

Fairy Tail 112

Chapter 112: The Harsh Reality

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Malba.

February, x782.

"Alfonzo, what are you doing?" Natsu asked while huddled together with the others inside the dome Alfonzo created.

"Yeah, why did you make that?" Lisanna asked while pointing up at the dome.

"None of you felt that?" Alfonzo asked.

"Felt what?" Mirajane asked with confusion written all over her expression.

"*Sigh* Hey, Elfman, did you see the vortex in the sky?" Alfonzo asked. "I mean, you were the only one looking at the sky the entire time."

"Yeah, I saw it." Elfman replied. "The clouds were swirling. But what's the problem?"

"Well, I felt my magic power and the surrounding ethernano being sucked toward it." Alfonzo replied.

Naturally, everyone looked at Alfonzo skeptically after hearing his explanation. However, when they saw the serious expression on his face, they took his words more seriously.

"So, I made this dome out of adamantite." Alfonzo continued. "It has the lowest magic power conductivity of any metal in Earth Land. So, I thought it would stop whatever force was acting on magic power and sucking it toward the vortex."

This time, everyone was shocked. They had never heard of a phenomenon that pulled in magic power like that.

"How long do you think we'll be stuck in here?" Mirajane asked with some slight worry in her voice.

"I'm not sure." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head. "But considering how little magic power you and Elfman have left; it could be dangerous to go out for now."

"Then we should wait here." Lisanna said, hugging Elfman a little tighter.

"Lisanna, I'm still hurt and out of magic power, remember?" Elfman said with a wince.

Remembering that Elfman was hurt, Lisanna released him immediately.

"Oh, you can't handle a hug from your little sister?" Alfonzo said in a teasing tone.

Feeling challenged by Alfonzo's teasing question, Elfman erased his pained expression.

"Of course, I can." Elfman said in the strongest tone he could muster at the moment. "I'm a real man."

'Yup, I definitely fucked up.' Alfonzo muttered internally. 'That's gonna become his catch phrase from now on. And it's probably gonna be annoying in real life.'

"More important than that, you're gonna be in a shit ton of trouble when we get back, Mirajane." Alfonzo said sternly. "Bringing those two with you on an S-Class quest was against the rules of the guild."

With that, the other four fell silent and Mirajane hung her head with guilt. A few moments later, Lisanna was the one to break that silence.

"But no one got hurt,, so the punishment shouldn't be that bad, right?" Lisanna asked in a cheerful tone.

While Elfman and Natsu, as simple minded as they were, nodded along with Lisanna's assessment, Mirajane knew better. She knew that her punishment would be serious.

"No one got hurt, huh?" Alfonzo asked, in a strict tone while narrowing his eyes at the three younger wizards. "That's only because Natsu and I followed you here."

Hearing the severity in Alfonzo's tone, the three flinched. For as long as they had known him, they had never heard him sound so serious.

"Lisanna." Alfonzo said, letting his gaze fall on Natsu for a moment, signaling him to stay silent with his eyes. "What do you think would have happened if Natsu and I weren't here?"

Lisanna was unable to answer the question. Not because she did not know the answer, however. Instead, it was because she knew the answer and did not want to accept it.

"Elfman would have probably killed you." Alfonzo said bluntly, deciding not to coddle the girl.

Like Mirajane, Lisanna also hung her head.

"And Elfman, though you probably would have been fine, this would have left a serious scar on your heart." Alfonzo said, continuing on to the next one. "Not only would you have carried the guilt of killing your sister for the rest of your life, but you would have also been afraid of your current strongest [Take Over], limiting your potential immensely."

With that, the severity of the situation finally sunk in for Elfman, Lisanna, and Natsu.

"Them, what will happen to them?" Natsu asked in a worried tone after a few seconds of uncomfortable silence.

"To Elfman and Lisanna, nothing serious." Alfonzo replied. "At worst, they'll get a slap on the wrist for going on an S-Class quest without the right designation."

Although Elfman and Lisanna were relieved to hear that, they were still more than a little worried for Mirajane.

"What about Mira?" Lisanna asked.

