of colours.

It has no eyes, only a crown of shifting yellow blobs in the flesh that would hover around the head before moving elsewhere on its body.

Around its head and tail, jelly fish like appendages drifted in the air as though it was underwater. Soft, ethereal and ghostly even.

And much like certain species that live in the sea, its colour would shift to match its surroundings, camouflaging it and making it difficult to spot the creature. Only the slight shifting of shadows would give away its position.

With this kind of beast as security, who would dare damage the books in here?

But since it was here as security, there wasn't much need to be worried about it as long as they followed the rules.

[Details on the previous eras and historical sites should be rather useful.] Cayla suggested while Alice folded her arms.

Topic like history and stuff felt a little boring for her. She couldn't quite put herself into the mindset of studying.

Of course, that's not to say she's looking down on the value of history. Since it is through history that one can learn.

But asking her to compile all that knowledge was. . .

Her mind was already full of beast, Abyss blood and Alcohol information. She didn't have space for anything else.

[I think I might have a method for that. Since we partially unsealed the Eye, a lot of the previous functions that were impossible are now possible. Not to mention the fact that I've fully awakened and synchronised to you. Outside of what remains of Kaden's seal, I'm basically back at full power.]

Of course, there was no need to mention the fact that Nyer still had the other half.

'What's the plan then?' Alice was curious about what Cayla wanted to do.

She knew that in the past, Cayla was able to move independently from Velouria. Then perhaps. . .

From Alice's arm, strands of energy began to weave together. Little by little, a silhouette was formed before details began to materialise.

Silver hair that held a pinkish hue, purple eyes and with a simple white dress. Her hair was short with a single long strand at the top. Alice had to fight the urge to tug at it.

The front sides of her hair were longer than the rest, reaching her chest and framing her face.

But. . .

There was a slight problem.

"..."

"Don't you say a word." Cayla glared at Alice.

That problem being Cayla was only around knee height.

And Alice was already considered rather short. . .

Chapter 737 - 737: Caelan's Immortality

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"Pft pipsqueak." Alice grinned smugly.

*BANG!!!

"!!!"

Widening her eyes, Alice clutched her shin in pain as Cayla had given it a solid kick the moment Alice called her pipsqueak.

Unfortunately for Cayla, her physical form is dictated by how much energy she can extract to materialise. And with the seal only being partially undone, this was as much as she could do.

Still, it doesn't reduce how infuriating it feels to have Alice, who's already short, call her a pipsqueak.

And worst yet, because of her incomplete nature as the Eye of the Abyss rather than the 'Eyes' of the Abyss, she can't leave Alice's side at all. If she were to try and increase the distance between them, the tether will falter and her physical form will disperse.

Seeing Cayla stumble away to get another book, Alice forced a grin despite the strange sense of pain.

It wasn't a true physical pain in the sense that Alice was hurt by it but rather, a mental pain making her think her leg is hurt.

"Caelan has more information than I thought. Most long living individuals usually begin to slack off when it comes to collecting information. And even if they do, the sources and time of acquisition is usually missing or rough guesses." Cayla spoke while picking up a book. "Yet all of his books have a precise date, rough estimation of when the event occurred and even evidence to back it up. If I didn't know any better, I'd say this is bordering on obsession."

"In fact, he might even give Zal-Ka'Rith a run for his money. Here, look at this one. It's about the era after the battle between the Gods. Arguably, it's one of the most chaotic and unsettling eras since the Abyss was in the process of rapid degrading after Velouria passed.

"With the Abyss degrading, it was causing some balance issues between the three realms and naturally, the main one suffered. Information on this age went missing rather frequently and hardly anyone talked about it. It's simply a distant memory with most regarding it as myth. Yet Caelan has recorded so much of the things that happened." Cayla flipped open the book.

Lines upon lines of text on the battles that took place, factions rising and falling. Movements in the shadows and even which cities that the Gods fought to take control of.

As the era overshadowed by the haunting memory of a God's death, his documentation was scarily accurate.

'Parchment would be frothing at the mouth if he realised this library exists.' Alyss muttered.

Meanwhile, Alice couldn't help but nod her head in agreement.

