

[Adam C. POV.]

The earth beneath my boots trembled with a silent whisper under my power as I stood alone amidst the once vibrant forest, now nothing more than a charred terrain.

The scent of burnt pine and dry earth engulfs me, mingling with the metallic tang of freshly spilled blood that clung to the blade in my hand.

I let out a weary sigh as I surveyed the field before me.

Hundreds upon hundreds of clones lie scattered on the forest floor. Every face is the same, Zero's face, twisted in rage, eyes aflame, waiting for their bodies to turn into dust, leaving nothing but a single strand of hair from the head of the man I had killed.

At first, I had enjoyed the opportunity of tearing Zero apart again. But it soon became boring, nothing more than a mind-numbing task I had to complete.

And the reason for that was pretty simple. They weren't Zero, not really, not where it mattered.

Killing them felt... empty, even more so than it had felt with the original.

Pushing my thoughts aside for the moment, I watch as the clones wither away like dying embers, turning into dust that danced through the air in a haunting ballet, leaving just a piece of hair behind.

As I stared at them, my eyes were cold and empty, as still as the depths of a frozen lake. "Go on, I'm waiting."

"You truly are one of my most wonderful creations, maggot," Zero's voice boomed from behind me. "But do not be so quick to think you have defeated me."

Slowly, I turned around, the grip of my blade tightening. "Me? One of your creations? Don't flatter yourself."

Zero chuckled, his voice echoing throughout the forest as more fakes appeared. "Oh, but you are. Without me, you wouldn't exist, your hate for me is the reason you stand here today."

"That's almost funny," I replied, before taking a step forward; vanishing out of sight, reappearing behind the unsuspecting fake, my blade poised and gleaming. "You should've considered a career in comedy; it would've saved you the trouble."

"Foolish magg-" The fake began, but his words were cut short as his body started breaking apart, multiple cuts appearing all around him.

"Let's get this over with," I said, turning around to face the other copies.

I would kill them all, putting to an end everything Zero built once and for all.

[Erza Scarlet. POV.]

The wind carried echoes of many battles as everyone fought with all their might to defeat the enemy that had dared to get in our path. Bleeding, and tired, I brandished my blade against the onslaught of clones that had appeared out of nowhere.

My armor, once glistening, was now broken, marred with the ashes of the forest.

My senses were being pushed to the limit as these abominations continued with their relentless assault, each strike being more than enough to bring a slight tremor in my arms.

A nagging reminder of the endurance needed in this battle.

Through the chaotic maelstrom I found myself in, I could feel the power of Adam and Gildarts in the distance.

I could feel the earth shattering and quaking under their might, each one fighting a storm of Zero's clones, of fakes. It's an awe-inspiring sensation, the sheer number of clones they were handling made my own skirmish seem like a mere trickle against a tidal wave.

I still had a long way to go.

"Is this all, little Scarlet?" Zero asked, his tone mocking me.

Suddenly, my heart feels lighter, and my blade steadier. I draw from the reservoir of energy that almost seemed dry moments ago.

"You think this will make me falter?!" I roared, as my armor shifted through countless armaments in mere seconds, a kaleidoscope of gleaming steel and resolute purpose, before landing on the armor I wanted.

As I cut through the clones, I imagine my comrades beside me, their spirits lending me strength. Jellal's unwavering resolve, Natsu's fiery spirit, Lucy's unyielding hope, and Gray's fierce determination. "For all who have suffered because of you! I will prevail!"

I am Erza Scarlet, Titania of Fairy Tail, and for my family, for my friends, and everyone I love, nothing will break my resolve.

I will not falter; I will not wane. And if needed, I will be the blazing beacon that pushes back the shadows.

[Jellal Fernandes. POV.]

The cool forest air brushed against my face as I raced silently through the dense foliage, following one of Zero's clones. At the distance, the echoes of everyone's battle reached me, more specifically, Erza's battle.

I would've liked to deal with her by myself, but right now there's something else I need to attend to. A glimmer of a plan, a whisper of opportunity.

"My army will keep them occupied long enough for us to activate Nirvana," Zero chuckled, his eyes beaming with twisted delight.

I had read about Nirvana during my time at the Tower. An ancient, mythical power that was deemed too dangerous to be wielded. A creation of the ancient wizards who possessed magic, the likes of which have not been seen since their time.

The kind of power that can either bring light or cast the world into darkness.

"We have arrived," Zero said, his voice breaking me from my thoughts.

I looked up to see a towering mountain in front of us, runes etched into its surface, protecting the place from being detected.

It seemed like Zero had planned for every possible scenario, but his own demise.

Silently, we delved deeper into the mountain, entering a cave hidden behind a concealing spell.

Zero, ahead of me, didn't miss a beat. The same confident, twisted grin he always wore was more pronounced than ever, the promise of the imminent realization of his grand scheme making his eyes glint with a vicious excitement.

"Over here," He motioned me towards a large, dark chamber. We stood in front of a massive, mechanical apparatus that hummed with magical energy. It was monstrous and complex, filled with tubes, switches, and glowing crystal shards.

An impressive feat of magical engineering.

In the heart of the machine, a glass cylinder pulsed with ominous, cyan light. Within it, I saw what looked like the shadowy form of Zero.

The clones.

It was here where Zero was producing the dolls.

"This is the result of my tireless effort," Zero gloated, sweeping an arm to indicate the clones gestating in the machine. "Using the materials left by the first, we are able to create an army of around one hundred thousand soldiers that share our righteous sight."

The clones wouldn't stop Fairy Tail for long, but their number advantage would keep them occupied long enough for Zero to do what he had set out to do.

He turned to me then, the light from the machine reflecting in his eyes. He looked more menacing than ever. "And with your help, Jellal, this will all be possible."

I smiled, approaching the machine slowly, my eyes fixated on the dolls being made within the glass cylinder. Their bodies ethereal and insubstantial, waiting for the piece of Zero that would give them life.

I reached out to touch the glass, feeling the warmth emanating from the machine.

"Come Jellal," Zero urged me, his voice laced with excitement. "Let's bring Nirvana into this world!"

My plan had worked.

Now, it was time to see it through.

My lips curled into a faint tired smile as I raised my arms and focused my energy on the machine, releasing a beam of yellow light that tore through the apparatus, engulfing the entire thing before tearing it apart until nothing remained.

"WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!" Zero roared, his eyes widening in anger and disbelief.

"I have done what I had to," I said calmly, my arms still raised. "I cannot let you succeed, Zero."

"You blind fool!" Zero spat, his hands clenched into fists at his sides. "Do you not understand the magnitude of what you've done?! Of what we could have accomplished together?!"

I lowered my arms, preparing myself for the confrontation that was sure to come. "I've been blind, Zero, this doesn't feel like that."

"They healed your mind," Zero growled, his eyes narrowing as he took a step toward me.

They did.

But that didn't wash away the sins I had committed.

Nothing would.

Not now, not ever.

But this, this would be a start.

"I will stop you, Zero," I said firmly, my voice unwavering as my body erupted in the aura of my Heavenly Body Magic. "I will do whatever it takes to make sure your plans never come to fruition."

Zero rolled his eyes and scoffed at Jellal, the corners of his lips lifting in a sarcastic grin. "Playing the hero now?" he asked mockingly, gesturing over to me. "You should know better by now that your hands can never be clean enough for that role."