

Fairy Tail 274

Chapter 274: The King's Court

While Elicia, Erza, Marin, and Lucy were searching the Royal Castle, King Faust, along with his captains and chief of staff were meeting in the throne room.

"Has there been any news about the intruders?" King Faust asked in an authoritative tone.

"Unfortunately, over the last two days, we have seen neither hide nor hair of the intruders, Your Majesty." The Chief of Staff, Byro, replied with his head lowered.

Byro was an extremely short, elderly man with a strangely shaped nose and large eyes. Other than his horn-shaped eyebrows and the two tufts of hair on the side of his face, he was completely bald with liver spots on his forehead and the sides of his head. Due to his small stature, most of his body is covered by the wide-collared cape he wears with a simple dark colored robe underneath.

"Still, it's pretty amazing that they were able to escape from you, Captain Knightwalker." The Captain of the Third Magic War Division, Hughes, said playfully as his glance flicked in the direction of Edolas Erza.
"Have you perhaps lost your touch?"

Bang!

"Why don't you follow me to the training ground and find out." The Edolas Erza said angrily as she slammed the butt of her spear into the floor.

"No thanks." Hughes replied with a smile as he waved off the Edolas Erza's words. "But a rain check would be amazing, though."

Hughes was a young man with strange, clock hand-shaped eyebrows and dark purple hair with a single, thick, white lock located on the front-right of his head. Wearing a white uniform with gold trim and a dark green shirt with olive green crisscrossing lines, he exuded a carefree, playful, vibe.

Understanding that now, especially in front of her king, was not the time to make Hughes regret his words, Erza Knightwalker took a deep breath in an attempt to calm herself down. Then, she turned towards Faust with a solemn expression on her face.

"Your Majesty, who were those people who intruded into the Royal Capital?" The Edolas Erza asked respectfully. "I recognized both of their faces. Yet, they were definitely not the people I knew. While one of them should be dead, the other was completely different from the man I know."

"I assume you are referring to the man and woman who destroyed the lacrima in the plaza, correct." Faust asked, not surprised that his Second Division Captain would be curious about the people she confronted. "There was also the young woman who looked like you and the young lady who accompanied her."

"Indeed." The Edolas Erza replied with a nod.

"Before I answer your question, do you have any idea where the magic power we've been acquiring since the natural magic in our lands began to dissipate is coming from?" Faust asked while making brief eye contact with everyone in the room.

Seeing that everyone present, other than Byro, shook their heads in denial, Faust went on to tell them where the magic power was coming from and how it was being obtained. Still, even after hearing the king's explanation, none of them felt there was anything wrong with what the king was doing.

Except for the Captain of the First Magic War Division, Panther Lily, an Exceed taller than most humans with a muscular physique and a head reminiscent of a black panther's. He had a white snout and a scar running down across his left eye. While on his body, he wore a personalized armor with a long cape draped from his shoulders.

"My King." Panther Lily said, stepping forward after Faust finished his explanation. "Is this the right thing to do? Taking magic power from another world is one thing, but to take the lives of its people, unprovoked, where is the honor in that?"

Swish!

"Panther Lily, you dare question His Majesty?" The Edolas Erza asked in an enraged tone as she pointed her spear at Panther Lily's throat.

Though Erza Knightwalker's four bladed spear was almost touching his fur, Panther Lily's gaze did not shift away from Faust in the slightest, as eh continued to wait for his response.

Eventually, Faust raised his hand, signaling for Erza to lower her weapon. Then, once Erza had lowered her spear, while making eye contact with Panther Lily, the king answered his captain's question.

"You have to understand, Panther Lily." King Faust said in an even tone. "My first duty is to my people. Although it is regrettable what we must do to the people of that other world, should I forsake my own people for strangers we have no connection with?"

Although Panther Lily gritted his teeth and clenched his fists, he understood Faust's position on the matter. Though, he still didn't agree with the method used to secure magic for Edolas. Before he could retort, however, the sound of hurried, barefoot, footsteps could be heard approaching the throne room.

"Big news! Big news!" A small girl with a distinctively puppy-like appearance with a small nose and a headgear that made it look as if she had a pair of floppy ears shouted as she entered the throne room.

"Coco, calm down." Byro reprimanded. "You are in front of His Majesty."

Upon hearing Byro's voice, the small girl, Coco, came to a stop, the yellow dress she wore over a dark blue body suit that covered everything from her forearms to her calves, fluttering from the sudden stop. Then, she brought her bare feet together and raised one of her gloved hands before performing a salute to King Faust.

"My apologies, Your Majesty." Coco said in a hyperactive manner. "But I have something to report from the soldiers in the city."

"Proceed." Faust replied calmly.

"Yes, sir." Coco said with a nod. "Two of the people who interrupted the presentation of the lacrima fragment have appeared in the city. Currently, they are being pursued by soldiers of the Royal Army."

Bang!

"They've finally shown themselves. Was that woman among them?" The Edolas Erza said in a bloodthirsty tone as she, once again, slammed the butt of her spear against the floor of the throne room. "Your Majesty, I will bring them to you to receive punishment."