"Do you think we can convince Rosey to stay for a little longer? If I can just compile this knowledge. . ."
Cayla frowned.

"You realise that staying longer increases the chances of being found out right? And I don't want to be around here when Nyer decides to knock on the door or some sh*t." Alice grumbled.

"I know. But how often is it that you get to access a trove like this?" Cayla pouted.

"Back when I had my full power, I kept a document of everything that happened in the Abyss. I couldn't digest all of it but I still kept a record so I can look back whenever I need. But after losing my other half and rescued by Kaden, I wasn't able to compile the data anymore.

"So this gap of knowledge has been pissing me off. Not to mention that when I could access my powers, some irresponsible f*cker decided to ask for Kaden to seal me without my consent! I couldn't even ask for him to keep the data storing part intact. Everything got sealed pretty much!" Cayla raged, giving Alice a glare as she coughed awkwardly.

"Therefore, now that I have the chance to replenish my knowledge, don't you think it's only fair that I take a long hard look at what's in this library?"

Folding her arms, Alice had to admit that indeed her words have merit. It's because of Cayla's databank of knowledge that the journey has been relatively smooth thus far.

The importance of knowledge was one that couldn't be stressed enough. With knowledge comes understanding, with understanding comes infinite possibilities.

And it's within these possibilities that the path of survival lies.

"Well. . . I suppose I am a separate group compared to the others. If I stay behind by a day it should be relatively fine I think. I just need to find a way to convince them." Alice sighed, scratching her hair.

There was also the possibility of Alice making a skill using the Sigils that she has to help Cayla read as much as she could in this library. But with the security overhead, doing so felt like a risk in itself.

Not to mention the fact that Alice had actually found an extract on what the Zetherion is.

The drifter, the foreigner.

Zetherion is one of the few rare beasts that have been documented in all three realms. A creature of unknown origin only the fact that it drifts through the Abyss, Void and Surface.

It's been sighted to drift above lost ships out at sea, amidst the floating islands of the Void and amongst the winged beasts in the deeper layers of the Abyss.

Despite its sheer size, it is able to keep itself afloat by drifting along invisible strands of energy that most can't interact with. Through this energy, it is also able to use attacks imbued with the element of space, forcing the target to be pulled towards two realms at once.

Those that cannot handle this level of power find themselves ripped in half before even being able to muster up a single scream.

But when the Zetherion is serious, all spatial boundaries become useless in front of it. Second Resonances fail to activate and it is able to escape to other realms at a moment's notice.

No boundary can hold this beast.

A slippery monster that will choose to run if battle is not an option.

Yet despite all of this, Caelan was able to capture one and even train it to be his security in the library.

'The more I look at that thing the more I question how the hell Caelan managed to tame it. If no boundary works on it then did he just keep chasing the beast until it exhausted itself?' Alice wondered while Alyss shrugged.

'Then again, it's not like it can kill Caelan. The fact that the previous Lord of Death died because Caelan couldn't be killed by the grim f*cking reaper of all things is wild to me. The LITERAL embodiment of death failed.' Alyss frowned.

She could still remember the moment they saw Gin summon the avatar of death. That. . . being which tore through the sky, peering down at the realm.

Even now she still felt chills from remembering its visage.

But not even that thing could kill Caelan.

'How does one even become THAT immortal to begin with.' Alice sighed.

Longevity and immortality are two wildly different concepts.

One means you don't die of natural causes while the other means you don't die at all.

And it's not the twisted kind of immortality either where his body rots away with the passage of time.

No, Caelan is still in his prime.

"What do you think Cayla?" Alice glanced over.

"Hm? What about?" Cayla blinked her eyes in confusion.

Since she was now outside of Alice's body, Cayla couldn't hear whatever conversation Alice just had.

"About Caelan's immortality. How do you think it works? And more importantly, how the hell he even became THAT immortal to begin with."

Cayla was about to respond when she looked up in realisation and paused.

She pulled a face of confusion before falling into deep thought, closing the book in her hands.

"If I'm being honest, the more I think about it the more strange it seems. I've seen different kinds of immortality through the years but his case is a first. Being able to evade authority of death is. . . impressive in itself." Cayla frowned.

