

## [Adam C. POV.]

The crackling energy of the small village festival engulfed me.

The air was alive with the scent of roasting meats and fresh-baked bread. Children danced through the streets to the beat of drums and the strum of lyres.

I had only intended to pass through this village, but the festivities had drawn me in, that and the fact the mayor had decided to dedicate the festival to me, because he had recognized me as the newest Wizard Saint.

A welcome change from the usual of being attacked, I thought.

In one corner, an old woman with wisps of silver hair sold trinkets that she claimed could ward off evil spirits. On the other side, a burly blacksmith was drawing an eager crowd with his display of meticulously crafted swords and shields.

So, seeing the rest of the group needed a rest, and Gildarts wanted to exploit my popularity to get some free booze, I decided to enjoy myself, taking a sip of the local brew, letting the lively atmosphere that had been dedicated to sweep me away.

Unfortunately, without much of a warning, something changed in the air, something... dangerous, something very dangerous.

The party continued unabated, but to me, it felt muted, distant. I could sense something. No, someone. Actually, two someones. Their presence was faint, like a whisper.

The feeling was so subtle that I wouldn't have noticed if it wasn't for the souls of those hiding their presence.

They were trying to cloak themselves, but the sheer magnitude of their souls penetrated through their veils. Smiling, I continued bobbing my head to the music, but my thoughts raced.

Fighting them wasn't an option.

Whoever those two were, I had no doubts that together they would simply be too much for me to handle. Perhaps separately, but together, I had very little chance.

Confrontation was simply not an option.

I needed a plan. One that didn't involve fighting.

Gildarts was the only one here that could help me if push came to shove, and even there I wasn't sure of how well we would do.

It wasn't often I found myself face to face with these situations.

One of them especially felt so fucking strong that I might even have to use my Bankai if I find myself without another option.

Now that I think about it, that narrows the list of possible suspects down by a lot. Still, I had no way of knowing who I was dealing with without actually seeing them.

"It's everything okay?" Laxus asked, noticing the tense expression on my face.

He had an uncanny ability to see through my bullshit, it was honestly scary.

I turned to him with a reassuring smile, "Yeah, everything's fine. Just thinking, nothing serious."

I knew Laxus wouldn't buy my lie, but he didn't push further, instead choosing to take another sip of his drink, orange juice, before leaving.

Taking a deep breath, I continued moving around the town, pretending to socialize as I analyzed the presences and their reactions, eventually confirming they were after me.

I could feel their eyes on me, at least for most of the time, so it was safe to assume they were either here for me, or were just keeping an eye on me, deeming me the most dangerous individual, and as such, the one that needed the most monitoring.

Either way, I was the center of their attention.

That was good.

I could work with that.

If that was the case, and I was truly their target, it was all a matter of taking them as far away from the rest as possible.

After that, well, I don't know.

My entire objective right now was avoiding a possible confrontation in the Town. This was way of out Erza's and Laxus' reach.

"Brat, what's going on?" Gildarts asked, pulling me out of my thoughts.

I turned to him. Realizing what had happened, Laxus had told me. That fucking snitch.

Unfortunately for me, Gildarts was my best chance of dealing with this.

"Gildarts, listen well, there's two people watching from above the mountain, and I have reason to believe they're not here for a friendly chat," I said, keeping a beaming smile on my face, pretending I was still partying.

Gildarts' expression turned serious as he listened to me. "How dangerous are we talking about?"

"Dangerous enough we might die," I replied, my fake smile faltering a bit.

Gildarts nodded, understanding the gravity of the situation. "Alright then, let's get moving. If that's the case, we need to move any possible altercation out of the town, Laxus and Erza should be enough to evacuate should things go south."

Evacuation.

That was risky, Erza wasn't one to back down from a threat, and the same could be said about Laxus, in short, no one in the guild had any common sense.

But considering things, this was the best option we had. Besides, if I wanted to go all out, I needed some space, so real space between me, and anybody besides Gildarts.

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### **[Third Person. POV.]**

The moon hung low in the sky, casting a dim, ghostly light over the dense forest surrounding the small village of Florencia. The wind whispered through the trees and the rustle of leaves felt like hushed secrets being shared among the age-old spirits.

An eerie mist seemed to caress the shadows, and a chill lingered in the air.

As Adam ventured deeper into the forest with Gildarts, both keeping their senses on high alert, the sensation of being watched increased as they neared the location. With each step they took, Adam could feel an aura of immense magical energy pulsating.

It was a familiar sensation, but one he couldn't put his finger on.

Eventually, as they approached a clearing, they saw her. Selene, The Moon Dragon, sitting gracefully on a simple rock, surrounded by ethereal light. Her blonde hair flowed like a river of silver in the breeze, and her eyes glinted with a mix of malice and amusement.

"Gildarts, run," Adam ordered, getting into position. He knew the woman well, he had faced her before, and because of that, he knew how dangerous this woman was.

"Like hell I will," Gildarts responded, standing his ground beside Adam. "I ain't leaving you alone, kid."

"Long time, no see, Adam," Selene sang mockingly, her voice echoing in the woods.

Adam's eyes narrowed, and the air grew heavy with tension. His voice was firm, "What are you doing here?"

Selene smiled at his reaction. "Just wanted to say hi."

"You just did, now be on your way," Adam responded, his hand crackling with energy as he prepared for a fight.

Selene chuckled, her eyes gleaming with amusement. "So rude, is that a way to treat a lady?"

"Who the fuck are you, lady?" Gildarts interjected with a growl, his expression stern. "And what do you want?"

Selene turned her attention to Gildarts, a coy smile on her lips. "Right, my apologies, it seems I have forgotten to introduce myself. My name is Selene. And as for what I want, well, I was hoping to have some fun with your young friend here."

"Over my dead body," Gildarts growled, his fists clenched at his sides as his power erupted around him.

Selene's smile widened. "That can be easily arranged."

"You won't find this fight as easy as the last," Adam warned, his voice deep with power.

At this, Selene stood up from the smooth, moss-covered boulder she had been sitting on. Her eyes glinted in the moonlight as her lips curled in a twisted smile. "Is that so?" she responded; her voice heavy with finality. "Good."