

[David Lance POV]

[Day 3.]

I was in the middle of my morning run around the fucking planet, trying to keep up with Wioska, when I saw a blur flash by me. It was so fast that I couldn't even tell what it was, but I knew that it wasn't something human, not even remotely.

I turned to look at where it had come from, and I saw a large figure standing on top of a hill, looking down at me.

Whoever or whatever this individual was, it looked like some sort of anthropomorphic rhinoceros.

Instinctively, my ring started to glow as I readied myself for battle, but I stopped myself when I saw Wioska looking at me.

"Are you really so weak that you need the ring to defeat that insect?" Wioska asked, her voice dripping with disdain.

I grit my teeth in frustration. I was honestly getting tired of her constantly putting me down.

"I've seen Kalibak best insects like this with a single hand," Wioska said, walking past me.

I guess I will have to beat McHorn with my bare hands.

"So, you are the one I have to crush under my hooves," The Rhino said in a voice that sounded like two rocks grinding against each other. "Good, I've been waiting for you. Rejoice in the fact you will be The Great Bakaara's one-thousandth kill!"

If his way of talking is anything to go by, this guy is a brawler. And a fault of all brawlers is that they rely heavily on their physical might, their whole style revolving around overpowering their enemy.

Taking that into account and the fact that everything with Wioska so far has been extremely difficult, I think it is safe to assume this beast is stronger than me.

At least on the physical side of things.

"Come then, let us fight for glory!" Bakaara said as he charged at me.

I quickly dodged to the side, barely avoiding his charge. He was fast, very fast, but not as fast as I had seen move. During his introduction, he had shown a vastly superior level of speed.

He was either holding back, be it out of his own accord or because Wioska told him to.

However, I honestly doubted Wioska would tell him to hold back; after all, she had made it very clear on more than one occasion that her training would either make me stronger or kill me.

"Is that all you can do, little monkey?" Bakaara said as he charged at me again.

Once again, I dodged to the side, but this time he was ready for this course of action and changed his trajectory mid-charge to follow me with a dexterity that betrayed his looks.

"I am The Great Bakaara!" Bakaara roared as he finally caught up to me and swung his fist at me.

I quickly ducked under his massive arm, delivering a swift uppercut to his chin. However, instead of my attack harming him, it was I the one that suffered damage, having one of my knuckles fractured after the hit.

It felt like I had hit a wall of steel with all of my strength as a normal human.

Realizing I had no chance to win this fight by taking him head-on, I jumped back, but before I could get away, he grabbed me

by the throat and started to squeeze, slowly cutting off my air supply.

I tried to pry his hand off of my throat using all the strength I could muster and more, but it was like trying to move a mountain.

"Are you really struggling with that insect?" Wioska said, her voice dripping with disappointment as she walked towards us.

"The Great Bakaara is disappointed. He thought you were stronger," Bakaara said as he continued to choke me.

My vision was starting to fade as the grip of Bakaara continued to tighten; I had to do something.

It was clear Wioska had no intention of intervening, and I refused to die at the hands of someone that speaks in the third person!

Gritting my teeth as I felt my desperation grow with each passing second, I swung at him with all my might, refusing to die, refusing to lose.

The impact was enough to make him release his grip on me and stagger back a few steps.

"Perhaps I can still make a warrior out of you," Wioska said, looking at me with a small smile.

I gulped down large breaths of air as I tried to catch my breath, my throat burning. I had managed to push him back, I had done no apparent damage, but I had pushed him back.

I clenched my fists with newfound determination, realizing the fist I had used to attack Bakaara felt fine.

I had fully expected to break my hand after that strike. After all, I had broken a knuckle with the first hit, but somehow, my fist was completely fine, a bit sore perhaps, but fine.

"YESSS!" Bakaara roared to the skies before cracking his neck as he got back into his fighting stance. "The Great Bakaara is pleased to see you still have some fight in you! Good! Excellent! An easy fight brings no glory, no honor, no satisfaction!"

I got into my fighting stance as well, bracing myself for our battle to restart. No matter the cost, I would win.

"Replicate the feeling you had with that last punch, and you might just defeat this insect," Wioska said, her voice laced with a hint of amusement as she looked at Bakaara. "Your power remains the same, yet what changed during that last attack? Ask yourself that."

What changed, indeed?

I had been close to biting the dust for a moment there.

Hysterical strength, perhaps?

It could be, I mean, hysterical strength is a display of extreme physical strength some creatures show, giving results beyond what is believed to be normal, an evolutionary method of self-preservation that normally occurs when people perceive themselves to be in life-and-death situations.

This extra strength is commonly attributed to increased adrenaline production in the body.

That would fit what happened right now.

Bakaara had pushed me into a corner, and my body had reacted out of self-preservation.

However, as much as this fit what had happened, my state of being right now showed no signs of a massive increase in adrenaline, meaning that whatever I had done to muster more strength wasn't a result of a boost thanks to hysterical strength.

I guess I will have to find out what exactly was that I did differently that time.

Trial and error. But with the risk of losing my life, how charming.