

Fairy Tail 263

Chapter 263: Gambling Is Bad

"That pendant is the embryonic form of the soul weapons I've been developing based on what I found from that scientist, Mayuri Kurotsuchi's research." Alfonzo replied with a smile.

Hearing that, Elicia and Erza stared at the pendants in their hands with interest. While Elicia looked on with excitement, wondering what kind of spirit her Zanpakuto would have, Erza wore a look of curiosity.

"And what exactly will this 'Soul weapon] be able to do?" Erza asked in a curious tone.

"Well, after syncing with your magic power, it will eventually take on a shape that fits you the best." Alfonzo said as he created an orichalcum chain before hanging the pendant on it. "Then, once that happens, after absorbing more of your magic power, a spirit, which I hypothesize will be a portion of your own soul, will start to develop. And when that happens, and it can communicate with you to the point you can hear its name, that's when the fun will really begin."

With that said, Alfonzo gently took the pendant from Erza's hand. Then, like he had done with his own, he created an orichalcum chain before hanging the pendant on it. A moment later, he moved behind Erza and helped her wear the pendant.

"Won't that damage our souls?" Erza asked while fiddling with the pendant hanging round her neck.

"It shouldn't..." Alfonzo said, sounding not a hundred percent sure. "I mean, since our magic power is synced with our spirits and emotions, they should go hand and hand... or so I hope."

"It sounds a little risky." Elicia said, creating a braided cord with her own magic to hang her pendant on. "But I trust you, Fonzie. I know you wouldn't do anything that could hurt us."

"Yeah, in that you can believe." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "At the worst, it won't manifest a spirit. Then, I'll have to go back to the drawing board."

"I believe in you." Elicia said, turning towards Alfonzo before wrapping him in a hug. "You're the world's best magic item crafter, there's nothing you can't do."

"I don't know if I'm the world's best." Alfonzo said with a wry smile. "But I'm doing all I can to make all of you stronger."

"Actually..." Erza said with an unsure expression on her face. "You said you're doing your best to make all of us stronger. Does that mean the other girls will be getting one of these, too?"

"Yeah, but right now I only have three of them." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "I really wanted to make more, but the alloy needed to create them takes too much magic power to make it permanent. And for some reason, the magic power I used to make them is regenerating much slower than usual."

Hearing that, both Elicia and Erza looked at Alfonzo with concern.

"Isn't that dangerous?" Elicia asked with a worried expression. "What if something happens and you need to fight? Won't you be low on magic power?"

"Indeed." Erza said, nodding in agreement. "You shouldn't put yourself at risk for us like this."

Smiling warmly at his worried fiancées, Alfonzo pulled the two girls into a hug.

"You don't have to worry about it." Alfonzo said with a smile. "That's why I only made three of them. Even though those three pendants took up twenty percent of my magic power reserves, I still have more magic power than everyone in the guild except for Gramps, Gildarts, Ur, Laxus, Lici, and Ultear. Still, I'm glad that you're so worried about me."

"*Sigh* I forgot just how absurd the amount of magic power you have is" Elicia said, burying her face into Alfonzo's shoulder. "it's almost unfair."

"Indeed." Erza added. "Just what does one have to do to have such an amount of magic power?"

"It's just genes, I guess." Alfonzo replied with a shrug as he released the girls from his hug. "I mean, before she got injured, Momma was the ace of the guild, remember?"

"Yeah, but Daddy was an S-Class wizard, too." Elicia said with a pout. "Why don't I have more magic power?"

"Maybe because your dad used his magic to bully me so much when we were kids." Alfonzo replied with his upper lip twitching.

Hearing that, Elicia could not help but giggle. Meanwhile, Erza wore a look of interest to hear more about two of her favorite people's childhood.

"What do you mean, bully you?" Erza asked curiously.

"It's nothing, you don't have to worry about it." Alfonzo said dismissively.

"Oh, I'll tell you!" Elicia said excitedly.

Then, Elicia grabbed Erza by the hand as she pulled her towards the main hall again.

"I think I told you, but Daddy's magic was [Soundwave Magic], right?" Elicia said as she dragged Erza away. "Well, whenever Auntie Bianca had trouble waking up Fonzie in the morning, she would ask Daddy to do it. And he would always use his magic. And every time, Fonzie would jump up with the cutest startled face..."