"Even Gods can be killed so true immortality shouldn't exist. For example, the Doctor." She reminded Alice of the seemingly immortal Doctor that they ran away from.

"He seems immortal but he's probably keeping a core of sorts somewhere or at least having a way to keep his mortal shell intact. Even though he seems immortal, death will no doubt claim him if the Abyss Lord makes a move.

"When the Lord of Death strikes, that strike will traverse realms and boundaries just to strike you at your core. Even if you're unsure of it yourself." She explained.

"So the fact that not even death can pinpoint his mortal core is. . . absurd."

"What if it's something like 'oh you can't kill what's already dead'." Alice joked around but Cayla shook her head.

"There's been cases of that in the past but they can't escape the grasp of death."

With that, they're back at square one.

Reflecting on everything Cayla had said, Alice felt as though something was off. Something she missed.

She needed to take a step back and examine the response as a whole.

"Erm. . . Cayla. You said that death targets your mortal core right?"

"Yes. Though 'mortal core' is something I made up to make explanation easier. There's not a literal core." Cayla nodded.

"If 'Death' can't find that core then. . . does it even exist? Like does the concept of death exist in Caelan?" Alice's smile twitched.

Cayla wanted to refute it but found herself unable to say a single word. She had no evidence that she could use to refute it from her data bank of knowledge.

The possibility was low but. . .

It's not impossible for that to be the case.

Chapter 738 - 738: The Umbral Witch

Just the possibility of removing the concept of mortality from someone was insane as it is.

Even Gods have the concept of mortality and with enough power and the right conditions, the Abyss Lord of Death can indeed call the Reaper to take a God's life.

Yet they failed against Caelan. So much so that the reaper felt it necessary to take the Abyss Lord of Death's life instead.

But if this is true then it begs the question of how it was achieved.

And most importantly, how to reintroduce the concept of 'death' into an immortal.

To turn the immortal mortal.

"I think this is a rabbit hole we shouldn't dive down. At least not right now and definitely not in Caelan's library." Cayla sighed.

Who knows if the weirdo was watching them right now.

"True. Otherwise it'll sound like we're trying to think of a way to kill him." Alice shrugged with a chuckle.

Since Cayla was going to busy herself with studying, Alice wondered if there were anything else she wanted to find in this library.

Things that will help her fight.

However, leaving Cayla's side wasn't a possibility.

Unless. . .

Folding her arms, Alice created a portal behind her.

The security above twitched momentarily, turning its head towards Alice. After a long drawn out silence, it turned away, allowing Alice to breath out in relief.

While Cayla was still distracted by her reading, Alice took a step through the portal, appearing on the second floor of the library.

She could feel the tether waver for a moment but held firm.

So long as she kept this portal open and ensured that the most direct path between them is short, they could maintain this connection.

Of course, it's more exhausting than having Cayla walk off on her own but nothing could be done about that. At least not until they fully get rid of this seal.

With Cayla so engrossed in her own research, she didn't even notice Alice walking away.

Compared to the first floor, the second floor was somehow even quieter. Even her steps seem to echo on for an eternity as Alice took care not to make too loud of a sound.

She could see more of the library from up here. In the distance, she could even see her friends browsing their own books and whispering to each other, fearful of the security guard overlooking this library.

She brushed her fingers along the shelves.

They were surprisingly. . . clean.

As though someone has taken the care to ensure that not a single speck of dust could be spotted in this aged vault of knowledge.

Chained grimoires, normal looking books and even books with jewels on the cover.

Countless assortments of books were stored, some without a title so Alice couldn't be sure of what they were about unless she opened it up to be read.

Yet strangely, once she finished reading one, the title would manifest by the cover.

It wasn't a curse or anything like that as Alice had analysed the intricacies of the energy threaded into the book.

It was simply a conditional spell similar to her triggered casts.

Hide the cover unless one were to open the book and read at least 3 pages. That's the spell imbued onto the cover.

And surprisingly, there were a few of them.

'And here you thought you were the first to think of this casting method.' Alyss chuckled, noticing how interested and surprised Alice was.

