

[Adam POV]

The man in front of me smiled mockingly, waiting for me to make the first move, his body language showing complete and absolute confidence. "Go ahead, try and kill me. It won't be as easy as you think."

Without a word, I lunged forward, unsheathing my sword as I flew towards him, blurring in and out of sight. My sword raised up from the ground in a widening crescent, the steel glinting and shining in the light.

The man dodged taking a step back, surprising me, but I was quick to follow up with a powerful thrust toward his chest. However, once again he reacted in time, parrying my attack, before jumping back a few times.

"You could poke someone's eye out with that, you know that?" The man's face lit up with amusement, his lips stretching into a wide grin, as he cocked his head to one side and chuckled heartily.

Gripping my sword tightly, I moved forward once again, this time faster than before, pressing my Shunpo to the next level of speed, slicing through the air with deadly precision, aiming at his legs.

Seeing this, the man's lips curled into an eerie grin as he deftly sidestepped my downward thrust, the blade slicing through his shirt but not his skin, before he took another step forward, never taking his eyes off me.

Something here wasn't right.

I was faster than him.

Stronger than him, and yet.

None of my attacks were reaching him.

And it wasn't because he was stronger than me.

"My turn," The man muttered calmly, as he unsheathed a long, serrated knife from one of his pockets and moved toward me.

I tightened my grip on the hilt of my Zanpakuto, blurring out of sight, aiming my blade at his hand. However, before my attack could reach him, I felt a searing pain spread in my abdomen, like a thousand needles stabbing me all at once, forcing me to stumble back in surprise.

The man smiled at this, showing his knife now stained with my blood, dripping into the ground. "You might be wondering, what is happening?"

My eyes flickered downward briefly and examined the wound in my abdomen. Finding an oozing gash, with blood seeping through my shirt and dripping onto the ground.

Taking a deep breath, I turned my gaze back to the man.

Once again he managed to dodge.

And this time, not only he had done that, but he had managed to hurt me.

Something here was clearly wrong.

I just couldn't quite figure out what exactly.

"Allow me to clear out your confusion, my magic is called Perceptive Alteration, which allows me to alter the perception my opponents have of things, small things, like for example your perception of time, speed, or depth. Making it so that you are always a few moments too slow in attacking me, or always a few inches away from your target," The man laughed softly, his eyes twinkling with twisted delight.

So that's why.

That explains why I felt off after every attack.

"So, you see, no matter how fast or powerful you are, I will always be one step ahead of you."

The ability to affect Perception itself.

Given the right circumstances or someone not willing to share the details he had shared, his magic could be unimaginably dangerous, thankfully he had shared more than enough information for me to adapt to the situation.

As I hated the bastard; solely for the simple fact he was associated with the Tower, I was more than grateful he had explained how his powers worked, because now I could kill him.

[Ur Milkovich POV]

After Adam had left, and his binding spell of light had dissipated, I did what I should've done a long time ago, and contacted the guild to tell them about the situation.

I didn't know much about what was happening, but I knew more than enough to know the brat had left on a personal

quest for revenge, and it seemed that nothing would stop him from doing just that, at least nothing I could do would.

Thankfully the guild had responded quickly, sending Gildarts to track Adam down and bring him back.

"Do you think Adam-sama will be okay?" Lilia's voice quavered, her eyes still wet with tears, her hands shaking and her cheeks stained with the tracks of recent sobs.

"I'm sure he will be," I replied trying to comfort the young girl, though I had my doubts about Adam's situation, I knew he was strong, more than enough to deal with most situations alone.

That being said, the brat had left without a plan, without support, and with only a vague idea of what he would deal with. While powerful, the kid still was far too young and inexperienced to face this kind of shit alone.

Then again, perhaps I was wrong.

I would like to be wrong.

After all, I didn't think he would defeat Deliora, and he did.

Still, strong or not, I didn't think it was good for him to do this alone. Without someone to balance his emotions out.

"I hope you're right," Lilia said, her voice barely a whisper as she hugged herself tightly.

[Gildarts Clive POV]

I rode towards the location that Ur had given me, on the hunt for the little shit that thought he could break his promise to my little princess!

I would castrate him if he thought he could make my little baby girl cry!

I sighed.

I knew the kid had his demons, things about his past he didn't talk about with anyone, but even when I knew that I wanted to believe he would rely on us when the time came.

I wanted to believe that even with that burden, he knew he had a family to count on.

But I guess I was wrong.

I shook my head in exasperation as I continued my ride, the tension between my shoulders growing with every second that passed.

It didn't matter.