Hearing Elicia exposing an embarrassing part of his childhood, Alfonzo could only smile wryly while shaking his head. Then, instead of following them back to the main hall, he made his way towards the guild library to continue his research.

Like that, a few more days passed with Alfonzo spending his time in the library while the rest of the guild trained and/or completed quests. That routine was broken, however, when a town-wide announcement rang out over all of Magnolia.

{"Ladies and gentlemen, please return to your homes and vacate the streets."} A female voice said over the towns announcement system. {"The Gildarts Shift will commence in three minutes. I repeat..."}

Hearing the announcement, most of the Fairy Tail wizards who were not on quests had their eyes light up. Meanwhile, those who were not familiar with Gildarts, or rather those who joined the guild after February 28, x781, were thoroughly confused by the announcement. Juvia, Gajeel, Wendy, and Carla being the prime examples of this group.

"So, Uncle Gildarts is back." Sun said happily.

"Yeah, that bastard finally came back." Gozaburo said as he slammed his mug of ale on the table.

"It certainly has been a while." Ren said, looking towards the guild's main entrance. "I wonder what he will think after seeing the new guild hall?"

"I'm sure that idiot won't even realize anything changed." Ur said after taking a sip from her glass of wine.

"Maybe someone should tell him about it." Masa said, sounding a bit worried.

"Nah, he'll be fine." Ur replied while waving her hand dismissively. "I mean, it's in the exact same place, right?"

"No, that's not what I meant, Ma'am." Masa replied. "What if he tries to walk through the walls like he usually does?"

Hearing that, Ur and the Seto family all froze. A moment later, Ur stood up explosively and spread her [Magic Power Detection] over the whole town to locate Gildarts.

"Oh, there's no way in hell I'm gonna miss this!" Ur shouted as she ran towards the guild hall's front doors. "I wonder just how far he'll fly after the barrier around the building rejects him!"

With that, the members of the Seto family could only look on in disbelief.

"And I thought she was going to go welcome back the man she had a crush on." Ren muttered to herself at a volume that only she could hear.

"But what will Alfonzo do if the barrier isn't strong enough to stop Uncle Gildarts?" Sun asked in worry. "Won't they fight if that happens? He should be a lot stronger, right? I mean, it's been almost four years. It really might turn into a fight.""

With Sun's statement, Gozaburo was the next to stand up explosively.

"I really hope Gildarts has gotten strong enough to break the barrier." Gozaburo said as he ran behind Ur. "I can't wait to see that boy lose his shit and challenge Gildarts to a fight only to get his ass kicked a few minutes later."

Watching her husband running away, Ren could only sigh in exasperation.

"Although he's gotten a lot better over the years, I guess he just can't shake his dislike for Alfonzo, huh?" Ren asked while shaking her head.

At around the same time, Alfonzo walked into the main hall after hearing the announcement.

"I guess it's about that time, isn't it?" Alfonzo asked himself. "Good thing I prepared all that extra metal to make some Automail."

"Fonzie!" Cana shouted as soon as she noticed Alfonzo had entered the guild hall. "Dad's back!"

A moment later, Cana ran over to Alfonzo and grabbed him by the arm. Then, she started dragging him towards the front doors.

"Come on, let's go greet him." Cana said excitedly.

"Calm down, Cana." Alfonzo said with a smile. "You know he's not gonna come in through the front doors, right?"

"I know, I know." Cana replied. "We're gonna go and try to meet him at his landing point. I have no doubt that he'll just try to burst through the wall like he always does."

"He better not!" Elicia said, standing up with her hands resting on her hips. "I don't wanna have to teach him another lesson of the painful variety."

"Oh, Lici, I thought you were at home working on a new design." Alfonzo said, surprised to see Elicia in the guild hall.

"I finished not too long ago and decided to come back to the guild." Elicia replied with a smile.

"I guess I was wrong, Cana." Alfonzo said, turning his head back in Cana's direction. "I guess he will be coming in through---"

Before Alfonzo could finish, he saw Cana had stopped in place while pulling at her hair with an unsure expression on her face. Not understanding what was going through her mind, Alfonzo just decided to ask.

"What's wrong, Cana?" Alfonzo asked in a confused tone.

