

[Adam POV]

It was two months after I had officially joined the Guild, that I met Laxus Dreyar, and I had to say he was a stark contrast to the version of him I was familiar with.

As far as personality goes, he was an outgoing, goofy, and all-around friendly person, who had been more than eager to meet me when he became aware there was someone around his age in the guild.

However, there was something conflicting deep within him, causing him to lack self-esteem in a concerning manner.

Once I discovered this, alongside other bits of information, like the fact Ivan Dreyar was still part of the guild, it didn't take me long to figure out this contrast of personality was because I was meeting him a point prior to his father putting the lacrima on him, the one that would at one point give him the ability to use Dragon Slaying Magic.

On the subject of Ivan Dreyar.

He was a monster, not in the sense that he was particularly powerful, because he wasn't, but in the meaning that even after meeting him just once, I could tell he was a psychopath.

During our first encounter, he just stared at me with vacant eyes, his mouth downturned in a twisted smirk.

I wasn't sure why he was looking at me, but whatever it was it wasn't something good.

His voice had a manic edge to it as he spoke, and every time he came near me, he lingered uncomfortably close.

For a while, I was content with simply avoiding the man.

I honestly had nothing to gain or seek from him, so I just kept my distance. In time, he would leave the guild, as it had once happened, so I wasn't going to waste my time with the man at all, in any shape or form.

However, much to my annoyance, he decided to approach me one day after I was coming back from a job.

Ivan's gaze felt heavy as it settled on me. His pale eyes, framed by dark circles and furrowed brows, seemed to look through me. His raspy voice was low as he said, "You're getting quite a reputation, boy. That's good - the guild needs strong, responsible members. If you ever need some guidance, feel free to reach out."

"Not interested," I replied, leaving the man alone. That even though he had remained stoic, I could tell he was seething in anger at my reply.

I don't know what he was trying to get by talking to me, but the way he had approached me felt like something right out of an ad to showcase how someone that likes kids a bit too much acts.

I know my answer to his offer had elicited some rage in the demented man, but I wasn't all too worried about him or his possible reaction to it. I could tell for a fact he was weaker than Brain, who I had managed to deal with without any formal training.

As I was now, I was pretty confident I could deal with him, if the situation called for it.

Makarov's thick fingers grabbed my shoulder, pulling me back from the stairs as I made my way to the room. His forehead furrowed, and his eyes were full of worry. He opened his mouth to speak, but hesitated, trying to find the right words to say. "Kid, about Ivan... he's..."

I looked at the old man and smiled. "Don't worry about it, master. You don't owe me any explanations."

Makarov sighed as I left him to go to my room, and at every step I took, I could feel Ivan's glare on my back.

Time passed, and the possibility of Ivan doing anything against me seemed less and less likely.

However, it wasn't until I took a job to subdue a group of bandits that had apparently set camp nearby a widely known commercial route that I confirmed Ivan's intentions.

As I was tying the unconscious group of bandits I had effortlessly dealt with, before calling the local authorities to pick them up, I felt something approaching me from behind, trying to sneak up on me.

Instinctively as I had learned with Zanryuzuki, I whirled around and drew my Zanpakuto in its sealed state, the edge of my blade glinting in the light as I instinctively cut down whatever had tried to approach me, only to reveal that that I had cut, was a paper doll, better known as a shikigami.

I didn't have to second guess who it was, I had no doubt in my mind it had been Ivan.

The only question in my mind was, where was he?

I couldn't see him around, and sensing energy around me to detect him was something I still wasn't particularly good at.

Even more, I questioned why he had gone for a stealthy approach of all things? From what I had gathered in my sole

interaction with the man so far, he had an ego, a quite big one at that, so this didn't quite add up for me.

In fact, I honestly expected him if he ever attacked me to do it openly, in an overly confident manner, like he had done with Laxus on the magic games.

I remained on guard for a few moments, pondering his motives before deciding to ignore his sad attempt at my life, if I can even call it that.

For a moment, I even humored the thought of telling the Master about this, wondering if that would be the straw to push the old man to excommunicate him from the guild, but what good would that do to me?

He barely represented a threat, so my life wasn't in any immediate danger.

If anything, giving the old man reasons to excommunicate his clearly evil son would only hurt Laxus in the long run, after all, his shit of a father had yet to give him the Lacrima that would set him on the path to becoming the Laxus I knew.

So, having that in mind, I just decided to wait and see what Ivan would do next, I might even have fun with his little vendetta against me.

Heck, I might even consider this as extra training of some kind, something to keep me alert at all times.

Year X270

It has been a year since I first joined the guild, give it or take at least.

And as far as updates go, well.

