

[Adam POV]

After two weeks of traveling, and hopping between trains, we finally reached the town of Rubera, a decently sized town located in the Land of Isvan, Ishgar.

The town was carefully nestled in the heart of the icy tundra that seemed to stretch as far as the eye could see, its flat expanse dotted with occasional clusters of frozen trees, and the majestic snow-capped mountains rose against the misty clouds, their jagged peaks illuminated by the pale winter sunlight.

As we walked through the narrow cobblestone streets of the town, heads turned in our direction, which I attributed to the fact we were dressed in multiple heavy furs, unlike them.

The town itself was pretty quiet despite the amount of people I could see and feel, with the only sounds around being that of the crunch of snow under the boots of those walking around and the occasional bark of a dog here and there.

Ignoring the looks we were getting for the time being, we continued walking through town, passing rows of houses and shops of all shapes and sizes. Until a small inn with a friendly cozy front appeared in the distance, seeing this, and the fact

this was the first inn I had seen in miles since we arrived at the town, I decided the place was as good of a spot as any to set up our camp and use as a base of operations.

"I think it's best we get a room here before moving forward," I said, getting a nod from Lilia before we started making our way to the inn.

Upon entering the inn through its wooden doors that announced our presence with a loud creak, the innkeeper a burly-looking man with a lumberjack beard, greeted us warmly, immediately offering us a place by the fire on his hall, alongside a hot plate of soup to warm us up; while we decided what room to get.

As I sat, I left Lilia to negotiate the price with the innkeeper, taking this time to scan the place around taking in my surroundings carefully, noticing that most of the walls of the inn were adorned with various furs and pelts and that the tables were roughly carved from pinewood.

"This place is cold," Mavis muttered, pretending to shiver from the cold, as she appeared in front of me startling the crap out of me, as she hunched her shoulders and rubbed her arms.

I looked at her, my eyes screaming. What are you doing here?!

"I got bored," Mavis shrugged, forgetting the fact she was pretending to be cold a few moments ago.

Fair enough I suppose, I just wish she stopped coming to my life like a fucking ad, when I least expect it.

Pushing Mavis's sudden appearance aside, I continued scanning the room until a tense conversation broke out between two locals six tables away.

Finding the demeanor of the conversation interesting, my gaze settled on two men sitting in the far corner of the room, trying to listen to their conversation.

Sadly, from where I was sitting, I could only make out bits and pieces of what they were saying seeing as they were whispering, but the words "monster," and "chaos" kept showing up more than anything else. Making it clear, alongside their expressions of fear that whatever they were talking about, was related to my job.

Sighing, I glanced back at Lilia for a moment, who was still negotiating with the innkeeper about prices. Before pushing myself off the table, approaching the two men, clearing my throat. "I apologize for the intrusion, but would you be so kind as to answer some questions?"

The two men glanced at me for a moment, their eyebrows raised before exchanging a brief look with one another. Then before I could do anything else the older of the two stood up

and stepped forward crossing his arms. His steely, gray eyes meeting mine as he asked, "And who the heck are you?"

I could feel the tension in the man looking for a reason to snap. I wasn't off to a good start with the locals it seems.

"There is no need to be aggressive," I replied, raising my arms with a faint smile to show him I meant no harm. "I just want to ask a few questions, and I promise I will make your time worthwhile."

The man's thin, graying brows furrowed as he pinned me with a suspicious glare. "You one of them wizards, aren't ya?" he asked, making emphasis on the last word almost like an accusation.

"I am a wizard, yes," I nodded, wondering where this was going.

The man's eyes hardened with rage as he slowly brought his hand towards me, his fingers wrapping around the collar of my shirt, lifting me up to him until I was at eye-level with him. "Thousands are dying all around, and you wizards do nothing! Where were you lot when Lopori was destroyed?!"

Oh, I see.

He was blaming the deaths this monster was leaving behind on the wizards.

I sighed, moving my right hand to his shoulder. "I understand your anger, sir, and believe me, I do empathize with your grief." At this, I pressed down on his shoulder gently, forcing the man that just a few moments ago had been lifting me with one hand to his knees, making his eyes go wide. "However, I am not to blame for all this."

