

Abyssal A 741

Chapter 741 - 741: Yrael's 'Prophecy'

Returning to his office, Caelan slumped over in his chair. His fingers tapped against his table as his mind began to turn.

Alice having the traces of Yrael was no coincidence.

The fact that she was practically retracing her steps could only mean one thing.

Taking a deep breath, he let out a fatigued sigh.

His mother was. . . someone who predates the Ayrian days. When the Abyss was beginning to flourish. She was the one who gave humanity the power to properly channel the energy that was ambient in the air. She was also the one who granted the Eclipse their twisted rituals.

If he was being honest, Yrael was rather. . . tame before the fall of Ayr.

But during the final battle, he could still recall his mother asking him to watch with him through an orb.

"Cael~ Make sure you don't turn your eyes away okay? Witness this and understand. The truth of this world~ Burn the sight into your eyes and bask in the afterglow of mortality leaving a God's body~ For the next few centuries, this sight will never appear again."

With Velouria dead and her blood dripping from her body, Caelan had looked towards his mother, wondering what she was thinking about.

While he couldn't quite remember her facial features. He could still remember that haunting smile that only stretched wider as the blood left Velouria's corpse.

"Ah~ the body of a God. Their divinity. If even Gods can bleed and die, why do we still call them Gods? If their only redeeming factor are the abilities bestowed by Divinity then what sets them apart from Realm

Rulers? Their mythos? The crystallisation of their achievements?" Yrael muttered with a chuckle. She bit her fingers in jealousy seeing Nyer retrieve that body and leave with it.

If only she could get her hands on a piece of Velouria.

"I can feel it~ Fresh inspiration. The new possibilities flowing into my mind~ Cael~ Do you trust me?" She turned towards him.

At that time, Caelan didn't know the true nature of his mother's personality. If he did, he wouldn't have nodded his head that day.

Unlike him, Rosalyn was never deeply involved with Yrael. She was more concerned with her own well being and happiness.

When the battle between realm rulers broke out years later, Rosalyn felt the weakness of her own power and mistakenly sought out their mother.

Clenching his fist, Caelan leaned back on his chair.

Yrael is dead. He's sure of it as he saw it with his own two eyes.

But was that all deception in the end?

After shredding away the concept of mortality from his body, his mother had abandoned him for years while he accumulated to the constant pain. The feeling of death trying to tear him to piece from the inside out but never succeeding.

He didn't die but the pain was always there.

Then he found Rosalyn in a coma. Her body half melted into a pool of blood, unable to drag itself back together. His mother appearing once more, calling her a failed product, how disappointed she was and how she couldn't match up to his potential.

Her greatest masterpiece.

It was then that Caelan understood one 'truth' that his mother had always preached about.

A truth that he couldn't deny.

His mother could not be allowed to continue on this path!

Hesitating for a moment, Caelan walked towards his closet and pulled out a small orb. Playing around with it between his fingers, he resolved himself and crushed it.

Mist began to flow from the bead as viscous blood slapped against the ground.

Taking a step back, Caelan watched as from this blood, bones and flesh was reconstructed.

A temporary vessel, a method of contacting. . . Nyer.

The incomplete vessel didn't grow the full body. It simply grew enough so that it could talk and see and listen.

Eyes grew in the hollow sockets and turned to look at Caelan.

"Now this is a surprise. I hadn't expected you to contact me after how we parted before." Nyer spoke slowly.

Usually, he kept his sentences short but for Caelan to contact him, it was truly an eye opener. He knew full well how difficult it must've been for him to choose this decision.

Especially after finding out that he had been collaborating with Yvael for . . . certain projects before she died.

Seeing Caelan hesitant to say a word, Nyer closed his eyes and injected more power into this vessel.

So that they can have a proper conversation.

Flesh whipped around the bones, reconstructing his form fully as cloth wrapped around his body. Giving himself a rather stylish suit, Nyer walked over to the sofa and sat down. Crossing his legs, he pulled out some tea and placed it on the table.

"Are you contacting me because Rosalyn's body is falling apart?" Nyer decided to take the initiative.

He was grateful to Caelan. Without him, some of his research wouldn't have been as successful as they were.

"No, Rosalyn's body is functioning just fine. There are no issues with her body." Caelan sat down opposite Nyer.

"That's good to hear. So what's the reason for your . . . hesitation old friend?" Nyer chuckled.

Closing his eyes, Caelan took a moment before staring back at Nyer in seriousness.

"What did you do with Yvael? I believe we agreed that she should be killed and left that way. So why does your experiment now show traces of Yvael's thinking? Why is she able to replicate Yvael's techniques despite never having seen them or have heard of her before?"

Hearing this, Nyer's finger twitched ever so slightly.

He placed his tea down and tapped his finger against the table. A slight echo that pulsed outwards.

"So she's in your library." Nyer spoke briefly as Caelan gritted his teeth.

"Calm yourself friend. I have adhered to our agreement. Yrael is dead, I can guarantee that. There is no reincarnation, no incarnation nor possession. She is and forever will be gone." Nyer narrowed his gaze, forcing Caelan to sit back down.

"So explain why the hell Alice is doing what she's doing? What exactly did you do after I left."

Caelan was. . . somewhat involved in the experimental progress after Nyer sought out his mother. But when his mother started stray, he formed an agreement with Nyer.

One that he surprisingly accepted.

But looking back, Caelan was beginning to see that he was naïve in that moment.

Pulling out a plate of sugar cubes, Nyer grabbed one and placed it in his tea before slowly stirring.

"Yrael was brilliant in all the ways imaginable. Willing to break any taboo, even if it meant experimenting on her own son and daughter. Your immortality is her greatest work after all." Nyer began as Caelan clicked his tongue.

"Oh jeez, thanks a lot for the reminder. It's not like I've been seeing her shadow in Alice because of what she's been doing."

"Be patient, I'm getting there. As an immortal, time is something you have in an abundance is it not? Patience and composure is a gift of experience." Nyer pointed his tea spoon at Caelan.

"While Yrael may have experimented on you and your sister, she wasn't like the others. She was opportunistic. Anything and everything was at her disposal, even herself. When you came to me with the suggestion of killing her, I was rather surprised.

"Surprised at how mother and son can be so very different yet at the same time very similar. She decided that the next step of her evolution, of her thinking, wasn't through herself.

"She helped you transcend mortality, she's created the fundamentals of casting. She even created rituals that promoted exchange. Contracts and agreements. To her, she did everything. But no more sparks of inspiration came to her.

"The world was simply lacking. Or rather, the cogs of fate have ceased to move. Much like her casting, she believed that everything had a requirement that had to be met before activation.

"She believed that there are. . . people that can fulfil these requirements. Velouria being one of them. And so am I. Though to a lesser extent." Nyer shrugged his shoulders.

Yvael was a frighteningly smart woman. Someone who saw through everything that Nyer wanted to achieve. No matter what he wanted to hide, she would be able to find it.

"However, Yvael said that she wasn't one of these people. She wasn't someone that can turn the cogs of fate but rather, the one who puts them into place. The world was her sandbox and she decides what can or can't be moved when the person comes along.

"Her final grand experiment. . . I have yet to unravel the full extent of it either. But some of her predictions have already come true." Nyer pulled out a preserved sheet of parchment.

Furrowing his brows, Caelan grabbed the page and read the contents.

As he continued to read, his fingers began to tremble.

"Yvael couldn't see the future nor was she some kind of omniscient being. What she can do however, was simulate and predict likely events based on the 'cogs' that have been put into place. What would happen should they begin to move." Nyer finished his tea.

"And I believe some of it has already come true. So perhaps calling it a prophecy and Yvael a 'seer' might not be inaccurate."

Caelan didn't say anything. He simply read the prophecy in silence.

[One who shall tread the trodden path not as daughter but as the great divide. The fifth boundary will wane, the sixth will weep. Beyond the seventh veil, what is bound shall blink.]

[Blood not born, yet burdened. Thread not spun, yet sovereign.]

[Three times shall the one bleed what is not theirs.]

[Once for the living.]

[Once for the dead.]

[Once for the chained.]

[The weeping star shall rise thrice and fall once. One who bears no beginning shall step upon the path lined with sin.]

[A name forgotten shall bloom in silence. Three veils torn by your hand.]

[The Eye that Watches.]

[The Mouth that Whispers.]

[The Womb that Devours.]

[Beware the boundary that sings. Beware the ruin that listens. Beware the child who does not blink.]

[At the Seventh Threshold, you will tread barefoot in blood. At the Eighth toll of the bell, you will speak words not meant to be heard.]

[Then comes Nine.]

[Neither number nor ending. A face turned backwards, the breath after death.]

Chapter 742 - 742: Nyer's Pursuit

After memorising all of the prophecy, Caelan handed the sheet back to Nyer.

"Is this. . . prophecy about Alice?" He asked. While he didn't know about the full story, some of the events sounded like it had already occurred through Alice. Especially since it matched the information he's already gathered.

"Maybe, maybe not. Her words are never as straightforward as they may seem. I met Yrael in passing before Ayr disappeared and she left me a couple of words.

"Back then I didn't know what they meant but it's clear now. She had already foreseen the fall of Ayr and Velouria's death through these 'cogs' that she spoke of." Nyer chuckled with a somewhat bitter smile.

"What did she say?" Caelan asked curiously.

"A shadow born not of flesh but of remembrance. She shall walk the path scorched in blood. And where the threshold breaks, her hands shall weave the severed threads. Her name spoken when none remain." Nyer recited. "At first I thought Yrael was talking about a person. Allura perhaps, or maybe even Velouria for this matter but it wasn't. The woman in this prophecy was in fact Ayr."

"And the second one was clearly about Velouria and my path till now.

"Twinned faces severed by death. You will not bury her, you will not forget her. You will walk through heresy.

"You will chase ghosts with no faces and each will wear her voice. The flower you hold will wilt in silence. A shadow across lifetimes. A never ending hunt for the one who has turned his back.

"And when the tree bears fruit, you will hear her laugh. But know it was never hers."

Furrowing his brows, Caelan tried to guess what Nyer was thinking but his expression was as cryptic as ever.

