

Abyssal A 841

Chapter 841: Art Of Revenge

"You want to know how I do it right?" The Healer grinned.

Alice furrowed her brows before letting out a small sigh.

"Yeah but I'll be honest, it's curiosity at best. Or did you think you were special?" Alice tilted her head.

Between the two of them, the special one here was her.

The Healer paused.

This was the first time he's seen this kind of attitude, especially after knowing who he is.

Or did this girl not care about healing those wounded by the Abyss?

"Perhaps you don't fully understand what I'm saying. But my power is one where I can undo the corruption brought forth by the tides. The irreversible damage, undone by me." The Healer bragged as Alice scratched her hair.

"Look, I'm in a pretty good mood after killing someone I've wanted to kill for quite a long time. If you don't want to be found then shoo. I don't want you here right now. But if you really, really think that curing this damage is impressive, I'm sorry to say but you're like..." Alice furrowed her brows, counting on her fingers.

"The fourth... No fifth person I know who can do this." Alice held up her hand.

"???" The Healer widened his eyes.

Fifth???

Not first, not second. Not even third.

He was the fifth person she knew who could undo this damage?

"Does this." Alice gestured to her nonchalant expression. "Scream the face of someone who's joking about this?"

"That's... Can you tell me how they do it?" The Healer asked, his curiosity burning at full force.

Alice glanced behind her.

Theron was currently holding Bella's body despite his own wounds.

"Certainly not here. And you think I'm just going to give you the solution for free? Dream on."

Flicking her finger, a portal opened up as Alice stepped through.

Scratching his hair, the Healer spun his umbrella and stood up.

It's definitely going to be interesting, especially since she was brave enough to kill a Lord's loved one in front of him.

###

Alice didn't immediately leave the Void. Instead, she took this time to go on a small stroll.

'Hm... It feels surprisingly empty...' She held her hand over her chest.

[Are you regretting it?]

'Not really. Regardless of how I feel, Bella is someone who must die. But... Doing so doesn't bring Lilia back. The regret of not being able to save her remains.' Alice sat down and let out a deep sigh.

She didn't regret what she did.

No matter what happens, no matter what Theron said, she would've killed Bella no matter what.

The only thing that could've changed that fact would be Lilia being alive and well.

But that's impossible.

So Bella's fate was sealed the moment Alice saw her.

'I guess it just feels... Empty? It felt good in that moment. Being able to rip her head off with my own hands... I loved it. But now that it's done... there's nothing more.'

Alice scratched her hair.

Cayla raised an eyebrow.

[Is it your conscience?]

'Hell no. My conscience is telling me that I did nothing wrong. How do I explain it...' Alice scratched her hair.

'Ah! I got it! It's like the feeling of seeing a really good mug of mead. The colour is beautiful, the smell is heavenly. Then I take a sip and it's f*cking tasteless. No flavour at all, simply like water. That's the emptiness I'm feeling.' Alice sat up straight.

'F*ck... I should've kidnapped her and tortured her. I'm missing this satisfaction because I didn't break the b*tch!' Alice cried out in regret as Cayla rolled her eyes.

'Seems like you got a little hasty hahaha.' Alyss laughed.

'I knowww...' Alice sobbed.

But in that situation, her mind was tunnel-visioned on killing Bella.

She should've taken the time to savour her kill.

To enjoy the moment.

The art of revenge shouldn't be sudden. It shouldn't be like a thunderbolt, blinding and over before the heart and mind can truly appreciate the sensation.

It should be a slow, controlled process.

Like a tea ceremony.

A ritual for one, enjoyed in its finest setting.

By letting herself lose to impulse, by letting herself end the hunt too fast, she has robbed herself of perfection.

In that moment, in that instance, she was the artist with two audiences.

Bella and Theron.

She should've presented the kill, dressed it in the finest silk.

But instead, she ended it before it could truly begin.

The shock for Theron was good in the moment...

In the moment.

But the emptiness that follows after leaves a sour, bitter aftertaste.

She didn't let her vengeance marinate properly. So enraptured by the meat presented in the kill, she ended the dinner prematurely.

To enjoy revenge is to be the finest chef. To savour, not as a rabid animal on the dinner table, but as a connoisseur enjoying the process.

To notice the little tremors, the fear, the guilt in her eyes as she begs for life. The stages of grief that flash through her mind, her panicked repentance in desperate hope for survival.

As the chef, she must witness every second of her victim. To taste their fear in the air, to let the adrenaline flow through her body. To let the ecstasy take hold and wet the appetite before her first bite.

And only when her 'meal' has gone through this arduous marination can the meal be considered ready.

This process was the final conversation between the hunter and the hunted. The one who eats and the meal on the table.

Killing is easy.

But revenge... Revenge is an art best served cold.

It is only today that Alice felt it in its entirety.

For her vengeance, she must become an artist. She must torture, strip and carve away at her victim.

Only then, can she place them on the dinner table and enjoy the bountiful feast set out before her.

'No matter. There are more victims available to me. I will take my time and perfect this art.' Alice intertwined her fingers together.

Her eyes turning into arcs as a smile curved on her face. The soft blush on her cheeks like a maiden in love.

Despite Alice being her master, Cayla had to admit that the girl scared at her times.

Times such as now, sitting on a rock in the Void.

Thinking about ways to truly enjoy revenge.

The childish glee, the excitement in her veins, the blush on her face.

A creepy contrast of pure love and absolute carnage that she wanted to enact.

"Ah oops. Almost got ahead of myself there." Alice coughed, hopping off of the rock.

Looking around at the Void, she couldn't help but frown.

It felt... lifeless.

Well the Void always felt lifeless but right now, there wasn't even a Void Beast wandering around.

Just chunks of rock floating aimlessly.

Folding her arms, Alice wondered if this was simply because they were near Extalia or if it was the Void as a whole.

There was a part of her that wanted to see if Feris was alright but at the same time...

'Urg... If Feris get's pissed I don't think I'm leaving unscathed this time.' Alice groaned inwardly.

'Actually, now that I think about it, how do you even contact a Realm Ruler to begin with? The times I've talked to Feris has always been her finding me and not the other way around.'

[Good question. One that I don't have an answer for unfortunately. Like Gods, Realm Rulers tend to go where they please and unless they want you to find them, you'll struggle.] Cayla shrugged.

The fact that Alice had met Feris so many times was already impressive.

'Hmm... well I always have the emergency option of blasting a portion of the Void if needed.' Alice stuck out her tongue.

[. . .]

'... If you want to suicide twinnie at least get me a body first. I'm not dying because you wanted to contact a Realm Ruler by dropping a bomb in her house." Alyss rolled her eyes.

Alice was like a seesaw.

From one extreme to the other. Super sadistic then super dumb.

*Sigh~

'You two always bully me. I need to find someone to take my side. Need a third person in my head.'
Alice pouted.

Alyss face palmed.

'The solution to us bullying you is not for you to get another voice in your head. What if they take our side instead of yours?'

'Ah...'

Cayla rolled her eyes.

###

Standing in front of the mirror, Kaine had a smile on his face.

"Seems like Lord Merias has suffered greatly on his journey. Expecting to find a healer for his wife yet only to see her get killed.

"Perhaps it's the perfect time for the family to give him a little... offer."

His finger traced the marking around his neck and walked away.

When Theron mentioned he was coming over to the city, Kaine was a little worried about what could occur.

But no that a tragedy has occurred, this has become a net positive for the family.

However...

Kaine narrowed his eyes.

He wanted to observe the fight properly but as the fight broke out, a barrier distorted the fight, hiding abilities and appearances.

All he could sense was the clash of energy.

'Was it the Healer?' Kaine furrowed his brows.

He had proven himself to be elusive, evading the patrols with ease.

Since he wanted to make an offer to Theron in the first place, perhaps it wouldn't be bad to ask for some reinforcement from the family.

They would also be useful for capturing the girl who managed to wound Theron to that extent.

Chapter 842: Offer For The Healer

"I'm sorry do I know you? Why are you sitting at my table first thing in the morning?" Alice asked with a twitching smile.

Right now, she was in disguise.

Long blue hair tied into twin pig tails that reached her calves. A set of blue eyes and round glasses.

She wore a large red poncho reaching down to her thighs, a pair of shorts and tights and long boots.

Rest next to the table was a silver rapier with a crystal attached to the pommel.

However, despite the disguise, despite the change in her voice and habits, the Healer sat opposite her with a smile.

"Ah so cruel. Didn't we just meet yesterday?" The Healer chuckled, placing his umbrella down.

"And I don't believe that's close enough for you to sit in front of me. What do you even want?" Alice pulled a face of disgust while eating her breakfast.

"You know what I want. I just want to hear a little about how those you know deal with the corrupted tides. How they reverse the damages. In return, I'll tell you how I do it. That's a fair deal, is it not?" He offered but Alice shook her head.

"You want four solutions for your third rate resolution? Can you even heal those who have been affected for a long time?" Alice rolled her eyes.

The Healer scratched his cheek before freezing.

"Wait... are you saying the other four can do it? Even with patients who have been affected for years?" The Healer widened his eyes, leaning towards Alice.

Glancing at the Healer while chewing her food, Alice nodded her head.

". . ." The Healer sat back down.

There are people who could undo the damage done over the years...

"Pft... hahahahaha." The Healer began to laugh, covering his eyes with his hand.

Alice frowned. She was about to say something when she saw tears streaming down his cheeks.

"Years... They could've reversed the damage by years..." He muttered.

"Are you... okay?" Alice furrowed her brows. With the Healer's reaction, they were attracting quite a bit of attention from their surroundings.

"Yeah, I am. Just regretful I only found this out now." He smiled bitterly.

"Sounds like you had someone afflicted by abyssal powers." Alice finished her food and took a sip of milk.

