

Fairy Tail 277

Chapter 277: Gajeel Found His Cat

While Marin was fighting Sugarboy, Panther Lily, the Captain of the First Magic War Division arrived at the floating landmass that housed the giant lacrima. And when he did, he was not surprised when he saw two intruders standing in front of it.

"So, His Majesty was right." Panther Lily said, floating in front of the landmass while reaching for the large sword that was strapped on his back. "I will stop you from destroying the hope of the Edolas Kingdom."

"Really?" Alfonzo asked with his eyes narrowed. "If the hope of this kingdom relies on the sacrifice of uninvolved parties, it's no better than a Dark Guild. And if that's the case, this kingdom doesn't need to exist."

Hearing Alfonzo's declaration, Panther Lily was shaken momentarily. However, his loyalty to his kingdom was currently overwriting his sense of right and wrong.

"Though, I understand what you're talking about, I cannot betray my king." Panther Lily replied, the resolve returning to his eyes.

"Whatever, that king of yours won't be in power much longer." Alfonzo said with a shrug. "Gajeel, he's all yours. This guy wouldn't even be a warm up for me."

"Haha! Hell yeah!" Gajeel cheered excitedly. Then, he pointed his right index finger at Panther Lily as he continued. "I'm gonna beat you up, cat. And when I do, you're gonna follow me back home."

"Bold words." Panther Lily replied while narrowing his eyes. "Especially when speaking to the Captain of the First Magic War Division. Now, allow me, Panther Lily, to show you why I have that title."

With that, Panther Lily pulled the large sword that was comparable to his own height off his back. However, when he held it in front of him, it began growing at an alarming speed. By the time it stopped, it was four times as tall as the Exceed.

"Alright, this should be fun." Gajeel said as he formed his hands into a trumpet shape before putting them in front of his mouth. "[Iron Dragon's Roar]."

With that, a spinning metallic mass capable of inflicting massive blunt force while the sharp iron shards spinning in the twister were able to shred its target spun towards Panther Lily.

Completely unbothered by Gajeel's spell, Panther Lily drew his sword back. Then, when the spell was close enough, he swung the flat of his blade at it, successfully redirecting it away from himself. Though, he did not notice that the spell went flying off in the direction of the city after curving around.

In fact, the reason the spell flew off towards the city is because Natsu, Happy, Lucy, Wendy and Carla were about to be surrounded by the soldiers of the Royal Army. So, Alfonzo took control of Gajeel's spell and opened a path for them.

Meanwhile, Gajeel threw a punch towards Panther Lily from a distance. And just as his punch reached its end, Gajeel's fist turned into iron before it was launched at Panther Lily.

"[Iron Dragon's Club]." Gajeel chanted as he repeatedly threw punches at his airborne opponent.

At the same time, Panther Lily had already had enough of the passive role in this fight. So, instead of waiting for the [Iron Dragon's Club] to arrive, he flew towards it. Then, when he was in range...

Shing! *Shing!* *Shing!*

... Panther Lily wielded his oversized sword masterfully, despite its unwieldy size, cutting all the incoming projectiles in half before they could reach him.

"Not bad!" Gajeel shouted excitedly. "but how about this? [Dragon Slayer Secret Art: Karma Demon's Iron God Sword]."

Clap!

With his chant, Gajeel clapped his hands above his head. Then, his hands turned into iron and elongated into a gigantic blade. A moment later, Gajeel swung his arms down with all his might, cleaving the gigantic blade down at Panther Lily.

"Impressive." Panther Lily said as he readied himself to swing his own giant sword. "but not enough. No blade in existence can match my Bustermarm."

"Hmph!" Alfonzo snorted from his position behind Gajeel. "I've made better, more functional swords than that one on a whim."

Hearing Alfonzo's mockery, Panther Lily's eye twitched. Still, he was not deterred from swinging his sword to meet Gajeel's blade.

Shing!

And just as he said, Gajeel's blade was unable to match Panther Lily's sword as the blade was cleanly cut in two.

