

[David Lance POV]

The following day after my battle with Bakaara was one of the hardest I had ever faced in my entire life.

The number of times I had been close to the gates of the cold beyond at the hands of Wioska during that single day, were simply too numerous to count, as were the amount of times I was dragged back into the living world by her power.

At first, I couldn't grasp what she was trying to teach me during our training.

She wasn't exactly the most talkative person I had had the pleasure of training with. Even then, something was very clear. She was certain I would learn what she was trying to teach me sooner or later, lest I wanted to die at her hands by the end of the week.

On our first day, she put me through various situations. One more deadly than the other, all of them including a fight of some sort, be it against a warrior, a beast, or things I couldn't name; for the lack of words in my native language that could describe them accurately.

In total, she made me face three challenges. And some others that weren't quite a challenge perse, but were tasks that required a lot.

The first was a very straightforward challenge. All I had to do was defeat a warrior of great renown on this planet, one who was strong enough to defeat Bakaara with a single finger.

I lost.

The moment the fight started, the warrior simply vanished out of sight, cutting me in half right around the waist before simply walking away.

I hadn't even seen him move. One moment he was in front of me, and the next, I was falling to the ground without a chance to fight back.

Wioska healed my wounds soon after that, and for the next two hours, she had me fight this warrior.

For the next two hours, I was cut down more times than I cared to admit. And each time, it would be the same thing, he would disappear and strike me down before I could even react. This continued until; eventually, I dodged.

After more than a hundred cuts, I had dodged.

That, unfortunately, didn't last for very long because the next swing of his blade did what the first didn't do, cutting me down.

However, after that first fateful dodge, my luck started to change.

I started to dodge more and more often as time went by. At first, I would dodge once every few hundred cuts; then it was once every fifty or more; that number kept going down to the point I found myself dodging several attacks at once.

I was finally able to see his attacks.

My danger sense was finally able to sense his blade before it swung down on me.

Here, what I didn't understand was the fact that even though I wasn't moving any faster than before. I was somehow keeping up with him.

I couldn't help but wonder... What exactly had changed?

She had said something about one's Chi before the challenges started. However, she hadn't elaborated further than the fact she had Chi and that she could use it.

Perhaps that was what had changed. Chi.

Perhaps the reason I was now keeping up with the warrior was that I was tapping into that power in some way, though I wasn't sure that was the case right now. After all, I felt no different.

Pushing those thoughts aside, I continued fighting the warrior until, eventually, the tables turned completely. As my senses continued to sharpen under the ever-present threat of this blade, I noticed a glaring flaw in his style.

After each swing, he would leave himself open for just about a split second.

Without hesitation, I took that opening.

I struck him with everything I had, hitting him so hard that he was sent flying several meters before crashing into a massive boulder, breaking it in the process.

He didn't get up after that.

The second challenge was against a beast.

I soon found this one was considerably harder than the last challenge.

The beast in question was a massive creature with two long tusks protruding from its jaws and spikes running down its

back. This beast had no style, no focus. It was simply a body of wild destruction.

Without hesitation, the beast attacked me the moment it saw me.

I tried to dodge it, but even though I was able to see the beast coming at me, I was simply too slow to dodge it.

So, instead, I tried to block it, that, however, did nothing as the beast blasted me out of the way before it started to trample me into the ground.

The cycle started once again.

I was healed by Wioska and thrown into the fray.

And so, I fought. Over and over again, I was thrown into the battle only to be trampled or tossed aside like a ragdoll. But each time, I would get back up and continue fighting until, eventually, my masochistic tenacity began to pay off.

I stopped the beast during one of its charges.

Like before, I couldn't feel any change within me, yet I had been able to somehow stop the beast, the very same beast who had mere moments ago overpowered me with ease, breaking my defenses like a castle of cards.

From that point on, I just continued fighting this mindless creature until, eventually, I claimed my victory by defeating the beast.

The third challenge was against another animal/beast and it was a speedster. Not like the first challenger, who mostly relied on bursts of speed alongside his blade.

No.

This one was a real speedster.

And, like the previous two, I knew this wasn't going to be easy.

But no matter.

Regardless of the challenge, this annoying creature would unavoidably represent, I would defeat it.

It was only a simple matter of time before that happened.

And who knows, seeing Wioska said this creature was an animal, I might cook it; I mean, it might taste good.