

## [Adam C. POV.]

I woke up in a small, dimly lit room. The air was thick with the scent of herbs and antiseptic, instantly bringing back memories of past battles and subsequent recoveries, most of them having a broom or two breaking over my head.

My body ached, the exhaustion from my fight still a heavy weight on my bones, but now to a much tolerable degree.

In front me, I saw the one treating me, Wendy, the petite dragon slayer, with her sky-blue hair tied up in a high ponytail, was sitting next to me, her brow furrowed in concentration as she gently applied a soothing salve to the array of cuts and bruises that marred my body.

"Hey there tiny," I croaked, my throat dry and raw.

She immediately looked up, her wide eyes brightening in relief. "You're awake?! You shouldn't be awake this soon... I-I m-mean, h-how are you feeling?"

I tried to sit up, but a wave of dizziness forced me back down.

Wendy gently pushed me back onto the makeshift bed, her eyes filled with worry. "Don't even think about it. You're still recovering."

"What happened to Gajeel?" I asked, smiling at her. It seemed that when it came to healing, she could be assertive.

"He's out fighting," Wendy replied, before reassuring quickly. "And don't worry, he's okay, he said he had to do something about a cat."

"I see," I chuckled, finding the fact that some things remained the same, despite all the changes, a bit comical. "So. everyone is still fighting..."

"Yes, and don't even think about going out to help them," Wendy scolded me, mistaking my tone for an intention to go and help. "You need to rest and recover properly."

I had no intention of moving from where I was.

I had done my part. Now, it was up to the rest to finish this up.

"Don't worry Wendy," I replied, leaning back into the semi-soft pile of linens serving as my bed. "I mean, I can't disobey my diligent doctor, can I?"

The corners of her lips turned upwards ever so slightly in what might have been a relieved smile. It vanished as quickly as it had appeared though, her worry-filled eyes flickering back to the bundle of bandages in her hands.

"Promise?" she asked, the small word carrying so much weight, showing she wasn't entirely certain my words were true.

"Pinky promise." I nodded, smiling faintly. "Besides, with how beaten I am, I don't have much of a choice."

Wendy let out a soft giggle. "You really don't," she agreed, dipping a piece of cloth into a bowl with salve.

Smiling at that, I settled back into my bed, trying to get as comfortable as I could.

In the corner of the room, I saw my blade, Zanryuzuki, leaning against the wall. I could feel her steady pulse, letting me know she was here for anything.

The rhythmic swish of Wendy's cloth over my wounds, and the crackling of the fire gradually luring me towards the precipice of sleep. However, before that could happen, a brief expression in Wendy's face made me open my eyes and turn towards her.

She was worried.

She was trying to hide it for my sake, but she was worried about everyone.

"Wendy," I started, and she paused, her hand stilling on my arm. "They will win, don't worry."

She met my gaze, before replying. "They can handle it, right?"

I nodded without hesitation. "There's nothing here, they can't face."

Wendy didn't answer immediately. She sat there for a moment, looking at me before the smallest of smiles dawned on her face. "Yeah, you're right they can. They're strong, just like you."

I wouldn't go as far as to say they were as strong as me, but whatever kept her from worrying.

Nodding at Wendy, I closed my eyes again, allowing myself to drift, slipping into peaceful oblivion, having no doubts that by the time I woke up, this entire situation would be a thing of the past.

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### **[Lucy H. POV.]**

The battlefield was a whirlwind of chaos, more so than what I could handle, as Faust's army surged forward, making it harder and harder to advance.

Despite how afraid I was, I stood at the heart of this storm, fighting alongside Loke, the Lion, the golden shimmer of his magic, Regulus, gleaming.

However, despite how strong he was, and our best efforts to work together, we were slowly being pushed back. My magic slowly, but surely running out.

At this rate, it was only a matter of time before I couldn't keep his gate open, and if that happened, I would lose.

