

Fairy Tail 113

Chapter 113: Punishments

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

February, x782.

After their meeting with the blue haired- young man, Alfonzo, Mirajane, Elfman, Lisanna, and Natsu returned to Malba to get Mirajane and Elfman's injuries treated. Then, after a few days, once the two were in good enough shape to travel, they headed back to Magnolia.

After arriving in Magnolia, they made their way to the guild hall. Though Mirajane, Elfman, and Lisanna walked with timid steps, Natsu continuously tried to bargain for a better condition to his challenge. Unfortunately, Alfonzo would not give in.

"Come on Man." Natsu said. "It's not that serious, right? Why does it have to be such a big price for just a little spar?"

"Because over the years, I've beaten you more times than I can count." Alfonzo replied. "And I need something to amuse me."

'God damn it, would you just give up already?' Alfonzo cursed internally. 'It's not like I wanna bring your queasy ass in my baby ether. I just wanted to scare you out of making this challenge. Take the fucking hint, would you?'

"Fine.. How bout just a meal?" Natsu asked, taking a step back. "I don't need the fight. But I definitely want you to cook something for me."

"Sure, that can be arranged." Alfonzo said while breathing a sigh of relief internally. "And I'll even make it half price."

"That's not what I meant, Alfonzo!" Natsu shouted. "You should be treating me to a meal! It's for compensation!"

"Compensation?" For what?" Alfonzo asked with a confused expression on his face.

"Huh? Now that you mention it... What do I need to be compensated for?" Natsu asked himself with a contemplative expression on his face.

Meanwhile, the Straus siblings, who were too nervous to speak when they got off the train, calmed down quite a bit after seeing the display in front of them.

'After all that pestering, did he really forget why he started it?' The Straus siblings thought simultaneously.

A moment later, Lisanna was about to open her mouth to remind Natsu, however, her words were caught in her throat when Alfonzo glanced her way.

Not long after that, the group of five arrived at the guild hall, resulting in the Straus siblings nervousness returning. Though it was too a much lesser degree.

"*Bang!*

"Fairy Tail, we're back!" Alfonzo shouted as he slammed the doors to the guild hall open.

Upon hearing Alfonzo's voice, the guild hall fell silent. Then, all the wizards, minus his group of friends, turned their heads in his direction slowly.

When Alfonzo saw their blood shot gazes, he had an idea why they were looking at him like that, and it caused him to smile. Still, he ignored them as he started walking toward Makarov.

"Okay, Gramps." Alfonzo said, letting his voice project over the silent guild hall. "Just like you told me to, I brought back the rule breaking siblings."

At that moment, all the blood shot gazes aimed at Alfonzo shifted over to Makarov. Unlike the gazes pointed at Alfonzo, these held a bit of killing intent on top of their anger.

'Why are they looking at me like I killed their parents?' Makarov asked himself as his eyebrow and upper lip began twitching.

The answer to Makarov's internal question was simple, actually. Though they all want to punish Alfonzo and chain him up in the guild's kitchen, they never had the thought of killing him. They could not kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, after all.

Makarov was a different story, though. He was the one who sent Alfonzo away during one of his shifts. So, he needed to be punished for taking their fix... *Cough* Enjoyment away.

Bang!

Makarov, unhappy with the gazes he was receiving, slammed his mug of ale on top of the bar. Then, he let his gaze sweep past every member of the guild, even those on the second floor, Namely, Laxus.

"Lately, I've been receiving a lot more complaints about property damage from the clients of the quests you brats have been taking." Makarov said, standing up from his seated position. Then, he looked at Alfonzo and Elicia lovingly. "Well, except for Alfonzo and Elicia, that is."

Though everyone was still glaring at Makarov, besides the anger and slight killing intent their glares held at first, there was now a bit of confusion mixed in as well.

"So, I've made a decision." Makarov continued. "From now on, Alfonzo will no longer be taking shifts in the guild's kitchen."

Immediately, some of the weaker willed members of the guild fainted due to Makarov's declaration.

"Instead, you will only be able to request that he cook for you when you've acquired enough points." Makarov said.

"Points? What the hell are you talking about, Old Man?" Macao asked with a stunned expression on his face.

"Yeah, the guild doesn't have a point system in place." Wakaba chimed in.

"Silence, you brats!" Makarov shouted, bringing an end to the questions temporarily. "The points will be earned by completing quests without causing property damage."

Makarov's newest declaration caused the faces of those who had not already fainted to pale immediately.

Completing quests without causing property damage was only a concept for most of the members of the guild. One that they had no experience with.

So, Makarov's new rule brought with it an unprecedeted wave of fear.