"That I did... My little brother." The Healer looked at the table with sadness in his eyes.

"What do you think will happen if the mother drinks Abyss Blood while the baby is in the womb?" He asked, turning his gaze to Alice.

"Shouldn't it only affect the mother?" Alice raised an eyebrow.

"It's a coin flip. Depending on the time of consumption, whether early in the pregnancy or late, the chances can change. My... Mother was about to die when she was pregnant with my brother. She had two options laid out in front of her.

"She drinks the blood and survives. Meanwhile, there is a chance that my brother will be mutated upon birth. Or... She doesn't drink and both of them die."

He was about to order a drink when Alice tossed something over.

Catching it, he was surprised to see good quality mead from the best tavern in this city.

"You looked like you needed a drink." Alice shrugged.

Revealing a smile, he thanked Alice before taking a sip.

"Naturally, my mother chose to drink and when my brother was born... He was almost killed by the doctors in fear.

"A beast with no face, a single split across for a mouth. Arms longer than normal with extra parts that looked like a wing. Protruding spine into a small tail. Not quite beast yet not quite human. A consequence of drinking beast blood during pregnancy." He took a deep breath and sighed.

"But my mother loved him regardless. She was sorry for what she had done to him and gave him as much love as she could. Aside from appearances, he was a normal kid you know?

"He spoke like us, laughed like us. He had no eyes but he could see through a different sense. He was my little brother." The healer clenched his fist, finishing his drink in one go.

"But you know how people are. They judge by appearances, fearful of what he may be. Most of the villagers knew what was going on. They knew that my brother was like the rest of them, only mutated due to the blood that was used to keep my mother alive.

"Yet knowing and accepting what he looked like was difficult. And... the same didn't apply to visitors who knew nothing. My brother had saved a pair of Hunters when he was playing in the woods. Despite bringing them out from the woods, when the pair woke up, they killed him out of fear."

The Healer paused. He looked at Alice with seriousness.

"Out of the four people that you know, would any of them have been able to undo the mutation placed onto my brother's body? Would their power be enough for him to live a life of a normal person instead of being killed, mistaken for a beast?"

Alice crossed her legs.

Mutation during pregnancy... that was a tough one.

For Arwen, that was a case of a mutation occurring earlier in her life rather than before being born.

Undoing it was simply a case of revoking the contract.

But in the case of this guy's brother... Alice wasn't sure.

She wasn't confident that she'll be able to solve it. Especially he's not the one who made the contract to begin with when drinking the blood.

Simply a victim of the circumstances.

There was no 'original form' to return to as that was his base state.

And out of everyone whom she knew could possibly resolve this issue, there is only one.

The Will of the Abyss.

Knowing his control over the Abyss as well as being the librarian of the abyssal library of contracts, he is probably the only one who can undo the mutation happening at birth.

"One of them might be able to. But it's the first time I'm hearing a case of mutation happening at birth so I'm not sure. Depending on the... situation. There might be two people who can." Alice replied truthfully.

Hearing this, the healer leaned back.

He was lost in thought, thinking of what could've been.

A normal life for his brother...

"I embarked on my quest to find a perfect cure because I didn't want more to end up like him. Of course, while a part of it is my own good will, the main purpose is to experiment and find the solution.

"Can... you tell me where I can meet the people you speak of? Perhaps if I meet them, I'll be able to form the perfect solution I've been pursuing."

Alice tapped her finger on the table.

"Sorry I can't. The fact that you managed to undo the corruption, even if there is a restriction is impressive enough as it is. Any more than that and it's in the realm of the divine." Alice shook her head.

"Divine..." The healer frowned.

But after a brief pause, he widened his eyes.

"You know about him don't you?"

"Know about who?" Alice creased her brows.

"The Will of the Abyss."

"!!!" Alice was now fully focused. Her eyes widened in slight surprise, not expecting to hear the Will come out of the mouth of someone uninvolved.

"When I performed my first transfer, I found myself in a realm of white. Pure, untainted. And a single featureless person clapping his hands in applause. He didn't speak much, only congratulating me for my feat." He explained while Alice listened intently.

"I don't remember much about our talks afterwards, just that I spoke to him about something. And... that I should call him the Will of the Abyss.

"Is he the person you're talking about? Someone who can undo the corruption?" He asked as Alice nodded her head.

"Yes he is. You can think of him as someone similar to a God like Solaris, Enris and Lumiria. Only stronger I suppose." Alice nodded.

She thought there would be more clues to his actions but that didn't seem to be the case.

Instead, the Will visited the healer simply because he managed to crack the boundary and undo the corruption using his own methods.

"How long ago did you meet him?"

"Hard to say, it's been a while after all. But if I had to guess... I think about 5 or so years ago?" The healer scratched his chin.

"Five years..."

If it was that long ago, then Alice doubted he has anything to do with what's going on currently.

"Are you attached to this city or the places around here?" She asked.

She wanted to figure out if there was a special reason he was operating in this place.

"Not really. There are just more subjects for me to test things on since accidents happen all the time. It's also easier to find targets that match the requirements." He shrugged.

Alice smiled.

If he had no attachment, then it was perfect.

A man who managed to get the appreciation of the Will.

Someone who managed to figure out something that the Zenia's have struggled with even after having access to her blood.

Such a talent shouldn't be given up so easily.

"You want to figure out a solution right? To the corruption." Alice asked as the man nodded.

"Alice Agnelia. That's my name. And why don't you and I form a contract?" Alice grinned, offering an opportunity to the Healer.

Chapter 843: Elias

"Alice Agnelia. That's my name. And why don't you and I form a contract?" Alice held out her hand with a smile.

"A contract?" The Healer furrowed his brows.

Lots of families and Hunters who've met him have offered the same.

Yet he could tell Alice wasn't doing so because she needed his help.

Rather, it was a case of wanting him to be on her side. If he agrees, she would be happy. But she wouldn't die if he didn't.

That nonchalance, he hadn't seen it in others.

"Yep. You help me, I help you. You see, I'm in search of a good combat medic. Someone who can reliably heal my allies during battle. If you are able to reverse the corruption, I don't doubt your healing capabilities.

"Though being able to heal in combat and outside of it is a different matter entirely. But I'm sure there are workarounds for that." Alice smiled confidently.

Whatever he can't do during combat, she'll supplement it with an artifact when she opens her second Resonance. That way, he'll gain the power of Sigils that he didn't have before.

"And I'm guessing in return, you'll help me find the perfect solution?" He furrowed his brows.

"Yep. While I can't contact the Will, the other people I know should be able to help to some extent with your assistance. I can't say much for now but just know that they're very capable." Alice chuckled.

Of course, one of the people she mentioned was herself. With his knowledge and her control, undoing mutations should get much easier.

The only issue with this would be how much she tells him. Even if he was on their side, telling him too much would put him in danger.

She may be crazy, but she knew the insanity of her enemies. It's not something ordinary people can handle.

Thus, even if she gets his help, so long as he's ignorant of the dangers and leave before things got crazy, it should be relatively safe.

She needed someone of his expertise.

The Healer frowned.

"Let's make this a short contract. I will help you for a short time and vice versa." He suggested.

His gut was telling him that he shouldn't accept. But this opportunity was too good to give up, especially if he can find the perfect solution he's been pursuing.

Despite his experiments, his progress has been stunted as of late. Thus this might be the breakthrough he was looking for.

"I agree. I won't ask you for more than what you're willing to tell me, and I hope the same goes for you." Alice nodded, happy he was of the same mindset.

While she may not have gotten the favor of a nine Sigil Lord, getting a contract with the Healer was a worthy trade off in Alice's eyes.

###

Kaine walked towards the man sitting on the ground, still holding the headless body of his wife.

Theron's hair was rough and he had dark circles under his eyes. Exhaustion and fatigue was evident on his face.

"What are you here for..." Theron muttered, refusing to turn around.

"I'm sorry for your loss." Kaine spoke words of apology yet a smile was worn on his face.

"If that's all you're here to say then please leave. Allow me to mourn." Theron sighed.

But Kaine didn't leave.

His footsteps continued to echo out as he stood next to Theron.

"There is... an opportunity." Kaine held his hands behind his back.

Theron frowned.

"For me?"

"Yes. For you. And..." He trailed off. "For her." He gestured towards Bella's lifeless corpse.

Theron finally turned to Kaine, his brows creased in displeasure.

"What are you trying to say?" He demanded an answer.

The feeling of losing Bella was still fresh and he had no patience for riddles at this point.

"What I'm trying to say... Is that the family can bring her back." Kaine rubbed his neck before reaching into his inner pocket.

He pulled out a single emblem, the icon of the Zenia family.

"Are you trying to insult me?" Theron gritted his teeth. "How many do you think I've watched walk down the path of madness for resurrection. For the dead to come back to life?"

"Lost in my grief I may be, but I am not unaware of people trying to make use of this vulnerability of mine."

Flicking his wrist, Theron summoned a blade and aimed it at Kaine's neck.

"So leave." He demanded yet Kaine only moved the blade aside with his finger.

"Oh I'm aware Lord Merias but I promise thee, this offer of resurrection is not false. We indeed have a method of resurrecting your wife. However... It wouldn't be the Bella you know. It'll be her from a... different time." Kaine clarified slightly.

"A different time?...!!!" Widening his eyes, Theron realized what he was hinting at.

"The Inverted World..."

"Perceptive as always Lord Merias. You see, the family has recently formed an alliance with a very talented individual. Someone who has shown great mastery over the powers of the Abyss and the properties of blood. Someone who showed us the potential hidden within these pockets of memory." Kaine praised with a laugh.

"And I believe that should you help us, we will be able to make use of this research to bring back a younger Bella. Before her corruption took hold."

Theron faltered. His sword was still out but Kaine could see the hesitation in his eyes.

