

[Adam C. POV]

As the days turned into weeks, my condition began to improve.

To the point, I began to harness my own healing abilities, aka healing Kido's to aid in my recovery, with Porlyusica's guidance and expertise leading the way of course.

The thing was, I wasn't particularly good at healing, which wasn't a secret to anyone, but thanks to Porlyusica, I started to understand how better to channel these techniques I had been learning with Zanryuzuki in order to accelerate my own healing process.

Despite our lack of communication and her less-than-ideal character for teaching, she was helping me a lot, to the point that the techniques which had once seemed so foreign to me, now coursed through my body with a newfound sense of purpose.

I was far from truly grasping this part of my power, but I could say that I knew more now than before.

I truly appreciated that old woman. Despite of how scary she could be at times.

Each day, at the same time, at the start of the morning, and by the end of the day, Porlyusica would administer her carefully crafted treatments, which ranged from herbal remedies to enchantments that helped mend my bones and restore my strength.

As she did so, she would never hesitate to scold, or threaten to kill me herself if she thought I was pushing myself too hard, but beneath her stern, VERY STERN exterior, I could sense her satisfaction as my condition gradually improved.

Warrod, ever the nurturing presence, continued to fill the place with his laughter and an endless supply of flowers and plants.

With his calm demeanor, he would encourage me to take things one day at a time, and despite how anxious I was wanting to get out of the bed, however, more than not, his words would usually hit their mark, calming me.

This continued for a while, until finally, by the end of the month, I was back on my feet, though not without lingering pain.

My movements were still somewhat stiff and labored, but the fact that I could walk unaided filled me with a sense of

accomplishment. I knew that from this point forward, it was only a matter of time before I was able to go back to my former self.

Sure, more than not... this felt like a slow and sometimes frustrating ordeal, but that was the price for my weakness during that fight.

I suffered as I did because I wasn't strong enough to defeat Artemis without hurting myself.

Next time I faced a strong enemy, I would be strong enough.

Kicking the door of my room open, Porlyusica approached me, a look of annoyance etched onto her face. She thrust a bag into my hands, most likely filled with the medicines I needed to take to continue my healing process.

Having done that, she began to scold me about my condition without missing a beat, her voice sharp and stern.

"I'll be straightforward with you. It's a miracle that your body has sustained so much damage and stress," Porlyusica snapped, clearly irritated by my condition. "You brought your body very close to the breaking point, and you almost paid the ultimate price."

I was starting to wonder when she would scold me for this, not to say she didn't scold me during this past month, because she did... but not about this in particular.

That being said, despite her harsh tone, I could sense a genuine concern behind her words. She crossed her arms, her gaze never leaving mine. "That being said, despite your stupidity will make a full recovery, eventually," she conceded, "But you'll be left with a few scars here and there as a reminder of your recklessness."

"Thanks," I smiled fondly at her.

Porlyusica sighed, her expression softening slightly. "Don't thank me, just don't get injured again! Especially not like that! And remember you still need to take care of yourself and follow my instructions. And don't you dare think about getting into any fights until you're fully healed! or I will kill you!"

I nodded.

"And next time you make me travel halfway across the country, you better be dead when I arrive!" Porlyusica growled.

"I take it you're leaving now," I replied, looking at the bag in her right hand.

"Yes, I don't want to waste any more time here," Porlyusica replied, grabbing her bag tight. "Take care, brat."

"I will," I replied, my smile widening.

With a final nod and a huff, Porlyusica turned around and walked out of the door, closing it behind her, her footsteps echoing down the hall before another figure appeared in the doorway.

Warrod, the kind-eyed, old man, who had taken me into his home. Smiling, he stepped into the room holding two cups of steaming tea.

"It seems the young lady is leaving," Warrod chuckled, his voice soft and comforting. "So, I thought you might need a good cup of tea to take the edge off things."

He walked over and handed me one of the cups. The aroma of the tea was odd, but seeing I didn't know much about tea, I shrugged and took a cautious sip.

And it tasted like crap.

"What kind of tea is this?" I asked, trying my best not to sound rude.

Warrod hummed for a moment, "Oh my, it seems that instead of tea, I gave you a cup of my urine, clumsy me, it must be the age, hohoho!"

...