At this, a heavy silence filled the once loud room, and without even turning I could feel everyone's gaze on me. My eyes were fixed on the man and his companion who shifted in place, staring at me with wide eyes, their faces drained of color.

Taking a deep breath, I sized up the room, my eyes sweeping past the shocked looks of the locals, before returning my gaze to the two I had originally approached trying to gather information. "My name is Adam, from Fairy Tail, and I'm here to eliminate the monster destroying the northern cities, any information you could provide regarding this would be most helpful. You don't have to like me, but in order to make this easier for all of us, we have set aside our differences and focus on the task at hand, at least for the time being, does that sound reasonable?"

The air in the room grew thick with tension before the man who I had brought to his knees slowly nodded, his face a mixture of fear, anger, and relief.

"I can work with that," The man said, his voice barely above a whisper.

"To translate that: I'm now aware you are stronger than me, therefore I will cooperate," Mavis giggled.

"Wonderful," I said with a nod. "Now, what can you tell me about this monster?"

The man took a deep breath and began to explain. Telling me that the monster had been rampaging in the area on and off for weeks now, destroying every village it came across, leaving more than not no survivors.

Those that had survived said the monster was massive in size, taller than most buildings, and incredibly powerful seeing it had eliminated two local guilds completely as if they were nothing.

No wonder wizards weren't that eager to help.

Beyond that, the locals in the inn didn't have much to share,

I sighed.

That wasn't much to go.

It was basically the same information the job posting had offered me.

I continued talking with the locals within the inn, trying to find anything that would help me in this job.

Sadly, the innkeeper and his patrons had little to offer in terms of useful insight, other than the fact that the monster would arrive unannounced, its howl reverberating through the night and shaking the earthen walls like a thunderclap. Then, after everything was destroyed, and the city bathed in the blood of their own, it would simply disappear leaving no trace of its existence beyond the destruction and devastation it had caused.

This was rather problematic for me.

Something capable of leveling entire towns overnight, and wiping out guilds just as easily should be easy enough to track, yet, there were no clues about the monster's whereabouts.

Beyond that, there were a few things that didn't quite make sense to me, like, if the monster was as powerful as everyone stated, then finding his magic power should be easy enough to do.

Even if the monster wasn't as powerful as the locals were making it out to be, it still should be easy to track it considering its size.

Based on the information I had on hand, which was superficial at best, I was able to come to two conclusions about the target of my job. One, I wasn't dealing with a monster, instead, I was dealing with a mage, one capable of hiding their power and using take-over magic.

Two, and what felt like the most likely option so far, I was dealing with a monster as the locals had stated, but one who was naturally capable of hiding his power, and altering his size using both as hunting mechanisms, like Lions and their fur to hide the savanna.

Then again, there was always the chance I wasn't dealing with a monster or a mage at all.

"Lilia, let's go, we are leaving," I said, before making my way out of the inn, with Lilia following close behind without saying a word.

While I would've loved to stay at the inn, the situation had changed a bit.

If I was to believe the locals and what they had said, then that meant the monster was unnaturally good when it came to leaving no traces of his existence after an attack.

Meaning that if I wanted to be able to stop whatever I was dealing with, I would need to establish my camp deeper into the country in a more central location so to speak.

That way, I would be able to easily move around the country whenever the monster attacked without giving it much of a chance to escape.

Taking a deep breath, I spread the map out I had bought for the country, trying to find a good spot to set camp. "The mountains might be a good place for that," I muttered, tracing my finger along the ridges of the paper mountain range.

"That's not a bad idea, considering your speed you might be able to intercept the monster before it escapes," Mavis nodded, understanding what I was trying to do.

With Lilia close behind, I trudged up the mountain through the thick snow with ease, our boots sinking deep into the white powder with each step we took, as the mountains rose up around us, their jagged peaks disappearing into the clouds.