'Hush it. I just never thought someone would think of something so similar. It seems to be long ago as well which only confuses me further. If they made such a casting method and even imbue it into books, why isn't their name known?' Alice frowned.

The contents of the books themselves weren't that interesting. Just mundane day to day things such as farming, woodworking, how to avoid the cold of winter and so on. But the truly fascinating things are the spells applied to the books that lasted the test of time.

If they were to use these ingrained casts for combat. . .

'Since the casts can last this long, if they had a base or something similar, just imagine the amount of spells ready and waiting for any intruders that are unfortunate enough to match the casting condition.' Alice closed the book.

Alyss didn't say anything but shivered thinking about the possibilities.

Regardless, all of these books had different author names but Alice could tell that they were done by the same person.

So finding the books were a little complicated but not impossible.

She simply had to filter reality to spot the unique casting compositions on the books.

Gathering her energy, Alice created a small blood lens with a bead of blood sealed within.

Rather than touching the books one by one to find the ones written by this mysterious author, which would take forever, this blood bead in the centre will drift towards high concentrations of energy in a book and drift towards it.

A compass of sorts.

But it still needed calibration before she could use it to its full potential. To properly tune it to the specific wavelength of casting applied to these books, holding the traces of the original caster's energy.

###

Letting out a deep sigh, Alice had a frown on her face.

The more she found, the deeper this rabbit hole went. In fact, it felt like some of her theories of thought directly followed this mysterious caster's path.

The way she used energy, the method of which she imbued things. Hell, even some of her unfamiliar methods gave Alice a sense of inspiration, like how this was the path her casting is meant to take.

However, she managed to gain a few hints. A few shallow mentions of who it could be.

Madame Obscura, the Umbral Witch, Genius, Uncrowned Lord, the Strongest Unknown Arcanist.

These were the nicknames that Alice had found hidden within the pages, brief mentions of who she may be but it never went into detail.

Full of ifs and maybes but never revealing her true capacity.

The only guarantee is the fact that she seems to be the undisputed genius of casting. One that no one could catch up.

Alice tried to find more about her but there wasn't a full book.

Even when searching this library, the most she found were small extracts littered throughout books that have nothing to do with casting.

Records of how she walked through a wave of carnage unharmed.

How a city vanished with only a spark of her Sigil left over.

Apparently rumoured to be an unknown collaborator in creating vaults and keys that access the Void.

A 'seer' that could predict the time of death through reading the twisting threads of fate.

Some of the more. . . far fetched extracts spoke of how she weaved the moon back into the night sky of a certain city lost to time.

How she plucked the very stars from the sky and sent it down into the Abyss, thus creating a new species of beasts.

Where lands crumble and break from the clash of lords, she wove the world anew.

She welcomed the first dusk in a land scorched by the sun.

Despite these grand claims, it's like her existence was completely erased. Not even a single mention.

With feats such as these, if they were true, she should be an Apostle level being.

But for someone called the Uncrowned Lord, they exhibited feats higher than Lords.

Or was the fact that 'Uncrowned' meant that she wasn't an Apostle?

Looking down at her compass, Alice understood that there was nothing else to be found on the first or second floor regarding this mysterious witch that Alice hadn't seen already.

Leaving the third floor as her next option.

"That's an interesting compass you got there." Caelan's voice rang out as Alice's eyes darted to the right, noticing that he was leaning by a bookshelf.

There was an amused smile on his face as he noticed the books that Alice had been looking at.

A strange emotion washed over his eyes momentarily before disappearing.

"You really are just bored, aren't you? Don't you have anything else to do other than to bother a poor girl like me?" Alice's smile twitched.

"As an immortal being, time is in an abundance for me." Caelan shrugged. "So care to tell me what's gotten you so interesting in 'those' books in particular?"

Furrowing her brows, Alice sighed. It's not like hiding it would do much good considering she didn't even know when he arrived. But the fact that he's interested in her compass and the books she was looking at meant that he clearly knows what's going on.

"Nothing much. Just surprised by the fact that a similar ideal casting method were found on these books. Ones that I use right now." Alice revealed, showing Caelan a small demonstration of her triggered cast. Not for an offensive spell but just one that illuminated her surroundings momentarily.

Seeing this, Caelan's pupils trembled before regaining his calm.

