

## [Second POV]

A lone figure stood in the midst of the chaos and carnage, their face hidden beneath the shadows, their breath rising in the air like a mist.

The light of countless torches and fires flickered around them, illuminating a scene of death and destruction within the Tower.

Amidst the screams of the dying and the hiss of steel against flesh, the figure moved with a grace and ferocity that was both beautiful and terrifying.

They moved with a surety and confidence that belied their relatively small frame, taking out their targets with an efficiency and ease that was both remarkable and very frightening.

In the corner of their eye, the figure noticed a group of slavers coming their way. Their weapons were drawn and their faces were twisted in malice.

They stopped for a moment, taking a quick look around.

The walls of the tower were lined with weapons and armor of all shapes and sizes. The floor had been covered in a thick layer of dust, and the air was full of smoke and the smell of death.

The figure calmly turned and readied themselves for the approaching slavers. With one hand, they held their blade with its sharp tip pointed directly at the enemy's heart.

The slavers charged towards the figure, but they were no match for this unknown, finding themselves lacking against his speed and skill.

The figure moved in a graceful, flowing motion, parrying and thrusting his weapon in a calculated and timely manner, eliminating his opponents with a grace and precision that for those around seemed simply unmatched.

As the last slaver fell to the ground, the figure looked around at the carnage they had caused. The once grand Tower of Heaven, a sickening monument to Zeref's might, now reduced to a cemetery, with bodies strewn about like discarded dolls.

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**[Adam POV]**

I moved through the Tower, releasing the slaves who were once held captive within the Tower, some of them stared at me with fear, others with admiration.

I didn't care though.

I wasn't here for their admiration or fear.

They were free to feel however they wanted.

"Are you okay, kid?" Rob asked as he shuffled closer, his naked feet scraping against the dirt.

"I am," I replied, avoiding his gaze, trying to sound sure of myself, but even as the words left my mouth I knew I didn't believe them.

I didn't regret what I had done.

Not by a long shot.

But whatever satisfaction it had brought me, had been short-lived, and now all that remained was a feeling of emptiness and unsatisfied rage.

I guess Brain was the one I truly wanted to destroy.

Though, despite my dissatisfaction, I didn't feel all that bad.

The bodies that now lay scattered across the Tower, their lifeless eyes staring up at the ceiling, as though they were searching for something that they never could find, something forever out of their reach, brought me a small but welcomed sense of satisfaction.

Taking a deep breath, Rob sank to the ground beside me, wincing in pain as he shifted one of his legs. "How much trouble do you think you will be in with Makarov?"

I glanced up at him, smiling faintly as I tilted my head to the side, furrowing my brows. "What makes you think I'll be in any trouble?"

Rob's thin lips curled into a small smile as he looked upon me kindly, before letting out a short laugh. "Young man," he chuckled softly, "I've known Makarov for years, and I know that he would never let you come into this situation without backup, no matter how talented you are."

That much was true.

"I don't know, maybe I'll get excommunicated? Or perhaps he will demote me, taking my S-Rank," I replied with a weak chuckle.

Rob's eyes widened in shock. His eyebrows scrunched together as he said, "S-Rank? But, you're... what 15?" He looked incredulous, unable to believe what his ears were hearing.

"Thirteen, I will be fourteen in a few weeks though," I replied.

Rob's old, weathered eyes focused on the horizon, watching the gentle tides of the sea lapping against the shore of the island. His voice was kind but certain, carrying a tinge of awe and admiration as he replied, "I knew you were destined for greatness the moment we met. But even I am surprised."

As I watched the old man, I couldn't help but feel a sense of respect and admiration for him. He had been suffering at the hands of the Tower for years, far longer than most, and despite this, despite having reasons to hate those who had hurt him, there were no signs of resentment in him.

"Rob, how do you do it?" I asked, breaking the silence that had fallen between us. "How do you not hate them?"

He turned to look at me, his eyes filled with the same warmth and affection that made my days in the Tower slightly more bearable. "Because letting hate take room in my heart would've been selfish of me. When others rely on you, you owe it to them not to. Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, but loving others deeply gives you courage."

I felt a lump form in my throat, realizing what he meant. He didn't hate, or allowed hate to remain because of those that relied on him like I once did. "So that's the reason."