Don't panic Adam, he's just joking. That's his one joke, his only material, don't believe a word he says.

"I'm just kidding," Warrod chuckled mischievously, patting my shoulder. "I take it you don't like it? I could make you something else instead, that type of tea I made it's kind of an acquired taste. Though I don't recommend lime juice as it did not agree with me."

Why would he say anything about the lime juice, I didn't even know he had that until he mentioned it.

"No... that's fine," I replied, taking another sip of the tea to more or less just be polite.

"I'm glad," Warrod chuckled. "Let's enjoy the tea while it's not too hot. I think it will taste much better."

I took another sip, and it still tasted like crap.

"It's a bit... bitter for my taste," I answered, putting the cup back on the table.

"Not to me," Warrod answered with a laugh. "I like bitter stuff, but then again, I'm an old man and I'm allowed to be a little strange."

"I suppose," I chuckled, turning my gaze to the man. "So, when does our training start?"

Warrod slowly closed his eyes, furrowing his brows in concentration as he pursed his old lips, tapping a finger against them. "In... about two weeks. I will let you recover for two more weeks before we begin."

Two weeks.

Not as soon as I would've liked it.

But I'll take it.

Besides I could really use the time to rest, after all, I still felt exhausted on some level.

[Erza Scarlet POV]

I stood in the middle of the training ground, surrounded by the magical training golems.

The sun beat down on my skin, beads of sweat forming on my brow as I gripped my sword tightly, feeling as the air was filled with the distinctive crackle of magic that made the hairs on my arms stand on end.

My heart raced as I tried to steady my breathing, focusing on the task at hand.

I couldn't allow my thoughts to drift toward Adam, who was away on a dangerous mission.

Who according to the master had been hurt terribly, but had survived.

Taking a deep breath, I pushed the worry deep inside, knowing that despite everything he would return stronger than ever. And because of that, I needed to be stronger than ever too.

Without a word, the first golem lunged at me, its wooden limbs creaking with each movement.

Taking a step forward, I swung my sword, feeling the weight of the blade slice through the air. The wooden figure shattered

into splinters, its magic dissipating as I moved to face the next opponent.

One by one, the golems attacked me from all directions, their enchanted forms twisting and turning to challenge my every move.

My heart pounded in my chest, my breath coming in sharp gasps as I moved like a dancer on a stage, weaving through their attacks, each step calculated and precise.

I couldn't afford to be anything less.

As I cut down another golem, jumping above the rest, my mind began to wander.

I remembered the first time I met Adam, the kindness in his eyes, and the confidence in his voice.

The way he challenged me to push beyond my limits and to believe in my own strength.

In my mind, the thought of him being injured felt... impossible, he was stronger than anyone, so the mere idea he had been heavily injured felt... surreal, even ridiculous.

In my mind, he couldn't be hurt, not for real.

So this situation worried me.

It worried everyone.

I shook my head, trying to push the thoughts away, but they lingered like a stubborn fog.

I gritted my teeth and tightened my grip on my sword, feeling the calluses on my hands protest.

I would not let my worry be my downfall, I had to keep fighting, keep pushing, keep growing stronger.

He might have been injured, and he might have been too close to... not returning, but against all odds he had won! Meaning that through sheer skill and determination, he had overcome yet again another seemingly impossible challenge.

Worrying about him would only be an insult to his victory, and I would not sully that.

I would instead show him how strong I could become!

The training golems were strong and relentless, but so was I.

My swords were an extension of my body.

Like Adam, like my mentor, each time a challenge came my way, each time an obstacle tried to slow me down, I would rise

to meet it, fueled by the fire of determination that burned within my chest!

Pushing forward, I moved faster than ever before, shattering the final golem, the fragments of wood and magic swirling around me like a whirlwind.

I could feel my muscles aching and my lungs burning. But there was a fierce satisfaction in my eyes as I looked around the now-empty training ground.

I had conquered this challenge.

Now, I had to conquer the next.

I knew that my mentor, that Adam would return, and when he did, he would find me stronger than ever.

To prove myself worthy of crossing blades with him, I would become a force to be reckoned with, a warrior worthy of his teachings, until I was strong enough to face whatever challenges the world threw at us, side by side.

I knew I had a long way to go before that.

But every journey starts somewhere, and mine starts here!