

FAIRY TAIL: METAL AND THREADS

Chapter 20: Anything for My Baby Girl!

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

July, x773

As night fell, Gildarts stumbled through the doors of the Fairy Tail guild hall. When he arrived, he saw that the guild was as raucous as usual. In one corner, a brawl was going on, something normal for Fairy Tail. Continuing to look around, He scowled when he saw Makarov sitting on top of the bar, happily drinking from a wooden mug.

'Damn that old man.' Gildarts grumbled in his mind. 'Did he have to knock me so far away?'

Continuing to look around the guild hall, Gildarts' eyes lit up when he saw who he was looking for.

Sitting at a table with the children of his old friends, Cana was happily eating a roll cake along with Alfonzo and Elicia. Seeing her smile, Gildarts could not help but smile as well. He was happy to see that the depressed crying expression he saw before Elicia punched him had disappeared. A moment later, however, he frowned at how close she was sitting to Alfonzo.

'Is he trying to steal my princess away from me?' Gildarts thought as he started walking toward the table.

Before he reached the table, Gildarts replaced the frown on his face with a happy smile.

"Cana~~~! Daddy's back!" Gildarts shouted loud enough to be heard over all the noise in the guild hall.

Looking toward the one who called her name, Cana looked at Gildarts awkwardly. Even though she knew that Gildarts was her father, she was not used to referring to anyone as such. So, she awkwardly waved at her over enthusiastic father.

Smiling at such a small gesture, Gildarts continued walking toward the table. Then, when he arrived, he sat down and cut a piece of the roll cake for himself. Even though he didn't have a plate, he planned to simply pick it up with his bare hand.

Smack!

Feeling a sting on the back of his hand, Gildarts looked at the one who slapped his hand, Elicia, curiously.

"Don't look at me like that." Elicia said sternly. Then, she pointed toward the guild's restroom. "Go wash your hands. Don't you have any manners?"

Seeing the angry expression on the little girl's face, Gildarts shivered momentarily. That was the same expression she was wearing before he was punched in the crotch several hours ago.

Then, without arguing with Elicia, Gildarts stood up and jogged toward the restroom.

"Yes, ma'am!" Gildarts shouted afraid of receiving another nut punch.

"And don't destroy the door!" Elicia shouted. "Open the door like a normal person."

"Yes, ma'am." Gildarts shouted again in reply.

Seeing this exchange, the rest of the guild fell silent for a short while. Then, the whole guild burst into raucous laughter. None of them had seen Gildarts being put in his place like that before. And to be honest, they all found it rather refreshing.

Since no one in the guild was strong enough to stop Gildarts from doing whatever he wanted, other than Makarov, most people just let him be. But Elicia, with one punch, had established herself as Gildarts' hard counter. Even if she was too weak to actually hurt him in any other circumstance.

A few minutes later, Gildarts returned after washing his hands. When he arrived at the table, there was a silver plate sitting in front of his seat with a small fork placed on top of it. Then, when he sat down, the knife he used to cut the cake began to float. A moment later, it was transformed into a spatula that served him the piece of cake he had cut earlier.

"Not bad, Kid." Gildarts said, having observed that it was Alfonzo who served him the cake. "You use [Metal Magic] if I'm not mistaken, right?"

"That's right, Uncle Gildarts." Alfonzo replied with a nod.

Gildarts eyebrow twitched when he was called uncle. However, considering that Alfonzo was Bianca's son, he chose to let it slide.

'I'm only thirty-four.' Gildarts thought as he chatted with the three children. 'I'm too young to be called an uncle.'

Eventually, the top of the conversation turned to Cana's life with Cornelia. Although she only remembered the last couple years. Cana told Gildarts everything she remembered. Unfortunately, most of those memories were not the happiest, since Cornelia spent that entire time fighting her illness.

Part way through the conversation, Alfonzo and Elicia made eye contact. Then, with tacit understanding, they both left the table, giving the father-daughter pair some time to speak alone.