Withdrawing his blade, Theron glanced down at Bella.

This life of his... he owed her. In her time of need, he couldn't stop Alice.

"... What's the price?" Theron asked.

He refused to believe that the family would offer him a one sided exchange. Not when it's clear that they desire something from him.

Kaine grinned.

"We simply hope that Lord Merias will be... able to assist us in a few matters. Matters that may require your expertise. The recovery of certain individuals, the killing of others. And possibly even your blood for research purposes."

Closing his eyes, Theron contemplated.

He recalled the times he drank with Allura and Gin, their friendship that fractured due to his wife.

How Gin warned him later...

Since their friendship has already fractured, then so be it. He doubted things can go back to the way they were before.

"Alright." Theron stood up, picking up Bella's corpse along with her head.

This life that he owed her... He'll give it back.

"I presume you do not require a funeral for your wife. After all, she will be rejoining the world of the living soon." Kaine gestured for Theron to follow him.

"Unless you have a need for her body, I would like to bury her."

"Hmm... Indeed. For a complete resurrection, having a physical body available to her would be ideal." Kaine scratched his chin.

A soul without a compatible body would die out eventually.

"I doubt the other families will simply sit by as the Zenia's lay claim to an Inverted World. So where did you even find one?" Theron frowned.

The creation of an Inverted World required certain events to unfold. Requirements that must be met and a Lord who's willing to self destruct.

Forcing a Lord to self destruct in the wild that matched the requirements was hard to plan. Not impossible, but the movements will naturally attract the gaze of others.

Not to mention, if one wanted to create one artificially, they must first find a Lord willing to give up their life.

"Our collaborator is a man of many talents. One of which includes introducing Lord level beings who can artificially create the Inverted World."

Hearing this, Theron glanced up at the sky and took a deep breath.

'Sorry Allura, sorry Gin.'

He has made his decision. If the Zenia family needs his power, then he is willing to provide.

###

Alice drafted a quick Law of Agreement for the Healer. One that binds them both and ensures a cooperation with no deceit.

After reading through it carefully, he accepted the contract and a tether formed between them.

"I feel like the order is a little wrong but allow me to introduce myself. Elias Solen. Most of my Sigils are focused on speeding up natural and artificial recovery. I only have one offensive Sigil that allows me to invert my healing into damage." Elias introduced with a smile.

"Hou? Must've been difficult for you to complete hunts with such a skill set. Even if you got your damaging Sigil early, the output would need time to ramp up." Alice folded her arms.

"Unfortunately that is the case. I had to make do with tools to complete my hunts. A rather... expensive period of my life." Elias laughed.

Now that a contract had been formed, a weight was lifted off his shoulders.

One step closer to his goal.

One step closer to achieving the perfect solution to this corruption.

"I can imagine. Now as much as I would like for us to chat, it's probably best to skip town for now and chat on the way." Alice suggested.

"Makes sense. Especially considering what you did to... Yeah." Elias scratched his chin, remembering the sight of Alice brutally tearing off Bella's head.

"Yep. And I do NOT want to stick around for someone who can access oblivion to lose his sh*t." Alice nodded, standing up while Elias followed after her.

"So where do you plan on going? I certainly hope it's not an aimless journey."

Thought... the idea wasn't too bad since it'll mean more time for his research.

In response, Alice simply pointed her finger up.

"We're going to the surface."

Chapter 844 Young Caera

"Hmm... Experiment four. Lord slain and the conditions were fulfilled. Tethering to the realm is successful, access to the library of memory complete. Selen dear, the rest is up to you~" Caera smiled as tendrils slowly retracted back into her shadow.

In front of them, the corpse of a Lord level beast was suspended in the air.

A one eyed beast with a large exposed mouth. An uncanny human like grin and a muscular body crafted from countless tendrils.

And yet, the chest cavity was pried open and the beast forced to self detonate against its will.

Selen had a deep frown on her face. No matter how many time she sees Caera fight, the chill never disappeared.

It was a complete one sided annihilation with the beast having no chance to fight back.

Looking at the glass like orb hovering in the cavity, Selen took a deep breath and sighed.

Clasping her hands together, she slammed her palms against the ground and activated a ritual.

***RUMBLE!!!**

Clock like patterns manifested in the air with Miralith's power burned at full throttle.

With this being the fourth attempt, Selen had gotten used to it a little.

The first attempt was the most shocking.

It was a sudden flood of history flashing through her mind. Battles from different eras, calamities untold of in history. The battle between Lords, the mundane life of lovers.

Countless 'scenarios' swapping in an out and she had to choose one for the Inverted World to latch onto.

Unfortunately, she was completely unprepared and the first attempt went to waste.

The second was a struggle as well. Even though she was prepared, the scenery flashed by so quickly it was hard for her to time it accurately.

Not to mention the fact that she didn't know the exact time that Caera wanted.

During the third attempt, Selen had some extra help from Caera to figure out the exact moment in history.

It was still a failure but at least she knew what to aim for.

And now, the fourth and hopefully final attempt.

Selen didn't want to be away from the main camp for too long.

Linking herself to the Inverted World, Selen felt as though her soul was extracted from her body. A strange sensation as she was plunged into the spiralling corridors of time.

Finding the right time was not difficult. It's all about understanding the sensation of what she's trying to aim for.

A period of time where Abyssal energy was at its highest. When the realm felt full of life and gentle rather than the oppressive miasma filled hellhole it is today.

Caera placed her hand on Selen's shoulder, stabilizing her condition so that she could expand her search.

She had to admit that her hopes were low. She thought they would've needed to kill quite a few Lords before finding the correct scenario.

Yet... Selen was getting close after just four attempts.

Selen didn't feel Caera's hand. Right now, she was fully immersed in the sensation of falling.

Vertigo attacked her mind while giant corridors of information narrowly missed her body.

An infinite maze of ever winding paths and rooms.

Adjusting her body in mid air, Selen shielded her face and swept her gaze across the strange landscape.

Her surroundings kept adjusting, almost as if trying to keep her away from what she wants to find.

One corridor threatened to swallow her whole but she managed to evade at the last second.

Snapping her finger, Selen began to adjust the 'time' around her.

To increase her speed when needed and decrease it when she wanted to observe where she was going.

Through the gaps, she saw certain details of history.

Some recent, some ancient.

She saw a hint of her battle against the beasts in the capital. When she was trying to fend off the hybrids from destroying everything.

She saw the calamity out at sea, the rolling waves as a Lord faced a veiled being of corruption.

The golden sword that pierced the mountains, the spark of light that erased a dragon.

Corrupted chains binding and sealing beasts.

Then Selen felt it. The sensation of the Abyss at its peak.

Without hesitation, she lunged towards the room, forcefully establishing a tether between the two and anchoring the Inverted World.

*RUMBLE!!!

The corpse of the Lord level beast was consumed. The surroundings absorbed into the glass like orb as Caera quickly dragged Selen away from the area.

Retreating away from the newly formed and stabilized Inverted World, Caera raised her eyebrow in pleasant surprise.

“Ohya? I didn’t think you actually had it in you.” Caera praised while Selen felt like she was about to hurl.

“What do you even mean by that... Urg... But this one is a bit strange. It’s... Well... incomplete.” Selen frowned.

In the previous attempts, she could feel what a ‘complete’ memory felt like. The established history and the people involved.

But this one was missing certain aspects. Even though the Abyss felt alive, it’s as though the heart and core was missing.

Something else filled the void temporarily, stabilising the realm.

“Is that so? Well~ I’m not surprised. A certain someone is probably messing around with the Inverted World. There’s also the case of dear successor inheriting the heart of the Abyss so that missing aspect is probably my dearly departed queen.” Caera smiled, placing Selen on the ground.

“You may return now. I don’t think you require me to help you back now do you?” Caera glanced back as Selen shook her head.

“But what about capturing the beast?” Selen frowned.

“I’ll capture that myself later don’t worry.” Caera reassured as she snapped her finger.

She created a barrier around the orb, concealing it from the world around them before pricking her finger once.

Allowing a single drop of blood to fall, darkness began to spread.

Seeing that Caera was now immersed in her own experiments, Selen left the area.

Making her way back was rather easy, especially since she can just hide herself from the perception of others.

###

Opening her eyes, Caera found herself standing in the middle of a nostalgic and familiar city.

Her smile faltered for a moment, her throat tightened but it soon faded.

Ayr... Beautiful as ever. A bastion of hope within her memory of the best times of her life.

Taking a deep breath, she listened to the conversations around her.

The voices that she had missed so dearly...

But this was not the time to enjoy herself.

She was here for one reason, to access her lab so that she can get revenge against Nyer.

Walking through the familiar streets, Caera saw a tavern and chuckled softly.

'Dear successor had used the favour the queen owed her to research the mead. But with how the North is right now, I doubt the Queen can fulfil that promise.'

Contemplating the decision for a moment, Caera decided to visit the tavern.

To buy a souvenir for the dear successor.

"Oh! Department head! How come you're here during the break?" A young voice called out to Caera as she froze in her steps.

Turning over, she saw an old face. The face of a friend and someone who worked under her.

"Wahaha~ I was thinking of something and decided to go on a little walk. I might stay cooped up in the lab all the time but I still take a walk every now and then." Caera closed her eyes and acted in a cheerful manner.

The way she was in the past.

Unrestrained, full of laughs and ideas. The burning curiosity to find out every secret the world had to offer.

The desire to create contraptions for a better future.

"Did you drink something weird? Ah! Before I forget, Johan wanted to talk to you about raising the budget for the next experiment." The colleague laughed.

While Caera looks a little different to normal, it was a rather common occurrence knowing what she's like.

"Ehh~ A bigger budget? You'll have to ask Kaden." Caera stuck out her tongue.

