

## [Adam C. POV]

I crumpled against a tree, my hands clutching at the searing wound in my abdomen. Each ragged breath sent a wave of dizzying pain washing over me, and I watched, as droplets of dark red blood trickled down my side and soaked into the parched ground beneath me.

I chuckled.

Fucking dragons, I swear.

"I need a drink," I muttered to myself, as I reached for the flask in my pocket. The one I had for special occasions, like this.

Taking a swig of the fiery liquid, I closed my eyes and tried to concentrate on healing my wounds. My mind was a jumbled mess of thoughts, but I knew I had to focus if I wanted to stay alive.

The sound of footsteps snapped me back into reality.

"Adam?" Gildarts gasped, his eyes widened in horror as he took in the scene in front of him: My pale face, trembling lips,

and the blood oozing from the gaping hole in my abdomen that was pooling around me.

"Don't worry, I've had worse," I groaned, trying to muster up a weak smile. Needless to say, this was a big lie, out of all the wounds I had received so far, this was by far the worst.

Gildarts shook his head, tears welling up in his eyes. He knelt down beside me, placing a shaky hand on my shoulder.

"I'm sorry," he whispered, his voice choked with emotion. "I should have recovered from her attack faster."

"It wouldn't have changed a thing," I grunted, attempting to sit up straighter.

The only thing that could've changed that outcome was using my Bankai. But that was a one use only card, one that I was saving for Acnologia.

If only I could use my full power, things would've never turned out the way they did. Unfortunately, Shinigami powers are not meant to be used in human guise.

"I'm weak," Gildarts muttered his voice barely above a whisper as he bowed his head in shame. "I couldn't protect you; I failed you."

Great, now he's depressed as well.

I guess it is time to snap him out of it, Clive style.

Taking a deep breath, my right hand shot forward, slapping him with all my strength. "Could you stop talking like I'm going to die?"

Gildarts winced at the force of the blow, but his eyes widened in surprise as he realized what I was trying to say. Despite the wound, the bleeding had slowed down considerably, and the pain had lessened.

I was still alive.

Sure, a gaping hole in the abdomen wasn't what anyone could call an ideal situation, but it just happened. Selene had missed most of my vital points. I assume the reason why she hadn't done some serious damage was because she wasn't actually trying to kill me, which I imagine had something to do with the piece of Spiritual Power she stole from me with that attack.

Time would tell what exactly her goals were.

In the meantime, I would focus on avoiding this outcome from ever happening again.

"We need to take you to a hospital," Gildarts said, his voice stern and resolute, trying to hide the trembling underneath it all.

I raised an eyebrow at him. "What makes you think I need a hospital?"

Gildarts chuckled weakly. "Dumbass, this is not the time to fuck around. You know you need medical attention."

"You know as well as I do, only the old lady can fix this up," I replied with a chuckle of my own.

"I know," Gildarts nodded, trying to help me up. "But before we can reach her, we need someone to stabilize the situation enough for you to travel."

That was actually a very good idea.

"Fine," I replied.

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**[Third Person. POV.]**

Under the golden glow of a setting sun, a dense forest whispered secrets as the leaves rustled in the wind. Through the thicket, a pair of anxious figures, Laxus and Lilia, hurried along a narrow trail, following the magic power of Adam, who was weakening by the minute.

Their breaths were heavy; their faces etched with worry.

Erza's eyes flickered with anguish, her voice choked, "Laxus, we need to hurry. Something isn't right, he has never felt this... weak, this vulnerable before."

Laxus nodded, his face softened by concern as he clenched his jaw, "I know."

Pushing through, the two came upon a small clearing. The sunlight fought through the canopy of leaves to touch the forest floor, and in the middle of it, there was Adam.

Their friend laid prostrated against a gnarly bark of an old oak tree. His shirt clung to his skin, matted with blood, and his eyes were closed as if in sleep.

His bleeding abdomen showing a gaping wound that exposed the pink flesh beneath in a terrifying sight.

Time seemed to freeze as Laxus and Erza rushed towards him.

"Adam!" Erza cried out, tears blurring her vision.

His eyes fluttered open with a yawn, and a faint smile graced his lips. "Erza, Laxus, what are you guys doing here?" he asked.

Laxus, knees hitting the ground, pressed his hands against Adam's wound, trying to stop the blood. His hands were trembling. "Hold on, Adam, we'll get you out of here, don't you dare to fucking die on me!" his voice broke.

Adam raised a shaking hand to touch Laxus' cheek, before slapping him with the force of an Ox. "Don't fucking shove your dirty hands in my wound!"

"The hell was that bastard?!" Laxus barked back, for a brief moment forgetting about the situation.

"What's that? Do you need a hearing aid, double AA?" Adam replied with a playful chuckle.

Erza's sobs choked the air. She reached out, touching James' hand. "You're not dying?" she whispered; her voice filled with all the pain in the world.

Adam shook his head. "No, I healed most of the damage already, now I just need to get some medical attention and the rest should come down easy."

Lexus blinked away the tears that had formed in his eyes, his expression softening as he realized Adam was going to be okay. "You scared the shit out of us, man," he muttered, bringing his blood-soaked hands to his head. "Slap me again, and I'll fucking kill you."

"Bring it on, Pikachu," Adam replied with a smirk.

"Enough!" Erza shouted, her hands clenched into fists. "This is not the time for this."

"Erza, it's okay-" Adam began, but was cut off as Erza's hand swung through the air and connected with his cheek in a sharp slap. Tears were streaming down her face as she glared at him, her chest heaving with emotion.

"Do you have any idea what it felt like to feel your magic fading? To think I might have lost you?" Her voice was raw, and her eyes burned with unshed tears. "You can't joke about this, not now, not ever."

For once, Adam was silent. He looked up at Erza, his own eyes tearing up a bit. The familiar cockiness that he was known for, faded from his face, replaced by something much more vulnerable. "I'm sorry," he whispered.

"Serves you right," Laxus muttered, turning away to hide anyone seeing a sign of his vulnerability. "You should know we care. You're a dumbass, but you're our dumbass."

Erza knelt down, taking Adam's face in her hands. "Promise me, promise me you won't ever scare me like that again," she choked out between sobs.

Adam's face softened, and he nodded. "I will do my best."

"Adam, I found some doctors!" Gildarts' voice broke through the moment, as Gildarts ran toward them, a group of medical professionals, and medical equipment all tied to his back.

Adam blinked. "Where did you find them?"

"He broke into the hospital and kidnapped us," One of the doctors muttered. "He tied us to his back and asked what we needed to treat a... gaping hole in someone's abdomen, once he had everything we told him we would need, and whatever he considered we could need, he rushed here at what I can only assume was supersonic speeds."

Adam chuckled. "I'm sorry, but could you put aside your discontent with him, and help me up?"

"I made an oath, and your father terrifies us, so yes, we will help," One of the doctors, the oldest one, sighed. "Now please



untie us scary man, so that we might treat his wounds before an infection takes place."