

Fairy Tail 218

Chapter 218: The Finals; Part 3 - Laxus' Realization

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

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After their fight with Bickslow and Fried was declared over, Sun and Marin slowly made their way back to Alfonzo and Elicia with their heads lowered and frustration easy to read in their body language.

"Sorry..." Sun said, clinging onto Alfonzo as soon as she was in range.

Seeing Sun's actions, Marin looked a bit envious. Still, she kept her head lowered.

Noticing the envy in Marin's gaze, Elicia took it upon herself to pull her into a hug.

"What are you apologizing for?" Alfonzo asked in a gentle tone as he started combing his fingers through Sun's hair.

"We lost." Sun replied.

"Are you going to apologize, too??" Elicia asked Marin, who was snuggling in her arms.

"If I didn't get caught by his [Eye Magic], we wouldn't have lost." Marin said, wrapping her arms around Elicia in return. "It's my fault we lost."

In response, Alfonzo and Elicia could only exchange glances with wry smiles on their faces. Then, they both turned to the girls in their arms.

"How long have the two of you been working together as a team?" Alfonzo asked while continuing to run his fingers through Sun's hair.

"A year and a half... I think." Sun replied somewhat unsurely.

"And how long to you think the Thunder God Tribe has been working together?" Alfonzo asked in a soothing tone.

"They've been a tight-knit group ever since we joined the guild thirteen years ago." Elicia replied before either girl could. "Still, you two work together really well. And since you didn't know about his [Eye Magic], how could you have prepared for it?"

Although Marin and Sun were still upset about their loss, they were no longer hanging their heads. By now, they were focusing on Alfonzo and Elicia's words, just now realizing how inexperienced they were in comparison to their opponents.

"Besides, if you had won, I would have looked pretty useless today." Alfonzo said with a smile. "I mean, I haven't even fought once."

"Yeah, he's been kind of slacking off." Elicia added with a chuckle. "At least let him do something."

Hearing that, small smiles made their way onto Marin and Sun's faces. Both of them were smart girls. They had an idea what the reason behind this tournament was in the first place. So, even though they would have rather ended the tournament in the last round, they understood how everyone would have been disappointed if it ended without its main event, Alfonzo versus Laxus, taking place.

"*Sigh* Actually, we lost on purpose." Marin said, pretending to drop a facade. "I mean, it wouldn't look good if we looked like we didn't mind the loss, right?"

"Huh? We did?" Sun exclaimed; confusion evident in her tone.

"Sun, you're adorable." Elicia said letting go of Marin and pulling Sun away from Alfonzo as she wrapped the mermaid in a hug.

"Seriously, don't ever change." Marin added, joining the hug.

"Uh... Okay?" Sun replied, tilting her head cutely with question marks floating above her head.

"Anyway, it's about time we wrapped this shit up." Alfonzo said, taking slow, steady steps towards the ring. "We've still got a parade to put on after this."

With that, Alfonzo continued towards the ring while Marin and Sun wished him luck. Elicia on the other hand, smiled at him, completely confident that he would emerge victorious.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the ring, Laxus nodded at Bickslow and Fried as he also made his way to the ring. On his way there, he could not help but think about what brought him to this point.

===Flashback===

Earlier in the month.

After Laxus separated from Alfonzo, Elicia, Levy, Jet, Droy, and Gajeel after their little run in, he could not help but think about what Alfonzo and Gajeel said.

'Was I really wrong?' Laxus thought to himself. 'What's wrong with wanting the guild to get stronger by cutting out its weaker parts?'

While mulling over that question, Laxus found himself wandering in front of his grandfather, Makarov's house. Looking up, he could tell that no one was home. Still, he made his way to the front door, anyway.

Reaching the front door, Laxus absent-mindedly reached into the pocket of his overcoat and pulled out a single key, the key to Makarov's house.

"Gramps gave me this key the day Dad was excommunicated from the guild." Laxus muttered to himself. "At first, I only thought it was because I had nowhere else to go. But..."

