

Fairy Tail 224

Chapter 224: Lucy's Stalker

The morning after the royal messenger showed up and issued the two subjugation quests, everything went on as per usual. Though, after the morning training sessions, Ur, Gray, Ultear, Natsu, and Happy would be making the necessary preparations for their quest to take down the Oración Seis.

Alfonzo on the other hand, still had not chosen who would be accompanying him on his own quest. He had two days to make his decision, though, as he would be leaving the day after Ur. Still, he decided that he would make his decision by the end of today.

"Hey, Lucy, what's wrong?" Elicia asked after the morning training ended as most of the group took their usual seats in the main hall of the guild hall.

"Huh?" Lucy exclaimed in surprise. "What do you mean?"

"Well, you've seemed kind of out of it all morning." Elicia replied. "You even lost focus a few times during training."

In response, Lucy diverted her eyes from Elicia's concerned gaze. A moment later, after feeling Elicia's gaze boring into the side of her head, she let out a resigned sigh.

"It's kind of embarrassing, but I've been feeling like someone is following me for the last few days." Lucy said while scratching the side of her head in embarrassment. "At first, I wanted to use the

uncomfortable feeling to improve my use of [Magic Power Detection], but that didn't seem to help as much as I thought it would."

"Well, you have to increase your magic power control to make any real improvements with [Magic Power Detection]." Alfonzo said, cutting into the conversation.

"*Sigh* I know." Lucy replied, lowering her head to let it rest on the table. "I know I was being impatient, but I really want to get stronger."

"Raising your strength doesn't happen in just a day." Alfonzo's said, reaching across the table and combing his fingers through Lucy's hair.

"Fonzie's right, Lucy." Elicia added. "But if you need help, you know we're willing to help you with your little stalker problem."

With that, Elicia glanced to the side.

"I mean, what if you have your own Juvia following you around." Elicia continued.

Following Elicia's gaze, Alfonzo and Lucy saw Juvia crouching behind an unoccupied table and watching Ur, Gray, Ultear, Natsu, and Happy discuss things about their upcoming quest.

"I get the feeling she's gonna follow them on their quest." Elicia said with a slightly strained smile.

"I bet she'll try, at the very least." Alfonzo said with a shrug. "Still, I wish she'd leave one of my girlfriends out of her obsession."

At that moment, Ultear stood up from the strategy meeting she was just having and jogged over towards Alfonzo. A moment later, when she arrived, Ultear flopped down in his lap with a smile on her face. Though, that smile would more than likely terrify weak willed people upon sight.

At the same time, Juvia's glare landed on Alfonzo, it was clear that she wished she could set him ablaze with her gaze alone, but she had failed to do so up until now. Though, she had no intention of giving up, either.

"Hey Ultear." Alfonzo said with a smile, wrapping his free hand around Ultear's waist while continuing to comb his other hand's fingers through Lucy's hair. Then, with a wry smile, he continued. "I'd say you look happy, but I'm feeling way too much bloodlust for that."

"Oh, I am happy." Ultear said, her smile widening as she spoke. "I'll finally be able to get revenge on the man who made me a test subject all those years ago. On top of that, he was the reason that Mom and I were separated for so long. By the time we're done with him, he's gonna have a few regrets to look back on."

As she spoke, the bloodlust Ultear emitted grew along with her smile. In fact, it was so potent that Lucy, the least experienced of all the wizards in the guild, was starting to feel faint.

"Come on, Ultear, take it down a notch." Elicia said in a reprimanding tone. "Lucy's not used to this kind of killing intent."

Elicia's words brought Ultear back to the moment. Then, she quickly reigned in her bloodlust and shot an apologetic gaze in Lucy's direction.

"Sorry about that, Lucy." Ultear said bashfully. "I kinda lost control."

"*Pant* *Pant* It's fine." Lucy said, struggling to get herself back together. "I couldn't even imagine going through something like becoming someone's test subject. So, It's understandable that you'd want revenge."

With that, Alfonzo finally stopped combing his fingers through Lucy's hair, receiving a dissatisfied whine in return. Then he brought his now free hand up and bopped Ultear on the nose before speaking in a much sterner tone than before.

"I know you want revenge, Ultear." Alfonzo said with a solemn expression on his face. "But don't let it consume you. Losing control against such a dangerous Dark Guild as the Oración Seis could get you killed."

"*Sigh* I know." Ultear said, hanging her head in shame. "But I can't help but get angry whenever I think about that guy."

"Ultear, he's not telling you not to be angry." Elicia said. "Just don't let that anger control your actions."

"You two don't have to worry about that." Ur, who just arrived near the table, said. "I'll be right there with her. So, even if she goes out of control, I'll be able to protect her."