Walking over to the counter, Caera placed an order for as much Ayrian mead as she could and stored it in a separate pouch. A gift for Alice.

Waving goodbye to the friend, Caera made her way to the research department.

She turned her head towards the highest point in Ayr.

Where the queen should be.

Instead, there was simply a large bundle of energy acting as the queen.

Velouria was not there.

It wasn't just Velouria either. Cayla and... Nyer wasn't around either.

As Selen mentioned, an incomplete memory.

Nyer must've retrieved the rest of his soul that he gave to the Abyss through contracts and did the same with Cayla.

Alice only possessed half of her while Nyer had the other half.

Arriving at the lab, Caera looked up at her old home. Nostalgia filled her chest as she wrapped her fingers around the door handle.

A small smile appeared on her face as she lifted the door and placed it on the side.

The door to the research department was never fixed since it would just break after a while.

Inside, she sensed only a single person immersed in her experiments.

How strange it is to see the past reflection of herself.

*BANG!!!

An explosion occurred upstairs, dark smoke filled the room and Caera chuckled.

“Ah jeez, I missed this.” She mumbled, walking up while waving the smoke away.

“Iya~ *Cough cough* A visitor, give me a moment~ Just sit wherever you want, I’ll be there with you in a second.” A young girl shouted through the smoke.

Her silhouette rushing over to open the windows.

She didn’t even turn to look at Caera.

Sitting down on the one legged sofa with the rest being replaced by books and machinery, Caera sat with her legs crossed.

And when her younger self finally turned, she gave a small wave.

Young Caera froze. She saw a reflection of herself, her future self.

Immediately, her brows creased and a deep frown appeared on her face.

“You look tired.” Young Caera sat opposite her future self with a gaze of pity.

Caera froze, her smile faltered and bitterness appeared on her face.

*Sigh...

"Yeah... I am."

Chapter 845 Facing One's Past Self

"Yeah... I am." Caera smiled bitterly, leaning back in her seat.

She knew how perceptive her younger self was. Lying here would be a pointless hassle.

"What happened?" Young Caera asked with a frown. She had already walked to the counter and began brewing a tea for the two of them.

"A lot happened. But you're handling this a lot better than I thought. Usually when Inverted World reflections see the original, they lose their minds. And I thought I would've needed to deal with you." Caera glanced towards her younger self who simply shrugged.

"Uwahh~ I can't believe I'm a memory. Boohoo~ Let me sabotage my future self who clearly came here for a reason~ Uwahh~" Young Caera mocked before placing a cup of tea on the table. "Is that what you expected?"

"Perhaps. Though I can't say I'm not disappointed. I am rather curious as to whether or not my younger self would change a lot after all." Caera chuckled.

"So why did you come here? With what I know about the Inverted World, trying to find a specific time isn't easy. So the fact that you don't seem surprised means you managed to succeed and find this time period. What do you want from this past? And I doubt it's nostalgia."

Seeing her younger self go straight to the point, Caera smiled and finished her tea.

“It’s a little hard to believe. So you can either lend me the lab and help without knowing anything. Or you can know what happens and... well I hope you recover soon since I’d rather have your help.” She offered.

“Who do you think we are?” Young Caera frowned.

She would never help without knowing what happened.

The events to make her future self so... exhausted, she wanted to know.

“Then this’ll be a long story. You might want to get yourself a snack.”

###

“You’re... joking... Right?” Young Caera asked with a deep frown. Her voice was strained.

But seeing Caera’s expression, she didn’t need an answer.

She stood up but her legs were unsteady like a newborn calf.

Opening her mouth, she wanted to say something but no words came out.

“I’ll help myself to your lab for a bit. Help me when you can.” Caera made a decision.

Her younger self needed a moment to digest what she had just told her.

How Ayr fell, how their friends died. How Nyer betrayed them all and what he plans to do.

Furrowing her brows, Young Caera sighed and nodded her head.

“If anyone asks, just say it’s an experiment.”

Without turning around, she stepped towards the lab.

Nostalgia and muscle memory kicked in as memories flooded her mind.

The way the equipment was placed, her secret snack compartments untouched. Research notes pinned on the walls and folded in drawers.

And the detail in the notes... Full of ambition, naivety and optimism. Compared to the notes she makes now, it’s like day and night.

Her gaze softened, her fingers ran along the row of labelled vials.

Then she noticed an old habit.

She would draw mini animals next to her notes that only she knew the meaning of.

After all these years, she had gotten rid of this habit. But seeing it again...

“Cute, I wonder if I can still draw them...” She chuckled.

She knew where everything was and allowed muscle memory to take over.

Opening draws for gloves, tools and certain ingredients that she needs.

She walked over to the small cabinet and opened it. Reaching in, she pulled out a large white lab coat.

A little smaller than what she had hoped but it's to be expected.

Aside from the e coat, there was also a notebook hung on the back of the cabinet door.

Flipping through the pages, she saw questions and theories that her younger self had written down.

Questions that she'll find the answers to in the next few months.

Caera was tempted by the idea of adding the answers. But despite this being a memory, she didn't want to rob her younger self of the joy she felt when finding out the answer.

"Do you need me to ask the others to get anything from the market?" Young Caera asked as Caera glanced back in surprise.

"Are you sure you don't need more time?"

"Do you think you have the luxury of me taking my time? The world is on fire and you can't rest, can you? Thus by extension, I can't rest either." Young Caera folded her arms while leaning against the wall.

"Fair point. Although... I don't really care if the world is on fire. This is the biggest difference between me and you. You still care about the world since it's still around. I don't care because my home is nothing but ash." Caera swung the lab coat around and wore it with familiarity.

"All I care about is putting the b*stard who took everything from me into the grave. Even if I have to sell my soul." Caera glanced back as her shadow began to writhe.

Young Caera's brows twitched.

Despite being the same person, it was rather uncanny to see this level of hatred in herself. This level of insanity.

Was this the person she'll eventually become? Was there no other choice?

Though considering the events...

Young Caera sighed.

So be it.

Giving her body a stretch, she helped with the set up.

###

*Tap... Tap... Tap...

A young man could be seen tapping his fingers against the table.

There was a small indentation being created with each repeated tap.

Veins bulged on his forehead and neck as he was clearly suppressing his rage.

He rested his cheek on his fist while listening to a report.

Though his mind was elsewhere.

"My Lord?" The attendant asked after Caelan didn't respond for a while.

"Hm? Right sorry. Please repeat what you just said." Caelan shook his head.

“We’ve received reports that the Sun Church has completely given up the border around the east. A faction within is starting to form, one that is supporting the newly risen dawn despite the church denying these theories.

“The Moon has made no movements and the Eclipse is the same as ever. Though there has been reports of Deva being spotted with wounds that were struggling to heal, clearly fleeing from danger.”

Caelan rubbed his chin in amusement.

Deva had taken so much care keeping herself hidden yet the moment a single hint was given, Kaden latched on like a rabid beast.

Though this report could also be a diversion. Deva sacrificing something to throw Kaden off her tail.

“Pay special attention to the Deva situation for now.” He ordered as the Attendant made a note.

“Understood. Next, we have reports from the south. There seems to be a large commotion by a Port City. The Slayer, Theron Merias, took his wife to be cured only to lose her in an ambush of sorts. Rumours are circulating on who is strong enough to kill the wife of The Slayer but no candidates have been named yet.

“Deeper in the Abyss, it seems the layers are having strange mutations with the boundary around Terminus loosening. The unsealing of the Old Lords have slowed to a halt. Whoever was undoing the seals must’ve hit a snag in their operation.

“Additionally, it seems like Lord Level beasts are being hunted down en masse, including Lord level Hunters. There’s been losses from the east and freelance hunters.”

“Mark this one down as Nyer.” Caelan ordered as the Attendant set the report off to the side.

“The situation in the north has improved to some degree but has yet to properly stabilize. Notable reports include the injury of the Apostle of Protection as well as seemingly immortal beast human

hybrids. Rumours passed through word of mouth but mostly dismissed as crazy talk. The Queen and her retainers have yet to be found.”

“Again, mark it down as Nyer. As for the beasts, mark that one down as Zenia. Have some people investigate the connection between the two, it’s likely that Nyer and Zenia have allied together.”

Once again, the Attendant made the necessary adjustments.

“Final report regarding the surface and the Abyss. Chaos is brewing in Extalia but our informants have not been able to dig out much. Several spies have died and there’s been a strange flow of energy in the land. But most clues are pointing towards the Zenia family along with the Royal family.”

Caelan furrowed his brows.

If that was all they could find despite the work they’ve put in then the enemy was taking extra care with their plans.

‘Nyer’s becoming more active. Is his experiments coming to an end?’ Caelan frowned.

“Allocate an extra 10% of manpower to Extalia. Reduce the priority of the east for now.”

Scribbling everything down, the Attendant closed her report.

“Final report. The Void has shown significant changes. The realm seem to be losing vitality as several Void Beasts are struggling to survive. We’ve searched the places you’ve mentioned but the situation is the same. Nothing notable, only an overall change.”

Caelan paused before tapping his finger again.

If the Void was losing vitality then Feris wasn’t doing too well.

Either she recovers... or a new Realm Ruler will need to be found before the bridge collapses.

Once that happens, the moment anyone was to try and access the Void, they would be in for a rude awakening.

But trying to help Feris recover was...

Caelan leaned back and sighed.

"Note that one down as high priority as well. Keep an eye out for new information but don't make any major movements in the Void." Caelan ordered.

With all the reports done, the Attendant was about to leave when Caelan called out to her.

"Let Valentine know that he'll need to pick up a bit of work. I'll be busy for a little while."

"Understood my Lord. What reason should I give him?" She asked.

"I'm going to kill someone." Caelan 'smiled'.

The Attendant raised an eyebrow before nodding.

