

## [David Lance POV]

With my nightmare being finally over, I opened my eyes and slowly sat up, trying to take in my surroundings. It was difficult to see in the darkness that surrounded me, but as my eyes adjusted back, I could make out a faint light in the distance.

Cracking my stiff neck, I stood up and brushed the dirt off my clothes as I began to walk towards the light, using my power ring to light the way.

As I walked, I noticed my anger not being the same, I still wanted to destroy Superman, but now, I had a much clearer view of actions thus far and what I was truly willing to sacrifice to bring the Kryptonian to his knees.

I carefully made my way across the empty field, and so far, there were no signs of Wioska to be seen; perhaps she had left once I was out of commission. Within moments, I reached the light, finding it to be a small lamp sitting on top of a table.

"So, you're finally awake?" Wioska said, her voice coming out of the darkness. "I was beginning to think you were going to

sleep forever. I won't lie; I had my doubts you would make it through your fight with Trigon."

Hearing her voice, I turned to face her, finding her to be sitting in a chair behind some rocks I had failed to notice, a big smile on her face.

"Why did Darkseid send me here?" I asked her, using my ring to speak. Darkseid's decision to send me here made no sense to me; I just couldn't wrap my head around it, no matter the angle I took to analyze it.

Under Trigon's influence, Darkseid could've just manipulated me into doing something for him by playing around the demon's influence, yet he decided to send me to someone that could help me.

And sure, I knew that Trigon probably represented a threat Darkseid wanted gone, but why help me? He could've asked Wioska to kill me.

"Oh, that?" Wioska asked. "Well, that's easy enough to answer. Trigon's hold over you represented a threat to his plans."

"I know that. What I'm truly wondering is, why did he help me? I mean..." I asked, a small frown forming on my face as I looked at her. "He could've just asked you to kill me."

Wioska tilted her head to the side, a thoughtful expression on her face. "Darkseid doesn't command me. I was the one that decided to help you if anything because I found it rather impressive the fact you resisted the demon for so long without knowing he had a hold on you."

An event that shouldn't have happened.

I shouldn't have needed her help. Nor Death's help, though both were welcomed, I never should've been in that situation.

I have no idea how I allowed Trigon within my soul, but that's a matter I intend to rectify sooner than later.

"As for why Darkseid didn't kill you, well," Wioska said, standing up from her chair and walking towards me. "Killing you would've taken too much effort. He knew you were stronger than him, that his avatar didn't have enough power to eliminate you, and that because of that, he knew he would've needed to use most of his resources to compensate for the gap between the two of you. Ultimately killing you wasn't worth the effort, so he sent you here. He knew that I would either kill you or help you."

I see.

I didn't expect Darkseid, of all people, to admit he was outclassed.

I wonder if I still have more power than him. I'm definitely weaker than before, a lot weaker, but not so much that I felt powerless.

In any case, now wasn't the time to worry about that.

I had more pressing matters at hand.

"Well, in any case, thank you," I bowed my head slightly before looking back at her. "For everything."

"No need to thank me," Wioska said, shrugging her shoulders. "I didn't do it for you. I did it to spite Trigon and Darkseid a little bit because I'm sure he would've preferred if I had killed you."

Be that as it may, I was still very thankful for her help. Without her, I would still be under Trigon's grasp, his influence eating away everything that made me who I am.

"I suppose you no longer have a reason to keep me here, right?" I asked her, wanting to leave this place as soon as possible. I had many things to do and preparations to make in order to face Superman.

"No, I don't," Wioska said, shaking her head. "You're free to go. Or to stay."

I nodded, turning to walk away as I realized what she had said last. "What do you mean by that?"

It almost sounded like an invitation. And while I wanted to kill Superman, more than anything, I was intrigued by Wioska and the power she held. Even now, without anything sealing my powers, I felt I was no match for her.

My danger sense was telling me not to engage her, and by telling me, I meant it was screaming at me not to do it.

Wioska smiled, her eyes twinkling mischievously. "Nothing. Why?"

I frowned. She knew what I was asking, but it seemed like she wanted me to say it out loud.

"I can't read minds, you know, so if you want something. Ask for it," Wioska said, her voice taking on a more serious tone.

I paused for a moment before turning back to look at her. "Every fiber of my being tells me you are stronger than me."

"Oh," Wioska said, her eyes widening in surprise before she started laughing. "You have quite a perceptive body, then. And you would be wise to listen to it because your body is absolutely correct, I am stronger than you."

Humble much?

"Can you help me become stronger?" I asked, clenching my fists as my eyes lit red in rage. "There's much I need to accomplish, and in order to do so, I need more power."

Wioska's smile widened at my words before she started clapping her hands slowly, the sound echoing across the place. "Bravo," she said, her voice filled with approval. "I like your spirit. And, sure, I will help you. I have nothing better to do."

That was easier than I expected.

But I won't complain.

"One week," Wioska said, her voice taking a harder edge. "I'll train you for one week."

One week.

I could work with that.

Killing Superman could wait a few more days.

I had waited long enough already, and seeing I had lost some of my power, it was best to find a way to compensate for that loss, if anything, to ensure Superman had no chance when the time came.