"I thought myself the first. But someone else got ahead of me. Whoever this is, it's like their existence was wiped out from this world. Only hints and remnants of her casting remain and rumours of her feats.

"For someone that sounds strong, not having a single record of her around seems. . . far fetched. You don't happen to have any detailed records on this Umbral Witch now would you?"

Caelan was silent. Even though he was smiling, he was in deep thought. In the end, he sighed.

"I suppose it's fate if you came across her traces." He scratched his hair.

"Yrael Velcarion. Strongest caster. The most talented human when it comes to manipulating energy. She was someone who dedicated herself in the pursuit of truth, so much so that she would violate taboos if needed." A somewhat bitter smile appeared on Caelan's face.

After all. . .

Yrael Velcarion. . .

Was his and Rosalyn's mother.

Chapter 739 - 739: Yrael Velcarion

"Yrael Velcarion. . ." Alice muttered.

An unfamiliar name yet their feats have left Alice in awe. The fact that Caelan didn't say anything to disprove the rumoured feats proved her strength already.

And that smile of his. . .

'He seems to have a personal connection to this woman.' Alice analysed.

"Do you happen to have any books about her?" Alice asked curiously but Caelan shook his head.

"If you want to find books, it's better to look for libraries outside. I burned whatever I could find minus some small tomes that slipped my notice." Caelan turned around.

Without even waiting for Alice's reply, he disappeared.

Having a reminder of his. . . Mother wasn't what he expected to find today.

"A method of making sure your records remain after death huh. . ." Caelan muttered.

He had already scoured his library throughout the countless years, making sure he got rid of all traces of her.

Yet there were still books leftover.

It must've been a restriction, one that hid them from his perception. So for Alice to find them. . . It can only be fate.

And her casting method. . .

Taking a deep breath to calm his mind, Caelan opened his eyes.

He saw a shadow of his mother looming over Alice.

Clenching his fists, Caelan forced his eyes shut. Even now, the memory of his mother haunts him.

Even now, he couldn't help but wonder if she's still alive.

If her death had been transcended just like how she removed the concept of mortality from his body and soul. His very essence.

If this twisted monster is still alive in the world today, where is she?

'No. . . I can't entertain that possibility.' Caelan gritted his teeth.

He could still remember his interactions with her as clear as day. The memory forever burned into his mind no matter how many years that passed.

A woman so in love with the taboo that she'll cross any boundary if she sees fit.

A human who slept with an Abyssal beast to see what would've happened. What kind of child would she give birth to?

And the result is an immortal monster that she removed the concept of mortality from and Rosalyn.

Her face is blurred from his mind but her silhouette remains clear.

That iconic ashen hair that shimmered like silver under moonlight, straight, flawless, carefully combed and reaching all the way down to her lower back.

A wide brimmed hat, similar to that of a witch hence her nickname. Yet despite looking like a hat, it doubled as a weapon. One that was stitched to the brim with spells ready to be deployed at a moment's notice.

Her fashion sense was strange to say the least. A pristine white coat reaching to her ankles and long sleeves. And beneath that coat was an elegant dress of black and white. Layers upon layers of intricately designed fabric pressed beneath that coat of hers.

But like her hat, that was no ordinary coat. It's a coat that accessed the Void like a vault. She could pull out whatever tool she had prepared beforehand, whatever concoction she needed by reaching into her coat.

And her voice. . .

Soft, soothing. . . yet all the more haunting for Caelan.

That insane smile reaching from ear to ear. . .

Just thinking about his mother caused his body to break out into cold sweat. Looking down at his hands, Caelan saw his fingers trembling and let out a self mocking laugh.

"After all these years and this body still remembers the fear. . ."

And he had asked Rosalyn to grab the Crimsaria too. A weapon personally crafted by their mother.

Even though Rosalyn feared her just as much, he still pushed her to carry a memento of her.

How. . .

Hypocritical.

Massaging his eyes, Caelan cleared his mind. There was no need to keep thinking about that woman, she's no longer here to haunt him.

###

After Caelan left, Alice couldn't help but scratch her hair in confusion.

He always left abruptly but this time it felt a little. . . different.