While Cana was too engrossed in the conversation with Gildarts to notice Alfonzo and Elicia's exit, Gildarts nodded at them gratefully. Though, that was not enough for him to give his princess to Alfonzo who he suspected had stolen Cana's heart.

While Cana and Gildarts continued their conversation, Alfonzo and Elicia made their way toward the bar, taking a seat in front of Makarov.

"Hahaha! Good job, Elicia." Makarov said happily after Elicia sat in front of him. "With you here, there's a good chance that repair costs around the guild may decrease."

"I'll do my best, Gramps." Elicia said, playfully saluting with a big smile on her face.

Then, Elicia threw a few punches into the air, causing Gildarts to flinch unconsciously. Like that, the night ended peacefully with Cana getting the chance to bond with her father. Accompanying the wholesome atmosphere, were the sounds of a few brawls. A perfect soundtrack for Fiore's strongest guild, Fairy Tail.

January 17, x774.

After Gildarts was able to connect with his daughter, several months passed and another year ended. During those months, Gildarts took the time to help in the training of the guild's younger generation. However, Laxus and the Thunder god Tribe refused his help. But, Alfonzo, Elicia, Cana, Laki, and Alzack benefitted greatly from his guidance.

In fact, their gains were so great that Makarov declared that Alfonzo and Elicia were now ready to start taking D-Class quests. Something that most of the child members of the guild were not given permission to do until they were ten or eleven years old.

Naturally, Alfonzo and Elicia were ecstatic after Makarov broke the news to them. However, they would have to wait until they turned nine, just as a precaution. On top of that, they would have to be accompanied by a senior member of the guild on their first quest. Something that they were expecting. As even Laxus had been accompanied by Makarov on his first quest.

Another thing to take note of was that Cana stopped living at Fairy Hills the same day that Gildarts found out that she was his daughter. Instead, he

invited her to live at his house and she accepted happily. However, what she could not so happily accept was how harsh Gildarts tended to be with Alfonzo. Unfortunately for Alfonzo, however, Cana's crush and Gildarts over protective nature led to a downward spiral with him caught in the center of the vortex.

Today, Gildarts stay in Magnolia would come to an end, however.

After reading a newspaper about the monster wreaking havoc in Isvan, a country to the east of Fiore, Cana asked Gildarts if he could help the people who were living in fear of the monster.

Naturally, this lit a fire in Gildarts.

===Flashback===

Sitting in teh guild hall during breakfast before their morning training, Cana was reading a newspaper, something she had started doing recently in order to keep up with what was going on in the world of wizards, while Gildarts drank a cup of coffee.

"Daddy, did you see this story about Isvan?" Cana asked while pointing at an article in the newspaper she was reading a day earlier. "These people need help."

Looking over to see what Cana was talking about, Gildarts nodded.

"Yeah, Things look bad." Gildarts said in a solemn tone.

"Daddy, can you help them?" Cana asked with puppy dog eyes.

Seeing the expression on his daughter's face, Gildarts felt as if he had been pierced in the heart by an arrow.

"Of course, I can help them, Princess!" Gildarts shouted energetically. "If my darling, little girl asks me to, I can do anything!"

With that declaration, Gildarts stood from the table he was sitting at and ran up to the guild's second floor, an area accessible only to those who had achieved the rank of S-Class wizard. Then, he immediately made his way to the S-Class quest board. After searching through the available S-Class

quests, he found the one that coincided with the article Cana had been reading.

A moment later, he rushed down the stairs and slammed the quest posting down on the bar in front of Makarov.

"Old Man, I'm taking this quest." Gildarts declared energetically.

Looking over the quest, Makarov then looked into Gildarts' eyes.

"You're aware there is a good chance that this is a demon and not a monster, right?" Makarov asked in a solemn tone.

Matching Makarov's tone, Gildarts replied.

