

## Fairy Tail 197

Chapter 197: What Laxus Lacks

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

October, x784.

\*Smack!\*

"You know, I actually agree with Gajeel on this one." Another male voice said after stopping Laxus punch just before it could hit Gajeel.

"Alfonzo!" Levy cried out in relief after seeing who intervened.

Alfonzo, using his [Lightning Enhancement] had quickly approached Laxus and Gajeel as soon as he noticed that Laxus had the intention to take things too far. As a result, he caught Laxus' wrist, stopping the momentum of his punch, just before it could smash into Gajeel's head.

"I didn't need your help." Gajeel said defiantly.

Hearing Gajeel's complaint, Alfonzo glanced at him briefly before returning his attention to Laxus.

"No, you really did." Alfonzo replied. "If that had landed, even if you ground yourself like the first time, you would have needed around half a year in the hospital."

"Why are you getting in my way, Alfonzo?" Laxus asked, anger seeping into his tone.

"To keep you from getting kicked out of the guild." Alfonzo replied.

"Kicked out of the guild? Are you out of your mind?" Laxus asked incredulously. "Like Gramps would ever kick me out of the guild."

"Uh... Yeah, he would." Alfonzo replied after a brief pause while staring at Laxus with disbelief in his tone. "You should know your grandfather better than that, Laxus. Gramps eats, sleeps, and shits for Fairy Tail. Everything he does is for the guild. You should know this better than most, he's not above excommunicating a member of his family, either."

That last statement caused Laxus expression to stiffen for a moment before it returned to normal.

"Why do you even care if I get kicked out or not?" Laxus asked, not wanting to continue the previous topic. "Wouldn't that be better for you?"

"Look, Laxus, it's no secret that we don't get along at all." Alfonzo said while shaking his head. "But we grew up together, Dude. And since I don't hate you, why would I want to see you get kicked out?"

By now, Elicia had joined the group of four, namely, Levy, Jet, Droy, and Gajeel. And like the others, she watched the ongoing conversation with interest. She did, however, pull Gajeel away from the two since he had still been standing only a few inches (2.54 cm) away from Laxus' still outstretched fist.

In response to Alfonzo's statement, Laxus looked at him skeptically.

"Don't look at me like that." Alfonzo said in response to Laxus gaze. Then, he shrugged his shoulders before releasing Laxus wrist and taking a step back towards Elicia and the others. "You can call me sentimental if you want. But after losing my family once, I don't wanna lose anyone from my new one."

Surprisingly, Laxus did not lash out at Alfonzo for suggesting they were family. Instead, he remained silent and held eye contact.

"Look, I know why you've been all pissy for the last ten days or so." Alfonzo continued. "Gramps told us on the day we ran into you after our vacation."

Remembering how bluntly Makarov had declined his request to become the new guild master, Laxus gritted his teeth and clenched his fists.

"And to be honest, I agree with him." Alfonzo continued, not paying attention to Laxus' current expression. Instead, he continued by listing his reasons why Laxus would not make a good guild master. "For one, you're too aggressive. Also, you don't have enough empathy."

Hearing Alfonzo admitting that he did not think that he would be a good guild master either, Laxus turned around, prepared to leave. However, when Alfonzo started listing his reasons, he stopped to listen, even though he really did not want to hear it.

Surprisingly, the two reasons Alfonzo gave were not the same as his grandfather's, who only told him that he was not ready and that he needed more life experience. Yet, he never told Laxus what he was missing or why he was not ready.

Honestly, that kind of vague reasoning would never work with the straightforward Laxus. Not to say that Laxus is dumb. Which he certainly is not. However, he is impatient and impulsive. So, not spelling out what he was lacking was more like brushing him off to him.

"And the biggest issue is that you always try to get rid of anyone you consider weak." Alfonzo continued. "Something I never understood. I mean, when you wanted Lici and I to leave because you thought the magic that we could use was worthless, you were only ten years old. Dude, you weren't even someone who could be considered strong at that point."

"I want the guild to be strong." Laxus said without turning around. "For that, we can't have weaklings bringing it down."

"Dude, are you stupid?" Alfonzo asked in an exasperated tone.

That caused Laxus to turn around, anger visible in his, literally, flashing eyes.

"You better have a good reason for that." Laxus growled.

"If Blondie really doesn't get it, then he really is stupid." Gajeel said mockingly.

Gajeel's statement drew all the attention to him.

"What? If he can't see that driving away children, for whom the sky is the limit, is a bad idea for the future of any guild, then he really is stupid." Gajeel said with a shrug in response to the gazes of the others. "I mean, I don't even like brats, but I know how necessary they are for a guild's development."

"Once again, I have to agree with Gajeel." Alfonzo said after the gazes lingered on Gajeel for a bit longer. "Like he said, you tried pushing away future members with unknown potential. On top of that, what if Gramps had listened to you? Sure, you and the rest of the Thunder God Tribe would still be here... But you would be here all alone as this generation's only wizards. You know... Since you wanted everyone that joined after me and Lici to get lost, as well."

Although Laxus expression did not change after Alfonzo said that, he did slightly avert his eyes from the eye contact he held with Alfonzo.

'I guess he had already realized that part on his own.' Alfonzo mused to himself.

"Even worse than that." Alfonzo continued. "All of us would have left and went to join the other guilds of Fiore. As a result, you would have indirectly strengthened the other guilds in the Kingdom. And by now, Fairy Tail's spot as Fiore's strongest guild would be in question."

Once again, Laxus could not respond.