"Doesn't exactly sound like a good prophecy. Ever thought of defying it?" Caelan finished the tea that Nyer offered.

"Why would I do that? Going against what Yrael has said only delayed the inevitable rather than avoid it. Her prophecies have a . . . strange way of coming true. It's entirely dependent on your interpretation of the events." Nyer chuckled. "But in all my years that I've spent experimenting, not once has one of Yrael's prophecies that she left behind failed. All of them have come true without exception."

Letting out a sigh, Caelan contemplated for a moment before opening his mouth.

"Then what about me and Rosalyn? Did Yrael leave behind any prophecies for us?"

"Nope. With you being her greatest creation, she didn't think it would be necessary to observe the cogs surrounding you. And as for your sister. . . Well, Yrael didn't even think Rosalyn would be able to survive, never mind giving her a prophecy."

When Caelan found Rosalyn in a coma, if he hadn't intervened, Rosalyn would've died sooner rather than later.

But since Caelan had begged him to save her, he did what he could. Modified her body to some extent, using a prototype that was being developed at the time. Thus allowing her to 'destroy' her body and reconstruct it.

The time it took for her vessel and soul to accumulate to this. . . technology took along time and during that time, Caelan acted as his assistant. But once Rosalyn recovered, Caelan left.

A shame considering the fact that Nyer didn't mind research a bit more into Caelan's immortality.

Yrael didn't want to reveal her secret while Caelan didn't want him to uncover his mother's research.

"I suppose that's something to be happy about." Caelan closed his eyes.

According to Nyer, Yrael's prophecies haven't gone wrong yet.

While he may not be a superstitious person, he understood how terrifying his mother is. Therefore, he didn't want to take any chances. Not even one.

"As long as Yrael's dead then I have nothing else to say."

"Oh? Not even one thing? I thought you'd be rather against what I've done to Alice." Nyer raised an eyebrow in mild surprise.

"It'll be hypocritical of me to criticise you after receiving your help with Rosalyn. It's the same branch of research after all." Caelan shrugged.

Hearing this, Nyer smiled. Indeed, as his previous assistant, Caelan knew more about him and his research than most. He even went as far as to 'seal' some of the confidential knowledge that was shared between them as an agreement for Rosalyn's safety.

No matter what he does and what kind of experiment he'll conduct, even if Rosalyn was to interfere, he won't kill her. This was his gratitude to Caelan.

And to begin with, even if Rosalyn interferes, she's merely a small roadblock. It'll hinder the progress but not stop it.

"If you don't mind me asking, what are your next plans? Even though I don't have the ability to see these 'cogs' that Yrael kept talking about, even I can tell that something big is brewing in the shadows. Outer Gods, the boundary, even the Abyss is stirring. The Void is relatively 'stable' but the Realm Ruler is slowly losing herself." Caelan asked while pulling out some wine and offered some to Nyer.

"My plans are the same as they've always been. Observe the situation while making back up plans if possible. I've. . . decided to split my research into three paths. One is Alice as you know. The other is what I've been personally working on. And as for the third. . . Well, that one I don't have as much of a hand in similar to Alice's case." Nyer chuckled, accepting Caelan's offer.

"One of the factors for the self destruction of previous subjects have always been me. My presence stirs the reawakening of Velouria's soul to some extent and causes a rift between the soul and body. A deep incompatibility. So by removing myself from the equation, the theory is that the subject should be able to survive long enough for the body to truly become 'theirs'.

"After that, it's simply a case of environmental factors. How the environment changes how they progress and mature. I suppose one major factor I hadn't expected to occur is for the prime soul of Alice's body to survive the injection." Nyer traced his finger along the rim of his wine glass before taking a sip.

"Oh? So it was an accident?" Caelan paused.

"Mnm. An accident but a good one. Surprisingly, by having two souls working in tandem, it has stabilized itself during the transformation period. The prime soul even taking on some of the burden that the parasitic soul was meant to take, allowing it to mature at a stable rate. Though the process is far from painless and the likelihood of success is low.

"I've tried a similar experiment in the past but it failed. Meanwhile, Alice and the prime soul in her body was not by design."

It wasn't by design yet it has shown the most growth. Indeed, taking himself out of the equation allows the subject to go further than any prior experiments that he's conducted.

"Why did you even choose her in the beginning? I'm sure that if you wanted something better, there are a bunch of different ways to achieve the same result. Even making a vessel from scratch."

That was the biggest thing that bothered Caelan.

The more he looked into Alice's past, the more confused he became. Rumours and accidents that surrounded the Zenia family. Their daughter's birthday and so on.

Even if Alice showed great promise with how far she's gone, surely there was something that caused Nyer to choose the original Alice.

Something that got this man to turn his gaze towards them and decide that they were the perfect host.

"The second part is incorrect. I can't make a vessel suitable since my interference will only cause the breakdown to speed up. Instead, I had to look for compatibility." Nyer smiled.

"What kind?"

"The soul kind. I'm sure you've already looked into the Zenia family and where I managed to find this gem of a person. But what if I told you that Lumiria already had her eyes on the youngest daughter?" Nyer glanced up at Caelan who seemed surprised by the Moon's involvement.

Sure he saw that the Zenia family and the Moon church had dealings but that's mostly afterwards when they began to mass produce Abyss Blood. Prior to that, there were only small brief dealings.

"The Moon sees. . . things a little different to most. She see's the capacity of the soul. The original Alice was a treasure in the sense that she was like the boundless ocean. Her soul is vast and almost without end. To put it in other words for you to understand. . .

"You know how one of the Moon's Apostles attach souls to herself to achieve immortality?" Nyer asked as Caelan nodded his head.

As someone who's had the concept of mortality stripped from his being, he made sure to avoid the Moon at all cost. Which meant looking into their activities and so on.

"Imagine her soul having the capacity of 100. She is able to attach 100 souls to herself before the boundaries become blurred. Meanwhile, young Alice had twice that size. They weren't sure if it was a gift or a disability since the Apostle was one that struggled to find a 'self'. It wasn't until she filled all 100 did her personality begin to form.

"Young Alice had the 'shell' to accept far more than the Moon Apostle. Enough where it could even potentially host the soul of a God." Nyer's smile began to widen. "After finding that out, I decided to make her my second subject and see where it went. Perhaps by having the parasitic soul 'snatch' that capacity, it would be able to achieve something beyond my imagination."

Caelan knew that Nyer was hiding more than this. He was only giving him the rough idea and small hints. Anything more than that and perhaps it might even expose more of his plans.

However, there was one key fact that answered some of the questions that Caelan had in his mind.

"This. . . 'Capacity'. It's what you researched right? To achieve 'clones' that can take on more Sigils even though the original should've reached capacity." Caelan questioned.

Even with Abyss abilities, a clone couldn't take on Sigils since it didn't have a 'soul' that can be modified. And if it did, it would no longer be a clone.

But Nyer? He was able to make duplicates of himself with different powers.

Hearing this, Nyer blinked his eyes in surprise before laughing and nodded his head.

"Indeed. Young Alice gave me the last hint I needed to achieve this power."

Chapter 743 - 743: Cogs Of Fate

Standing up, Nyer adjusted his sleeve.

"I think it's about time I took my leave old friend. If I stay any longer, I risk having dear Alice sense my presence and I doubt you want that kind of trouble on your doorstep." Nyer chuckled.

Massaging his forehead with his fingers, Caelan let out a sigh as he could already foresee what would happen. Alice would complain, Rosalyn would question him and he wouldn't be able to answer. A domino of annoyances piling up left and right.

But even if that was the case, leaving this early was. . . unnatural for Nyer.

"Did something happen? You don't usually take your leave so soon." Caelan asked curiously.

"Hmm. . . Let's just say I have a rowdy child at home begging for some attention. And even if she wasn't, it's not like this incomplete vessel can hold on for much longer." Nyer shrugged, showing Caelan the rotting flesh that was beginning to spread.

"You know how to contact me so I won't leave anything behind. And. . . a warning from an old friend. Avoid Extalia until everything is over."

After leaving those words, Nyer's body began to crumble apart. Flesh peeling off the bones and dissolving into a puddle of rotting blood.

Furrowing his brows, Caelan scratched his chin before disposing of what remains.

"Avoid Extalia. . ." He muttered. As a 'true immortal', there weren't many things he needed to be wary of.

But if Nyer was warning him not to approach Extalia then. . . the consequences of going could mean a fate worse than death.

Perhaps eternal torment?

His friend wasn't someone who gave out warnings often. Usually, he would take the warning to heart but this time, with his sister being so stubborn about helping Alice and figuring things out, there might come a situation where he has no choice but to visit Extalia.

Pausing momentarily, Caelan let out another sigh.

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With the connection to the temporary vessel now severed, Nyer slowly opened his eyes and saw a pale hand tugging at his sleeve.

Turning his eyes to the right, he saw the newest product of his experiments.

A young woman with long white hair that seemed to float behind her, shifting with each subtle movement as though she's underwater.

Her left eye was. . . strange. The whites were black and her iris a shade of vibrant purple. As for her right, it was as per usual except this one had a crimson iris.

She wore an elegant sleeveless frilled white dress that reached just above her ankles.

And on her neck, a strange set of 'stars' tattooed onto her skin.

"I believe I gave you a pair of shoes? Where are they?" Nyer let out a helpless sigh, noticing the woman was walking around barefoot.

"Annoying. Not comfortable." She replied with a slight frown.

"Even so, a lady shouldn't be walking around barefoot."

Standing up, he made her sit down on his chair and kneeled down, pulling out a pair of white sandals for her to wear.

Just as he was about to help her put them on, she kicked him in the face. It wasn't a strong kick by any means but more so one to get his attention.

"Do you have to kick me?" Nyer looked up helplessly.

"I don't want to wear." The woman pouted before pointing at her mouth.

"I'm thirsty."

"I'll give you something to drink if you wear your sandals properly." He bargained.

Weighing up the options for a moment, she pulled her foot back and allowed him to put the sandals on her.

"See? Wasn't so hard now was it." Nyer shook his head.

"Drink." She demanded.