'Do you think Nalem might have some information about this Yrael woman? Considering he ran a bookstore as well.' Alyss asked curiously.

'Maybe. . . but finding Nalem will be pretty difficult. We got nothing to track him down. And I doubt the Underground would be able to track him down either unless he wanted.' Alice sighed.

People from Ayr have always made themselves hidden, even if they have a hand in things.

It's how they've survived this long.

And with the leader of the Underground owing Allura a big favour, enough for them to be careful whenever she approached, she probably has them keeping their information well concealed.

However, there was one other person that might have the information they're looking for.

Turning her head, Alice could see that Cayla was still focused on reading through the portal.

Even after Caelan arrived, she didn't turn her head.

"Cayla." Alice called out.

"Hm? What's up? Did something happen?"

It was only after Alice called out her name did Cayla react.

She glanced up and froze at the sight of the portal. Her smile twitched as she understood that this was Alice's way of getting past the range limitations.

"Do you happen to know a woman by the name of Yvael Velcarion?"

"!!!" Cayla's pupils constricted as she stepped through the portal without hesitation.

"How did you find out about that name?"

Taking a step back in surprise, Alice didn't think Cayla would have such a large reaction.

"Caelan mentioned her to me. I found some of her books laying around and tried to find information about her. But apparently he burned a bunch of the books and only these slipped through his notice." Alice pointed to the stack of books next to them.

Furrowing her brows, Cayla scratched her hair.

"Of course Caelan would know her. If he lived a long time, it wouldn't be strange for him to know of a . . . controversial mage such as Yrael."

"Controversial?"

"Yep. Her. . . existence is that of a duality in some situations. She is a genius that helped humanity, but also a heinous witch that caused some of the biggest disasters known to the three realms.

"Yrael is someone who existed before the days of Ayr and managed to extend her life through. . . strange methods. The information I know of her is blurry near the end since she persisted after Ayr disappeared. But as for what she did before the fall of Ayr. . .

"It's enough to mark her as the enemy of humanity." Cayla sighed.

Alice was silent.

If Cayla was correct, then that meant Yrael's reign of terror was one that predates the ascension of Velouria!

Not only that, but the things she was so bad that she could be marked as the enemy of humanity! The same level of danger that Cayla had given Nyer before.

"What did she even do?" Alice's curiosity was burning at full force.

The woman who was able to achieve this level of casting and existed before the foundation of Ayr. . . The same woman who caused Cayla to call her the enemy of humanity and one who brought out such a reaction from Caelan.

Alice wanted to know more.

"I will tell you what I know. But believe me when I say this, don't get too curious. If you tread down the same path as she did. . . No, I believe you won't." Cayla sighed with a shake of her head.

"But the people who have found her. . . forbidden research in the past have all lost their minds in the pursuit of truth. Rather than a person, the existence of Yrael is more so like a curse. A dark shadow forever looming in the minds of those who are aware of her existence.

Pacing around for a moment, Cayla thought about how she should best describe Yrael to Alice. One that will make her understand the full extent of this nightmare.

"Are you aware of the history of casting? There are different methods that have been passed down from generation to generation. What you use most frequently is what would've been dubbed as emission in the old ages.

"A style of casting that has you projecting Abyssal Energy outwards to form an ability. The other styles are Channelling, Binding, Transmutation, Convergence, Invocation and Fracturing.

"Channelling uses the body as a conduit, reinforcing the mortal shell and allowing it to compete with beasts beyond our base states. Binding is self explanatory and so is Transmutation. Convergence is the efficient act of gathering energy so rather than a casting style, it's more so a method of preparation. Invocation, the act of summoning. Luke's chess pieces would be part of the school of Invocation.

"And Fracturing. A classification of spells and casting that breaks natural laws. You use this method a lot, even if you're not conscious of it. Now I have a question for you." Cayla turned to Alice.

"How many of those schools do you think Yrael's responsible for?"

Folding her arms, Alice scratched her chin. Based on the concepts she saw on the books. . . If she were to guess. . .

"Did she create Channelling, Binding, Invocation and Fracturing?" Alice answered but Cayla shook her head.

"She made all of them.