"That's up to Gramps. But I'm sure that her punishment will be much more severe." Alfonzo replied.

"Not only did she bring two unqualified wizards on an S-Class quest, which almost led to the death of one of them, she let her arrogance cloud her judgement. And as a wizard, that can be fatal."

'Isn't this ironic, I had been seen as arrogant for most of my two lives.' Alfonzo mused to himself. 'And now, I'm here lecturing someone bout being arrogant. The world is a strange place.'

At that point, the regret was rolling off Mirajane in waves. She had never even considered that something could go wrong on this quest as long as she was there. And like Alfonzo said, that was a sign of arrogance.

"Will I... be kicked out of the guild?" Mirajane asked in a weak, defeated tone.

Once again, the three younger wizards were shocked. None of them had thought that far. At worst, they only considered Mirajane losing her S-Class status.

"We can't let that happen!" Natsu shouted indignantly as he was suddenly covered in flames that grew in temperature rapidly.

"*Bang!*

Chill the fuck out!" Alfonzo shouted as he slammed his gauntleted right hand into the back of Natsu's head. "We're in an enclosed space, are you trying to suffocate us all?"

'Actually, I don't' even know if Natsu's fire burns oxygen like normal fire.' Alfonzo mused as he looked down at Natsu who was now laying face first on the ground. 'But it's already warm in here with all our body heat. I don't wanna be all sweaty and shit in the winter when I bring this barrier down.'

"Geez, Alfonzo, you didn't have to hit me..." Natsu said as he picked himself up off the ground. "As compensation, you have to fight me and cook me a meal when we get back to the guild."

In response, Alfonzo only looked at Natsu with a deadpan gaze.

"If I accept that condition, you have to accept a condition of mine, too." Alfonzo said, his deadpan expression morphing into a sinister smile.

Seeing Alfonzo's smile, Natsu was no longer so sure about this. However, he wanted to know what Alfonzo wanted if he accepted.

"What do you want?" Natsu asked with a slight quivering in his voice.

"If you lose..." Alfonzo said, his smile growing wider.

"*Gulp* If I lose?" Natsu asked, growing more nervous as time went by.

"You'll have to ride with me next time I take the Vanquish out to do donuts." Alfonzo said.

Immediately, Natsu's expression fell as his face paled. Just the thought of riding in Alfonzo's car, let alone riding with him while he was driving recklessly and faster than usual, made Natsu feel queasy.

Meanwhile, the others were stunned by Natsu's outburst. Then, they were stunned once again when Alfonzo hit Natsu and seemed to be unbothered by the heat of Natsu's flames. And finally, Alfonzo's sinister smile brought them back to their senses.

"Hey!" Lisanna exclaimed, interrupting the current atmosphere. "Will Mira get kicked out of Fairy Tail for this?"

"Oh, that?" Alfonzo said, dropping the sinister smile as he glanced at Lisanna. Then, he waved his hand dismissively. "Nah, there's no way. It's not like she did anything that endangered the entire guild."

"Then, what will happen to her." Elfman asked, trying to sit up from his laying position.

Quickly, Lisanna helped Elfman sit up as they both focused on Alfonzo.

"I'm not sure exactly." Alfonzo replied honestly. "But if I had to guess, she'll probably be suspended from taking any quests for a while. ON top of that, she'll probably be demoted to A-Class, or lower, until she proves she deserves the S-Class designation again."

Whie Natsu smiled at Alfonzo's guess, Elfman and Lisanna breathed a sigh of relief. Even Mirajane thought that was not such a bad punishment.

Seeing the expressions of the others, Alfonzo frowned.

"You all think that's not so bad, right?" Alfonzo asked, his serious tone pulling the three out of their relieved state. "Then, you're more foolish than I thought. Mirajane broke the guild's trust. And trust is one of the hardest things in the world to rebuild once broken."

That caused the other four to open their eyes wide.

"Mirajane." Alfonzo said, his stern gaze finally falling on the eldest of the Straus siblings. "Master Makarov and the other S-Classes put their trust in you. We all gave you a vote of confidence. We felt that you would be able to bring the guild to a new level of strength. Instead, you spit on our trust and broke the rules that were put in place to keep the members of the guild safe."