Seeing her so intent on getting a refill, Nyer let out a sigh and rolled up his sleeve. Picking the woman up, he set her on the armrest and held out his arm.

"Dig in."

Upon getting permission, the woman grabbed his arm and sank her teeth into his flesh.

Blood began to roll down from Nyer's arm but before it could roll off and hit the floor, she wiped it up with her finger, making sure not even a single drop is wasted.

"You don't need to rush, no one's taking it from you." Nyer chuckled, seeing her drink with such ferocity.

However, she simply shot him an annoyed look before kicking him in the stomach and continued to drink ravenously.

Rolling his eyes at her kicks, a small smile formed on Nyer's face before it disappeared.

He recalled his conversation with Caelan and closed his eyes.

Having Alice show. . . signs of Yvael was a little outside of his expectations and made him recall his discussions with Yvael in the past.

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"Hmm~ Ohya? Nyer~" Yvael called out with a wide smile. Her hat hid a majority of her face with the ashen strands of hair framing the sides.

"What is it?" Nyer didn't turn around. His gaze fixated on the vessels before him, ones that were still undergoing experimentation.

"I've been thinking~" She hummed, holding her arms behind her back and walking slowly next to Nyer.
"What if the soul. . . Didn't end the way people think? Fufu~"

Nyer finally turned his gaze towards her.

"So reincarnation and recycling?" It was the method that the Abyss used to continuously supply beasts to be killed.

Hearing his response, she let out a soft laugh and shook her head.

"No no~ Not those. They're. . . returning things to the natural order. A cycle. I'm thinking of. . . persistence." She held her own chin with a slight grin.

Nyer raised his eyebrow.

"A perfect persistence. Similar to what I did to my son but very much different. An alternative kind of persistence. The Cogs of Fate that I keep seeing, these. . . 'results' that come along when certain requirements are met." Yrael spun her finger around.

Energy dancing to her tune, her command, soon formed a cog above her fingers.

"I'm thinking~. . . A gate with no door, a dream that repeats? Hmm. . . That's a little inaccurate." Yrael tilted her head to the side.

"Cogs of the natural order, with one comes two, with two comes four. And these pile up to become the life cycle of person." She waved her hand.

Countless cogs began to converge until they formed a silhouette of a person.

"Each footstep a chime, each choice, a key played by an invisible musician." She giggled, flicking her finger as the cogs began to turn.

"Riddles again?" Nyer sighed.

Yrael was often like this. Always speaking in ways that only she understood. Her view of the world was far. . . different to what people usually see. Even with the Eye of the Abyss.

Some see souls, some see energy and some see sounds. But her? She sees the world through the lens of these. . . 'cogs'.

Yrael Velcarion sees the world through 'fate'.

"Speaking to people have never been my strong suit~ You wouldn't explain your experiments to a monkey now would you Nyer?" Yrael leaned in front of Nyer with a grin. To her, he too was a monkey, a fool. Someone who knows more than most but still, to her, an animal.

"Whether or not someone can understand me is the difference between them being an animal and someone I'm willing to extend my thoughts towards. So if you understand, then congratulations, you're one step closer to truth. But if you don't~ Then you're just another animal like the rest of them." Yrael stuck out her tongue.

Nyer's eye twitched slightly but ignored her provocations.

While she may insult him like this, she's still willing to extend a helping hand and even explain when it comes to their main experiments.

This was simply one of her. . . quirks that he had to get used to.

"But let's just say I've succeeded in folding it. The lattice structure of the soul." Yrael stood up straight. "I am the conductor of my own orchestra. The Cogs of Fate to my whims. And I am creating a new piece of art~"

Turning around, she began to walk away from Nyer with a new hop in her steps.

"The flesh and vessel is merely a decoration. What I'm about to do, what I'm about to discover, is whether or not I can achieve the acclamation of the soul~ Ah~ I'm so jealous. Jealous of the new era to come if this is a success." Yrael turned around to look at Nyer one more time.

"Jealous of you who will see my efforts come to fruition."

Nyer furrowed his brows. The way she was saying it sounded like she wouldn't be there to witness it. Knowing what she's like, Nyer doubted she would miss this kind of observation.

But as Nyer was about to reply, Yrael skipped away without giving him a chance.

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It wasn't long after that did he accept Caelan's offer and Yvael was dealt with.

Perhaps through these Cogs of Fate did Yvael predict her own death. Her own death at the hands of a partner and her own son.

"Are you overworking yourself?" The woman asked as she finished her meal.

This. . . tone. This voice, Nyer found himself being lost in her words for a moment. The exact same thing that Velouria used to ask him.

"No, I'm not." Nyer reassured while patting her head.

"Do you want to run some more tests today or another day?" He asked.

The woman crossed her arms and thought deeply before shaking her head.

"Another day. And where did you go earlier? 'You' weren't here." She asked curiously.

"To visit an old friend. He wanted to ask me a few questions and it seems like your sister is doing things to scare him a little." Nyer chuckled, standing up as the woman hopped off the armrest and followed behind him.

"Say, when am I going to meet her?" She asked as stars seemed to shine in her eyes.

"Soon, don't worry. Neither of you are ready yet. When the conditions are right, when the Cogs of Fate begin to turn, the two of you will meet."

Chapter 744 - 744: Unravelling Secrets

"You're what??" Rosalyn stared at the two in front of her in disbelief. First of all, forget the fact that Cayla had a body now.

That was something Rosalyn didn't want to think about.

But most importantly, the two want to stay for an extra day??

"You realise that if you stay another day, the security around the nation is gonna get tougher right? It's going to be practically impossible for you to leave without drawing their attention."

"I know but. . . Well Cayla wants to use this time to fill a few gaps in her knowledge." Alice scratched her cheek awkwardly.

Even if she is going to travel alone for the safety of the group, there was still an optimal time to leave.

And if she stays behind for a day, that optimal time disappears. But most importantly, Alice couldn't place down an anchor in this space.

With the way Caelan's library and house is set up, it's as though it's constantly tumbling around in a turbulent Void sea. Its coordinates ever changing and any anchor she places would be swept away in the next hour or so.

Which only makes Alice question where exactly was this 'library' occupying in terms of space. Or perhaps. . . It was the work of the security guard floating overhead.

Scratching her hair, Rosalyn stared at Cayla before back at Alice.

Indeed, Caelan's library was the best place when it comes to getting information but still. . . The risk of staying behind for another day at that was simply too high.

The Apostles were already observing the situation around the sea. The longer this goes on, the harder they'll look and Rosalyn didn't want to be there when that happens.

After a moment, she let out a sigh.

"Be honest with me, how confident are you at leaving unscathed? Leaving is one thing but leaving undetected and unscathed is another."

Alice wanted to make a joke but stopped seeing Rosalyn's expression.

There's a time for fun but this was not one of them.

"I'm about 60% confident. But that's also me not knowing fully what the situation is like. Once I get a better look at their barricade, I'll be able to judge it better." Alice admitted.

"Only 60%. . . And your confidence in avoiding the gaze of an Apostle?"

"That's. . . If the Will doesn't make them my target, I'm about 50/50 on it."

Apostle of Protection and Apostle of Preservation. These two were the ones that taught her about the Zones. Even now, she could still remember how oppressive Shiera's zone was.

In fact, now that she's had the time to properly use the technique, Alice understood that Shiera's zone was something that showed signs of reaching a level beyond Absolute Zone.

And with how much time has passed, it's pretty much guaranteed that the Apostle of Preservation has achieved the pinnacle of martial mastery.

So to avoid their gaze. . . Trying to hide would only make her more suspicious. She needed a way to evade their suspicion while walking in broad daylight. That meant having a way to hide her Eldritch energy, her divinity as well as the myriad of souls attached to her.

There were. . . certain ideas that Alice had in mind. Ideas inspired from the traces of Yrael that she saw.

Rosalyn was silent. She stared at Alice, judging her, weighing up the options in her mind.

There wasn't much that she knew about Cayla but what she did know was that the value of information was priceless. With information, paths to survival open up.

It's simply a case of what they wanted to risk.

Eventually, Rosalyn sighed and nodded her head.

"Alright, I'll trust you on this. You haven't betrayed that trust yet. Even if you're the one to cause 90% of the troubles we encounter." Rosalyn shot Alice a glare. Meanwhile, Alice showed Rosalyn a sheepish smile.

"Take this. If trouble does indeed appear and it's not something you can deal with, crush it." Creating an orb of blood, Rosalyn handed it over to Alice.

"Hm?" Noticing something strange with the orb, Alice tilted her head and her gaze darted between Rosalyn and the item.

Then she understood what it did and her smile began to twitch.

"What the f*ck??? And you said I was insane???"

An orb that kills whatever vessel she inhabits that forcefully drags her soul to a new vessel.

"You're one to talk. Have you even considered the crap you've been pulling? I'm pretty sure a cloned vessel that kills the previous vessel isn't anything to be shocked about." Rosalyn rolled her eyes.

"Yeah but isn't the vessel supposed to be something important for a person? Like Kazira, she couldn't exhibit her power because her vessel was stolen." Alice felt a little reluctant to use something like this.

Folding her arms, Rosalyn realised that she had to explain it a little further before Alice would accept and use this orb when she's in danger.

"My situation is a little. . . unique. My old vessel was already 'broken' beyond repair. But my brother helped me acquire this one. It's not like his... curse." Rosalyn scratched her hair. "But think of every vessel that I create as being my original. I don't lose power at all whenever I 'die' and incarnate into a new vessel."

"That so?" Alice mumbled, her gaze lingering on the orb.

Alice couldn't help but wonder. . . If Rosalyn's lack of detail on this orb is a result of her trying to hide the function or if it was because she didn't know much. Since the traces that Alice can detect from this orb was. . . a little similar to Yrael's traces.

Not much but enough where Alice could tell that it was probably her handiwork.

'Well Caelan seem to know Yrael so it's not exactly surprising that Rosalyn's cloning was part of her creation.' Alyss spoke up as Alice nodded her head.

With Rosalyn accepting the fact that Alice was going to be staying behind another day, she gathered the others and prepared for their escape.

Grabbing a bean bag, Alice made herself comfortable while Cayla began to furiously browse through the countless books stored in this library.