I would show the brat his family, Fairy Tail, would be there for him no matter what, even if I had to beat him to an inch of his life to make him understand that point.

The Tower wasn't his enemy alone.

The enemy of one of us was the enemy of all of us!

[Cordelia A. Clive POV]

I felt my heart sink as I watched Gildarts ride away, off to find Adam,

If half of what Gildarts had told me was even remotely true, the poor kid was far too young to be shouldering this weight alone, revenge or not, no one should face this kind of thing.

I knew how hard it was for him to open up to others, to fully trust other people, and it truly made me sad that he didn't think he could rely on us.

I knew he was strong, and that he would probably manage to take care of whatever he was determined to face.

It was just.

I hated the fact I couldn't do anything to help him.

"Do you think Gildarts will reach Adam in time?" I asked Makarov, who was sitting beside me, watching as Cana played in the park of Magnolia Town.

Makarov's brows were knitted in frustration and his mouth was set in a grim line, his eyes drooping, heavy with exhaustion, as a sigh of sadness escaped his lips, "That kid is way too troublesome."

I smiled weakly. "I guess it's just something that happens in the guild," I offered, hoping to ease the situation.

[Adam POV]

Bracing in a defensive stance, I exhaled. As the man moved forward, delivering a horizontal kick that I tried to parry with my elbow, but missed by a few inches.

Smiling, the man advanced forward, continuing with his assault, with a barrage of attacks, each set even stronger than the last, cutting into my body, little by little.

His magic was problematic.

It truly was.

But as useful as his power was, he lacked the firepower to end me. While all I needed was a single strike to finish this.

"Judge all things in this universe. Zanryuzuki," I muttered, releasing my Shikai in a silent explosion of power that erupted from me, rippling in waves that cracked the earth.

"My, that's scary... Haha, I must say though, you are quite impressive, most people usually give up by now, but here you are, still swinging away," The man chuckled lightly, as he took a step back, his knife coated in my blood that slowly dripped into the ground. "Your magic power increased a lot, is that your full power? Don't answer, let me find out."

At this the man inched forward, his face twisted in a sadistic grin, as he raised his knife back and prepared to stab me once again.

I remained still, gathering as much power as I could in my blade, as his attack barreled towards me, before swinging my blade in a circular motion, cutting everything around me in a five-hundred-meter radius.

"I guess that's one way to solve a problem," The man muttered calmly as he fell to the ground, his body now separated from his legs from the knee up.

If his magic was messing with my perception of things, the solution was simple, releasing an attack where things like timing or depth don't matter.

"Tell me where the tower is," I spat, walking towards the man that now lay on his back on the ground, smiling at me.

"Well, it seems I underestimated you, oh well, it was bound to happen eventually," The man sighed, shrugging his shoulders as he tossed his knife away. "Do you want the exact coordinates or just a general direction to follow?"

He's... just accepting this?

No struggle, no fear, no anger, no hate, no pain, just empty acceptance.

"Exact coordinates," I replied, stopping right in front of him.

"24.4879 S, 46.6742 W," The man replied calmly, index finger pressed upon his lips. "The entire place is clouded from the eyes of others thanks to a magical enchantment, but get close enough if you will be able to see the place."

"Why?" I asked, finding his behavior, and his acceptance strange.

"Why not? You see, as a whole, I think we are just insects, we live a bit and then die. There's no point in anything. You won, I will die, end of the story, so why not give you what you want?" The man replied, tilting his head. "I mean, in the end, it doesn't matter whether or not I give you this information, it all remains the same."

"So, you give me what I want... because you don't care?" I asked, gripping the hilt of my Zanpakuto tightly.

"I don't care because there is no point in caring, it just doesn't matter, I don't believe there is any real value in my or anyone else's life, and I think that all life in existence is fundamentally unimportant," The man replied, pushing himself off the ground into a sitting position. "Every decision we make is meaningless. At the end of the day, every life ends, the only

thing that changes is how they end. The point is there ain't no point, life it's meaningless."

Nihilism.

"So instead of dying in a pit, you decided to fuck with the life of others?!" I hissed, pressing the tip of my blade into his arm, before pushing it in slowly.

"You can believe whatever you want. It doesn't matter," The man replied, showing no signs of pain whatsoever. "Good luck in your quest for vengeance."

I gritted my teeth, before cutting his head off with a single swing of my blade.

I don't know why it infuriated me so much the fact that he didn't care, but it did.

But he was right about one thing.

His life, and therefore this feeling of frustration he had gotten out of me didn't matter.

I had what I wanted, now, all that was left was bringing the Tower of Heaven down, once and for all.