There was only one reason for Caelan to act like this.

Rosalyn.

Chapter 846 - Extalia Royal Family

Tilting her head back, Alice glanced up at the giant pillar leading up far beyond what the eyes could see.

The gateway leading up to the surface, a tunnel of raw energy stabilized by the natural laws and formation of energy around this place. Even if a Lord tried to break it, the gateway will not falter.

While most people would simply see an unassuming pillar, Alice saw the spiral of energy leading up, breaching the border between realms.

In her eyes, the pillar looked as though it was a convergence of multiple colours.

Absolutely beautiful.

There would be occasional pulses of energy shooting up, each representing a new group exiting or entering the Abyss.

Enjoying the view, Alice took a deep breath and glanced down at the queue forming towards the exit.

"I don't suppose the queue is supposed to be this long?" Alice asked with a chuckle.

She was still keeping the disguise she had on earlier.

With them now entering Zenia territory, it's best for her to keep her identity hidden.

"They're just desperate to leave the Abyss after the commotion 'someone' caused." Elias replied, lifting his umbrella slightly to get a better view.

"They fear that they could be next since not even a Lord is safe from attacks."

Alice sighed, inching forward with the queue.

If she was being honest, the repercussions of her attack wasn't as bad as she had initially anticipated.

She thought Theron would be looking to kill her in revenge. Instead, according to the rumours, he didn't move from his spot until disappearing with his wife's corpse.

Of course, Alice could've tried to verify it using her Vision but doing so would expose herself and she didn't want that. All she could rely on was the rumours floating around the place.

"Though the ones desperate to enter the Abyss despite the rumours circulating right now are those who know what's happening on the surface." Elias narrowed his eyes.

Despite the large number of people leaving, just as many people were entering through the same passage if not more.

They hold faces of fear, seeking to escape from Extalia as soon as possible.

"Oh? Sounds like you know what's going on." Alice raised an eyebrow.

"Somewhat. As a wandering healer, you get to hear things here and there. Rumours and word by mouth. How familiar are you with Extalia?"

"Hmm... Most of my knowledge is probably outdated. I only really know a few bits and bobs from 10 years or so ago." Alice shook her head.

Arguably, before going to Extalia, she should've gathered some information first.

"Then you probably don't know that most of the noble houses have been hollowed out." Elias sighed, shaking his head.

"Huh? Hollowed out?"

“Mnm. The noble houses have been slowly taken over. Some with alliances, some through marriage. There were apparently a few that noticed what’s going on but couldn’t stop it. Right now, they’ve converted more than 70% of the noble houses into a single faction.

“And they say at the top of this faction is the Zenia family.”

Hearing this, Alice furrowed her brows.

While the Zenia have always been influential, they mostly kept themselves to the Abyss Blood trade.

Yet just from this rumour, it’s clear that they’ve expanded their reach and showed their true face.

“What did the Royal family do? I doubt they’ll simply sit by and do nothing while the Zenia family usurps their power.”

“Do I look like an info broker to you? I’m a healer not a scout.” Elias rolled his eyes.

“Just tell me what you know. I’ll do some scouting later.”

“Tch. There’s two unreliable rumours and this is rather old.” Elias clicked his tongue. “A few say the Royal family knew this and wanted to stop them. A few say they didn’t and the Zenia took them by surprise. Either way, it seems like they’ve taken a stance of aggression for now.

“Both sides have some small scuffles and disagreements here and there but nothing major.”

Alice folded her arms.

The Royal family in Extalia was a little unique. They weren’t royal by name or combat ability. They are Royal by blood.

Perhaps it was a contract made in the past but the Royal family have influence over the World Tree placed in the underbelly of the palace.

A tree that holds a special meaning to elves that reside in Extalia with roots that stretch across the continent.

Elves are a group of people with elongated ears and powers that humans don't have.

Powers that Alice was unsure of considering the information she heard back then wasn't in detail, only that they were different.

A few of the scholars even wanted to open one up and experiment but finding wandering elves were difficult.

They served as the guardians of the Royal family, each one was accounted for and unless there was a special circumstance, one would rarely find one out in the wild.

And even if you do, it's hard to tell if the elongated ears are a result of their bloodline or Abyss Blood.

If it's the latter, then it's simply wasted effort.

However, it's proven that the elves have significantly increased combat capabilities compared to normal people. Many of them even being rumoured to be blessed by the Abyss as the Royal family would always have one or two Elven Abyss Lords following them.

Sometimes it wasn't the same elves either.

'Based on the rumours that Elias has heard, it seems like Extalia is split into two sides right now. The Royals and the Nobles headed by the Zenia.' Alyss folded her arms with a frown.

'Yeah. Seems like if we want to dip our hands into this, we'll have to side with the Royals. I'm just worried what the Zenia's might be doing in terms of experiments.' Alice sighed. 'Since the Noble families are under their control now, finding subjects for their hybrid experiment should be much easier.'

[I wouldn't be so certain. They're lacking your blood after all. And from what we learned before, they're running out fast. They can only make a few effective hybrids and a lot of them have already been killed in combat.] Cayla reminded.

During the battle in the north, they managed to make a rather large dent in the Zenia family reserved. Or so they hoped considering the power of those Hybrids.

'They missed out on capturing me in the east so I think they're on guard now. They won't deploy Hybrids for no reason when they have a limited stock.'

[True. But... I think they're trying to recreate your blood to some extent. Remember the three hybrids you fought? All three of them working together was required to emulate your power to some degree. That can't be a coincidence.] Cayla creased her brows.

'So are you suggesting they're isolating parts of my power based on reports?' Alice theorised.

If that was the case, then the battles she's had with the Zenia family has only increased the rate of their research.

[Maybe. It's not certain though. They have years of experimental data and new data that you've shown them. Perhaps their thought process is to take things a step at a time rather than recreate it as a whole.

[Even Nyer seemed to have a relatively hands off experience when it came to creating you. Especially considering the fate of the previous experiments. You are a one of one. There hasn't been a second result that's performed on the same level as you.] Cayla reminded.

'There's also the case of Yvael. Honestly I don't know if I should praise the Zenia family for trying something that took two freaks of nature to accomplish.' Alice scratched her hair.

[Either way, let's focus on gathering information once we reach the surface. Making moves without knowing anything is the worst thing we can do right now.]

'Agreed.' Alice nodded.

After an hour or so of queuing, they finally reached the front of the queue and took the gateway towards the surface.

###

"Hm?" Nyer's movement faltered for a second while extracting a small blood sample from the girl in front of him.

"Hey! That hurt!" She flinched with a frown, holding back the urge to kick him.

Doing so many make the pain worse.

"Sorry, I was surprised by something." He apologized, removing the needle from her arm.

Putting the blood onto a small dish, he examined the changes within the girl's body.

"What did you get surprised by? If it surprised you, it must be something pretty major." She mused, hopping off the table and jumping onto Nyer's back.

"Somewhat." Nyer replied while the girl swung herself in a circle around his arm.

"Your sister is visiting Extalia."

"Wait really!?" The girl widened her eyes in surprise.

She jumped onto his head and leaned down, blocking his view.

Looking at the upside down girl, Nyer nodded.

“Yes, she’s just entered now. I’m surprised that she has since I didn’t think the time would come so soon.”

“Oh! Let’s go see her!” She suggested with sparkles in her eyes.

“We can’t do that. Not yet.”

“Ehhhhh... Why not! I’ve been dying to see her.” She flailed her limbs around like a hyperactive child.

Placing down his tools, Nyer lifted her off his head and placed her back onto her seat.

“Because your body isn’t stable enough yet. There’s some hints of deterioration so I want to stabilize it before you do anything.” Nyer explained as the girl sighed.

“I’m so jealous of her. I want to run around as well.” She lamented.

But if she did, she’ll get really sick to the point she wouldn’t be able to move at all.

Being stuck in bed was the thing she hated the most.

“Don’t worry, you’ll get to see her soon. If you waited this long, you can wait a little longer can’t you?” Nyer patted her head.

Reluctantly, the girl nodded while he finished his examination.

Chapter 847: Cyradil

"Aren't... we meant to be looking for information? What are we even doing right now?" Elias's smile twitched while following behind Alice.

"What? New place new clothes." Alice shrugged. "I don't see what's wrong with that.

"Plus, how am I supposed to make a good disguise if I don't even know what people usually wear here? If I randomly pick one, wouldn't it just turn more eyes towards me?" She stuck out her tongue while grabbing a few dresses and seeing how they look in front of a mirror.

To her surprise, there were quite a few turtle neck collars with exposed shoulders or chest windows.

Not only that, some of the outfit even exposed parts of the hip or even the stomach area.

A type of fashion that focused on the shape of the body for the women.

On the other hand, the gentlemen got suits and asymmetrical designs that mixed certain militaristic flair along with pieces of decorative armour.

Of course, the women weren't limited to just outfits that exposed their bodies. There were also modest attire but by far the most prominent were the ones that exposed the stomach and shoulder.

After mixing and matching, Alice bought herself quite a few pieces that she could combine while Elias was forced to suffer through the ordeal.

"Alright that's one store down. Let's check out some other places that I saw." Alice smiled happily as there was a bounce in her step.

"Huh?! Another one???" Elias widened his eyes.

"Of course! Did you think I'll leave after just one? You have to check out all the best places so that I can make the best outfit for this region!" Alice puffed out her chest.

"Then there are also the stores I want to visit for your clothes. Can't have you wandering around with just the umbrella and what you're wearing now after all. Even if I'm blending in, if you stick out like a sore thumb it'll ruin the disguise." Alice framed Elias with her fingers while thinking about what outfits would suit him.

"Wait I'm involved? Look, we-" Before he could finish, Alice cut him off.

"Yeah yeah I know. Now come on, we can do that later. Let's check out the next store."