24 hours of time. That's how long Cayla had to get as much information as she could.

And to help her, Alice designed a new 'artifact' of sorts. A token with a triggered cast imbued into it.

Using the inspiration Alice received from Yrael's books, this artifact essentially allowed Cayla to open any portal she wanted within this confined space. That way, she can explore as far as she wants while maintaining a tether with Alice.

Turning her head to look at Cayla who was flipping through the books, Alice smiled before leaning back.

She held the orb above her head and stared at it in silence.

The swirling of energy that was held within. . .

The tethers that were attached to Rosalyn was similar to the chains binding the souls to her own body. As well as the bindings that Griselda put in place in order to keep the countless souls attached to her under control.

Then did that mean Griselda received certain teachings from Yrael as well?

Considering the fact that Caelan is a true immortal that even the Apostle of Death couldn't kill, Alice wouldn't be surprised if the Moon went all out in trying to capture him.

But they haven't.

'They don't know he's immortal do they?'

'Seems to be the case. And the fact that he's this strong helps hide his immortality rather well.' Alyss nodded.

With enough strength, even if Caelan was immortal, no one would know. Since they wouldn't be able to land a scratch on him to begin with.

'At this point I'm pretty curious about what Yrael did when it came to Apostles. She seem to have ties with the Moon and Eclipse. Did she help the Sun at one point? Or maybe even Kaden and Allura.' Alice wondered curiously.

With such a . . . prominent figure hidden by history, uncovering her traces felt like this library in some sense.

A simple door that should've only led to a small room was in fact a boundless reservoir of knowledge.

But right now, her attention was focused on the orb in front of her.

The concepts held within. . . if broken down and studied, could help Alice achieve an idea she's had in her mind for the longest time.

However, there were still a few things that had to be accomplished first. Requirements that had to be met.

She had to break down all of these imbued triggered casts and methods before she could fully conduct this experiment.

First and foremost, the outer layer. The triggered condition was a simple one as it's something that Alice uses rather often.

If broken, this happens.

Or, if injected with energy past a certain threshold, this happens.

A condition needed to activate the effect held within the orb.

Next, a source of power. A container for the energy needed to activate.

Most of the time, Alice simply uses the condition of injecting energy so that it's able to activate whatever was inside.

But this orb was a little different.

It had the condition of breaking and as for the 'battery' for the skill, it sucks in ambient energy for activation. And on top of everything, it uses the most dominant energy in the surroundings.

So even if they were in a situation where Abyssal energy is sealed, it'll simply substitute the required energy and activate the skill regardless.

A smile slowly crept up on Alice's face as she began to unravel the secrets held within Rosalyn's orb.

Chapter 745 - 745: Yuhai Port

Yuhai Port. A location that reeked of salt, smoke and drugs.

A hub of trade from the southern side of Sikha to the rest of the world. Whether that be transporting 'local goods' or importing wares from abroad.

Each boat docked on the port sang songs of adventure with sea water crashing against the wooden frame. The cries of seagulls that echoed overhead.

The wind whipped against the towels stretched between buildings, hoping to protect themselves from the sun's harsh rays.

In the distance, an arch of polished white stone stretched between a stone pillar and a mountain out at sea.

If this port were to have an icon, a defining trait, that piece of manmade beauty would be that icon.

And yet. . .

This arch now bore the emblem of the Sun Church, scorched onto the surface with several bestial and humanoid bodies hanging from the arch for all to see. A demonstration of what happens should you go against the Sun's righteous crusade.

Near the main gate of the port, a modest carriage rolled to a halt near a queue that was formed. A line of carriages all looking to enter the city yet security was put into place by the Sun Church.

Far more stringent than the usual guards put into place, especially for the southern part of Sikha.

A lawless port that had law forced upon it.

Seeing this queue, a cluster of travellers stepped off the carriage.

The first to hop off was a woman. Her coat swept behind her, almost royal in a sense and far too grand for a port like this. She had short black hair that clung to her skin due to the sweat, a pair of golden eyes and a disdainful frown. She had one hand instinctively resting on the head of a quiet child who followed beside her.

On her black and red coat, there was an eerie motif of white butterflies with black thorns surrounding them. Beneath that coat, she wore a simple shirt with trousers that flared outwards around the ankles along with a pair of heels.

The child who followed beside her wore something a bit simpler. Consisting of a red and black hoodless jacket and a pair of baggy pants. The same black hair as the woman and a pair of emotionless crimson eyes.

A sharp gaze that seemed unbecoming of someone his age.

She turned her gaze towards the checkpoint as her lips twitched in annoyance.

"Of course there's a check. Why wouldn't there be?" She grumbled. "No shortage of zealots with a flaming rod up their arses."

The boy tugged at her coat as the woman glanced down.

Behind her, a young man hopped off the carriage as he adjusted the pack of his shoulder.

"Now now Maevis, as annoying as the situation may be, it's best not to use that kind of language around children. They may learn an adult's bad habits after all." He laughed with a genuine smile.

A stranger, anomaly even, for the southern part of Sikha. Someone with an honest smile, not the kind of a swindler or merchant but a simple pure hearted smile.

He looked like a knight of sorts with large shoulder plates and a cape that hid most of his armour. There weren't any icons or emblems that could link him to any Church or faction and from the looks of things, a simple travelling knight expanding his horizons.

"Mr Rinan, be that as it may, you cannot deny the fact that the Sun Church is pushing their authority a little. It's as though they're unafraid of the Eclipse." Maevis rolled her eyes as the actions of the Sun have been annoying the citizens of southern Sikha for the past few days.

"That I can't deny. These actions are a little. . . unbecoming of how the Sun Church usually operates. It's as though they're afraid of letting someone escape. But hey, silver lining is that they're actually thoroughly checking rather than committing a slaughter." Rinan grinned.

Though his grin didn't match the ominous implications of his words.

After Rinan, another duo stepped off the cart. A mute boy handed Rinan a small crate before helping a young woman down.

She nodded once at the boy before turning to Maevis. The two sharing certain features and even face shape. One might even think they were mother and daughter but that's not the case.

"Stay close, who knows what they'll ask if you start walking on your own." Maevis shot the girl a glance before letting out an annoyed sigh.

The last to emerge was an hunched over old man wearing a wide straw hat and a large shawl that obscured his outfit. The cane in his hand dug into the ground as his wrinkled fingers wrapped around the handle.

"Do you need me to carry you?" Rinan offered but the man laugh out a soft laugh and shook his head.

"That won't be necessary, young man. I'm not so weak that I need a youngster like you to support me just yet. But thank you." He patted Rinan on the back.

The group had met each other about two towns away and rode the same carriage, all of them seeking Yuhai Port.

With the church needing to check the carriage separately, the group made their way towards the checkpoint first.

On the walls, Sigil markings were painted onto the side with a robed figure sitting in the corner.

By the main gate, two Sun Church Sentinels wearing gold and white armour began their checks.

Once it was the group's turn, they stepped into the designated spot.

"Business and destination?" The Sentinel asked as the other checked their documents to make sure everything matched up.

"Travelling overseas. Extalia." Maevis stepped forward.

The Sentinel's gaze lingered on the child next to her then to the group following behind.

"Business and destination?" He moved to Rinan.

"Just helping out where I can. No destination. Think of me as a guard." Rinan smiled, standing up straight.

The Sentinel sized him up before moving onto the next duo.

The mute boy and the girl.

"Business and destination?"

"Ah he's mute. We're here to follow. . . Maevis. We're family. Where she goes we follow." The girl spoke up for the boy as the Sentinel turned to Maevis. However, she didn't deny that claim.

Finally, he moved on to the old man.

"Business and destination?"

"I'm visiting my grandson, he lives here."

Staring at the old man for a moment, the Sentinel turned to his coworker.

"The documents checks out." He nodded.

With both tests now done, it was for time for the final check.

*YAWN~

"You know you can take longer for these checks right? I barely got a nap in." The hooded figure yawned before standing up.

Pulling down her hood, she revealed herself to be a woman with long blonde hair and a pair of golden eyes. Black markings could be seen on the side of her face, reaching down her neck as she gave her body a lazy stretch.

The Sigils around the walls began to glow as she eyed up the group.

Squinting her eyes, she stood silently for a long period before turning around.

"They're clear~"

*BANG!!!

"!!!"

Maevis widened her eyes as her pupils constricted.

A golden spear had manifested in an instant and stabbed towards her, forcing her to block with black wires.

"Just kidding~ This one's a bad one." The woman leaned back, staring at Maevis upside down with a wide grin.

"Ah~ You guys gone and done it now. This is why I keep telling you to take more time for your checks, otherwise people like this will slip through." Turning her body, the woman conjured a golden spear and twirled it around her body.

The Sentinels brought out their own weapons as Maevis clicked her tongue in annoyance.

"Rinan! Didn't you say you wanted to help? Why don't you give me a hand?" Maevis asked as Rinan let out a hearty laugh.

"Yes. . . Indeed! I've already promised you my help. The situation does not matter and one must admit that I've been rather interested in fighting the Sun Sentinels. Do you think if I perform well, I'll be recruited?" Rinan raised his hand in front of him as energy erupted from his palm.

Clenching his fist around the stream of energy, he tore out a giant greatsword bigger than his body.

"Careful of this one~ She's carrying traces of divinity." The woman of with the spear warned while the others quickly evacuated the area.

In a fight between Hunters, they're the ones who'll suffer the most.

"Bella! Orlen! Back me up!" Maevis commanded as the mute boy narrowed his eyes.

Tapping his finger against his shoulders, his skin broke apart to reveal a set of prosthetics instead that ejected a set of knives for him to grab.

"What a drag. . ." The girl scratched her hair. Ejecting an artifact from her leg prosthetic, she injected energy into the weapon and radiant flames burst out from around her body.

Her hair transformed to match the shimmering flicker of fire.

"Oh hou~ Artifact wielders. They seem like pretty high quality ones at that. You've definitely been busy."

"Miss Gwen, please be serious about it." One of the Sentinels frowned as a set of golden chains appeared in his hands.

