

"He taught you..."

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SPOILERS!! Kuja returns to his palace after the destruction of

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The low, loud rumble of the Hilda Garde 1 echoed through the hanger of the Desert Palace as it docked. It had sustained little damage in the escape from Alexandria's destruction, unfortunately Kuja had not been as lucky as the airship. He had been in the center of the city and it would seem that Bahamut disregarded his presence, decimating several buildings that were to close for comfort, as was he too close to the obliteration of Alexander at Garland's hands.

That fool, Kuja thought angrily as the airship finished docking, I could have controlled the legendary eidolon and he goes and destroys it! Kuja stood to leave and realized how badly he was injured, wincing slightly he carefully straightened his posture and walked off the airship with cautious steps. Down on the pathway Zorn and Thorn greeted their master panicked.

"Master Kuja!" they said in unison as they usually did.

"Returned, you have."

"Are you hurt?" Kuja scowled at them.

"Shut up, that is a stupid question! Of course I'm not hurt! If Bahamut couldn't than nothing can."

"What about Garland?" Zorn asked timidly. Kuja glared at him for a moment before he grabbed the small jester by the throat and held him up above his head.

"How dare you! Never mention that name in my presence!" he bellowed and threw the jester into the far wall, Thorn backed away slowly. The two black mages that stood behind Kuja looked at each other, what Kuja did not realize was that blood had started to roll down his back from several large gashes that were from glass that exploded when a building was demolished. He turned around to the Black Mages.

"Is everything prepared as planned?" he demanded, both of them nodded, not wanting to anger him by pointing out that he was in fact wounded. "Good, keep working." he snapped and turned. "I'm going to go rest." he said and walked swiftly away, the mages looked at each other again.

The portal glowed and Kuja appeared, he cringed, his legs shook violently and he limped slowly across the room to a small door that blended in with the wall so well that one who didn't know about it would never find it. The door slowly opened for him but after only a few steps his knees buckled and he collapsed onto the cold floor.

Dammit! He cursed himself. Damn Bahamut. He clenched his fists tightly. Damn Garland! He slammed his fists on the marble as hard as he could, a small pool of blood formed where his fists sat.

"Sir, you're bleeding." a black mage said. Kuja looked at the golem startled, he hadn't heard it come in, he hadn't realized that the black mages had become so bold or maybe it didn't see what happened to Zorn.

"What are you doing?" You're not allowed in here!" Kuja barked, trying to stand up on his own but to no avail.

"Sir, you're hurt." the black mage said in the same tone, and moved to help Kuja to his feet.

"You didn't answer my question." he snapped and pulled away from it.

"But I did, you're hurt that's why I am here." Kuja looked at the black mage confused.

"You....you want to help me?" he asked uneasily. The black mage nodded, and held out his hands as an offering to help Kuja to his feet, which Kuja reluctantly took, it led him carefully over to the bed. As he sat on his bed he finally unclenched his fists, showing his hatred of Garland; he had put his nails into his palms. He looked up at black mage, keeping his head down so it didn't notice, as it began to gently clean

the cuts on his hands. "Why do you want to help me?" asking distrustfully, he winced slightly at the water stinging his cuts, and looked down again.

"Zidane taught us that you don't need a reason to help people." At this Kuja looked at the golem shocked.

"Zidane taught you that?" The black mage nodded. Kuja looked back down at his hands. ``What else did he teach you?" Kuja said somberly. The black mage began telling Kuja all the life lessons that Zidane and his friends had taught the habitants of the Black mage village, Kuja listened carefully all the time staring at his hands and the marks that his hatred had left, finally the golem bandaged Kuja hands and finished his retelling. ``You have certainly learned a lot since you awoke haven't you?"

`` Why yes master we have." He nodded. ``Now you need to rest. No trying to rule the world till you're well." Kuja smiled slightly and carefully lay down and instantly fell asleep.