"Yeah, not all that much of a relief." Alfonzo said with a wry smile. Then, before Ur could get angry, he continued. "You're even more likely to lose your shit than she is, Ur. The difference is, you're probably strong enough to not have to worry about the members of the Oración Seis."

In response, Ur looked away awkwardly. Basically admitting to what Alfonzo had to say. Instead of letting the awkward feeling bother her, however, she turned back towards Alfonzo, or rather Ultear sitting in his lap, and spoke to change the subject.

"Anyway, we should go and get what we need to take on this quest, Tear." Ur said with a slight blush on her face. "We can talk about what to do with Brain while we do that."

"Okay." Ultear said with a nod. Then, she turned and kissed Alfonzo on the cheek before she stood from his lap. "I'll see you later, Alfonzo, Elicia, and everyone else. Oh, and good luck on your quest, Alfonzo."

Meanwhile, from a distance away, the sound of boiling water and rising steam could be heard. However, everyone chose to ignore it.

"I would wish you guys luck, too." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "But honestly, with Ur and, more than likely, Jura going on this quest, I doubt there's anything to worry about. Still, be careful and come back safe."

Smiling in return, Ultear made her way over to her mother's side before they both walked away and left the guild hall. At the same time, their stalker also left as stealthily as she could. Though, the sound of her, literally, boiling anger gave her away quite quickly.

"And that's why we need to do something about your little stalker problem as soon as possible." Elicia said, watching Juvia follow Ur and Ultear out of the guild hall.

"Yeah, I guess you're right." Lucy replied, also watching Juvia leave. "but I can't seem to find them. And my [Magic Power Detection] isn't good enough yet."

"And who says you have to find them on your own?" Elicia asked with a smile. "If not for things like this, why else would you join a guild? We're here to help each other whenever we need it, right?"

"Yeah, but I didn't wanna---" Lucy began to say.

"If you finish that sentence with anything like, 'bother you with my problems,' I'll put you over my knee and spank any thoughts like that out of you." Alfonzo said with a frown.

Immediately, Lucy's face turned red in response.

'Honestly, that doesn't sound quite so--- No, no, no, bad Lucy.' Lucy thought to herself as she quickly shook her head to rid herself of those perverted thoughts and imaginations.

"Anyway, I'll walk you to Fairy Hills until we catch the stalker, alright?" Elicia said, breaking Lucy out of her thoughts.

"Are you sure?" Lucy asked, sounding a bit more relieved than even she expected.

"Yeah, I know what it's like to have some weirdos vying for your attention." Elicia said as she remembered Karen, Darkness, Bacchus, and Ichiya. "Trust me, it's best to nip a problem like that in the bud before you end up with strange admirers like mine."

As she finished, Elicia slumped her shoulders.

"Yeah, you attract weirdos like ants to honey." Alfonzo said with a chuckle. "Speaking of one of your weirdo admirers, I'll probably run into one of them on my quest."

"Which one?" Elicia asked listlessly.

"Bacchus." Alfonzo replied in an annoyed tone. "I hope he doesn't go overboard. I don't want to have to kick his ass."

"Would it be so bad if you did?" Elicia asked innocently while tilting her head.

"*Sigh* It would sour relations between us and Quatro Cerberus." Alfonzo replied. "Unless he were to attack me first, that is."

"*Sigh* I guess you're right." Elicia replied, slumping her shoulders again.

"Bacchus, isn't that the drunk guy we met in that restaurant in the capital?" Lucy asked curiously.

"Yah, that's him." Elicia replied.

"Eww... If I have a stalker that could end up like him, please help me deal with them as soon as possible." Lucy pleaded.

Hours later, after the sun set and the moon was high in the sky, Elicia and Lucy were walking through the streets of the town.

"I don't understand why you won't just take my offer and move in with us." Elicia said as she made her way towards Fairy Hills with Lucy.

"*Sigh* It's because Alfonzo is there." Lucy said, her face taking on a red hue.

"o, you don't like Fonzie?" Elicia asked, pretending like she did not know the answer to that question.

"No, that's not it." Lucy replied in a fluster. Then, in a much quieter voice, she continued. "It's the opposite, in fact. I really like him a lot. *Sigh* I can't believe I'm saying this to his fiancée."

"*Giggle* Yeah, I can see how that would feel kinda awkward." Elicia replied with a smile.

"But I'm not really sure about joining a harem." Lucy continued. "I mean, I can see that he treats you all well. But, I just---"

"Sorry, Lucy, I'd like to hear the rest of that, but we've got someone following us." Elicia said, her voice taking on a much sharper tone.

'At first, I was certain it was her father that was stalking her, intent on asking her for some money.' Elicia thought to herself as she stealthily extended her threads to capture the stalker. 'But the amount of hostility I'm feeling is making me reconsider. Especially since almost all that hostility seems to be directed at me.'

Lucy, on the other hand, looked around vigilantly. Now that she was focused, she could feel the hostility in the air, as well.