As we walked higher, and higher, into the mountain's peak; the snow grew deeper, and the wind grew fiercer. But despite all the attempts nature was throwing at us to deter us, the harsh conditions around us barely did a thing to slow us down.

Lilia was using her telekinesis to shield herself from the weather.

While I was using my power, vibrating it in intervals to generate heat turning myself into a makeshift radiator.

Eventually, after a few hours of walking seeing nothing but white and the occasional tree, a small cabin appeared in the horizon, having no neighboring houses, standing alone in the snowy plateau this hellish tundra offered.

The cabin's wooden walls had seen better days, sagging and worn from years of exposure to the elements, making me believe at first that it was an abandoned hunting cabin. But I quickly dismissed the thought as the faint tendrils of smoke curled up from the stone chimney revealing it was still being occupied.

Or at the very least, that it had been occupied very recently seeing I couldn't feel anyone nearby.

Taking a deep breath, I closed my eyes and quieted my mind, allowing my spiritual awareness to reach out around the mountain's range. At first, all I could feel was the presence of the animals nearby, but as I pushed my senses further, I started to feel something new.

A mile away, to the east, I could feel a faint tremor of energy moving, followed by two others. Taking another deep breath, I

took a few steps east almost as if trying to reach them out, and felt the sensation grow stronger.

Three distinct energies, one radiating a considerable amount of magic power, accompanied by two weaker sources.

They were coming towards the house from what I could tell.

"We will be having company," I said, giving Lilia a look.

"I see, don't worry Adam-sama, they shall be dealt with," Lilia replied, her eyes growing cold as she reached her hand into the pocket of her coat, pulling out a pair of long-bladed knives.

"I still don't get how she went from shy, to this..." Mavis muttered, her eyes narrowing on Lilia.

I sighed, rubbing my temples. "Lilia, I never said they were enemies. Put that knife away..."

"Oh, my apologies!" Lilia bowed.

I sighed once again. "I will go ahead and greet them, you stay here, and make camp."

Lilia beamed at me. "Leave it up to me!"

Using Shunpo, I closed the distance between me and the energies I had felt, in less than a few seconds, coming to a stop when I started hearing the sounds of footsteps approaching in the nearby distance.

Dropping to the ground before they reached my location in order not to scare them, I waited for a bit, watching as three figures slowly started to take form in the snowy distance, at first, I could make anything out of them, seeing nothing but shadows, but as they neared me, I began to see more and more.

Eventually realizing once they were close enough, who they were. Ur, Gray, and Lyon.

This meant that I wasn't dealing with a simple monster, I was dealing with a demon.

Deliora.

That complicated things, Deliora was stronger than anything I was expecting to face, however, I was excited with the idea of fighting the demon, more than I would've expected to be.

"Who are you?" Ur asked, her voice tinged with suspicion as she neared me, her voice snapping me out of my train of thought.

I flashed her a friendly grin and gave a polite wave. "Oh, my apologies, my name is Adam, and I'm a Wizard from Fairy Tail, here to do a job."

Ur looked me up and down, clearly skeptical. "You're a long way from home, kid," she said.

That was an understatement. "Well, the best-paying jobs are rarely ever close to home."

"I see," Ur said, crossing her arms. "Most people don't venture this high into the mountains, especially not alone."

I shrugged, if the weather was the worst this place had to offer, I could deal with it. "It's not a big deal, I've faced worse challenges than the weather of a mountain."

"Yeah, right," Gray, who had been silent until now, scoffed.

"Gray don't antagonize the poor guy, don't you see he's clearly suffering from cold-induced hallucinations?" Lyon scolded Gray, crossing his arms in disappointment.

Ur's eyes narrowed and one eyebrow rose slightly in disbelief. "No big deal you say?"

"I suppose it's a matter of opinion," I chuckled, giving the trio a small look. "I came here to greet you all seeing we are going to be neighbors for the foreseeable future."

"What do you mea-" Ur began but before she could finish her sentence, I had already vanished out of sight using Shunpo, leaving nothing but a trail of swirling snow behind me, and a very confused woman with her just as equally confused students frozen in place. "The hell was that?"