If Alyss could talk, she would give Elias a warning right now.

Aside from mead, Alice's next favourite thing was buying cute clothing and mixing them. A mead goblin soul with the hobbies of fashion.

Their shopping took 8 whole hours. During the entire time, Elias was either forced to be a model or giving Alice his opinions on certain outfits.

After visiting all of the stores, Alice understood that Extalia has an infatuation with asymmetrical designs.

It wasn't limited to male or female. No matter the style, asymmetry was always involved.

Not only that, but they also enjoy wearing metal on their outfit, especially silver adornments.

Perhaps it was by influence of the Moon Church or maybe even another reason, by silver is their favourite metal.

With these in mind along with a few other trends that Alice had spotted, she finalised her disguise.

In terms of physical appearance, Alice gave herself long black hair where the roots and inside was dyed a bright green.

And to contrast this green, she gave herself a pair of bright crimson eyes.

Outfit wise, she chose a cropped white jacket with tall collars and large sleeves that hid her hands. A black body suit underneath with the sides of her waist exposed but not her stomach.

A pair of asymmetrical shorts with the right side extending and merging with thigh high boots. On the left, a single belt around her thigh into knee high boots with silver accessories around both ankles.

Her waist had some decorative silver armour pieces with cloth attached to form a fake skirt of sorts that only covered the side and back.

Looking at herself in the mirror, Alice gave herself a twirl and nodded in satisfaction.

"Fufu~ I give myself a cute out of 10. Don't you agree?" Alice asked, striking a pose with her tongue peeking out of a cheeky smile.

"Arguably, despite having an outfit that matches the design choice, you stand out far more than before." Elias sighed, adjusting his sleeves. Alice had also given him a new outfit.

She left his hair and glasses as is since disguising him on top of herself would be a pain.

It's not like people knew who he is to begin with.

He had a black oversized suit jacket draped over his shoulders without needing his arms through the sleeves. They were attached on the underside to the real suit underneath.

The suit had silver chains attached to a watch in his chest pocket and under the suit, he wore a bright red long sleeved shirt to contrast the black. Black tie tucked neatly and a set of black suit trousers and shoes.

After adjusting the wrist buttons, he wore the black gloves that Alice had gotten him.

"Well don't you look just stylish." Alice smiled, adjusting his suit collar and tie.

Taking a few steps back, she showed what he looked like in the mirror.

"I'll admit, it does look nice. But I don't see how this is necessary." Elias sighed, brushing his hair back slightly.

"It just is okay? Also how do you feel about a pair of red earrings? I think it'll contrast nicely." Alice rubbed her hands together.

"I'll pass. It's already been 8 hours and this is the third outfit you've had me test out. Any more than this and I won't play along." Elias frowned.

"You say that but you stuck through it for 8 hours ,haven't you? What's a few more minutes?" Alice smirked as Elias fell silent.

Clicking his tongue, he looked out of the store.

"I'll admit it was necessary for four hours. But eight? Isn't that a little excessive?" He mumbled.

After leaving the Abyss through the gateway, they arrived in the city of Cyradil.

First came the liberation from the miasma. The sensation of being able to breathe properly without any issues. Next came the view of the clear blue sky and sun. The feeling of safety and people chatting happily around them.

The common folk walked without issue, ignorant of the things happening outside of their perception.

But Elias could sense several eyes scanning the entire place and tracking Hunters through the city.

They were wary of those who held power and observed carefully.

Thus he acted as though he didn't know they were being watched.

He acted as a tourist, enjoying the view of the city and in part, it wasn't inaccurate. Despite working around Nethril and the surrounding cities and towns, Elias never went up to the surface.

He saw no need to.

But what greeted him was a city of white marble stacked along the mountainside. A giant building crowned in gold and silver sat in the centre with towering archways and towers flanking the sides.

Waterfalls and fountains filled the main square while giant tree roots coiled around the city, poking out from the ground before diving back in.

A city merged with nature, that's the best way he could describe it, pristine and sacred.

Large blue banners were strung from the balconies and rooftops, fluttering in the wind as the crest of Extalia was embroidered into the fabric. Elven guards and human guards would occasionally patrol the city, keeping public order but that was not where the gazes that he sensed originated from.

They were simply a front, a distraction from the true guards hidden away in the shadows.

While shopping, Elias could sense the guards staring at them, but couldn't quite pinpoint their whereabouts.

It was during the fourth hour did he finally sense their disappearance, yet Alice continued without care.

And now, with Alice being satisfied with her outfit, could they finally get back on track.

Four hours wasted more than needed.

"Excessive? I don't think so." Alice smiled knowingly, revealing her sharp teeth.

"The last ones left just now. There were two more that kept an eye on us." She didn't use vision in fear of notifying them.

Instead, she observed the energy surrounding them.

There were certain strands that would always follow no matter where she went. They were observing their actions, their movements, their conversation. She couldn't feel their stares but they were there, watching, observing, possibly reporting.

It was only now, after they finally left, did Alice end their shopping spree.

Of course, she was also happy that she had the chance to shop to her hearts content so if anything, she was grateful.

Elias furrowed his brows.

He knew Alice's detection range was rather crazy considering what she demonstrated in Nethril but this goes beyond just range.

She was seeing something he wasn't.

"Don't tell me... If you wanted to, you could've found me even though I was hiding." Elias forced a smile, cold sweat running down his back.

Alice gave him a glance and smiled.

"I could've, but if I did, you wouldn't have a good impression and probably try to run away no?"

Hearing this, Elias scratched his hair and sighed.

She wasn't wrong.

If a freak with that level of detection appeared in the city, he would immediately flee from the city.

"Damn..." He muttered.

The world was a large place, freaks and anomalies are common when looking at the big picture.

"Don't worry about it. Not many people can properly hide when I try to find them. But since we sent eight hours, we should start gathering information properly now." Alice gave her body a stretch.

"Finally. What's our next destination?"

"Let's hit up all the taverns. I want to see what me- rumours are floating around."

". . . You were about to say mead weren't you?"

"I don't know what you mean. Now let's go~ the taverns wait for us!"

Chapter 848: Secret Code

"Waiter! Another! Wahahaha~" Alice shouted, hoisting up her empty mug while Elias groaned next to her.

Surprisingly, she managed to find a mead she enjoyed a lot and they've been stuck in this tavern for around an hour now.

At this point, Elias was beginning to wonder if this cooperation was a good choice or not.

He thought they would be gathering information but instead, they've just been relaxing.

He was proven wrong with the shopping but what's the reason this time for the mead? Or was it simply because she liked the drink?

Elias needed to figure out how Alice operated as a Hunter.

Though that comes with more exposure to Alice's actions. So for now, he'll simply let her do her thing and see what happens.

Finishing another mug of mead, Alice paid her tab and bought a large supply to take with her.

"Phew~ that was good. I didn't expect them to have something so tasty in store." Alice licked her lips with a satisfied grin.

"Are we going to go to another tavern now?" Elias sighed, glancing around them.

At this point, it was getting rather late into the day with the sun setting on the horizon.

They should find an accommodation for the night unless they want to sleep on the streets.

"Nope, we're going to visit a broker." Alice chuckled, holding up a small slip of paper.

"Eh?"

"The tavern was a front for the Underground. But they have to make it hidden." Alice smirked.

The code was hidden within the menu and her orders doubled as communication.

Of course, she enjoyed the mead but most of it was asking for an informant.

There were hints and clues in the menu and Alice even ordered an extra menu for clarification.

In the end, she settled on a Moon Herb Mead with a Travellers Platter for one, delivery via courier and make sure the bread isn't stale.

When decoded, she was essentially asking for information on the current situation from an informant, private meeting no extras and the informant must be a handler with eyes and ears everywhere while avoiding city watch.

After placing her order, the bartender gave her the coordinates to the informant.

With Alice explaining the situation, Elias widened his eyes in surprise.

To the outside perspective, all she was doing was ordering mead like usual. But in reality, a series of exchanges was happening under the table.

Navigating their way through the city, Alice read the instructions carefully and began to trace the path of the tree roots.

Ducking and weaving through the giant roots that coiled around the city, she took several turns in the alleyways.

At the end of this journey through the city, they arrived at a tavern hidden through the gaps of the buildings. A dimly lit door with two people standing guard, invisible to the naked eye.

Alice took the lead, she walked up and pressed the note against the chest of the first invisible guard, surprising him as he didn't expect her to discover his presence.

"I believe this is the 'ticket', right?" Alice smiled.

Undoing his camouflage, the guard burned the note and opened the door.

It was an elevator of sorts and Alice stepped in with Elias following behind.

The doors slammed shut and the elevator was hooked onto a rail system of sorts.

She could hear the tracks being adjusted, the path changing based on where she needed to go. And finally, they started to move.

Through the gaps, Alice could see several tracks splitting and merging, twisting to different levels and some even going higher into the building.

As they descend into the depths, Alice closed her eyes, opting to use her senses rather than eyes.

Everything was covered in darkness after all.

There were... several 'cavities' in the depths of the city.

Obscure and hidden. Large corpses were being harvested, leviathans of colossal sizes transported from an alternate route it seems.

Useful parts being smuggled into the Abyss through the gateway.

Beast harvesting wasn't the only thing that she sensed.

There was also a market sprawled across a large chasm. Lanterns made from a mix of beast parts and metal illuminated the surroundings, humming with a small echo of energy.

Strange transportation reaching other cities could be sensed, large moving contraptions with the sound being dampened by arrays crafted from Abyssal Engineering.

Those above ground were ignorant of the moving masses of metal beneath their city.

The elevator changed tracks once more, a steep dive towards the bottom.

There were other elevators moving along side them before changing tracks.

"To think this was under the city... Don't you think the guards would do something about it?" Elias furrowed his brows.

