

FAIRY TAIL: METAL AND THREADS

Chapter 18: Gildarts Clive

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

July, x773

Exactly three minutes after the announcement, loud sounds of machinery could be heard from outside of the guild hall. Curious to see the Gildarts shift in action, Alfonzo and Elicia moved toward the guild's entrance, followed by Cana who did not want to be separated from the two.

When they looked out at the large wooden door, they could see all the buildings in the town rose from their spots on the ground. A moment later, the buildings began to move around. Although they could not see it, they knew that a straight path had been made from the guild to whichever town entrance Gildarts was entering from.

"He's not coming from the south." Alfonzo commented as he could see some of the buildings moving into the street that stretched from Magnolia's north to its south.

"Yeah." Elicia replied with a nod, looking at the town changing before her eyes.

Cana stayed silent. This was not the first time she had witnessed the Gildarts shift. However, she did not know that Gildarts was her father back then. On top of that, she was too young to know its significance.

"Well, let's go back inside." Alfonzo said after all the moving stopped. "He'll be here soon enough."

Nodding in response, Elicia and Cana followed Alfonzo back into the guild hall. When they returned to their table, though, Alfonzo was called by Makarov.

Making his way over to Makarov's usual spot on the bar, Alfonzo stopped when he was close enough to speak comfortably.

"What's up, Gramps?" Alfonzo asked.

"Alfonzo, my boy, could you whip up a couple of dishes?" Makarov asked.

"Our strongest wizard, Gildarts... I've told you about him, right?"

"Yeah." Alfonzo replied. "Mom used to tell me stories about him and the other strongest wizards in the kingdom when she was still alive."

For a moment, rage clouded Makarov's expression. Just like any time Alfonzo's mother or Elicia's father was mentioned. But he got his emotions in check rather quickly before taking a deep breath.

"Well, Gildarts will be here soon." Makarov said, returning to the topic. "I'd like him to have a good meal when he returns."

Not really wanting to cook for a deadbeat like Gildarts, Alfonzo eventually nodded his head. But he would get the most out of this that he could.

"Well, since my shift is over, I'll be getting extra pay for this, right?" Alfonzo asked while holding up his right hand and rubbing his thumb and index finger together.

"*Sigh* Can't you give an old man a break?" Makarov asked.

"Oh, come on, Gramps." Alfonzo said with a smile. "Like you taught me, a wizard should be compensated for their work. And if they go above and beyond, they should get a bonus, right?"

"Why can't you be like the other kids and not pay attention to me when I talk about important things?" Makarov grumbled. "Fine, I'll add an extra fifty percent to your pay for these dishes."

"Deal." Alfonzo said with the smile of a greedy merchant.

'Ha, you're gonna have to try harder, Gramps.' Alfonzo thought as he walked into the kitchen. 'I ran a shop for six years in my past life, I know how to get my money.'

An hour and ten minutes later, Alfonzo set two plates with medium rare steak, scalloped potatoes, and broccoli covered with cheese on the top of the bar next to Makarov.

"Your timing is perfect." Makarov said with a smile while a bit of drool dripped from the corner of his mouth as he stared at the food. "Gildarts should be here in a couple of minutes."

"Okay, cool." Alfonzo said nonchalantly. "I got one more thing to bring out for Lici, Cana, and me. Then, I'm done. I left the money for the ingredients I used on the counter in the kitchen."

"Okay, go have fun." Makarov said, still eyeing the plates of food on the bar.

A few moments later, Alfonzo left the kitchen with a raspberry cheesecake and three plates in his hands. With the use of a magic oven and refrigerator, the cheese cake that would take at least four hours to prepare and be ready to serve was done in little more than an hour.

"Man, I love magic technology." Alfonzo said with a smile as he walked through the guild hall to the table Elicia and Cana were occupying. "Makes everything go so much faster."

Less than a minute later, Alfonzo set the plates in front of Elicia and Cana. Then, he placed the cheesecake on the table between them. Meanwhile, during his walk to the table, all eyes in the guild were focused on the cake that he was carrying. It was something that he had never served before, after all. But that makes sense, considering that he only cooks for the members of the guild during the breakfast rush.

"Fonzie, is that what I think it is?" Elicia asked with a smile.

"Yup, a raspberry cheesecake." Alfonzo replied, about to put down his own plate and sit down next to Elicia.

However, before he could sit down, Elicia gestured to Cana, who was looking at the cake curiously. Having forgotten about her nervousness for a moment.

Taking the hint, Alfonzo walked around to the other side of the table, put down his plate and sat down. Then, remembering that he had yet to cut the cake, he stood up again and created a knife with his magic. Then, after slicing the cake, he changed the knife into a spatula and served the cake to Elicia and Cana before serving a slice for himself.

Taking his seat again, Alfonzo realized that he had not brought any forks with him. So, once again using his magic, he created three forks that should last long enough for the three of them to have their fill of the cake.

Just as he handed out the forks to Elicia and Cana, Alfonzo, along with the rest of the guild heard a crash coming from the east wall. When everyone looked in the direction of the crash, a new, blocky, man-shaped hole was present in the wall. Standing in the newly created opening was Gildarts.

Gildarts was a tall man, standing at 6'2" (1.88 m) tall, with slicked back, shoulder-length, orange hair and a stubbly beard wearing a simple black high-collared cloak with armored shoulder plates, simple black pants tucked into a pair of simple black boots with a black belt and armor plates around his waist.