Once again, Mirajane hung her head while guilty tears flowed freely from her eyes. Meanwhile, Elfman and Lisanna wanted to console her. However, neither of them knew what to say.

"Why did you have to be so harsh with her?" Natsu asked as he grabbed Alfonzo by the collar.

Instead of replying, however, Alfonzo looked at Natsu coldly.

Seeing Alfonzo's expression, Natsu was surprised. Behind the cold gaze, there was disappointment and anger.

"Why does he look like that?" Natsu asked himself as he released Alfonzo's shirt. 'Is he really that disappointed in Mira? Did he really trust her that much? Then, what's with the anger?'

In fact, Alfonzo really was disappointed in Mirajane. In neither of his two lives did Alfonzo have siblings. But he did lose his family in this one. So, he knew the pain of loss. And considering that Mirajane lost her parents only four years ago, he was very disappointed in Mirajane, who put her remaining family in so much danger.

As for the anger swirling in Alfonzo's eyes, it was aimed at himself. He knew he could have stepped in and solved the whole situation without anyone nearly hurt. But he also knew that they would all grow from the experience, so he let it happen. And the fact that he let people he considered friends get hurt when he could do something about it is what angered him the most.

Once Natsu released him, Alfonzo stepped past him. Then, he knelt in front of Mirajane.

"Regaining our trust won't be easy." Alfonzo said sternly. Then, he placed his hand on top of Mirajane's head as he continued in a much gentler tone. "But you will get the chance to do so. So, you better work your ass off, Mirajane Straus. Prove to us, Fairy Tail's S-Class wizards, that we weren't wrong about recommending you to Gramps. And prove that Gramps, Fairy Tail's guild master, was not wrong for accepting our recommendations. And if you can do that, I know you'll come out much stronger from this."

Although Mirajane had been crying silently for a while, after hearing Alfonzo's gentle, encouraging tone, she finally broke down and cried loudly. At the same time, she grabbed Alfonzo's shirt and buried her head in his chest.

"I'm sorry!" Mirajane shouted through her tears, the weight of her actions hitting her like a speeding truck. "I never wanted them to get hurt! I didn't want to break anyone's trust! I just wanted Elfman and Lisanna to see how strong their sister had become!"

Elfman and Lisanna also started tearing up again after hearing Mirajane's outburst. Even Natsu felt his nose getting sour.

Meanwhile, knowing that she had been through a lot today, Alfonzo gently wrapped his arms around Mirajane and pulled her close.

Not long after she started crying, after only five minutes or so, Mirajane cried herself to sleep in Alfonzo's arms. So, Alfonzo adjusted her position and lifted her in a princess carry.

"Natsu, help Elfman up." Alfonzo said. "We need to get back to the city. Mirajane and Elfman are hurt."

"Mira..." Mirajane said, somewhere between consciousness and the land of dreams. "Call me Mira... Fonzie..."

Alfonzo could immediately feel one of his eyebrows start twitching fiercely.

'I knew I should have put my foot down about calling me Fonzie.' Alfonzo thought to himself as he lowered the adamantite barrier. 'I've hated that nickname since my past life. At least it was only Lici who called me that back then. But now, there are three, and probably more on the way.'

Just as Alfonzo was having that thought, the barrier came down completely. And as soon as it did, Alfonzo, Elfman, Lisanna, and Natsu saw a blue haired young man standing there with his hand raised as if he was going to knock on it.

"Who are you?" Natsu asked, narrowing his eyes at the unfamiliar man.

"Chill out, Natsu." Alfonzo said calmly. "I get the feeling this guy isn't bad. But it would be nice to know who you are."

'Damn, I hate keeping up appearances.' Alfonzo muttered internally. Fairy Tail's future, coolest wizard is standing in front of me right now.'

"I was just passing by." The blue haired young man said. "I figured you were taking shelter from that vortex when I saw the dome. But since you came out on your own, I guess there's nothing to say."

With that, the blue haired young man walked away, not giving the group of five a chance to ask him any more questions.