"Master, you can't do that!" Chica shouted, almost hysterically. "Being a wizard can be stressful enough as it is. Why would you take away the thing that helps us unwind the most."

"It's not like you'll be losing his food completely." Makarov said with a smile. "But this way you'll have to work for it. Oh, and by the way. When you exchange your points, you won't have to pay for the meal."

That last sentence caused the Fairy Tail wizards' eyes to sparkle. A moment later, however, their eyes dimmed once again. They still had to somehow complete their quests without causing property damage, and they were not sure if that was a feat they could ever complete.

"Hold the fuck up, Old man!" Alfonzo's angry roar broke the silence caused by the wizards' contemplation.

Alfonzo's shout also got Makarov's attention. So, he turned his head to look at Alfonzo. And when he did, he stumbled backward, almost falling off the bar.

"A-A-Alfonzo, what's wrong, my boy?" Makarov asked in a slightly scared tone.

The reason for Makarov's slight fear was obvious if you could see Alfonzo's face. Right now, his expression was contorted with inhuman amounts of anger. On top of that, the dark aura and pressure Alfonzo released was suffocating.

"Did you just suggest that I would be working for free?" Alfonzo asked while cracking his knuckles and slowly walking toward Makarov. "I think we talked about this a long time ago, right? I'm a wizard, and I don't work for free."

'Shit!' Makarov exclaimed internally. 'I paused my speech for too long before finishing. Alfonzo, just like Bianca, never plays around when the matter involves being fairly compensated for their work.'

"Calm down, Alfonzo." Makarov said in a placating tone. "I wasn't done yet. I only paused to let the facts sink in for these brats."

Though Alfonzo still was not fully satisfied, he decided to wait until Makarov was finished before he passed judgement. So, he gestured for Makarov to continue.

'I'm supposed to be the guild master, right?' Makarov asked himself while regaining his bearings. 'How can I be intimidated by such a young man. Well, now that I think about it, Bianca could be pretty intimidating when she wanted to, as well.'

At the same time, Makarov thought he heard a group of four adults laughing at his misfortune. However, he dismissed it as an audio hallucination. Still, he looked in the direction the laughter would have come from, had it been real. What he saw was Ur, Ren, Gozaburo, and Masa chuckling. But he dismissed what he saw as a visual hallucination, as well.

'There's no way they're laughing at me.' Makarov convinced himself. 'I'm the guild master, the most respected person in the building. Yup, all that must have been my imagination.'

"*Cough* Anyway... Although you brats won't have to pay for the meals you trade for with your points, it would be unfair to Alfonzo if I asked him to cook for free." Makarov said, trying to pretend that he was not just frightened by the almost seventeen year old boy standing next to him. "Instead, the guild will cover the costs of those meals."

After finishing his explanation, Makarov took a glance at Alfonzo's expression. When he saw it relax followed by Alfonzo nodding his head in approval, Makarov breathed a relieved sigh internally.

"Now, we need to deal with the rule breakers." Makarov said, letting his gaze fall on the Straus siblings. "Follow me up to my office."

With that, Makarov led Alfonzo, Mirajane, Elfman, Lisanna, and Natsu up to the third floor. After a few moments, the group of six were all in Makarov's office. While Makarov, Alfonzo, and Natsu were all seated, Mirajane, Elfman, and Lisanna remained standing with their heads lowered guiltily.

"Alfonzo, give me a report of the events." Makarov said in an authoritative tone.

Following Makarov's instructions, Alfonzo told Makarov every detail about Mirajane's quest, from his perspective. And as he did, Mirajane and her siblings lowered their heads even further. However, they were not the only ones who felt guilty at this moment.

Makarov, like the Straus siblings, also felt some guilt. Alfonzo had asked him why he didn't stop Mirajane from bringing Elfman and Lisanna along with her before all this happened. In response, he made teasing remarks about Alfonzo's worry. But now, he realized that there was much more merit to Alfonzo's wariness than he originally expected.

"*Sigh* It looks like I bear some blame for this as well." Makarov said in a solemn tone. "The rules are in place for a reason. I should have stopped you as soon as I noticed what you were going to do. Otherwise we may have lost two promising wizards that day."

Hearing the severity in Makarov's tone only reinforced the lecture Alfonzo gave them in the dome. On top of that, hearing the chain of events from an outside perspective made the siblings realize just how dangerous the situation was.

"*Sigh* I will reflect on my inaction." Makarov said. Then, he turned his gaze toward Alfonzo and Natsu. "And I want to thank the two of you for bringing them back safely."

"We're all family here, Gramps." Alfonzo said with a smile while waving off Makarov's words of thanks. "That's what we do, right? No need for thanks."