{Here, Laxus, my boy.} Makarov's voice from nearly fifteen years ago rang out in Laxus' head. {This is the key to your new home. A place where no matter how far away you go, or how long you're gone, you can always call home.}

"Even now, I'm not sure why he made it seem like such a big deal." Laxus said, inserting the key into the doorknob and unlocking the door.

Entering the house, the first thing Laxus saw was the familiar tapestry he had been seeing for as long as he can remember. Hanging over a large portrait of the guild from the day Makarov became the guild master was a white Fairy Tail emblem woven into an orange background.

"Gramps was forty when he became the guild master, I think." Laxus said to himself while he looked at all the faces, both familiar and unfamiliar on the portrait. "So, it's been forty-eight years since then. Yet, the only member of the guild I've ever heard of being excommunicated was my dad."

{Remember, Laxus.} Makarov's words from the past once again played in Laxus' head. {A guild is like a family. A place filled with people that will always be there for you when you need them.}

{Look, Laxus, it's no secret that we don't get along at all.} Alfonzo's voice followed shortly afterward. {But we grew up together, Dude. And since I don't hate you, why would I want to see you get kicked out?}

{Don't look at me like that.} Alfonzo's past words continued as Laxus' gaze fell on his father's face in the portrait. {You can call me sentimental if you want. But after losing my family once, I don't wanna lose anyone from my new one.}

"He really sees the guild as a family, huh? Does that mean Gramps sees the two of us like brothers who fight over every little thing?" Laxus muttered as he reached towards the portrait, his fingertips brushing against his father's image. "Is that why you got kicked out? Because you no longer saw the rest of us like that, Dad?"

Pulling his hand back, Laxus scowled at his father's image as he clenched his fist before it was covered in flowing currents of lightning.

{Fairy Tail is the strongest guild in Fiore.} Laxus' father, Ivan Dreyar, was the next voice he heard in his head. {The weak have no business here. So, I'll implant this inside of you, Laxus. Then, you will no longer have to fear being weak before eventually being cast out.}

"He made it seem like the weak would be cast out." Laxus muttered to himself. "He always told me I had to be strong for one reason or another. But the one I heard the most was so that I would not be cast out of the guild."

Zap!

"What kind of shit is that!?" Laxus roared, his body engulfed in lightning that scorched the floor around him. "You were objectively the third strongest wizard in the guild when you got kicked out, Dad! So, how did being strong work out for you!?"

The lightning continued to rage around Laxus for a few more moments after that outburst. Then, he started reeling it in. While he did so, he looked around at the damage he caused.

"*Sigh* Gramps is gonna have some shit to say about this, huh?" Laxus said as he looked down at the scorched floorboards under his feet. "I won't be able to hide it, either. He'll recognize the trace amounts of magic power left on the burns without a problem. Damn it."

Shrugging his shoulders and deciding to let the future Laxus deal with that problem, Laxus turned around and continued walking through the house, many fond memories crossing his mind as he did so.

"As much as he said the weak should be cast away, Fairy Tail seems to be doing pretty well." Laxus said, still contemplating everything Alfonzo, Makarov, and Gajeel had said to him before. "And I know Alfonzo and the iron kid were right about getting rid of the kids that come to the guild without giving them a chance to grow. And that only proved what Gramps said about me being aggressive and impulsive to be true. Damn it.."

By now, Laxus was sitting on the couch in Makarov's living room while he continued to contemplate. The sun had faded over the horizon and the moon was lighting the night's sky. And Laxus had finally realized that he was going about making the guild stronger in the wrong way.

"Laxus~~~~~!" Makarov's angry roar echoed over the house after he entered and saw the scorched floor boards near the entrance. "How many times have I told you not to burn things in the house!?"

"Huh?" Laxus exclaimed, his contemplative state broken thanks to Makarov's roar and magic power sweeping all over the house. "Gramps is back already?"

After uttering that question, Laxus looked out a nearby window and noticed that night had fallen.

"Damn, I wanted to be out of here before Gramps got home." Laxus said with slight a frown on his face. "he would have been less angry about it in the morning. I could run away now so that I can get back to thinking. But then he'll be even more annoying about it when he catches me."

