

## [David Lance POV]

After dealing with the Blue Lanterns that had dared to try and stop me, I continued flying across space using my red lantern ring to fly at full speed. At my side, there was Dex-Starr, the red lantern cat and unlikely companion I had accepted just to piss off Atrocitus. At the speed I was going, I was certain I would reach earth's solar system within a minute or two. From there on, my sole mission was to eliminate Superman, to kill him, to torture him to his last breath.

Be that as it may, I wasn't so blind to my rage that I was stupid, not entirely, at least. I knew that I would have to fight the entire Regime to get to him, a most difficult task if I considered my target.

As I pondered about the Regime's forces and the dilemma they represented, I continued flying, watching the stars as I flew by them, just now realizing I had never seen them this close before in my life. Perhaps I would've enjoyed this show had the situation been any different, but right now, even in their beauty, they were nothing more than annoying obstacles.

The only thing keeping me calm and collected right now was knowing that soon enough, I'd be able to tear Superman limb from limb. That simple thought made me unbelievably happy.

Knowing that he would soon suffer was intoxicating beyond belief.

But that brought me back to my original concern. How would I deal with the Regime as a whole? Superman alone would be simple enough; I had no doubts my rage would tear through him easily enough, but fighting him and the entire regime alone, well, that was another matter altogether.

Perhaps the best course of action would be to take the Regime's champions one by one. It would not only serve to make my job easier, but it would torment Superman, seeing his pathetic empire crumble to dust without having the power to stop it.

That would work.

Even in rage, I was still able to see there was more than one way to approach things.

"Dex-Starr, there has been a slight change of plans," I said, coming to a stop as I was about to enter Earth's solar system. "In order to better achieve our goals, I have decided it's best if we take a more careful approach to this."

Dex-Starr hissed at me as if saying. That was not what we agreed on!

I rolled my eyes at him. Maybe it had been a mistake to bring the fur ball with me, I could always kick his tail back to Atrocitus, but that would beat the point of bringing him, which was to piss off Atrocitus. "I am aware that wasn't what we agreed on, cat. And believe me, this is not a decision I take with pleasure, but unfortunately, there's is a chance that fighting the entire Regime would backfire on us, resulting in our execution, which means no revenge for me and, by proxy, no revenge for you."

Dex-Starr yowled, not liking that outcome at all.

"So, to avoid that, I have decided to eliminate our obstacles, one by one," I replied, clenching my hands as my ring glowed. "Leaving Superman for last. After that, the earth will be ours to search for the one who wronged you."

At this, Dex-Starr purred happily at my side, his rage and excitement growing stronger.

"I'm glad you approve of my plan," I rolled my eyes once again as I focused on the new problem at hand, reaching Earth undetected. No matter how I approached this peculiar task, I had no doubt that I would be detected. The Regime had multiple satellites and other tools to monitor their borders.

Then again, sometimes what is there to stop someone can be used to help that very same person if you think well enough. If

their space monitoring system was my problem, why not make it an advantage by using a distraction?

If memory serves me right, Superman should have already killed Darkseid's kid, meaning the conqueror had quite the score to settle with the Kryptonian, just as I had. I could use that to my advantage, making an alliance of interest with the New God out of our mutual hate for the Kryptonian.

Looking at my ring, I asked through my mind. Where is Apokolips?

Immediately without wasting a single second, the ring answered my call, giving me the coordinates to Apokolips. "Alright, Dex-Starr," I turned to face the cat, my eyes telling him I would take no complaints. "Let's go to Apokolips."

Dex-Starr didn't make a sound, dutifully following me as I blasted toward Apokolips.

I wasn't happy about the fact that I would have to wait a bit longer to kill Superman, but if by doing this, I would ensure his demise as an unavoidable fact, then I could wait a bit longer. After all, the best things in life are worth the wait, and killing him would make each second worth it.

---

## [Dr. Fate POV]

Inside my tower, I sat in the air inside my library as the ancient books of magic within the library floated around me in a circular manner, illuminating the room with a soft light. The books were written by many different magicians from across history and other worlds; with some of them being centuries old. Each book carrying spells with power beyond belief.

But would any of them be enough to stop the entity Black Bolt had allowed into his heart? I doubt it.

Even from afar, beyond the reach of our stars, I could feel the entity growing stronger every moment. The power I felt grasping at his mind was dark, tainted. A darkness so absolute that no light could exist within it. It reeked of death, decay, corruption, and despair. In my most dire visions, it seemed like the soul of madness itself.

There was nothing but evil in its presence. No love or kindness existed there. Only destruction for all things living, an implacable hatred, and a thirst for knowledge greater than any god ever knew. And Bolt had made a contract with this entity without knowing.

My only comfort right now was that until Bolt completed the contract, the entity would be merely the shadow whispering in his mind, giving him power, barely able to manifest even a tenth of its power. But once the contract was complete, once the entity had done its part, it would be time for Bolt to pay the price.

Which I had no doubt would result in the entity gaining access to our realm. The idea chilled me down to my core. For if that monster gained entry into our world, we would be destroyed, and there would be nothing we could do to stop it.

I had to find a way to break the link between the two before Bolt finished what he had set out to do.

"If seeing me die was the breaking point, wouldn't seeing me alive help?" Dinah asked. For a moment I had forgotten she was here.

I had already given her a new life, a new reality. But, in my fear, I had brought her back to the tower as a last resort to stop Bolt. Had Nabu tried to stop me, I would've had, but apparently, just like me, he knew how big this threat was, so much so that he was playing blind with my dealings in Chaos.

"We don't know how far gone he is, Dinah," I replied. "It might not work."

She smiled sadly at that. "Then you better think of something, because brother or not, we have to break him free from whatever hold this thing has on him."

I nodded slowly. "If we are lucky, Trigon's hold might not be as strong as we think."

One could only hope that was the case.