

[David Lance POV]

No matter what I tried, my attacks would never reach Wioska. No matter how much rage I had, she always remained just out of reach, always one step ahead of me, taunting me.

"Getting tired already?" Wioska asked from behind me, using the same mocking tone she had been using since this battle started. "When will you learn that leaping at the enemy blindly doesn't work?"

"I will tear you apart!" I replied as I dashed towards her, slamming myself against a mountain.

"You've been saying that for quite a while, and yet here I am, in one piece," Wioska replied calmly as if my attempts to kill her meant nothing to her.

She was treating me like a child, a mere annoyance that didn't demand any effort on her part; she wasn't even fighting back anymore; she was just dodging me. Everything about her pissed me off.

Roaring in frustration, I punched the ground below with all my might, frustration coursing through me.

"You know, this test could be easier for you if you were willing to listen," Wioska said as she walked toward me. "You won't be able to defeat me, not like an animal, at least. So, let's talk, shall we?"

I paused momentarily before replying coldly. "No."

I refused to accept her help. Not after she had humiliated me so much, no, she would die, no matter how much time it took me, I would rip her condescending face off her head and bask on her corpse!

At my response, Wioska simply sighed. "Fine by me then... " Then, before I could react, she stepped forward, placing both hands at the sides of my head, making me freeze as she pressed them directly against my forehead. "I guess I can always do this without your consent."

I screamed in pain as a new sensation entered my being, overwhelming my every sense beyond reasoning as Darkness swirled around us wildly until there was nothing around me but a void of pain, revealing a figure of red standing in front of me.

A red demon with horns and four eyes, a demon I knew.

Trigon.

"What?" I muttered, and just like that, the darkness and the void disappeared, bringing me back to Wioska.

"So, are you willing to listen now?" Wioska asked, releasing me from her hold. "I promise you'll regret refusing to listen to me, even if you fail this test."

I looked at her, not knowing what to think. "Trigon..."

What was Trigon doing inside my mind? Had Raven betrayed me?... What am I even thinking?! Raven would never betray me, not my Raven, I knew her, and I trusted her with my life, so why was I even considering the possibility of her betraying me?

"You see it now, don't you?" Wioska commented, bringing my attention to her. "That thing is controlling you. Partially at least. Do you want to be under its control, or do you want to be free?"

I took a step towards Wioska before stopping. She said she could help me; all I had to do was ask? No, this was a trick; she was playing me! just like she has been playing me since I arrived here; I can't trust her, I...

What...

NO!

Something isn't right!

My mind, I can't even think straight, something... I can't... focus; I keep going back to the same point over and over again.

"I can't focus," I growled, my head spinning as I tried to focus on what I had seen, on what Wioska was offering.

"Of course, you can't. Why would that parasite let you focus? Imagine you make an intelligent choice. He can't have that," Wioska replied calmly, making me angry all over again.

But she was right.

After all. Why would Trigon keep me in a state of rageful ignorance of everything but my main focus? The answer was simple: because otherwise, I would know if someone was using me like a puppet, dancing around their own interests.

There was also the possibility that Wioska was playing me.

But seeing she could've killed me anytime during our long fight if you can't call our fight a fight, I was willing to bet killing me wasn't her goal.

"You said you could help me, then do it..." I replied through a growl, shattering the earth beneath me as my voice pushed through the air.

“Impressive,” Wioska complimented, her tone laced with a hint of surprise. “You managed to regain some of your senses incredibly quickly. Normally, once a mind is that far gone, they don’t come back that easily.”

“Good to know,” I gritted out as anger bubbled up within me with each word that left her mouth.

Wioska chuckled softly before she finally started to walk towards me once again, the ground shaking with each of her steps. “This will hurt a lot. So, be sure to get control on the first try.”

With a gentle touch from Wioska’s hand, I was once again engulfed in darkness and pain until I found myself in a strange place. It was an empty plain lit by an eerie red light, having nothing but dirt and bones to fill the place. Then, before I could react, my body froze into place.