"Yeah, Alfonzo's right." Natsu added. "I'd do anything for my friends."

While Makarov smiled at the responses he got to his thanks, Mirajane's face had turned beet red at Alfonzo's declaration of family. Then, her mind drifted off into the world of imagination.

'He said we're family.' Mirajane thought to herself blissfully. 'Wait! Does that mean he likes me, too? Well, he did follow me to keep me safe, right? So, he has to. Then does him saying that we're family mean that he wants us to become a real family? Like, marriage? Then, if we get married, we'll have kids, right? Right. And to have kids, we'll have to do... that!'

"Hehehe..." Mirajane released a perverted chuckle, bringing an end to the heartwarming atmosphere in the office.

Unfortunately, Mirajane was too far gone at the moment to realize the change in atmosphere.

"Mira!" Lisanna said sharply while shaking Mirajane by the shoulder.

"Huh?" What happened?" Mirajane asked in a confused tone after being shaken out of her daydreams.

Then, she swept her gaze over those present. When she met eyes with Alfonzo, her face, all the way up to the tips of her ears, turned a deeper shade of red.

"Big Sis, are you alright?" Elfman asked as he place his hand on Mirajane's shoulder. "You're all red. Do you have a fever? Are your injuries still hurting?"

"I'm fine, Elfman, there's nothing to worry about." Mirajane said, unwilling to make eye contact with anyone in the room.

"*Cough* Can we get back on track, please?" Makarov said, a bit confused by Mirajane's behavior. "Although I was negligent in my duties as guild master, that does not change the fact that the three of you broke the rules of the guild."

Once again, the atmosphere in the room regained its solemnity.

"and because of that, you will have to be punished." Makarov continued sternly. "Elfman, Lisanna, the two of you will be suspended from taking quests for a month. And for the duration, you will join the wait and custodial staffs in the guild hall. Understood?"

"Yes, Master." Lisanna replied while bowing her head.

"I understand, Gramps." Elfman replied. "I'll take my punishment like a real man."

Smack!

While Makarov was taken aback by Elfman's change in demeanor, Alfonzo face palmed hard enough to leave imprints of his fingerprints on his face.

'Damn it, why did I have to taunt him with that phrase.' Alfonzo asked himself with his hand over his face. 'Fuck it, what's done is done. I'll just condition myself to tune that phrase out completely from now on.'

"Mirajane, before I name your punishment, do you have anything to say for yourself?" Makarov asked, ignoring Alfonzo's actions for now. Even if he was curious why he did that.

"What I did was reckless and put my siblings in danger." Mirajane said with a bow after taking a deep breath. "I know what I did was a breech of the trust I received when I was promoted to S-Class, and I will do my best to regain that trust going forward. I really never wanted to get anyone hurt. I just wanted to impress my brother and sister while helping Elfman get a powerful soul for his [Take Over Magic]. Still, that is no excuse. So, I will accept any punishment you deem appropriate, Master."

Once again, Makarov was surprised at Mirajane's change in demeanor. Then, he glanced at the gently smiling Alfonzo, and had to restrain his laughter after seeing the marks on the young man's face.

'I would bet the entire guild that Alfonzo said something to them while they were gone.' Makarov thought to himself. 'Not only did he get Elfman to come out of that timid shell of his, but he also caused Mirajane to mature immensely. Perhaps I really should start grooming him to be the next guild master.'

"Mirajane Straus, your punishment is as follows." Makarov said in his authoritative tone, putting his thoughts of grooming Alfonzo aside for later. "First, you will be suspended from taking quests for the next six months. On top of that, you will be demoted to A-Class. Also, you will no longer be eligible to take the promotion exam."

At that point, Elfman and Lisanna felt worse than they had for accepting Mirajane's proposal.

"Does that mean she can't become S-Class again?" Lisanna asked in a sad tone.

"I'm not finished, Child." Makarov said, holding up a hand, signaling Lisanna to stop. "Instead of taking the exam again, you will have to prove that you are truly worthy of S-Class... with your actions."

"I understand, Master." Mirajane replied in a serious tone with a determined expression. "I promise to never let you or the guild down again."

"Very good." Makarov replied with a satisfied smile. "Oh, and one more thing."

Thinking that Makarov had already laid out Mirajane's punishment in its entirety, the five wizards of the younger generation all looked at him with confusion written on their faces.

"You'll also be in charge of coming up with the point system I mentioned earlier on the first floor." Makarov said with a smile. "You're a very smart girl, so I know you'll come up with something good."

The confused expression on the young wizards faces vanished immediately. Instead, they all wore deadpan expressions with contempt swirling in their eyes.