"On top of that, Ur would have---" Alfonzo tried to continue.

"Shut up!" Lexus barked, turning around as he spoke. "I get it. So, you don't need to say anymore."

With that, Lexus turned into a bolt of lightning and flashed away from the park.

"Damn... He's so rude." Alfonzo murmured after Lexus left. "He could have at least let me finish."

"Why are you looking at me like that, woman?" Gajeel shouted, causing Alfonzo to look back at the rest of the group.

When he did, Alfonzo saw Elicia looking at Gajeel with equal parts interest and disbelief on her face.

"I didn't know Dragon Slayers had brains." Elicia teased in a tone of mock surprise. "That argument was so well structured. Are you really a Dragon Slayer? Or just someone who uses magic that looks like [Dragon Slayer Magic]?"

"Of course I'm a real Dragon Slayer!" Gajeel exploded. "Don't lump me in with that idiot, Salamander."

\*Giggle!\*

Hearing a feminine giggle from behind, Elicia and Gajeel looked back to see Jet and Droy staring at Levy in surprise while Levy covered her mouth to suppress her giggles.

"Sorry." Levy said when she noticed that she had drawn everyone's attention. "But I couldn't help it. I mean, you did challenge Alfonzo to a fight and get beat up, just like Natsu, so it's hard to not put you too in the same category."

While Alfonzo shrugged at Levy's statement, Elicia smiled, and Gajeel frowned, Jet and Droy looked mortified. Levy's smile while looking at Gajeel was so... genuine. Not to say that her smiles at everyone else were fake. But she looked really happy. And they did not like that.

'Don't tell me she likes him.' Jet and Droy thought at the same time after exchanging glances.

Jet and Droy's thoughts could not be further from the truth, however. The reason for Levy's genuine, happy smile was very simple. Her imagination had substituted Gajeel into the impression she had of Natsu.

However, instead of a pink-haired wizard with plumes of fire shooting out of his mouth as he made challenges to every strong wizard he knew, there was a black-haired wizard with chunks of iron dribbling out of his mouth while doing the same.

"Anyway, since the show's over, I'm going back to the guild." Alfonzo said, turning around and starting to leave the park. "I've still got training to do."

"Why did you even come here?" Droy asked. "Were you following us?"

"Obviously." Alfonzo replied.

In hindsight, Droy felt that question was just as obvious as Alfonzo said it was, causing his face to redden a bit in embarrassment.

"But why?" Jet questioned.

"To keep all of you from doing anything stupid." Elicia replied this time as she started following Alfonzo back to the guild. "Like what Fonzie said to Laxus, if any of you had gone too far, you could have been kicked out of the guild."

With that, Alfonzo and Elicia continued to walk away, leaving the other four in silence. Eventually, however, that silence was broken when Gajeel took a step forward and shouted at the backs of the two.

"One day, we're gonna finish that fight that got interrupted, Magic Seamstress!" Gajeel shouted. "And I'll beat you one day, too, Master of Metals."

Immediately after Gajeel's declarations, Levy giggled once again, the image in her imagination overlapping with the current Gajeel.

Meanwhile, Jet and Droy both felt as if they had taken an arrow to the heart when they heard Levy's giggle and saw her smile.



Alfonzo and Elicia, on the other hand, only waved without turning around as they continued to leave.

"Sure, we can do it whenever." Elicia said.

"Yeah, come find me whenever." Alfonzo said. "I make it a habit of handing out lollipops and ass whoopings to guild mates that challenge me. But you should know, I've been outta lollipops for a long time."

In response, Gajeel simply clenched his fists.

"Oh, and you should call me Alfonzo, instead of using that grandiose epitaph." Alfonzo continued.

A moment later, once Alfonzo and Elicia were out of earshot, Gajeel relaxed his hands and turned back towards Team Shadow Gear.

"So, did you guys still need to blow off some steam?" Gajeel asked nonchalantly. "Or are we done here?"

"Come on, guys." Levy said, finally over her fit of giggles. "Let's just leave it here. Now that we're all part of the same guild, there's no need to fight like this."

"Tch! Fine." Jet agreed begrudgingly.

"Yeah, but only because you're the one who asked us, Levy." Droy continued.

"Simps." Gajeel said before turning around and walking away. "I need to do some missions, anyway. The Old Man told me that I could have one of the best meals I've ever had if I collect enough points by not causing property damage on my missions. And I need to see how true that was."

With that, Levy, Jet, and Droy watched Gajeel walk off with strange expressions. Then, when Gajeel could no longer be seen, Levy glanced at Jet and Droy, who were clearly thinking the same thing that she was.

"So, that's how Master convinced him to join the guild!" The three members of Team Shadow Gear exclaimed simultaneously.

"Well, I guess I can't blame him for being lured by Alfonzo's cooking." Jet said.

"Yeah, just thinking about it makes me miss the old days when he cooked at the guild every day." Droy added.

"I guess he really is a Dragon Slayer, like Natsu." Levy said, stifling another fit of giggles. "I mean, the only things they ever think about are fighting and food. But Master has to be a genius to use that knowledge to invite Gajeel to join Fairy Tail."

At the same time, back at the guild hall, Makarov, with a mug of ale, was sitting atop the bar after finally finding his favorite spot on the new bar.

\*Sneeze!\*

"I wonder which lovely lady is thinking about me." Makarov said while rubbing his nose. "Anyway, I wonder how long it will take Ivan to make contact with Gajeel. I know he won't be able to resist having a contact in the guild."