"Serious? I've always been serious about it. The question is why you guys keep giving me the hard work~ Just let a girl have her beauty sleep alright?" Gwen hoisted the spear on her shoulder and tapped down with her foot.

*RUMBLE!!!

Spears rained down from above as Maevis waved her hand and a net of threads parried the spears.

Flicking her finger, thorns burst out from the earth and pierced towards Gwen who grinned.

Twisting her body, she twirled the spear around her arms, waist then legs, cutting everything approaching her with frightening precision.

Once the last thorn was cut down, she wrapped her leg around the spear before grinning.

*BANG!!!

Spinning around to maximise the power she could generate, she kicked the spear towards the boy next to the woman.

*BANG!!! CRACK!!!

"I knew it~ heretics." Gwen narrowed her gaze with a chuckle.

From beneath his clothing, the boy transformed his arm into a bestial head that snapped the spear in half.

"Shall we begin?" Gwen asked, summoning two more spears.

"With the purification of the unclean~"

Chapter 746: Guinevere

"I must thank you. Really like truly thank you. You've made this job worth taking~" Gwen ripped out her spear as she squatted down with a twisted grin.

"I'm grateful for the fact that you heretics decided to deliver yourselves to my door, giving me the time of my life. Someone of my station shouldn't be here you know? I should be elsewhere, doing something actually worth my talents rather than just playing border control." She sighed, leaning her head against her hand as she stabbed the spear into Maevis' shoulder.

"But having clowns like you appear before me means I get to indulge in a little entertainment. A break from this monotony." Gwen giggled, pulling out the spear before stabbing it into the other shoulder.

"Though it makes one wonder. Is it really worth it? Smuggling something like this overseas? It's hard to hide the traces of divinity from someone like me~ Did you think I wouldn't notice? That horrid aura latching onto your body. The signs of a fallen god." Gwen tilted her head in confusion while looking at the twitching mass of flesh shifting beneath Maevis' skin.

As for Maevis, she simply glared at this woman with hatred in her eyes.

Around her, her allies lay motionless.

Black blood dripping out of their wounds as their limbs were either torn apart or bound by the golden chains.

Even Rinan was forced onto his knees, unable to do anything to the sentinels thanks to one variable that Maevis didn't account for.

The presence of a Cardinal! And not just a normal one at that. . .

"Cardinal Gwen or rather, Guinevere. The esteemed daughter bathed in the finest rays of gold. Offspring of Arax the Protector. Apostle of the Sun God with the moniker of Protection. I can only curse my own foul luck to have run into someone like you in this backwater port." Maevis spat out in annoyance.

"Ohya? Someone knows of me even though we're all the way out here. Seems like you're someone who works with information." Gwen chuckled, leaning towards Maevis as she began to sweat from the heat.

"Since you know, maybe we can strike a deal. You've already killed my assistants and even the guard I hired. Whatever you're looking for in the south east, maybe I can help you look for it with my connections." Maevis offered.

"Hmm. . . That's not a bad proposition. I have been stuck out here for days and Dad's even keeping a close eye on me so I can't slack off too much." Gwen grumbled.

A spark of hope appeared in Maevis' gaze when she felt her eye twitch.

Her eyes stung as even blinking began to hurt. Furrowing her brows, she realised that her eyes were beginning to dry up. Her throat parched and her outfit soaked with her sweat.

"M-maybe we can talk this over a nice meal. I've already shown my desire to not fight anymore yeah? I surrender." Maevis' smile twitched.

"But that's something you do with friends isn't it? To talk over the table." Gwen smiled, looking at Maevis who was beginning to squirm. Her body was pinned down by the several spears she had summoned.

"I wouldn't dare be friends with someone as illustrious as you. A s-servant!"

"I wouldn't go as far as a servant. But as friends, that's something that can be arranged yet." Gwen nodded happily and Maevis nodded along with the smile.

Her throat was beginning to dry up.

Each word that she spoke felt like sand paper sliding against her flesh. Crackles in the voice and profuse coughs.

"Even so~ If my dad finds out I actually negotiated with heretics like you smuggling pieces of fallen god flesh, I'll get scolded as well. If we're going to be friends, you have to stop doing things like that." Gwen sighed with lament.

"I-I can do that. No more smuggling from me, I'll walk the righteous path!"

"Oh! You get it! Yes you get it!" Gwen grabbed Maevis' hand with excitement.

*TSSS!!!

Flinching from the heat, Maevis held back the urge to scream as she could feel- no, smell her flesh being seared from coming into contact with Gwen.

"But to make sure that you're truly free from that life of crime, we must go through a baptism okay? Don't worry, I just need to burn away the sins that you've accumulated, then we can truly be friends." Gwen chuckled, unable to hold back her grin.

The black tattoos on her body now shimmered with a radiant gold as the sand beneath her feet began to melt into a puddle.

Maevis wanted to let out a string of curses but all that came out was slurred noises and the gurgling of blood.

The moment she opened her mouth, Gwen stuck her fingers inside, burning the tongue and pulling it out.

A movement so quick Maevis didn't even notice until the tsunami of pain stabbed into her consciousness.

"Ah please, stop squirming like this. It'll make the baptism more annoying you know?" Gwen summoned more spears, stabbing it through Maevis' back to pin her against the ground. She made sure to avoid the major vitals so that she wouldn't die too quickly.

"Arh!!! Uggh!!! AAAGGG!!!!" Maevis glared at Gwen with bloodshot eyes.

The first to catch fire was her outfit as she was engulfed in a ball of radiant flickering fire.

Next was her eyes. No tears, no blood. They were burned away. Only the melted remains of her eyeballs remained as her eyelids began to peel back. The heat separating skin from flesh as the oils within her body started to fry her alive.

Yet Maevis squatted in front of the burning woman with a wide smile. She watched in satisfaction like a father watching a crackling flame on a sunny day out.

To Gwen, there was something cathartic about seeing the body slowly melting into a puddle while engulfed in flames.

One might even go as far as to say that this was her hobby.

Others may use magnifying glasses on ants or pour water on them. Maybe even going as far as to use molten metal into their nests. But those fleeting acts of violence didn't entertain Gwen.

No, those were lesser beings. Things negligible in her life, beings that can't even be held on the same pedestal.

What truly got her going, what truly fuelled this fire in her heart, is subjecting her fellow humans to the same torture. To push down someone the same as you, to crush them beneath her foot.

Gwen felt a rush of adrenaline whenever she did this.

She even went as far as to use the Zone that her Aunty Shiera taught her in order to capture every little detail while her victims burned.

Forever etching that fleeting memory of their vitality fighting against her baptism.

Once the final embers surrounding Maevis extinguished, Gwen stood up and repeated the same with Rinan.

Quite a few of the citizens looking to enter the city have already fled when the battle broke out. It was no surprise as most people don't even get past three Sigils throughout their whole life.

Never mind hunting enough to put up a decent fight against someone like her.

Which only begged the question. . . where was that old man?

Everyone from that carriage pulled out their weapons to attack the trio yet the old man was nowhere in sight.

Something was off. . .

"Put out a notice. See if you can find the old man that we saw earlier. Either he ran away from the gates or there's more to him." She turned to one of the Sentinels who gave her a salute before walking away.

"I'm not one to judge your. . . enjoyment Miss Gwen but the cleanup will stall the process of allowing the uninvolved into the city." The Sentinel who summoned the golden chains sighed as Gwen shrugged her shoulder with a laugh.

"It'll be fine~ Better to be a little late than to die amirite?" Gwen revealed a cheeky grin while walking away.

Waving her hand playfully, she jumped back into her seat comfortably hidden in the shade and kicked up her legs.

Watching this, the Sentinel sighed out helplessly and turned to the charred remains.

Cleanup was going to be rather annoying, especially if he didn't want to alarm the civilians who may come back.

###

Within the city, a greyish blue haired woman leaned against the walls with her eyes closed. She had short wild hair with two long strands on either side of the face that reached down to her chest.

She wore a sleeveless black shirt beneath a long sleeved sheer blouse. On the blouse were faint golden embroidery that would only appear in direct sunlight.

A pair of short shorts and knee night boots.

Slowly opening her eyes, she retrieved a strand of blood that she injected into the ground. She disguised the blood with the surroundings to allow herself to spy on the situation.

"A cardinal. . . the daughter of an Apostle at that. Yeah I'm glad I dipped before they tried to find me." Alice sighed. She had disguised herself as the old man and travelled with the group having noticed the unusually high Sigil count.

In one sense, it was the perfect cover. If trouble starts, they'll be the one implicated.

And on top of that, there's also the case of them having traces of divinity, it allowed herself to camouflage her own much easier.

Once the fight broke out, Alice found the chance to enter the city and change her disguise so that they won't be able to find her.

[There's probably another check for the boats leading out of the city so you'll need to be careful of that.] Cayla reminded.

'It's most likely going to be limited in departures at all.' Alyss added.

'I aware.'

Getting through the checkpoint was more annoying than anything. What's truly got her back sweating was coming up as the Apostles were checking every single ship departing the nation while also keeping an eye on the Void.

Escaping through teleportation was not an option as doing so would be akin to suicide.

Of course, that's not to say it was impossible. Alice had her methods and even the weakest one should allow her to evade their gaze.

Chapter 747: Causing Trouble

To leave Yuhai port and by extension, Sikha, one must evade the gaze of the dual Apostles of the Sun church.

And to do so, one must be freed of any involvement with the sickening pieces of Outer Gods and even markings of fallen divinity that have been shipped out to the world.

If a ship is found to be tainted and guilty of such, the entire ship is erased with no exceptions. It doesn't matter who was on that ship, a golden pillar of purification will notify the port of another departure.

Therefore, Alice needed to find a ship completely free from any incriminating evidence.

Unfortunately, the most accessible port that hasn't completely closed was also the one filled with the most contraband.

On the off chance that they don't have any fallen Divinity or ties with Outer Gods, the goods they're smuggling would be more than enough to let the Apostles eradicate them.

Hiding inside a room, Alice squinted her eyes towards the port and let out a deep heavy sigh.

"F*ck." She grumbled.

There were far less ships leaving than expected. Only idiots and the mentally challenged would actually try to leave the port with the Apostles watching everything that was going on.