"Fairy Tail, I'm back home!" Gildarts shouted after looking around the guild hall for a moment.

Immediately, the members of the guild who were present in the guild hall cheered loudly. Meanwhile, Cana froze with her fork halfway between her plate and her mouth. Looking back at Gildarts, she was unsure of what she should do.

However, when Gildarts walked toward the bar, without even noticing her, she slowly put the cheesecake in her mouth with a dejected feeling. Tasting the cake, however, her eyes opened wide. Unable to stop eating, she continued to do so while watching Gildarts walk through the guild hall.

'I guess the cake was a good idea.' Alfonzo thought as his sight shifted between Cana and Gildarts. 'It seems to be combating the depression I'm sure she's feeling right now.'

Meanwhile, Gildarts had reached the bar.

"Master I'm back." Gildarts said, taking a seat in front of Makarov.

"I'm glad you're back safely." Makarov said with a smile. "You can give your report on the quest later. For now, why not have a bite to eat. We got a very talented cook since you left for the quest."

"Really?" Gildarts asked in surprise. Then, he looked at the plates of food sitting between him and Makarov. "Wow, this looks great."

"You'll never guess who the cook is, either." Makarov said with a smile.

"Who is it?" Gildarts asked curiously as he picked up a fork and began to dig into the food in front of him.

"Bianca's son." Makarov said, digging into his own plate of food. "His name is Alfonzo."

"Now that's a name I haven't heard in a few years." Gildarts said. "She retired... What...? Ten years ago?"

"Yeah..." Makarov replied while stuffing a piece of steak in his mouth.

"Man, I miss her. Orlando, too." Gildarts said while cutting a piece of steak. "How are they? Bianca used to always try to talk women out of sleeping with me... Those were good times. She even tried to convince Cornelia..."

"They're dead..." Makarov said in an angry yet sad tone. "They were killed by Zeref cultists. That's why their children are here."

"What!?" Gildarts shouted, gaining everyone's attention.

"Calm down, Gildarts." Makarov said sternly. "After you finish your food, I'll introduce you to them."

"Fine." Gildarts said, beginning to dig into the food fiercely.

About ten minutes later, Makarov and Gildarts were walking toward Alfonzo, Elicia, and Cana. As they neared, Cana became more nervous while Alfonzo patted her on the shoulder to calm her down.

"Alfonzo, Elicia, let me introduce you to a friend of your parents." Makarov said with a smile. "This is Gildarts Clive, the ace of the guild."

"It's nice to meet you." Alfonzo and Elicia said in unison.

"And this is our friend Cana." Elicia said with a smile.

"Nice to meet you three." Gildarts said with a strained smile. "I'm sorry to hear about what happened to Bianca and Orlando. We entered the guild at the

same time back then. And they were my partners before we became S-Class wizards."

"Really?" Elicia asked, her eyes lighting up in interest.

"Who was stronger?" Alfonzo asked curiously.

Even though she was nervous, Cana found herself taking interest in the conversation since she was friends with Alfonzo and Elicia just like Gildarts was friends with their parents.

"I'd like to say it was me." Gildarts said with a wry smile. "But Bianca's magic was too much for me."

"Bianca's [Dispel Magic] was too much for most people." Makarov added.

"Yeah, she used to smack Orlando and I around all the time." Gildarts said with a fond smile. She could throw a mean right hook."

With that, the group of five continued to chat. Gildarts told stories about his past with Bianca and Orlando with a smile on his face. Everything seemed to be going well. Until Gildarts brought up how Bianca used to try and protect innocent young women from his perverted claws.

While Alfonzo rolled his eyes and questioned if this guy was okay in the head for talking about this kind of thing with a couple of eight-year-olds and a seven-year-old. Elicia's thought to kick him in the nuts was being solidified. Cana, on the other hand, was becoming more and more uneasy by the moment.

"Bianca even tried to convince Cornelia not to marry me." Gildarts said in sadness. "I guess she was right in the end. I was so busy that I ended up neglecting her and she left me. *Sigh* I wonder how she's doing now."

At that moment, Cana could not take it anymore. She stood up and ran out of the guild hall in tears. Immediately afterward, Alfonzo and Elicia made eye contact. Then, Alfonzo stood up and chased after Cana while Elicia glared at Gildarts.

Makarov, who was sitting on Alfonzo's side of the table, and Gildarts, who was sitting next to Elicia, also stood up when Cana ran off. Though, they were completely confused.

"What's going on?" Gildarts asked, feeling that something he said set off the little girl.

"Are you stupid?" Elicia asked as she walked in front of Gildarts who was facing toward the entrance of the guild hall.

When Gildarts looked down, he saw Elicia winding her arm back. Then...

Bang!

Elicia swung her fist forward with all the force she could muster and punched Gildarts in the crotch.

Opening his mouth and eyes wide, Gildarts fell to his knees while covering his crotch with both hands. Meanwhile, every male in the hall covered their crotch due to phantom pain.

"She passed away at the beginning of last year, and Cana's mother's name was Cornelia." Elicia said angrily. "I've seen a picture of her that Cana keeps

in her room. They look almost identical to each other. She was your wife, how did you not notice?"

After that, Elicia ran out of the guild hall to chase after Cana. Unfortunately, Gildarts did not hear her explanation. He had lost consciousness, frothing at the mouth, shortly after he fell to his knees. However, he never fell over. So, Elicia did not realized that he was actually unconscious.