

The Vermillion Moons possessed eight Serums. R – Red Riding, T – Traumatic, U – Ultimo and V – Vacuity was kept in the smaller tubes anchored into their lower backs. W – Wishcatcher, X – Xpulsion, Y – Ylem and finally, Z – Zenith filled the half-meter long tubes along their upper backs.

They first needed a suitable test subject to showcase their newfound might. And who else fit the criteria better than a Red Giant? Exactly three Red Giants were kept in captivity. They were chained and impaled by various rods like living pincushions and were kept alive by a constant stream of Serum H.

Tubes were threaded through their muscles. There was more Serum H in their bodies than there was blood, and it was a medical miracle that they were still conscious. More than that, they were fully aware and alert of their surroundings, but they played dead when they realized just who was now in the presence.

Frost was there to keep them alive just in case the Vermillion Moon took it too far. Though with Frost's Skill Mastery over Prolonged Stasis, there was no such thing as 'too far'. No matter how much damage they took they could not die unless she explicitly gave them permission to.

Of course, this meant that she needed to be in contact with them as well.

The smaller tubes were able to hold roughly 100mLs of a Serum. This meant that most if not all four of the lesser Serums were a one-time use before they needed to be restored. Thankfully, this was where Serum Y – Ylem came into play.

The 500mL of Serum Y was how their Serums were replenished. Serum Y required the Mana of its users firstly, transforming it into the black-glowing liquid that served as their Serum reservoir.

They were limited by the rate of its regeneration which was approximately 2.88mL a minute. It took 24 hours to fully replenish Serum Y at a 1:1 ratio with Mana. But it could be hastened by burning twice as much Mana, or instantly replenished by bloodletting.

This however took 20% of their HP and reduced their maximum HP by 20%.

"Everything comes at a price, huh." Frost commented as she was told that Inflow Direct's equivalent of super soldiers – the Obitutors. It was also not surprising that many did not return alive, namely due to Serum Y's demand over their life.

R – Red Riding was a Serum that served to stimulate a fight or flight response similar to a shot of adrenaline.

However, it also kept the Vermillion Moons razer focused and mentally proactive. It meant that they were unable to remain stagnant like the Moons administered Serum G and were constantly striving towards their goal.

This also meant that when they lost their goal they'd be just as susceptible to Corrupt. This was another reason why Frost had offered them an invitation into the Nexus.

Red Riding at its core gave them the illusion of grandeur, like they were the vengeful protagonist of a fairytale. It was unfortunately not known whether it was related to the Vengeful Red-Hooded Assassin.

U – Ultimo was the textbook ‘super soldier Serum’. It allowed them to temporarily exceed their level and boost their stats for thirty minutes before their stats were shaved in half for the next two hours. But it did bolster their stats passively, nonetheless, making them formidable fighters.

Vermillion Moon

< Bulwark of the Head >

Soul Rank: Incandescent | **Body:** The Head

LEVEL : 200 ORIGIN : X HP : 100,000 ATT : 3,200 MAG ATT : 0
ATT DEF : 2,600 MAG DEF : 2,600 MP : 25,000 RESIST : 100 AGI : 50

They were incredible compared to ordinary Moons. In fact, they were stronger than them whilst augmented. But without the Serums they were easily the weakest of all the Moons.

That being said, T – Traumatic was the next prohibited Serum. It was liquid fear that induced terror into those significantly weaker than them, to the point of complete submission. This came at the price of making it difficult for them to distinguish the innocent from foe as they would become one homogenous mass.

It did not incite Corruption as Frost initially believed, but it could certainly contribute towards one. The blinding nature of it was easily a reason to prohibit its production. When used actively, it had the potential to turn enemies into Shells.

And finally, V – Vacuity. This was an enigmatic Serum that left a gaping cavity within the Vermillion Moons, meaning that they were possibly no longer what they once were. They had no organs or a reason to eat in the first place other than to satisfy their remaining instinct.

It was not seen as a drawback from them because they were not supposed to be alive in the first place. As Moons they were able to resist its indomitable power.

And that power, as one demonstrated on a chained Red Giant, was the ability to tear things apart at a molecular level. It all depended on the opponent’s DEF stats of course, but it also applied to the mind.

Too low of a RESIST stat and they may as well be brain dead.

Vacuity was the magic of erasure, and by the virtue of being Moons they were able to wield its exceptional power. A healer could easily reverse the changes. After all, their Souls were strong enough to RESIST it.

Indeed. It was able to erase Souls as well, making them powerful assets to dismantle Scarlet Logic.

After all, they feared those that could destroy the Soul.

The Red Giant could not scream or repent if they wished.

As for the remaining three major Serums – they were far more abstract and difficult to explain without demonstration.

W – Wishcatcher granted them the ability to seek those alike. They described it as seeing a star in the sky that showed them where other Blood Moons resided. It was similar to the Galvanic Blood that the Triplets had which allowed them to sense one another, causing Frost to wonder if it was partly made from Serum S.

X – Xpulsion was another combat Serum that was more like thermite than an explosion, capable of destroying even Stars of the Nexus if used correctly. It was a terrible weapon used in the War in Heaven that claimed the lives of many Stars and Moons.

A vial of this Serum was kept around the throat of the Red Giants. The reason for this was not to threaten them. Rather, it was there because they *planned* to execute them.

“Ever wondered what happens when a Star dies?”

One asked Frost, torturing the Red Giant in her hands.

“They explode. Everything around them disappears as colorful mist fills everything. They’re our backup when things get dicey. Our getaway card when can’t possibly win. We can get away easily. We’re Vermillion Moons of course. But the Hearts? Everything will be replaced with stardust.”

They were living bombs. Stars destined to go supernova, the equivalent of the nuclear option. Frost then realized that they were probably responsible for the majority of the damages within the Nexus’ interior.

And may explain why the Ateliers were so lenient with them compared to the Moons.

Whatever the case was, she had no qualms in using them like this.

Finally, Serum Z – Zenith.

It was the culmination of all Serums, but also the absence of it. Serum Z was essentially magic in its rawest form, allowing the Blood Moons to use known magic once again. However, their magic was strengthened by tenfold, and whatever coloration it once had wielded a black glow.

It reinstated the powers that had been stolen from them, and most of all, when active, a black, ominous flame surrounded their being as if they had broken through their limits. Zenith used 289mL per use, but it was well worth it for the price.

Flames that barely reached ten meters became flaming lances that went as far as a hundred meters. Giant magical blades grew to sizes larger than the buildings of the Shallows. A single crystal arrow turned to a hundred and they were all dyed black.

It was only unfortunate that it devoured a piece of a person's soul per use. However, their souls were already so miniscule that it had no effect on them, making them the perfect retainers for such power.

Frost could never see herself using these Serums outside of the Vermillion Moons. As impressive as it was, the drawbacks only chipped away at a person. But for the Moons that could no longer lose any more than what Scarlet Logic had stolen –

– they were more than happy to wield the forbidden powers of the Obitutors as her living bulwarks against the Impurities of this world.