[What happened to your easy plan huh?] Cayla asked as Alice coughed awkwardly.

'It's still possible but. . . I guess I'll have to instigate a few things.' She scratched her hair.

Currently, the port city had two entrances as well as the port where ships would enter.

From her brief scouting, the 'enemies' in the port was as such.

One cardinal, at least 10 sentinels and the rest were common worshippers. Each of the sentinels were around 4 to 5 Sigils in strength. Some were at six Sigils while the Cardinal herself also had six Sigils.

But the difference between them was like night and day and Alice knew that gap deeply.

After all, she herself was at six Sigils and most of the six Sigil populace couldn't even hold a candle to her. Hell, even Lords will fall to her.

If it was just a normal Cardinal, Alice wouldn't care too much. Violence could always be an option.

But Guinevere was a ticking time bomb. Kill her and Ajax becomes her enemy.

Killing Kazira was hard enough already and she was weakened.

Killing Ajax? Who is with Shiera? And a God that cares about him? Yeah that's impossible.

Therefore, in order to leave this port, she had to make sure she evades Guinevere at all costs.

The easiest choice would be to pick a different port but unfortunately. . . They pretty much shut down thanks to the Sun's intervention.

None of them wanted to risk death and only Yuhai port was even remotely willing to give it a try.

Regardless, the fact that she stayed an extra day couldn't be changed and the trade off was good.

Standing up gave her body a stretch.

In order to instigate things. . .

###

Deep in the underbelly of Yuhai, a man stared at the cargo in front of him with a pair of bloodshot eyes.

Even though he wore a black facemask to hide his expression, one could tell that he was absolutely livid right now.

Veins bulged on his forehead while blood dripped from his clenched fist.

"Who. . .

"Who the hell accepted this batch of shipment!?!?!" He roared, glaring at the subordinates around him.

"Do you not know what the f*ck is happening in Yuhai!?!? Do you WANT the Sentinels to storm in here and kill everyone!? Who was it?! Who the f*ck was it?!?!"

Rama, a leader of one of the smuggling gangs in Yuhai noticed a new batch of shipments.

With everything happening in Yuhai, he had carefully instructed his subordinates not to accept it and yet here they were, standing in front of a batch of forbidden goods that the Sun Church was hunting down.

The subordinates around him were panicking as they were very familiar with what Guinevere was doing to those who she discovered to have possessed these forbidden goods.

If they were to be discovered. . .

“W-we have to get rid of it!” One of them shouted as Rama wanted to punch the man.

“No sh*t! But if we dispose of this much cargo, do you think the Sentinels wouldn’t think that something is f*cking wrong? Getting rid of it now telling them to come kill us!” Rama paced back and forth, trying to think of how to deal with the situation.

And most importantly, who the hell accepted this shipment?

Pausing mid step, Rama frowned.

Within Yuhai, there were three major smuggling groups with him being one of them.

The other two. . .

One was too preoccupied since their shipment was recently busted because the other group sneaked some cargo into their warehouse when the Sun Church was doing inspections.

‘Are they trying to get rid of me now that Marcel is in trouble?’ Rama narrowed his gaze.

If that’s the case, the best way to get rid of this shipment would be to plant it in Ami’s warehouse and reverse the situation.

‘No, if she planted it here, then that must mean the Sentinels are close to arriving!’

They needed to cause a distraction to give them enough time.

“Golon, cause some trouble with Ami’s girls near the entertainment district. I want the Sentinel’s attention to be dragged over there so we have time to move the cargo.” Rama instructed as a muscular man known as Golon nodded his head.

There was no telling what was going to happen with the Sentinel’s hot on their heels.

###

“Was it Rama?! Marcel?! Those b*stards!” Ami bit her nails in anger as she looked at the fresh batch of contraband in her warehouse.

She had made sure to inspect every shipment yet it still managed to slip through.

She knew this plan very well, it’s what she used to get the Sentinels on Marcel.

But now that it was in her own warehouse, she could feel her blood pressure rising.

Getting rid of this was not an option. The others were aware of her methods so the Sentinels must be nearby!

‘I need to get rid of this evidence!’

Sending it to Rama is a bit difficult considering how tight his security has been recently. Then there’s also the patrolling Sentinels that make it hard for such a large shipment to be transferred.

Ami doubted that Marcel is involved but. . .

“If he’s been caught once, what does a second time or third time change?” She forced a smile.

“Laura! Check if the route we used last time is still available. If it is, give our dear friend Marcel a little. . . reminder of what happened last time. The Sentinels will be patrolling so we’ll need to divert their attention a little. Something near the gates but away from the entertainment district.” Ami ordered as the girl named Laura nodded her head.

###

“That b*tch! F*cking wench! How dare she!!! Once is enough and she dares to do it again?!?!” A muscular man roared out in anger as he punched the wall next to him, cracking it in the process.

Like before, he could see a large shipment of contraband in his warehouse.

He was barely allowed out by the Sentinels since the three of them have been keeping some resemblance of ‘order’ in Yuhai port but if he’s found to smuggle contraband again. . .

Marcel paled.

He had even made sure to seal certain routes to his warehouse yet she’s managed to sneak them in again.

However. . . This wasn’t like Ami.

No, the way these shipments are packaged and her usual habits are no where to be seen.

Taking a deep breath, Marcel took a step back and closed his eyes.

‘Let’s be rational here. Ami knows that if she pulls this sh*t again it’ll be too obvious unless she has no choice but to do it. She was almost caught last time when she tried to use me as a scapegoat.’ He furrowed his brows. ‘Rama on the other hand. . . He’ll probably try to pit us against one another again.’

Rama has mostly taken the sidelines when it comes to conflict unless he's directly involved. With him already running into issues with the Sentinel, Rama knows that his movements are limited.

And if during this period, 'Ami' was to attack again. . . he'll be forced to defend his innocence.

A fight to prove that he had no hand in this contraband.

'But no words can only mean so much. Like last time, if the contraband is already found here, the Sentinels must be close.

"Tina! Cause a distraction to drag the Sentinels away towards Rama's territory. The louder the better. Even if the Sentinel's come knocking on our door, it's better to be caught in a territorial dispute than being caught with this sh*t again." Marcel gritted his teeth.

Despite his large muscular stature, he was someone who liked to use his brain.

"But make sure it's between Rama's territory and the Gate. It'll give us the blind spots needed to transport this into his warehouses." He instructed as the woman named Tina nodded her head and adjusted her glasses.

###

Near the main streets of Yuhai port, a short blue haired girl could be seen skipping her way towards the port. There was a wide smile on her face as a small thread of blood was retrieved from the ground.

Alice couldn't hold back the smile on her face.

Having spied on the situation, it was actually shaping up a lot better than she expected. Now she just had to wait for the battle to break out and take a boat out of here using that as an excuse.

Chapter 748: Weighing Risk And Reward

Gwen felt a disturbance.

She couldn't sleep properly.

The gate was relatively uneventful after the last run in and she only had to give them a quick scan before sitting in her chair.

But something felt off. Like an itch she couldn't reach, something was nagging at the corner of her mind, stopping her from resting.

Was it the old man? She didn't know. When she scanned the group, he was. . . painfully ordinary with only around three Sigils worth of power.

Nothing more nothing less.

Probably a retired hunter who couldn't make a living.

But at the same time, there was something about his. . . gaze that threw her off.

What was it?

Furrowing her brows, Gwen clicked her tongue and stood up.

"Whatever. You two! I'm taking a break for a bit."

Unable to calm this doubt in her mind, she decided to ditch work and jump away before they could even stop her.

Her father and aunty are busy keeping the seas clean so they entrusted this location to her.

To begin with, she didn't understand why Solaris even chose this option.

Was there really a need to surround a country like this? And while this might seem like they're dealing with Outer God flesh and fallen Divinity to outsiders, the real reason why they were doing this was to track down the one that killed Kazira.

An Apostle like her father.

However, this only annoyed Gwen.

If they can kill an Apostle like her father, why were they deployed? Even for her, she was still just a Six Sigil Hunter with more blessings than others. In terms of power, she was still lacking to go against Lords never mind trying to hold off someone that can kill an Apostle.

"If dad heard what I was thinking I'll probably be punished again." Gwen grumbled while landing on a roof.

She recalled how he acted when he caught her questioning what Solaris was doing and shivered.

But one couldn't blame her. After all, Solaris was too busy looking good on his lofty throne to be bothered with anything else.

Not how his subjects were doing, not how the Eclipse were causing havoc nor did he care about the shipments being sent across the world.

But now that an Apostle died and he's facing a bit of danger and uncertainty, that's when he decides to act like a righteous god.

"I suppose these kinds of thoughts make me a heretic as well." Gwen chuckled.

However, at the end of the day, she is still the Cardinal of the Sun.

The daughter of an Apostle.

Regardless of her complaints towards the Sun, she will do as she is tasked and purge the unclean.

And naturally, it helps that she enjoys the job.

Standing up, she hoisted the spear onto her shoulders.

Since she can't settle this uncertainty in her heart, she'll find a way to clear this doubt.

'Aunty, I'll be borrowing your move~'

Twirling the spear, she tapped the pommel against the ground.

At that moment, the boundaries of her 'zone' expanded out in an instant! A dome of observation that stretched to the edge of the pier. Every movement, every conversation, all rushing into her mind.

Discard the unneeded. Filter everything out that doesn't involve the keywords.

Capture suspicious movement outside of a crowd.

Gwen's eyes began to glow a radiant gold as red spots began to appear across the city.

"So many rats on the move today, what an occasion." She muttered.

On top of their suspicious movements, each of the gangs were also carrying an abnormally large batch of contraband.

'Traces of Outer Gods. . . Eldritch Energy. But it's different to the normal supplies that's been shipped out. A new batch?' Gwen tilted her head.

Suspicious.

She knew the three gangs wouldn't dabble in things like this, not after last time.

'Are they sabotaging each other? No. . . How would they even get the shipment into Yuhai? The seas are sealed off and I'm holding down the gates. If there's movement in the Void dad would make sure nothing is up.'