"Laxus, I know you're still here!" Makarov shouted as if to prove Laxus right. "You better stay right where you are, Young Man! We need to have a talk about respecting the property of others!"

'Doesn't he get tired of this topic?' Laxus thought to himself as he could feel a headache coming. 'I mean, how many times a day does he have to talk about it when the guys from the guild come back from quests?'

Even though he really wanted to run away, Laxus decided to wait for his grandfather and just get it over with.

Boom! *Boom!* *Boom!*

Makarov's footsteps shook the house as he approached the living room. On top of that, Laxus was sure he heard the sound of a few things breaking along with the sound of the footsteps.

Bang!

"Good, you're still here!" Makarov shouted as he destroyed the walls around the entrance to the living room, crashing through them in his giant form. "We're gonna have a nice long talk about your blatant disregard for other people's property. But first, tell me, why are you here?"

"*Sigh* You were right, Grandpa." Laxus said, hanging his head in shame. "I'm really not guild master material. Not as I am, anyway."

With that, Makarov froze in his steps. Then, the sound of air escaping a balloon sounded as Makarov rapidly shrank back to his normal size with a thoroughly flabbergasted expression on his face.

A moment later, Makarov ran up to the couch Laxus was sitting on, jumped onto the cushion next to him, and put his right palm on Laxus' forehead.

"What the hell are you doing, Gramps?" Laxus asked, swiping Makarov's hand off his head as he did so.

"No fever..." Makarov muttered, ignoring Laxus' question and the fact that his hand was swatted away. "But he's gotta be sick... He just admitted he was wrong about something..."

Hearing his grandfather's words, a vein on Laxus' forehead began to pulse violently. Before he could say anything to snap Makarov out of his thoughts, however, Makarov continued.

"Porlyusica!" Makarov exclaimed, quickly grabbing Laxus by the arm. "We have to get you to Porlyusica! She'll be able to tell what's wrong with you!"

"Enough, Old Man!" Laxus shouted, raising Makarov up by the back of his collar. "Just because I admitted I was wrong doesn't mean I'm sick! It's not like this is the..."

With that, Laxus fell silent, thinking back on his life.

"Look, I'm not sick." Laxus said, changing the subject forcefully. "I just had some time to think after running into that bastard Alfonzo earlier today. And I realized that I was going about things in the wrong way."

IN response, Makarov's eyes widened and his gaze urged Laxus to continue.

From there, Makarov and Laxus spent the rest of the night talking about Laxus realizations and the things he could do to make the guild stronger in a positive way. Though, Laxus came up with the idea for the tournament, mostly, on his own after talking to the Thunder God Tribe about what they needed to change.

===Flashback End===

"The next fight will be the final round of the tournament." Makarov declared, snapping Laxus out of his reminiscence. "The winner of this fight will claim victory in the Battle of Fairy Tail. Not only that, but

they will gain honor, not only for themselves, but for the rest of their team, as well as the title of Fairy Tail's strongest team."

Makarov's speech caused the atmosphere in the venue to explode. Even though it was a fact that Alfonzo had never lost a fight to Laxus ever since he joined the guild, most of the townsfolk had no idea about that. They only knew that Alfonzo and Laxus were both S-Class wizards of Fiore's strongest guild, and they were looking forward to the upcoming fight.

The Fairy Tail wizards, on the other hand, were all aware of the record between Alfonzo and Laxus. However, considering the fact that Laxus was the one who suggested this tournament in the first place, they were curious what he had up his sleeves to deal with Alfonzo.

"Now, without further ado." Makarov said, his voice cutting through the loud cheers from the crowd. "From Team Steel Threads, Alfonzo Marcus! And from the Thunder God Tribe, Laxus Dreyar! Fighters, are you ready?"

Receiving nods from both Alfonzo and Laxus, Makarov raised his hands into the air. Then, he slashed them downward as he gave the signal to begin the final round of the Battle of Fairy Tail Tournament.

"Fight!"