"Yrael Velcarion, Genuis of the old age was one that searched the unknown and turned it into knowledge for humanity. It is because of her that casting took the form it is today. While her name might be wiped out and people have stolen her credit, her traces persist even now. And worse of all. . ."

Cayla furrowed her brows.

"She was the one that created the Ritual style of casting and established the system of contracts. If it wasn't for her, the Eclipse might not be what it is today."

Chapter 740 - 740: Yrael's Footsteps

"She was the one who created the Ritual style of casting and established the system of contracts. If it wasn't for her, the Eclipse might not be what it is today."

Alice felt her heart skip a beat.

Yrael Velcarion. . . A single woman who existed before the formation of Ayr was. . .

Responsible for every school of casting and even ritual casting?

In an age where information was unknown, she alone stood at the top, pioneering the various methods of manipulating energy. Methods that even Gods saw fit to use in order to receive offering from their followers.

What they deem as common knowledge now was all. . .

"Damn. . ." Alice muttered.

"Yeah, that's a pretty accurate reaction. But in order to achieve the level of progress that she achieved, you can imagine the sacrifices it's built upon." Cayla reminded as Alice nodded with a slight frown on her face.

"Regardless, I don't believe I need to say more on why she shouldn't be looked into. As great as she was, a woman like this is better off being forgotten, no matter how impressive her feats may be." Cayla shrugged.

Had Yrael stuck with just advancing standard casting, her name would've been carved into the history books for all to see and know about. But because of the lines that she crossed, the taboos that she violated, her existence was erased.

To ensure that the next generation and the generations that are to follow will never step onto the same path as that woman.

Though. . .

Turning her gaze towards Alice, Cayla felt a little ominous.

Alice was. . . strange to say the least.

In the time that she's gotten to know this split haired girl, Cayla understood one thing.

When inspiration strikes, not even Alice can stop it. The way she sees the world, how she theorises on the combination of energy and even creating false resonances.

Conventional wisdom and logic does not apply to her. She's someone who breaks out of the common shell and transcends beyond. A pioneer.

Though in this case, perhaps that's not the truth.

Every idea, every combination. . . they have all been applying the foundation's of Yvael's wisdom to an unnaturally high degree. Uncanny even.

All this time, Cayla thought of it as a coincidence. That anyone, with Alice's experience and training, guidance under Kaden and his tutoring in the Inverted World would be able to reach this stage.

But, now that Yvael's name has been brought up, Cayla couldn't help but take a step back and observe the situation as a whole.

Based on what Alice had said, she shouldn't have gotten prior knowledge on casting before Kaden.

And Kaden only taught her the fundamentals of casting. How to modify and make things more efficient.

He taught her Emission, Channelling and Convergence.

But Alice on her own figured out Binding, Transmutation, Invocation and Fracturing all on her own.

Then there's also learning about establishing contracts between her and Alyss.

Ritual casts aren't unfamiliar either.

And to apply all of that self discovered knowledge into triggered casts. . .

Something was wrong.

It felt like the discoveries that Alice had made was following in Yvael's shadow. Each step that Alice took traced Yvael's and perhaps, they'll end up at the same destination.

Once would be a coincidence, twice would be luck. But more than that? And for it to keep repeating?

Then that's design.

When the right conditions are met, the right sparks of inspiration, it's as though Alice's mind unlocks a piece of knowledge and applies it to her current powers. Enhancing her casting to the next level.

And eventually, she'll reach the level of Yrael.

Had she not mentioned Yrael, Cayla might not have noticed that something was wrong until it was too late.

But now that the connection has been made, it was impossible not to notice.

'Telling her to stop casting isn't an option either. . . She needs this kind of power to deal with the dangers ahead. Without the foundation of Yrael's knowledge somehow being traced with each discovery, Alice would've died many times already.' Cayla frowned.

The fact that Alice was walking Yrael's path sent alarm bells ringing in Cayla's mind but she had to force herself to ignore it.

"Ah!!!" Blinking her eyes, Cayla didn't notice Alice poking the tip of her nose.

"I didn't think even dear Cayla would lose herself in deep thought like this." Alice chuckled as Cayla took a step back with an embarrassed blush.