"Stand down, Knightwalker." Faust replied, not even looking in Erza's direction. "Coco, was there a description of the intruders?"

"Yes, sir." Coco replied. "One was a young man with spiky pink hair. The other was a young girl with long, straight, dark blue hair."

Hearing Coco's descriptions of the two who were being pursued, The Edolas Erza deflated a bit. However, she was still enthusiastic about catching them. If she did, she might be able to force that woman who looked like Elicia Phyllis out of hiding.

Meanwhile, Faust pondered what he had just heard from Coco. Then, he remembered the descriptions he heard from one of Queen Shagotte's prophecies.

"If I'm not mistaken, those two should be the dragon Slayers we've heard about." Faust said while stroking his beard. "The wizards from the other world with unlimited magic power."

"Who will you send after them, Your Majesty?" Byro asked calmly.

"Let the soldiers pursue them. If they were the only ones in the Royal Capital, I would send one of my captains for this." Faust replied. "But there are more of these vermin running around. And we don't know what they are planning to do, other than destroying the lacrima."

"A wise decision, Your Majesty." Byro said with a bow of his head.

"Knightwalker, Hughes, Sugarboy, the three of you shall stay here to protect the castle should they attack." Faust ordered.

"Yes, sir!" The Edolas Erza, Hughes, and Sugarboy, a tall, blue-eyed man with blond hair worn in a pompadour with long side burns and a well featured face with a very prominent cleft chin wearing a light red armor with gold trim and a bronze belt, replied in unison.

"Panther Lily." Faust continued after receiving the responses from the three captains.

"My King." Panther Lily replied while bowing his head respectfully.

"You are to go to the lacrima and guard it." Faust ordered. "The intruders cannot be allowed to do what they did to the lacrima in the plaza."

Although he was hesitant to follow the orders he was given, Panther Lily's loyalty to Edolas won over his honor. So, he stepped forward and thumped his fist on his chest plate as he replied.

"Understood."

"Now, go." Faust ordered before his four captains left the throne room.

A few moments later, only Faust, Byro, and Coco were left in the throne room.

"How dare he question my methods." Faust spat after he was sure that Panther Lily would not be able to hear him. "As a soldier of my army, all he need do is follow my orders."

"Your Majesty, please calm down." Byro said in a placating tone. "Soon, you won't have to worry about him."

"Then, you have completed it?" Faust asked, his eyes lighting up after hearing Byro's words.

"Indeed." Byro replied. "And this last use of the Anima was the proof. We now have the ability to turn those with magic power in their bodies into lacrima for later use."

"Excellent!" Faust said happily. "Well done, Byro. Now, those Exceed will no longer be able to lord themselves above us. Hmph! What gods. Soon, all of them will be no more than the power sources for our magic items."

While Faust and Byro wore excited expressions for finally becoming the dominant species on Edolas, Coco's expression turned into one filled with worry. Although she was the Assistant Chief of Staff and Byro's right hand, the person she was closest to in Edolas was Panther Lily. And hearing that her king and her direct superior were planning to kill her friend was more than she could take. Though, she did not do anything about it immediately, especially because the Captains of the Magic Ware Divisions were still nearby.

Meanwhile, the four War Division Captains, Panther Lily, Erza Knightwalker, Hughes, and Sugarboy strolled through the hall of the castle until they reached a large balcony. While the other three would continue down the hallway, Panther Lily turned towards the balcony. Then, using his [Aera Magic], he sprouted a large pair of white, feathered wings from his back.

"Panther Lily." The Edolas Erza said, stopping Panther Lily just before he could fly away from the castle.

Looking back, Panther Lily saw Erza once again pointing her spear at him from the hallway.

"Don't forget your station." The Edolas Erza said sternly. "His Majesty's orders are not to be questioned. You should remember that well."

"Besides, what His Majesty is doing can't be considered dishonorable, right?" Hughes asked with a smile. "I mean, those people from the other world would probably be overjoyed to know they are helping such an amazing cause, right?"

In response, Panther Lily merely shook his head before turning back towards the balcony and taking off in the direction of the floating landmass where the giant lacrima was being housed. And from his expression, it was clear to see that he did not take Erza's threat seriously. Nor did he agree with what Hughes had to say.

"Hmph!" Erza said, lowering her spear. "If he ever second guesses our king again, I'll cut him down myself."

"Now, now, there's no need to get so worked up, Captain Knightwalker." Hughes said with a smile.

"Indeed." Sugarboy said, speaking for the first time. "Though he may have spoken out of turn, Panther Lily's loyalty is unquestionable. There is no need to point your spear at him."

"We'll see." The Edolas Erza replied, glancing at Panther Lily one last time. "For now, we have our orders to follow. Let's go."

With that, Erza Knightwalker, Hughes, and Sugarboy ran off in different directions to make sure that the intruders had not infiltrated the castle. Unfortunately for them, they would have another problem to deal with less than half an hour later after Coco, who was concerned for her friend's well-being, stole the key that opened the doors to where the Anima was located.