"Although I can feel someone watching me, it doesn't feel the same." Lucy said quietly. "Usually, it's just a feeling of being watched. But now, it feels like whoever is watching me is angry."

"Maybe it's not the same person." Elicia replied. "But how bout we ask the stalker directly."

"Huh? What the...?" A male voice sounded from a few buildings down.

A few moments later, a cocoon made of Elicia's threads was dragged towards Elicia and Lucy from the distance by the threads extending from Elicia's fingertips.

Wrapped in Elicia's threads was a clearly male, hooded figure. And although it was not evident at first glance, he was struggling rather hard to free himself. Unfortunately, Elicia's bindings were too much for him to escape from.

"Who are you?" Lucy asked as soon as the bound man was close. "And why have you been following me around?"

Instead of responding, the man continued to glare at Elicia with hostility.

"*Sigh* Let's just remove the hood and see for ourselves." Elicia said, manipulating some of her threads to take off the man's hood. "I'd like to know why he's glaring at me like I ruined his life, too."

Once the hood was finally removed, Lucy looked on in confusion while Elicia was thoroughly shocked. What they saw was a middle-aged man with long, disheveled blond hair that reached past his shoulders and a long, scraggly, unkempt beard.

'So, it really was him.' Elicia thought to herself after seeing the man's, Jude Heartfilia's, face. But she still could not understand why he was glaring at her like that.

"Lici, do you know who this man is?" Lucy asked, not recognizing her father at all. Especially since he looked quite different when she saw him about two months ago.

"How can you not recognize me, Lucy?" Jude asked, finally turning his glare away from Elicia.

"Wait, that voice?" Lucy replied, sounding completely flabbergasted. "Dad, is that you? But why do you look like that?"

"And why do you keep glaring at me like I ruined your life?" Elicia asked, sounding just as confused. "I mean, I only met you that one time like two and a half years ago, right?"

"Of course you ruined my life!" Jude shouted angrily. "Because of your clothing business! We lost almost ninety percent of our clothing sales after your business opened. Then, that led to us losing money everywhere. Before we were eventually bought out! If you had just sold your little clothing shop to me, none of this would have happened!"

"Wait!" Lucy exclaimed in surprise. "You lost the company? But it's only been, like, two months!"

With Lucy's question, Jude shifted his glare over to Lucy.

"And I wouldn't have lost it if you had been obedient and married the man I chose for you." Jude shot back. "That alliance would have stabilized our position."

Hearing that, Lucy realized that her father really was not the loving father she remembered from the past any more. With a sigh, her shoulders slumped as she asked her next question.

"*Sigh* I'm already over this. What do you want?" Lucy asked with no enthusiasm. "You've had to have been following me around for a reason, right?"

"I came to ask to borrow some money, so I could get started again." Jude replied, also calming down after hearing Lucy's question. "I built my company from nothing in the past, and I'm sure I can do it again."

"*Sigh* And how much do you need?" Lucy asked, reaching into her waist pouch, intending to give her father the money just so this farce could end.

"A million should barely be enough." Jude replied as if he wasn't asking for much.

Immediately, Lucy's movements stopped.

"Are you serious?" Lucy asked in disbelief.

"Yes, that should be just barely enough to get me a train ticket to Acalypha." Jude said casually.

"I don't have that kind of money." Lucy said, removing her hand from her waist pouch. "And what kind of train do you plan on riding that would take a millions jewels to buy a ticket?"

"What?" Jude exclaimed. "How could you not have such a trifling amount of money?"

By now, Elicia had released Jude from her bindings and he was standing a short distance away from the two ladies. But when Lucy denied him, he started to approach, his eyes bloodshot as he did.

Before he could get too close, though, a number of threads raised between Jude and Lucy, causing Jude to glare at Elicia fiercely.

"And even if you don't have it, just get this girl to give it to you, you're friends, right?" Jude ordered. "Why wouldn't she help you help your father?"

With that, Lucy fell into silence as she lowered her head.

"You should leave." Lucy said, the disappointment clear in her voice.

Hearing Lucy's tone, Jude wanted to shout at her and throw a fit. However, one glance from Elicia ended that desire. Instead, like Lucy, he lowered his head in disappointment, turned around, and walked away.

Then, once Jude was no longer in sight, Elicia wrapped Lucy in a hug.

"How did he end up like that?" Lucy asked, sobbing quietly as her face was buried in Elicia's chest.

"*Sigh* I have no idea. But I do know that I'm not going to leave you alone like this." Elicia said as she patted Lucy's back. "Come on, we're going to my house. You're sleeping over tonight, and I won't take no for an answer."

With that, Elicia continued to hug Lucy as she cried out her frustrations about her father. Eventually, when Lucy was able to calm down, the two made their way to Alfonzo and Elicia's mansion.