"You're worried aren't you?" Alice stood up and leaned against the railings of the second floor.

She tilted her head back and stared at the ceiling with no end. This library that seemed to stretch on forever.

"I can tell ya know? That things are weird now that Yvael's in the equation. I'm not so blind as to not realise how freakishly similar 'my ideas' and her ideas are. The way I approach casting, especially triggered casting that I haven't seen before is practically a mirror image of what she does.

"Even now, now that I know who she is and what she's responsible for, I can feel inspiration right around the corner. Like a thin veil between me and the next big idea. I just need one tiny push and no doubt recreate something that Yvael's probably known for." Alice chuckled, raising one hand above her.

She looked at her own flow of energy and for a moment, they felt foreign for her.

Alice understood Cayla's gaze. One of wariness and worry.

Closing her eyes for a moment, Alice clenched her fist.

"I can probably do it."

"Do what?" Cayla tilted her head in confusion.

"My sixth Sigil. I can probably figure out a way to form a resonance between three subjects. Yvael's books, my Sigil and lastly, my own soul. I can overlay the 'history' of the books, the spells that was cast with my own soul and see if a connection is made.

"And if it is, I'll probably be able to figure out the connection between us. Though. . ." Alice hesitated. "I'm not sure if there are any unintended side effects. Last time I overlayed the Jester Sigil, it felt as though a portion of the soul came alive. It even asked me a question.

"So what do you think? Should I give it a try?"

Furrowing her brows, Cayla paused in deep thought.

Indeed, if she was to overlay Yvael's cast with the sixth Sigil, they might be able to figure out what happened to her and why Alice is rediscovering her ideas.

After a long pause, Cayla smiled and shook her head.

"I don't think that's quite necessary. Yrael's Yrael, you're you. She's simply a hollow of the past and you're here in the now. No matter what kind of crime she committed, no matter the taboo's that she violated, you two are separate entities.

"And I've known you long enough to know that you won't turn out like her. Velouria accepted you as her successor after all." Cayla grinned.

Indeed, it was foolish of her to even think about doubting in the first place. Even if Yrael's involved, even if Alice is tracing her footsteps, at the end of the day, Alice wasn't Yrael.

She is Alice Agnelia, a girl who's finding her way through the world despite the heavy burden placed on her shoulder.

And as the Eye of the Abyss who's accepted Alice as her master, Cayla's role is to simply support Alice through her journey.

"You say that but you still doubted a little." Alice chuckled, shrugging her shoulders helplessly.

"Oh hush it. Don't act like you've never doubted and me and Alyss hadn't needed to comfort your ass until you could stand on your own two feet again." Cayla rolled her eyes, smacking Alice with her hand.

"Hey! That doubt and this doubt is very different okay? I can't believe you would even doubt that I'll start committing heresy in the name of finding 'truth' or some sh*t." Alice grumbled, picking Cayla up as though she was a large doll.

"I forgive you for this okay? So you better forget about me sealing you."

"Hell no! That's different to this!" Cayla raged. "That was you stripping me of my power without consulting with me!

"And sure, maybe you won't commit heresy in the name of truth but don't act like you won't do it if it meant making the best mead in the world."

Hearing no response, Cayla paused and turned her head up.

She saw the awkward twitching smile on Alice's face with the slightest hint of drool pooling in her mouth and a vein bulged on her neck.

"Gods dammit! Is alcohol all you think about woman!"

"What?! I mean, you can't blame me right? Think about it. What is best anyways? That's subjective right? So if a mead is considered the best, that means it fits everyone's tastes! Sweet, spicy, sour and so on ya know? And it has to be good enough that it beats their favourite mead already!" Alice held Cayla away from her with how much she was throwing her tiny limbs around.

She felt like she was holding a feral cat right now.

"Who the hell commits taboo for mead!? I'm banning you from drinking for the next week!"

"WHAT!? You can't do that to me!" Alice's pupils constricted.

"Oh yes I can! Dammit you're definitely not Yrael. You're worse! At least she was gunning for truth! You're gunning for a drink!"

With the two arguing, the security above couldn't help but turn its head towards them. But after a brief moment, it chose to drift a little further away instead.