Once again, the old man's face by the gate repeatedly appeared in Gwen's mind.

After the battle was over, he was nowhere to be seen.

Based on the facts, Gwen was sure of two things.

Someone was sabotaging the three gangs.

Someone was manually creating these shipments inside of Yuhai.

Regardless, she had to diffuse the situation. Rather than letting the three groups fight one another, it's better if she forced them to calm down so that they can find the true culprit.

She may like giving heretics a brutal death but what she likes more than that is dragging cowards out from the shadows and seeing their fearful expressions in clear sunlight.

###

'Holy f*cking sh*t!' Alice panicked for a moment as she had almost instinctively fought back with her own zone.

She knew that the range of the Zone was entirely dependent on the capabilities of the user, their perception and range of their attacks.

The wider the range, the weaker the attack.

But this. . .

Even from this range, Alice could tell that Gwen can unleash her full power.

As expected of the daughter of an Apostle, she must've gotten personal training from Shiera.

Even in the Inverted World, Shiera's Zone was one that encompassed an entire arena and beyond. A range that she could control at will.

She wanted to check out the situation but doing so was risky. Any suspicious movement while this Zone was active would only draw attention to her current location. And if that was to happen, escape might be annoying unless she's willing to charge through two Apostles.

But at the same time. . . Alice had an idea.

A little risk but life is always about taking risks.

A risk and reward situation where the potential reward heavily outweighs the risk.

[Yes but the risk has a 98% chance of failure. Even if the reward is a payout of 1000%, is that really worth it? Especially considering the consequences of failure.] Cayla folded her arms.

'I mean-'

[And before you try to push the blame onto me for staying an extra day, remember who's fault it was for sealing me in the first place. I agreed on not mentioning it anymore but if you dare bring up my actions in pursuit of knowledge, then I'll remind you of why I have to do so.] Cayla clapped back before Alice could even form a sentence, causing her to choke on her own words.

Alyss only smirked off to the side.

'Alright fine. Maybe it's a little riskier than normal but the payout isn't just 1000% ya know? And let's say we fail and the plan falls through, it's not like we can't get out alive.'

[True, but it also means the entirety of the Sun Church knows where you are, what you look like and maybe even leave a marker on you to constantly chase you down. Not to mention two Apostles.]

'Yes, that's a fair point. But, hear me out now, we get information directly from their side.' Alice winked.

Cayla stared at the girl in front of her.

That expectant smile.

That glimmer in her eyes.

If they were able to get information from their side, they'll be able to keep a close eye on the movements of the Sun Church.

Hell, they might even get information on Famine if they play their cards right.

[Absolutely not.] Cayla shook her head.

It didn't matter how tempting the rewards may be, the risk was simply too high.

'Ehhhhh, but why?'

[I'm not going to argue about why you shouldn't but rather how suspicious it f*cking looks if some random chick whom the Cardinal doesn't even know about tries to be buddy buddy. If it was me, I would avoid them like a plague or worse yet, kill them depending on the danger.]

[And don't forget the fact that she's the DAUGHTER of Ajax. You know damn well that no matter how well we hide our Divinity right now along with the Eldritch energy, it's one f*ck up away from revealing itself and causing the entire Church to hunt us down like animals.] Cayla was firm on this matter.

Today was the day she stands her ground. Today, she won't let Alice's stubbornness defeat her since the risks were simply too high and unlikely to succeed.

'She's got a point. Even I think it's way too reckless of a plan this time.' Alyss added.

If her two voices of reason were going this far to convince her then there's nothing Alice could do.

'Fine, I guess I'll behave myself.' Alice sighed while scratching her hair. 'But staying at the port is also pretty bad. We don't know what kind of information she's getting from the gangs. I think it's best we go and observe the situation from afar.'

Seeing that Alice was compromising with this, Cayla nodded her head.

[As long as you're just watching from afar, I have no complaints. But I can't stress this enough. Watching is one thing but Do. Not. Get. Involved. Okay?] She emphasized each word as Alice nodded her head.

'I get it I get it~'

Stepping away from the port, Alice made her way towards the gates where most of the gangs were gathering.

All three of them trying to shift the contraband to the enemy gang while Gwen was getting herself involved in order to calm the situation.

###

"Ajax, what is your daughter planning now? Is she thinking of skimping out on work again?" A woman asked with a helpless smile.

Meanwhile, a man in heavy armour let out an awkward cough.

"She's in her rebellious stages."

He didn't give her a tough job by Yuhai port so nothing major should happen. At most it should just be a small conflict with the local gangs so he has no reason to worry. . .

Chapter 749: Purifying White Flames

Gwen was speechless. Even after busting down the door to all three operations, they kept pointing fingers and throwing accusations.

Rama blamed Ami, Ami blamed Marcel, Marcel blamed Rama.

All of them were also trying to sabotage the other by causing havoc to draw the attention of the sentinels away while they planted the contraband in the enemy warehouse.

Massaging her eyes, Gwen felt the urge to just kill all three of them.

Even Marcel, the somewhat smart one was reduced to throwing insults at the other three.

Just as the three were about to fight again, Gwen slammed her spear down.

"If you keep behaving like children, I'll make sure all three of your gangs have new leaders by sundown." She warned in a low voice, forcing the three to shut up.

"Do you have even a remote idea of who might've planted the contraband into your warehouse?" Gwen sighed in annoyance.

As though rehearsed, all of them pointed the finger at the other, forming a triangle of blame.

*PUCHI!!!

Gwen's vein bulged as she forced herself to calm down.

She wanted to kill all three but having three headless gangs running rampant around this city wouldn't do. It'll cause more harm than good, especially since her dad has already told her not to make a big mess of things if possible.

Just focus on tracking down anyone who may seem suspicious instead of uprooting the local gangs.

Taking a deep breath, Gwen decided that it's best to eliminate the contraband first then talk later.

Walking over to the giant stack of infected flesh, she held out her spear and transformed it into a greatsword. Rather than practical, it was more ceremonial. A golden cross guard and handle. Pristine silver blade with a single streak of gold running down the spine of the greatsword.

"Skyfather above, blazing in eternal glory." Gwen chanted as her eyes lit up with a golden hue.

The streak of gold running up the spine of her sword also began to emit a radiant light as behind her, a halo of gold spun to life.

"Bless your devoted daughter, born of your fire, forged in your will. Cleanse the sins, grant it mercy."

Beneath her, an array began to expand with all three gang leaders taking a step back in fear of being caught up.

"Let your wrath flow through my veins.

"Let your gaze burn through my enemies.

"Let your truth blind the deceivers and sear the heretic's tongue."

Taking a step forward, Gwen took an offensive stance with the sword behind her.

"By your divine blood, I cast off my sin. By your golden hand, I sanctify my blade.

"Purification!"

Above the skies of Yuhai port, radiant energy converged into a single false sun. A harsh, searing sphere of golden white flame.

With its birth, the pressure of the divine gaze crashed down, filling everyone with the overwhelming urge to kneel.

But the false sun offered no warmth, granted no mercy. The clouds scattered in all directions as a halo of fire flared outwards, converging into a single location.

Guinevere slashed down with her ritual blade.

*RUMBLE!!!

A pillar of raw, unfiltered radiance plummeted from the sphere, striking the stack of crates. The attack was absolute, the crates stood no chance. Every speck of corruption and Eldritch energy was consumed and swallowed by the radiant beam.

Eldritch energy is hard to erase. Through normal methods, even using the power of faith and Holy Energy, it would cling to life tenaciously. Normal believers and even certain cardinals may find it difficult to completely erase the remnants of this power.

A constant tug of war where the Eldritch would fight to the bitter end.

All it has to do is win slightly and a domino effect would occur, corrupting the divinity and turning it into a state of fallen divinity.

But Guinevere was no ordinary cardinal.

She's the daughter of Ajax, the Apostle of Protection.

The loyal retainer of Solaris himself.

As his daughter, she has inherited some of her father's powers. Namely the power to invoke the mythos of Solaris.

Not in its entirety but rather a small fraction. Brought forth by performing a ritual to his name, thus establishing a connection and a contractual agreement for power.

The burning white flames of purification.

Flames that can burn away all sin, thus the perfect weapon to use against the tenacious Eldritch energy that resides within these crat-

*BANG!!!

From the pillar of radiant energy, countless streaks of darkness began to break out, forcing Gwen to take a step back in shock.

This. . . energy.

It was beyond just Eldritch. No. . . this was not the work of the Outer Gods at all! This defiance against the Gods, this hatred within! Even when the radiant flames have almost eliminated everything, it regenerated with increased tenacity!

Even if she's just a Cardinal, even if she can't summon the full might of the purifying white flames, this was still a manifestation of Solaris's mythos!

She had to track down the source of it all. If the extension of their was enough to defy divinity to such an extent, there's no telling how dangerous the source is.

Not to mention the fact that they went out of their way to implant this into the warehouses of the three gang leaders.

Their desire. . . Must be chaos! But why?

If they desire chaos with such potent Eldritch energy then surely they don't need to stoop this low? Are they afraid of getting caught?

Furrowing her brows, Gwen took a step back and adjusted her grip.

Since the Eldritch energy was fighting back so fiercely, she needed to use more power!

"Purification!"

Golden chains burst out, restraining the energy as two additional slashes were unleashed, forming a star shape.

The energy fought back momentarily, corrupting the chains but it wasn't enough and soon, with the heat of the white purification flames assaulting it from all directions, the Eldritch energy was eliminated.

Breathing out, Gwen furrowed her brows.

Dismissing the blade, she condensed an orb of light and fired it into the sky.

"All sentinels to me!" She commanded.

She WILL find out the source behind this.

If they're going this far to hide while causing this much chaos, then they don't want to be found.

And she knew two very big reasons why and both are the Apostles out at sea.

###

'Hou~ I didn't think a Cardinal was capable of summoning the Crystallization of Myth. I thought only Gods could do that?' Alice narrowed her eyes.

She made sure the energy she injected into the crates were more tenacious than normal, even mixing a small sample of her own blood into it.

Yet Gwen was able to purify it in the second attempt. Hell, the first attempt came close. Had it been just a bit stronger, Gwen wouldn't have needed two tries.