"I know. But it's nothing I can't handle." Gildarts said in a serious tone. A moment later, however, his expression turned into one of a doting father before exclaiming loudly. "Besides, my baby girl asked me to help the people of Isvan. And that's what I'm gonna do!"

===Flashback End===

Today, just after breakfast, Alfonzo, Elicia, Cana, Laki, and Alzack were seeing Gildarts off for his S-Class quest. While Gildarts was hugging Cana with tears in his eyes, mortified at the thought of being away from his daughter for any longer than necessary, Alfonzo, Elicia, Laki, and Alzack were watching them with wry smiles.

Meanwhile, Cana's face was red with embarrassment. Although she was glad that her father accepted her and loved her so much, sometimes his love was way too heavy.

A few minutes later, Cana was saved from her embarrassment by a giant hand. Makarov, using his [Giant Magic] had picked up Gildarts by the back of his cloak, freeing Cana from his grasp.

"Stop wasting time." Makarov said sternly. "If you're gonna help the people of Isvan, get going already."

Then, Makarov wound his right arm back and threw Gildarts toward the train station.

"Damn you, Old Man~~~~~!" Gildarts shouted as he flew through the sky.

"Bye, Daddy~~~~~!" Cana shouted after her father while waving vigorously.
"Come back safe~~~~~! And bring back souvenirs~~~~~!"

After she could no longer see Gildarts, Cana turned around with a smile on her face.

"Okay, let's start our training." Cana said with a smile. "I'm gonna be a lot stronger when Daddy comes back."

Nodding in response, the children moved to the guild's backyard to start their usual daily training. Using Gildart's training regimen that he tailored for each of them individually, they began training intensely.

And for the next few hours, the five children put their all into their training. They all wanted to be official wizards as soon as possible. Even though they were members of Fairy Tail, none of them had received their guild mark yet.

And that was something that was reserved for D-Class wizards, meaning those who were eligible to take on D-Class quests, and higher.

As the sun started to set, the children ended their training for the day. When they did, Elicia and Cana ran over to Alfonzo, each holding a towel. While both were smiling brightly, Alfonzo could recognize that Cana's smile had a hint of competitiveness held within.

'*Sigh* I hope this stops before they hit puberty.' Alfonzo thought to himself while he smiled at the two enthusiastic girls. 'I don't wanna deal with a hormonal girl who's misunderstanding the situation.'

Just as Alfonzo thought, Cana was indeed misunderstanding the situation. While she thought Elicia was competing with her for Alfonzo's attention, Elicia was just happy that they were all so close.

"Thanks." Alfonzo said, taking both offered towels. "Let's go get something to eat. We skipped lunch today and I'm starving."

As if to punctuate his statement, Alfonzo's stomach growled loudly. Then, he wrapped one of the towels in his hands around his hair, trying to dry it from the sweat. After that, he began wiping his face and neck with the other.

Like Alfonzo, the others were also drying off their hair and faces as they walked toward the guild hall. To their surprise, when they entered, the guild hall was rowdier than usual.

"It looks like their having a party." Elicia said excitedly.

"Yeah, but what are they celebrating?" Cana asked, tilting her head cutely.

"Gildarts' exit?" Laki asked.

"I don't think that's it." Alzack replied with a wry smile.

"Even though I'm sure their tired of Gildarts breaking things, I think Alzack is right." Alfonzo said.

"Then why?" Elicia asked.

Alfonzo then pointed toward Laxus' table.

"It looks like we've got some new members." Alfonzo said with in an exasperated tone. "And it looks like Laxus is up to his old habits again."

Following the direction Alfonzo was pointing to, the others saw a blue-haired girl standing behind a pair of boys, one with orange hair and one with dark brown hair, while the boys glared at Laxus angrily.

"*Sigh* Why would Gramps ever pass the guild master position to Laxus if he doesn't fix his habit of pissing off everyone he deems weak at a glance?" Alfonzo asked rhetorically as he started walking toward the newcomers.