“CAUGHT YOU” A deep voice thundered inside my skull, seeming to come from everywhere around me.

“Trigon, I suppose,” I replied, trying to escape whatever bound me in place. It felt strange, not like Raven’s hold, or Klarion’s, more like physical in essence.

“YOU KNOW OF ME; THAT MAKES THINGS EASIER,” The demon chuckled in amusement. **“I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT,**

AND I CAN GIVE IT TO YOU. YOUR MIND HAS STRUGGLED TO KEEP ME OUT SINCE THE MOMENT I DECIDED TO AID YOU, BUT NOW YOU KNOW! YOU KNOW WHO I AM! AND THE POWER I POSSESS! THERE'S NO NEED FOR DARKSEID! FOR ANYTHING! JUST GIVE YOURSELF TO ME, AND I WILL SEE THE KRYPTONIAN DIES A MOST PAINFUL DEATH!"

"I want to kill him, but I won't whore my soul to you to get that result, so let me be!" I replied in a shout.

Trigon, at this, chuckled, his laugh booming across my mind as he appeared in front of me, towering above me like a man in front of an ant. "I have already gotten access to your mind, child. We made a contract. You can't escape me; whether you like it or not, I am here to stay."

How does Raven do it?

How can she keep this monster at bay, and could I even do it without magic?

Unless...

Magic wasn't a part of my particular case.

Taking a deep breath, I focused on my red lantern ring, of how it felt to have it, its power, the rage boosting my every move, until suddenly a red shine appeared in my hand, shattering to pieces the hold that kept me in place.

“Bravo,” Trigon clapped, grinning at my display.

“Unfortunately, that won’t help you against me at all. I really don’t understand why would you try to fight me, the Kryptonian deserves to die, and I can grant you the power to do so.”

He could.

I knew that.

He was unimaginably powerful.

A being that transcended everything I knew, a God beyond my reach. However, just because I knew that was the case, I couldn’t help but wonder why hadn’t he given me the power I needed to kill Superman already.

Or the power to defeat Wioska?

That question had two answers.

One, he didn’t want to help me at all.

Or two, he couldn’t give me any kind of power and was instead simply powering my emotions, which in turn would give me more power through the ring.

“You have no access to your magic, don’t you?” I asked, staring at him.

Trigon froze for a moment before his confident posture turned into one of rage. **“You wish to see my power, child, so be it!”** With a roar, Trigon swung his hand, releasing a torrential wave of fire at me, burning through everything around the place.

The fire rushed through my skin faster than I could react, scorching my every cell to ashes.

Bringing me pain beyond comprehension.

However, as painful as this was. It wasn’t real.

I could see that.

I had experienced something like this before in my training with Martian Manhunter.

I smiled, realizing I was right. “That hurt. Or at least I imagined it hurt; the mind can be a confusing place, am I right?”

Trigon remained silent, staring at me before breaking into a fit of laughter, one that seemed to come from a place of rage and amusement. **“You’re right, child. I can’t use my magic, not with you, at least. You are warded with a powerful spell, one that is**

connected to the life of another, one that feels familiar yet distant. Be that as it may, without me, your power will vanish, for it is my fury that powers the ring. Not yours!”

“Perhaps, but unfortunately for you, there are more ways to kill a Kryptonian, thousands of ways,” I replied, feeling a sense of relief I hadn’t felt in a while. I guess it was part of being inside my mind that I no longer felt nothing but blind rage. It was refreshing, even if my rage was justified.

“It doesn’t matter, really. It's only a matter of time before your mind breaks to my control, and then, you will serve as all should,” Trigon replied, looking down at me.

I looked at him, and remembering Raven’s words and Martian Manhunter’s teachings, I changed my mindscape to one better suited to host my unwanted guest.

A prison.

“My mind, my rules, bitch,” I replied, with me now being the one that towered over Trigon and the cage I had formed around him.

Trigon laughed. “You think you can keep me here? You lack the magical component to make this a lasting solution.”

I smiled back at him. “And you lack the magical component to make you a threat. At the end of the day, things even out.”