[That should've been the case. Summoning a God's Mythos is an authority that can't be accessed unless you have a significant compatibility with the divinity of the God. Think of it this way, not even Allura and Kaden are able to conjure Velouria's legends when she was still alive.

[Even Kazira couldn't summon Enris' mythos since she was still lacking in compatibility.] Cayla folded her arms.

'So you're saying that his Gwen girl has higher compatibility to Solaris than Allura and Kaden has to Velouria?' Alice raised an eyebrow.

[Yes. Which is probably why she's stationed near the Apostles in case anything was to happen to her. Losing her would be a rather big loss on Solaris' side.

[With her being able to conjure Mythos through ritual, she's essentially a mini Solaris on a ticking time bomb.]

'Which is all the more reason to get close to her right?' Alice grinned.

A vein bulged on Cayla's neck as she glared at Alice.

It's as though their previous conversation didn't exist at all and the girl was just pacifying her.

The words go in one ear and out the other.

'I'm joking I'm joking~ Instead, I think we should push her a little. Cause a bit more chaos while keeping myself concealed. I want to see how much of Solaris' power she can summon.' Alice chuckled.

While creating true artificial life is beyond her, what she can do instead was create a lump of pure survival instinct. A reflex of sorts like the flesh that twitches even after being separated from the main body.

A merger of Abyssal and Eldritch energy injected into flesh.

A mutation that seeks out survival no matter what and attacks whoever tries to stop it from achieving its objective.

It couldn't be too fast or too strong or else innocents will get dragged into it. But it couldn't be so weak that Gwen can kill it without any issue.

Balancing was necessary and adjusting the values next to the beast would be required. Which meant 'fighting' it.

Little by little, a plan began to form in Alice's mind as she skipped over to Rama's district. The warehouse wasn't too far from where she's at right now and creating a beast away from the residential district was probably for the best.

Now naturally, moving suspiciously while Gwen's Zone was still observing the entire city was going to be reckless.

But there was a certain someone that managed to bypass the detection of the Zone. One that Alice killed personally and with her Sixth Sigil, it is surprisingly easy to replicate once the knowledge was overlaid.

While out of combat, if paired with the Mirror jester and a few tweaks using her first Sigil, Alice was able to effectively camouflage herself from detection.

But the moment she starts a fight, the camouflage breaks apart so she needed to be careful.

Yet the fact that Gwen hasn't tracked her down yet meant that this technique was working perfectly.

It's a little lacking compared to the original but this was good enough since it allowed Alice to move while being undetected.

And all that's left now was to let Gwen show the cards she's been hiding and for Alice to reap the rewards.

Chapter 750: Blessings Bestowed By Gwen

"Madam Cardinal! We're receiving reports of abnormalities in the east!"

"Abnormalities in the north!"

"Warehouses near the docks!"

Gwen gritted her teeth.

Right after summoning the Sentinels to her side, they began receiving word that corrupted masses of flesh appeared in each of the three sectors. They weren't fast by any means but their regenerative abilities are no less than what she had just tried to purify.

Ordinary methods wouldn't work!

And to make matters worse, they haven't got a clue on who the culprit is yet.

She had to take command as the only one who can purify these masses in the city.

"Rama, Ami, Marcel! It's time for you to do the Lord's work and redeem yourselves. Are you ready?"
Gwen turned her gaze towards the three gang leaders. fre\e(w)ebn ov.e l\ co.m

Since they were most familiar with the terrain, they'll be able to delay the corrupted masses of flesh long enough for her to deal with them one by one.

Plus, none of them were weak by any means. They became gang leaders for a reason. While they cannot compared to her in raw power, they should be able to hold their own.

The three were hesitant. Especially since if any of them get injured, the other two might take the chance to get rid of them.

"Tch. I'll guarantee you this. If you get injured during the fight and the others try to take advantage, I will personally deliver their head to your doorstep. This isn't a battle to see who gets an advantage, this is a battle to maintain the order of your city." Gwen warned.

On top of this, there was also the silent warning in her gaze.

The tightening of her grip around her spear.

'If you don't fight, I'll throw you in there personally.'

Marcel was the first to react. He slammed his fists together and forced a grin on his face.

"Of course, who else to defend the order in this city if not us? I don't know about you two but I ain't afraid of some lump of flesh. Hold it off? Sure I can do that."

With each clash of his fists, steam began to emanate from his body as his skin took on a red hue.

Realising that he was probably trying to curry a favour with Gwen in order to redeem himself the other two didn't hold back either.

"I'll have my ladies secure an escape route for the civilians that might get dragged into the battle. I'm more suited for assassinations and recon after all." Ami hid her face with a fan as her shadow began to twitch and expand.

"Then I'll use my clones to lock down the other two. Muscle head can only deal with one but through technique, restraining two is a piece of cake." Rama taunted as a vein bulged on Marcel's forehead.

But this was no time to argue.

Gwen felt like facepalming.

All three of them in front of her were idiots in their own right.

What's the use of acting tough after surrendering to her just a moment ago?

However, she couldn't send them off without thorough preparation either.

Twirling the spear, she threw it into the air and clasped her hands together.

"O' Flame undying, source of the Lord's holy breath.

"Grant me thy warmth that mends all wounds.

"Ember that defies decay, spark that light up the darkest night."

"Flame of Renewal."

Opening her palm, a golden flame appeared and split into three, shooting into the bodies of the gang leaders.

All three of them felt a warmth spread through their body but Gwen wasn't done.

"O' Crown of heavens, radiant halo of light.

"Let your shield encircle my soul, my body.

"Let no shadow pierce your divine light.

"Stand by me, as you stood at the world's first dawn."

"Radiant Spirit."

The spear that she tossed above stabbed down as golden tethers attached to each of the three, forming a barrier around their bodies before disappearing.

And for the last buff, Gwen reached out to her spear and shattered it, transforming it into a roaring flame.

"O' Blade of morning, bearer of radiant wrath.

"Ignite within my grasp, sacred flame.

"Let my enemies feel your sting, let them turn to ash in your path.

"Enchantment."

Compressing the flame into a spark that split into three, the gang leaders had their weapons burst with radiant fire.

Marcel's fist glowed with red hot justice, Rama's daggers lit up the darkness and Ami's threads lit up with a radiant white.

"I've bestowed upon you three buffs that should help you out if the outbreak is bigger than anticipated. Now you have no excuse if you were to get your ass kicked." Gwen smirked.

Turning around, Marcel crouched down for a moment before jumping high into the sky, transforming into a red blur.

"That buffoon. Not a single speck of patience." Ami sighed, falling into her own shadow and disappearing from the spot while Rama split into clones, covering both his own territory and Ami's.

While the three of them were out holding back the masses of flesh, Gwen had her sentinels shut down the gates, making sure that no one can get in or out.

Not only that, but she also put more focus into her 'Zone', making sure that not a single speck of detail is missed.

Blood began to trickle down her nose as she wiped it away.

Pushing her focus on such a wide space was pushing it, no matter how talented she may be or how good the technique is. Yet the strangest thing of all, was that she couldn't spot anyone who could be the culprit at all.

Nothing was wrong, it's as though the beasts just appeared out of thin air.

Something must be concealing the culprit from her detection and not just that, but they're aware of it too.

'What a troublesome enemy.' Gwen narrowed her gaze, making her way towards the Ami's territory since that's the closest one to civilians.

Dealing with that first will resolve a lot of her worries.

###

Alice observed the situation from the ally. After setting everything on a timer, she wanted to see how Gwen was going to react.

What she didn't expect was for her to overlay so many buffs on the three gang leaders, thus making them capable of holding off the corruption rather easily.

Just from analysing the energy threads, Alice could tell what the three buffs were.

The first was a significant regeneration boost bordering on healing. Even if they lose an arm, that flame would regenerate a new one for them.

The capacity isn't that high and big wounds cause it to drain faster. But it was still better than most healing skills that she's seen.

The second was a barrier that acts similar to the first ritual that she did.

Not only would it protect them from Eldritch energy but also weaken it in the process.

And the third ritual was one that enhanced their weapons with a small spark of the purifying white flames.

With this woman being able to do this much, her predicted importance within the Church has just skyrocketed.

Even Alice knew that getting involved with her was bad news since there's no doubt that Solaris was going to be looking after her to some extent as well.

Then there was this. . . Abnormal 'Zone' of hers.

The range that it covers, the intensity of the information gathered. . . It's almost as though there was an eye in the sky that observed everything. If they were to fight, Alice was certain of one thing.

Her current Zone was inferior to Gwen's vision.

It's certain now.

No matter what, she had to interact with Gwen even if there were risks involved.

She needed to understand the secrets behind this new vision so that she can prepare against Shiera if they are to fight in the future.

[I'm still against this. But this is probably your best chance at finding out what's happening with this new vision. If you tried to find out while fighting Shiera. . . Yeah, you'll be cut in half before you can even get a rough idea.] Cayla was reluctant.

The risk was high but delaying this would only increase the danger in the future.

[Just. . . be careful since we don't know who's watching her. Solaris definitely did something to protect her since she's too valuable. And the two Apostles out at sea will definitely move if something was to happen to her.] She warned as Alice nodded her head.

The issue now was how she'll 'appear'.

If she was to stay as she is, Gwen will get suspicious. Someone that can't be detected? She'll be the only one that can move freely within this 'Zone', thus making her the prime suspect.

But if she was to drop her stealth completely, Gwen will no doubt focus her attention towards Alice as someone who suddenly 'appeared'.

Once again, suspicious as hell.

She needed to slowly fade in her presence.

Slow enough where it wouldn't draw Gwen's attention. Faint enough where she could justify somehow ignoring it and still strong enough where it can't completely evade detection.

Which meant amplifying her presence if she was to get involved with something but dimming it if she's just a bystander. . .

This level of fine tuning, this level of risk and danger.

Alice had to admit, she was getting a little excited. She held her hand over her chest and felt each beat.

[Yeah, Imma just call you a danger junkie now.] Cayla sighed while Alice shrugged.

Little by little, her presence was reintroduced to the 'Zone' as she made her way towards the beasts that she had released.