For one, I have fully mastered Zanjutsu. That doesn't mean there isn't anything for me to learn on that, but that now is all a matter of perfecting what I had learned.

Other than that, I had started my training with Zanryuzuki in Hakuda, Hoho and Kido.

I was learning Hakuda easily enough, speeding through training without many difficulties, the problems lay in the other two, Hoho and Kido.

More so in Kido than in Hoho.

My main problem with Hoho was the level of agility, precision, and concentration it required to be executed. But

that was something that I was certain I would eventually master, after all, through practice comes perfection.

Kido on the other hand.

Well...

I was having a lot of problems regulating my power the way it was needed to use the spells properly. In short, I had the power to fuel them with no problem, just not the control over it to make it a successful endeavor.

I didn't let my lack of control dishearten me though. I would learn in time, maybe not as fast as all the other Shinigami arts, but I would.

Besides, there was a certain level of enjoyment when dealing with something particularly difficult. Maybe it was knowing the sense of accomplishment that I would get once I managed to overcome said struggle.

Outside training.

Not much had changed.

Gildarts would continue to take long missions, coming back to the guild very sporadically, time which I would happily use to annoy him by pretending to be his abandoned son.

Master Makarov would help me on that, it was kind of a thing between us, an unspoken yet strong alliance whose sole purpose was to bother Gildarts as much as possible.

But that wasn't all I would do in my free time.

When I wasn't training, I would hang out with Laxus, who was a genuinely nice kid who desperately craved for any kind of positive company.

As for Ivan.

He had tried to attack me a few times since the last time, and the result has been the same each time. His attempts at my life were never truly a threat, to begin with, and now that I was able to sense energy, well, it took the surprise out of them.

Maybe that's why he had stopped after attempt number eight, I guess he caught up to the fact I was detecting his attacks through the sudden changes in his magic power.

I really didn't give a fuck either way.

I was just waiting for him to give Laxus his lacrima, before antagonizing the creepy bastard.

Other than that, I was happy to announce I had finally gotten my own place, a two-bedroom apartment close to the commercial district of Magnolia. The rooms were big, and the

place offered a kitchen and a living space which also overlooked the town below.

The building itself was set back from the main road, so I had a private little garden in the back of the apartment surrounded by concrete and iron bars.

The rent was 77,500 Jewels a month, which was easily within the range of things I could afford.

"Are you going to take a job today?" Laxus asked the moment I entered the guild, beaming at me in an overly excited manner.

"Maybe," I replied, looking at the Job board. There wasn't anything good, and I had just come from a mission.

Laxus shuffled his feet, not meeting my gaze as he asked, "If you pick something, maybe I can go with you?" His voice wavered as if he both wanted to ask me and was scared of the answer at the same time.

God fucking damn, that hits me right where it hurts, in my heart.

"Sure, sounds like fun," I replied with a smile. I really didn't have in me to tell him no, besides, I could always pick something where the chances of him getting hurt are non-existent.

Not that I was overprotecting him, it was that his magic power right now was almost non-existent, so it was best to avoid unnecessary risks with him, for now.

"Awesome! I will go and tell gramps!" Laxus' face lit up with excitement, his eyes sparkling with joy as he spoke. Then without another word, he high-fived me, before rushing towards Makarov's office, barely able to contain his enthusiasm.

Once Laxus was out of sight, I turned around to greet Ivan who was just now entering the guild. Though that was because he had been eavesdropping all along.

Ivan's eyes widened as he spoke in his usual menacing tone. His lips parted, revealing a sinister grin beneath his greasy beard. "I heard you want to take Laxus with you on a job," he said. "He will only hinder you, but I understand, like me you pity him. Don't feel bad, those who are weak deserve nothing less from the strong."

I slowly spun around to face him, arching an eyebrow. My gaze was unimpressed as I took in Ivan's expression and demeanor. "That's an interesting analogy, Ivan. By that logic, I should pity you then."

At this, Ivan's pupils dilated and his nostrils flared as the barely contained fury bubbled up in him. It seems my words had struck a nerve or two.

Good.

I was all for ignoring him, and pretending he didn't exist. But I would not humor him.

Ivan's dark eyes narrowed as he raised a quivering hand, threatening to unleash his magic at me. His voice cracked like a whip as he spat his words, "You forget your place, child."

I glanced at him, eyebrows raised, and the corner of my mouth twitched with the effort of suppressing a smile. "Look, Ivan," I said in an even voice. "I'd love to stay and argue, but I have too much on my plate. So see you around, and do remember to have a good day."

With that said, I walked off leaving the fuming mage in the back as I neared the bar to order some food. I had no doubts Ivan would try to do something to me after this, I wonder if this time he will make it a bit more challenging than he has so far.

I guess time will tell.