"Like what? Shut it down? They can't do that. The underground is too important when it comes to dealing with the Abyss. And as much as they hate it, Extalia is too entwined with Abyss Blood to ignore the Underground." Alice shook her head.

"Of course, that doesn't mean the Underground would simply operate out in the open either. Cross the boundaries and people will naturally begin to complain or take matters into their own hands.

"The Underground must remain a neutral and covert organisation. Perhaps with a few hints of favouritism here and there but only for those they owe favours to."

Naturally, that being Allura.

An organisation such as the Underground needed to be careful of how they treat their... vip clients. Lords that can wipe out branches with a wave of their hand.

Despite being ignorant of the core workings of the Underground, certain assumptions can be made based on what Alice has seen.

After a little while, their elevator started to slow down before stopping completely.

The doors creaked open and Alice stepped out.

They arrived at a strange location with a single tree illuminated by natural glowing lights, filling the room with a soft blue hue.

In front of the tree sat a grey haired woman with elongated ears.

The hair, long and messy, reached to her ankles with her height being relatively the same as Alice.

Rather short.

As for what she was wearing... it was more accurate to call it a nightgown.

She turned her head, vibrant violet eyes gazing towards her guests.

"Welcome~" She spoke lazily.

Alice could tell this woman was exhausted.

The way she moved, the bags under her eyes. Her overall aura was one of lethargy.

"I believe you wanted an information broker right? What do you desire?" She asked.

Her movements were slow and gentle. Strange vines appeared from the floor, twisting together to form seats.

Alice sat down and crossed her legs.

She couldn't help but wonder if the girl in front of them was an Elf or simply someone who looked like one.

Feeling Alice's stare, the girl's ear twitched slightly.

"I'm not one of the elves that serve the royal family. I simply had the misfortune to drink some blood that's been mixed with elven blood thus granting me these ears. It does make it rather annoying to step out as all eyes are turned to me." The girl chuckled, her finger tracing her ears.

Adjusting herself to face the duo, she kept a professional smile on her face.

"Can you tell me about the current situation with the Zenia family and the noble houses?" Alice went straight to the point.

The girl tilted her head, surprised by the contents of Alice's question.

"Hou~ I wonder for what reason you are inquiring about this family. But before I begin, are you able to afford the toll?" She narrowed her eyes.

Alice tossed over a coin pouch full of gold and platina.

Weighing the pouch in her hand, the girl smiled and lifted up the hem of her nightgown ever so slightly. Elias was about to turn away when he saw a row of teeth on her stomach.

*Krrr...

The 'mouth' opened and a tongue swallowed the pouch.

The girl's body tilted from left to right. Then after a moment, she opened her main mouth and spat out a few coins.

"Your change~" She presented the coins.

Looking at the saliva coated coins, Alice winced a little, creating some blood to cleanse it before storing it back into her pouch.

"The information of the Zenia family has been hard to come by. They've tightened their security and most of the spies have been dealt with. Are you wanting information on the houses they've taken over or the houses they've yet to consume?" She asked with Alice folding her arms.

It was probably easier to know about the houses they haven't taken over yet.

"Tell me about the houses the Zenia's have yet to take over." Alice requested.

The girl nodded her head and closed her left eye.

Twitching for a few moments, she opened her left eye, revealing its change.

Several pupils could be seen squashed next to each other, twitching and pulsing.

"There are currently three major houses that have yet to fall to the Zenia family. They're holding their own but one of them are already on the verge of falling.

"House Varyn, House Serathei and finally, House Nightingale. Despite their fall from grace after the take over of the Abyss Blood business by the Zenia family, the Nightingale family has committed a firm foothold in Abyss Engineering.

"They're refusing to bow down but are on the verge of being swallowed once more." She explained as Alice blinked her eyes, surprised to hear the name Nightingale.

After all, in the past when she was at the academy under Rosalyn, she had actually met a member of the Nightingale family.

Miki Nightingale, Luke's friend from the same department.

Chapter 849: Varyn, Serathei, Nightingale

Alice fell silent. A deep frown visible on her face.

While her interactions with Miki was short in time, she could still be considered to be a friend.

And hearing that the Nightingale family was in danger, Alice wanted to see if there was anything she could do to help.

Only issue was... What could she even do?

"The Nightingale Family has been a firm pillar of support in the Abyss Engineering market. Getting rid of them wouldn't be easy, even if it's the Zenia family.

"Though I may say they're on the verge of falling once more, the time they have left is actually rather generous considering the methods the Zenia used for the other families." The woman added with a small smile after noticing Alice's distress.

Leaning back a little, Alice sighed and nodded her head.

She made a mental note of the Nightingale family for now. Later, when she has the time, she'll give them a visit and see if Miki is around.

'I doubt she'll still be at the academy.'

"Can you tell me a little about house Varyn and House Serathei?" Alice asked. Like the Nightingale family, her knowledge of the main houses were a little outdated.

All she knew was what she overheard years ago.

"Ohou~ Of course. The payment you provided was ample after all." The woman chuckled, nodding her head.

"House Varyn, known as the sword of the Royal family. If the elves are the guardians and the shield, then Varyn are the opposite. Old, stubborn and fiercely loyal to the crown."

She opened her mouth, regurgitating a crest of the family. A single rose in front of three intersecting blades.

"Throughout the years, they have served with unwavering loyalty and acted as deterrent for any potential rebellions.

"While their honour and loyalty binds them, it also makes them... rather predictable when it comes to the actions they may take. Of course, such draw backs are worth little in their eyes.

"They are rather confident when it comes to power. Rightly so. They are not a family that can be won over so easily or taken over from the inside out. The Zenia family understands that. So instead, they've been targeting the connections and seek to strangle them through economy." She narrowed her gaze, showing the hand sign for money.

"And House Serathei?"

Once again, the woman tilted her head back and pulled out a single crest from her mouth.

At this point, Alice had half the mind to ask her not to do that again as not only was it unsanitary, it was also creepy as hell.

'Where does she even keep everything? Is her stomach linked to a pouch or something???'

Alice had burning questions on her mind. Questions she'd rather not ask as it may come off as rude.

"Ah yes, House Serathei. The crown's 'Shadow'. Literally."

The crest she held in her hand was that of hooded figure with just the head visible. A simple crest.

Nothing more, nothing less.

"The Shadow of the Royal family. They deal with everything that must be disposed of under the table. Keeping tabs on the movements within the nation while also plotting assassinations of those from other regions.

"They've reported the movements of the Zenia family but even through these reports, the family moves fast. Unpredictable. Much of their usefulness has dwindled but the Royal family keeps them around.

"After all, they are the bridge between us, the Underground, and the Royal family. The Zenia cannot easily uproot the Serathei family. Not because they don't have the capabilities... but rather because of their obscure nature. Kill one and two more are hiding in the darkness."

She created a strange black ball of energy before snuffing it out. Only for two more to take its place.

[So, the Nightingale Family can't be easily taken care of because they're ingrained with Abyssal Engineering. Too involved with things to deal with easily. The Varyn are loyal to a fault, can't tear them away from the Royal family. And finally, the Serathei family are too annoying to uproot.] Cayla summarised as Alice nodded her head.

[I don't like it. Something feels off. Annoyance doesn't stop the Zenia's from what I've seen. If it's necessary, even if it's annoying, they will seek it out. Loyal means jack sh*t when all you have to do is remove them from the equation.

[Something is stopping them from moving. Enough where they don't want to make a public scene yet not enough for them not to try.]

'Mnm. I'm thinking the same. If anything, the annoyance would only be an enjoyable challenge for someone like the Doctor. They must be opting to keep them around but why?' Alice sighed. 'What can they even offer for the Zenia to keep them around?'

Looking at the woman in front of her, Alice doubted she actually had the answers she was looking for.

Instead...

"Are you aware of a man known as the Doctor within the Zenia family?" Alice asked.

The woman's eye twitched a little.

As one of the brokers who works in the Underground, she naturally prided herself on her reservoir of knowledge.

There were few figures she wouldn't know about and yet Alice had just mentioned one of them.

A high profile target within the Zenia family. Someone who leaves so many traces of himself yet at the same time, there was so little known.

What they know was only what he was willing for them to know.

What he didn't, he kept concealed ever so tightly.

Even after all these years, this has never changed.

"While I am aware of the man in question, I am afraid there is not much I can offer in terms of information." She apologised.

"I see... That's fine."

". . ." The woman's smile twitched.

Alice's reaction revealed that she hadn't expected much.

A rather... insulting reaction.

"Can you show me how the Zenia forces are distributed? I want to know where most of their manpower is stationed along with any known Lords." Alice changed her question.

Once again, she asked another difficult question as the woman felt a hit against her pride.

If she was to answer with what she knows right now, it'll all be assumptions and guesses.

Full of maybes and uncertainty.

As a broker, she hated giving out this kind of information the most.

The worst part about this is that she couldn't even say she'll provide it after a few days either. Sending spies and scouts to check out the Zenia family has been a complete dead end.

The Underground has been trying to get information for several months at this point. All they can find is surface level information.

"It... has been rather difficult to gather information regarding the distribution of their core forces. I can mark down where their branches are and already known Lords. But for the Lords, this information is outdated." She kept a composed smile despite the annoyance in her heart.

Alice's frown deepened.

"I guess that'll work. Can you also show me how the Varyn, Serathei and Nightingale family are distributed along with known Lords?"

"Of course. Unlike the Zenia family, the Varyn and Nightingale family are much easier to keep track of. Serathei though, due to the nature of their operations, are hard to track." She nodded.

Alice was mildly surprised by the fact that they were willing to share information on the Serathei family.

After all, based on her words, they were allies of sorts. Two groups that work together.