I was breathless, tired, and beyond my breaking point, feeling as my heart pounded like a war drum against my chest.

But taking a page out of Erza's book, I would not back down, not here, not now. As much as I wanted to just run, and wait for someone stronger to deal with this, I would not give up.

Everyone was counting on me.

Pushing through my exhaustion, I danced through the battlefield, narrowly avoiding a swing from a soldier's sword, while parrying another with my whip.

My only option now was to keep moving, keep fighting until I couldn't anymore, and even then, I would still give it my all. That being said, it was in my best interest not to drag this more than it was absolutely necessary, meaning that I needed to find a strategy, a plan, something, anything that could turn the tides in our favor.

And then it hit me.

We had done this before, with Erza.

We had shattered the Lacrima that had sealed her. If I could do that again with the Lacrima these soldiers were so fiercely protecting, then maybe things would improve.

"Loke!" I shouted, as one of the soldiers struck me in the face, drawing blood. "Forget the soldiers and strike the Lacrima they are protecting with all you have!"

Loke turned my way, worry flickering in his eyes. But despite the sight of my blood, and the situation around, he nodded.

I could take a few hits, and deal with this for a few moments alone, and that was all we needed, a few moments to change the tides of this fight.

With a final glance in my direction, Loke shifted his attention, his gaze set on the massive glowing Lacrima. Knowing what we were planning to do, the soldiers tried to stop him.

And with every step he took, more and more soldiers hurled themselves at him, trying to prevent him from reaching the Lacrima, throwing everything they could his

way, cutting and damaging him, but not slowing him down.

Unfortunately for them, Loke was relentless. And each soldier that came his way met the golden force of Regulus.

I could only watch, as the soldiers continued to hit me, my heart pounding in my chest, as Loke finally reached the Lacrima, his body threatening to disappear due to his wounds and my lack of magic.

With a final roar, he swung his hand forward, his golden magic illuminating the battlefield. The Lacrima shook violently, cracks appearing along its surface until, with one final shatter, it broke apart, its glow dissipating into nothing.

A smile stretched across my face, a weight lifted off my shoulders as Loke's form began to flicker, as his gate began to close.

My body ached, my magic was completely drained, and I was on the verge of collapse. And the soldiers Loke had kept away from me, were now closing in on me, their swords ready to strike me down.

"You will pay for that whore!"



As the first soldier lunged at me, there was a sudden shift in the atmosphere, and the battlefield went quiet, the noises of the ever-approaching army drowned out by a deep, resounding rumble. The air crackled with energy, static electricity dancing on my skin. An unnerving calm fell over me, the calm that came before a violent storm.

Then, in an explosive burst of raw power, a bolt of blinding yellow lightning shot down from the clear sky, striking the ground between me and the oncoming soldiers. The shockwave threw the soldiers back, as the ground beneath me trembled with the force of the impact.

When the dust settled and my ringing ears could hear once more, a figure emerged from the epicenter of the lightning strike. His frame was tall, the silhouette backlit by the residual energy of his entrance, his body crackling with electricity.

"Lexus," I breathed, recognizing him instantly.

"I don't know where the fuck am I, or who any of you are for that matter, all I know is you will regret hurting my family," Lexus growled, his voice low and dangerous.

The tides of this battle had changed.

Wait...

I needed to give him the pills Mystogan gave me before he lost his magic.

"Lexus!" I shouted, my voice hoarse from exhaustion as I pulled the bottle of pills from my bag, "You need to take these pills, otherwise you won't be able to use your magic!"

Lexus snatched the pills from my hand and swallowed them without a second thought. As the soldiers who had been knocked back by the lightning strike scrambled to get back on their feet, fear etched on their faces as they stared at Lexus.

"You can rest now, Lucy," Lexus said, turning back to me with a rare softness in his voice and gaze, "I'll take care of this."

I smiled, dropping to the ground. I had done it. Now I can finally rest.