"Now, I'm now sure what I should do." Cana replied with a troubled expression. "I know I shouldn't want to see my dad get punched in the nuts, again. But it was just so funny last time. Should I start chugging some alcohol to enhance the comedic value? Or, should I go out there and stop him so he doesn't get in trouble with Lici?"

Hearing that, Alfonzo could only look at Cana with a helpless expression. He really had no idea how he should react to what he just heard.

Meanwhile, Gildarts was leisurely making his way through the empty, mechanically altered streets of Magnolia.

"Wow, it's been more than four years, yet nothing has changed." Gildarts said to himself with a nostalgic smile on his face. "*Sigh* I wonder how Cana's doing? I really miss my baby girl. Then, there's Bianca and Orlando's brats. They better not have been slacking off. *Sigh* Of course they haven't. They worked just as hard, if not harder, than their parents back in the day."

While thinking about the good old days, Gildarts continued walking towards the Fairy Tail guild hall. However, when he saw the tall, eleven story building in the distance, he was confused.

"I've never seen that building before." Gildarts thought aloud. "I wonder what it is. And it's so close to the guild hall. Did the old man buy something new while I was gone? Now, I have to find out what it is."

With that, Gildarts picked up his pace, no longer walking quite so leisurely. And at his new pace, it only took about ten more minutes before he reached the guild hall from the southwest.

"Hmm... the guild hall isn't here anymore?" Gildarts asked to no one in particular. "But that tower does have the guild mark on it, I guess I'll go in and ask about it."

With that, Gildarts continued walking straight towards the westmost wall of the new guild hall. Meanwhile, inside the guild hall, a few betting pools had been started by the members of Fairy Tail.

The first being whether Gildarts would be stopped by Alfonzo's barrier or not. Then, there was one for how far he would be sent flying when Alfonzo's barrier bounced him away. Also, there was one for who would win if Gildarts did crash through the wall like usual and Alfonzo challenged him to a fight. And lastly, there was one for if he would come in through the front doors or not.

As far as that last one went, there were only two people who bet that he would enter through the front doors. Naturally, they were Alfonzo and Elicia. And of course, everyone was happy to bet against them. The bookkeepers were even looking forward to the large payday they would receive, considering how much the two put on the bet.

At the same time, Ur, Gozaburo, and Masa were standing outside the guild hall and watching Gildarts approach from the building's corner.

"Here he comes." Ur said in anticipation. "This is gonna be hilarious."

"Come on, Gildarts, show that brat how strong you've gotten over the years." Gozaburo said energetically.

"Boss, shouldn't we stop him?" Masa asked.

"Just be quiet, Masa." Gozaburo said while waving off Masa's concerns.

A few minutes later, without a care in the world, Gildarts strolled up to the wall, intending to crash through it like always. Just before his magic came in contact with the barrier, however, he came to a complete and sudden stop while shuddering in fear.

"Something is telling me this is a bad idea." Gildarts muttered while looking around cautiously.

Meanwhile, Ur and Gozaburo were looking on in disbelief at what just happened.

"Seriously!?" Ur and Gozaburo shouted in unison.

Hearing the surprised shouts, Gildarts looked in the duo's direction.

"Ah, Ur, Gozaburo!" Gildarts shouted before briskly walking over to his friends. "Long time no see! How have you been? Other than that, do you guys know what happened to the guild hall? And what is this big building that took its place?"

Like that, Gildarts bombarded Ur and Gozaburo with questions while they disappointedly led him towards the front doors of the guild, answering his questions along the way.

Meanwhile, all the wizards who placed bets were staring at Alfonzo and Elicia in disbelief.

"What's wrong?" Elicia asked with a smile while tilting her head to the side.

"Seriously, did you all forget about the last time Gildarts came home?" Alfonzo asked with a chuckle.

"Lici only had to glare at him through the wall before he entered the guild like a decent human being."

Hearing Alfonzo's explanation and remembering the event he mentioned, the disbelieving looks on everyone's faces turned into glares of indignation. Alfonzo was right, they had completely forgotten that Elicia had the ability to alter the outcome of a bet like this one.

"And that's why gambling is bad." Elicia said. "I mean, just look at your faces. It looks like you're all ready to end our friendship. Either way, I'll be taking this money as tuition for the lesson."