"It is easy to hate and it is difficult to love. That is why all good things are difficult to achieve, and bad things are very easy to get," Rob replied, his tone soft and reflective.

Despite everything he had endured in the Tower, despite having all the right reasons not to be how he was, his spirit remained unbroken.

It was admirable.

"Where's Erza?" I asked, changing the subject.

Rob's shoulders sagged and his face creased with worry as he peered at the ocean before him. "She went out looking for her friends."

I glanced at him and saw his lips were set in a thin line, the wrinkles around his eyes deepening with worry. "You sound like you think she won't find them."

Rob's eyes were glassy and sorrowful as he spoke, his voice thin and strained. "After your escape, things changed drastically in the Tower. The cult developed a much harsher approach to discipline; suspicious individuals were

handpicked, then taken away. Erza was one of those fortunate enough to come back after selection, though sadly, she still lost her right eye."

I see.

So that bastard was still doing it.

Handpicking those with the highest potential to break and mold into his sickening image.

"Let me guess, most of the ones that never came back were considered high magical potentials," I replied, my voice heavy with anger.

Rob's lips twisted in a grimace and he furrowed his brows. "I wouldn't know, I wasn't able to feel their magic potential like I did with yours, you were a special case, your power was massive and was easy to feel despite the dampening shackles."

I clenched my fists, my nails digging into my palms. "Be that as it may, I doubt they were killed off. I know better than most how Brain thinks, and there is a high chance that the ones that disappeared were the ones he deemed strong enough to become his tools."

Rob sighed, his eyes dark with worry. "I fear you may be right."

I let out a deep breath, trying to push down the anger that was now boiling inside me at the mere thought of Brain. "She won't find her friends here, no matter how hard she looks for them."

Rob nodded, his expression grim. "I know, as much as it pains me to say it, I know. That being said, Erza is a stubborn little lady, one that refuses to give up on anyone she cares about no matter what."

I could understand that. I had my own share of stubbornness, and I knew that feeling of wanting to save someone, no matter the cost.

Taking a deep breath, I pulled myself off the ground and brushed off my pants. "You better go and find her," I said, not taking my eyes off the Tower's dock where a few boats bobbed in the distance. "In the meantime, I will go and prepare the ships to get us out of here."

Rob nodded, as he slowly pushed himself off the ground, his old joints protesting to the movement. However, before he could fully stand, a wave of energy rippled through the area, lifting the small hairs on my arms as the air itself seemed to vibrate in the wake of a powerful magical signature.

This power.

I knew it.

This power I was feeling undoubtedly belonged to Gildarts.

This wasn't good.

Gildarts not only had somehow found where I was, but he was coming toward me fucking fast, and he was pissed.

Rob's eyes widened in alarm as he shouted, "Adam! We have to evacuate the tower! Now! We have no time left! There's a monstrous beast heading this way!" He jabbed one of his bony fingers at the open sea, pointing in the direction Gildarts power was approaching.

That was.... an accurate description of Gildarts.

"That's not a... monster," I replied slowly. "That power you feel belongs to Fairy Tail's strongest wizard, Gildarts Clive."

Rob's eyes widened even further, if possible, as he stumbled back a few steps. "Gildarts Clive? The brat Makarov used to write me about? Why does he feel pissed?"

I slowly turned, and gave Rob an incredulous stare, that silently communicated the following: What do you think?

Rob's gaze dropped to the floor and he cleared his throat, hesitating for a moment as he coughed into his hand, clearing his throat. "Right, that. Well... I should go find Erza. Best of

luck with... all this." He gestured vaguely in the direction from where Gildarts was approaching, then quickly left, leaving me alone.

Taking a deep breath, I watched as Gildarts slowly came into view in the distant horizon, being nothing more than an ever-approaching speck moving toward me at unimaginable speeds on a boat that flew over the choppy ocean surface leaving a wake of water behind, seeming to part the sea in two.

Well... fuck.

I was ready to face the consequences of my actions, but I will admit I never imagined I would have to face them so soon. In a week or two sure, but not immediately after.

"Hm," I sighed.

This was problematic, not so much because of what I would have to deal with, but because at the speed he was approaching he would crash into the island bringing the entire place down into the ocean.

I might as well go and deal with this before he shows everyone on the island why he has such a terrible reputation when it comes to damage control.