"Don't worry, the Serathei family understood this point the day we decided to cooperate. The Underground serves as a hub for information and the markets. Even if you are our ally, we will still provide information if given the right price.

"Though certain cases will cost more than others of course. And a few high tier information can only be traded with information of equal worth rather than monetary value." She explained.

This was the kind of reaction she was expecting. Surprise and awe rather than disappointment.

"And... the money I gave was enough for Serathei's information?" Alice raised an eyebrow.

Of course, that wasn't the case. But she couldn't exactly say that because she failed to provide information on the Zenia family, she had to compensate to some degree. Her pride was on the line.

"Indeed."

Since that was the case, Alice didn't see the need to reject such a gift.

Accepting the offer, Alice watched as the woman tilted her head back once more.

"Wait wait wait, do you have to... pull it out of your mouth every time?" Alice asked with a forced smile.

But the woman only chuckled.

"Why would I pull a map out of my 'stomach'?" Leaning back, she tapped her finger against the tree behind her and the trunk opened up.

A flash of energy pulsed and a rolled up map was teleported into the cavity.

Retrieving the map, she glanced at Alice with a smirk.

"Are you disappointed? Should I eat it then pull it out for your liking?" She teased lifting her dress up to reveal the mouth on her stomach.

"No... If anything I'd rather you stick with the tree than throwing up stuff." Alice massaged her eyes.

Letting out a small laugh, the woman unfurled the map on the table and began to mark down certain locations with red circles.

Her left eye would occasionally twitch, updating the information.

While she was updating the map, Alice observed the woman in front of her. Based on the strands of energy coming off her body, that eye was probably linked to several nodes or familiars scattered around the world.

"Does every broker in the Underground have an eye like yours?" Alice asked as the woman only smiled.

"Maybe. Maybe not. While we do provide information on other families or even our allies, the secrets of the Underground are something you'll have to find out for yourself." She held a finger over her lip.

Once she finished marking down the locations on the map, she rolled it up and handed it over to Alice.

"Distribution of forces and even Lords have been marked down. I believe that will be the end of our exchange."

"Mnm. For now. If I need anything else in the future, how do I make sure I get you again?" Alice asked, storing the map into her pouch.

"It's simple. Repeat your order but add an extra order of Yggdrasil Tea." She gave a small wave as Alice and Elias departed from the room.

Chapter 850: The Zenia Store

Taking the elevator back, Elias had a troubled expression on his face.

He was silent during the entire exchange. Yet the things he was hearing... He couldn't help but wonder what Alice was planning.

They've made a contract to help one another. But he has yet to make any progress or see evidence of progress for his research.

However, he feels as though he's already been dragged into something far bigger than he had originally anticipated.

As a healer, he knew about the Zenia family. The most influential family when it comes to dealing with Abyss Blood. But now... it seems as though they were in conflict with the Royals.

Elias sighed and massaged his eyes.

"Feeling the pressure?" Alice asked, leaning against the elevator walls with a relaxed expression.

After everything she had gone through, this could still be considered to be rather tame.

"You forget that not long ago, I was simply a healer in the Abyss. Doing my own research, enjoying my own freedom." Elias groaned. "But now there's talks of royalty and the great noble families? How am I supposed to keep my cool?"

Alice tilted her head. He wasn't wrong. Compared to her other friends, he has indeed been tossed into the deep end without any warnings.

"Hmm... if you're having second thoughts, I don't mind if you back out now." Alice offered.

If the danger was too much for him, she didn't want to force him to be around. Everyone had the freedom to choose whether or not they wanted to help.

"Leave and do what? Rot away in the Abyss with no sign of being able to complete my desired goal? I'll pass." He shook his head.

The answer is now closer than ever, how could he say no to this?

"Haha, that's the spirit. I'll admit that the danger is rather high. Even if you take into account of Lord level hunters. Depending on the situation... fighting Apostles might be likely too." Alice patted him on the back.

"The f*ck??? Apostles? Since when are the Apostles involved?!" Elias widened his eyes in horror.

Lords was one thing. He's dealt with them before as they've sought him out for his healing prowess.

But Apostles? The left and right hand of the divine?

Even if his dreams and ambitions were presented on a silver platter in front of him, he refused to get involved with Apostles.

Doing so practically meant having a chain around the neck as they act as the messengers of the Gods.

"They're not as bad as you think ya know? I think I've seen and interacted with... Seven? Yeah seven of the Apostles. One or two might be... scary but the rest aren't bad. Especially Gwen's dad and aunt. They're kind people." Alice chuckled while Elias felt as though a sledgehammer was just slammed into his face.

Gwen? As in Guinevere, the daughter of the Apostle of Protection Arax.

And with the way she's speaking... She had also interacted with Lady Shiera, Apostle of Preservation.

"Oh Griselda is similar. She's got a tough outer shell but she's kind and emotional on the inside." Alice recalled the way Griselda was acting when they had trained in the Abyss.

"So don't worry yourself. Just think of Apostles as really really strong Lords with some extra authority." Alice poked her hand out of her giant sleeves and gave him a peace sign.

". . ."

His common sense wasn't common sensing anymore.

How can one be so... casual about Apostles?

"Let's... set aside the issue of Apostles for now. I have to ask, why the long sleeves? I noticed that during the clothes shopping you seemed to keep a special eye out for these." He asked, looking at the giant sleeves hiding Alice's hands.

Despite it being a cropped jacket, her sleeves reached all the way down to her knees.

"What? They're cute aren't they? I think the big sleeves are extra cute points to me." Alice smiled happily, flailing her hands a little so that her sleeves whipped left and right.

"Combat wise... Well. That can be ignored since it looks good." She stuck out her tongue after making a blood blade.

Seeing the way the sleeves folded back due to the blade in hand, Alice decided to ignore it for now.

Regardless, she loves her large sleeves and refused to take them off.

[I can't wait for you to enter combat and the sleeves get shredded to oblivion.] Cayla smirked.

'Even if they don't get shredded, the moment I throw a punch the sleeves will be destroyed regardless. Unless they're strong enough to fend against Destruction Point.' Alyss laughed.

'Destroy one and I have two more! Destroy two and I have four more! If you destroy them all I'll keep buying more!' Alice pouted.

How dare they talk about destroying her precious large sleeves.

[Alright alright, no need to pout. Jeez, if Velouria saw you now, she'll be ecstatic you know?] Cayla chuckled, kneeling down and poking Alice's cheeks.

At first, Alice was against trying out new clothes. Simply sticking with her own stuff.

But over time, she's opened up to the idea. Heck, she even spent eight hours figuring out new outfit combinations!

The old Alice would never be able to sit through that. Instead, she'll be crying about wanting to train or do literally anything else.

Meanwhile, Elias stared at Alice who revealed a bunch of different expressions before settling down on pouting.

"Are... Are you okay?" He asked hesitantly.

"Don't worry about it. Just talking to the voices in my head. How dare they slander my big sleeves." Alice complained, flailing her arms around and swinging her sleeves.

Leaving the elevator in a huff, she was surprised to see that the exit was different to where the entrance was. She thought she would appear back at the alleyways but instead, they appeared from the back of what seemed to be a tavern near the main square.

"Seems like there are different entrances based on needs." Alice muttered.

"There was a black market there after all." Elias reminded as Alice nodded her head.

"I'm planning on looking for a place to stay for now. What about you?" She asked.

They could probably do with a bit more scouting but she'll leave that for tomorrow. For now, she wanted to consolidate everything she's learned thus far and make a few initial plans.

"I'll take a look around the city. As for my lodgings... I'll sort it out so you don't have to worry about it."

"Alright if you say so. Take this. If you ever get into any sort of danger, just crush it and I'll pop right over alright?" Alice snapped her finger and solidified her blood into a single bead.

Holding the bead, Elias raised an eyebrow before nodding his head.

"I doubt I'll run into anything major but I'll let you know if I do."

Giving Alice a wave, Elias walked away and pulled out his umbrella.

Despite how strange this item looks, it actually helps obscure his presence.

The combination of a suit and umbrella was a strange one to behold in the middle of the day. Yet no one turned their eyes towards him.

'Main square... To the north is the main office it seems. There are a few small family businesses here but none of the noble families have a house here.' Elias made a mental note while walking through the city.

Crouching down slightly, he hopped towards the rooftops and made his way towards one of the roots of the world tree.

Knocking it with his finger, a light hint of green pulsed out.

After the root, he made his way over to the markets where he observed a few of the stores opened by the Zenia family along with the other houses involved.

Each of the stores were large and eye catching. A large variety of blood was available along with testing rooms.

There was even a service where they will help concoct a counter agent for any side effects the body may be suffering. While the effects may be limited, it was still better than nothing.

But there was... something new. Something rather strange. A new offer where they'll help merge certain bloods together to form something new. A specialised blood type for certain hunts.

Mixing blood was never easy. Depending on what's being mixed, the effects are either cancelled out or weakened. Yet they've managed to merge it properly and maintain both effects?

Elias furrowed his brows.

Each of the stores was busier than ever with both civilians and hunters visiting alike.

They even made a new 'lite' version of Abyss Blood. Minimal side effects with high potency abilities. The only drawback is the short duration but that doesn't matter for civilians.

What troubled Elias so much was the price.

It was practically dirt cheap!

A strange merger of blood, a service to create counters on the fly and even dirt cheap effective blood with minimal side effects.

Elias didn't like this. Everything he was seeing was telling him this should be a good thing. But his gut was screaming otherwise.

As a healer, he knew the lethality of the Abyssal powers. The Abyss was not so kind as to give things for free. Even if it may seem that way, a price was being paid.

They just don't know what that price was.

Standing up, Elias turned towards the store one last time before looking away.

He'll give this information to Alice first before they decide on their next move.

A choice of whether or not they wanted to buy the strange new samples and test them out to see what the Zenia's have created.