Seeing that his [Karma Demon's Iron God Sword] was not enough to even slow Panther Lily down, Gajeel was forced to leap to the side to avoid the swooping Exceed. Alfonzo, on the other hand, did not even deem it necessary to move from where he stood.

"Now that there's no one between us, why don't you try the power of my sword directly?" Panther Lily said as he swung his sword at Alfonzo with all his might. On top of that, the two lacrima imbedded on the blade began to glow in a bright, reddish-orange color as the blade approached Alfonzo.

Although Panther Lily was a tolerant and gentle Exceed, at his core, he was a warrior. And his warrior's pride could not handle Alfonzo mocking the partner he had stepped into battle with many times.

"[Buster Bomb]." Panther Lily chanted as his sword was about to make contact with its target.

"Wrong move." Alfonzo said, holding up one finger in front of the incoming, giant blade.

Then... Nothing happened.

The [Buster Bomb] was the special ability of Panther Lily's magic sword. Upon impact, it causes a large explosion. But using it against Alfonzo was not a good idea. In fact, if Panther Lily had more information about Alfonzo, he would have never tried to do so.

Still, the visual effect of Alfonzo stopping his sword with only one finger was almost too much for Panther Lily to comprehend.

"How... is this... possible?" Panther Lily asked.

"Like I said, you're not even a warm up for me." Alfonzo said before flicking away Panther Lily's blade.
"Now, be a good kitty and go play with Gajeel."

'*Sigh* I have to admit, I'm really surprised they use the same sigils as they do back on Earth Land for their magic item crafting.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'But it's a good thing they do. Otherwise, I would have been able to stop the sword, but I wouldn't have been able to stop the explosion. I guess I should change the sigils back, too. That way Gajeel will have more fun.'

Ding!

Meanwhile, Alfonzo's flick sent Panther Lily spinning away from Alfonzo along with his sword.

"[Iron Dragon Incarnation]." Gajeel chanted.

Hearin Gajeel's chant, Panther Lily decided that now was not the time to ponder how Alfonzo stopped his sword so easily. Looking in the direction the chant came from, Panther Lily saw Gajeel was being covered by what appeared to be liquid iron that took on the form of a humanoid dragon with a long, thick tail, metallic wings, and a hinged jaw.

"Now, let's see how you do when your opponent can fly, too." Gajeel said, his voice sounding much more bestial in his new form.

A moment later, Gajeel flapped the wings on his back and he.. didn't move.

"Huh?" Gajeel exclaimed in confusion. "What's the big idea?"

"*Sigh* Why are so many of the Dragon Slayers I know morons?" Alfonzo asked himself.

"Hey, don't lump me in with Salamander!" Gajeel shouted in response.

"Gajeel, do you have any idea how heavy you are, right now?" Alfonzo aske, ignoring Gajeel's protest. "It's gonna take a lot more magic power than that to get yourself airborne."

"Oh, that makes sense." Gajeel replied in an enlightened tone.

Meanwhile, Panther Lily was too surprised that Gajeel's wings did not seem to work to take advantage of Gajeel's confusion. Unfortunately, he would not get another chance to do so.

Swoosh!

With another flap of his wings, Gajeel shot up into the sky, directly at Panther Lily.

"Even if you're covered in iron, it's useless." Panther Lily said, preparing his sword to cut down Gajeel.
"You should have seen it already, Bustermarm can cut through iron with little effort."

With that, Panther Lily attempted to cleave Gajeel in half.

Clang!

To Panther Lily's surprise, however, Gajeel simply raised his left arm and blocked the incoming slash with an excited grin on his face.

"Do you really think an iron dragon's scales would be the same as ordinary iron?" Gajeel asked as he gripped the blade of Panther Lily's Bustermarm with both of his hands. "Now, let's see how the iron of this world tastes."

Seeing Gajeel opening his mouth wide, Panther Lily tried to activate his [Buster Bomb] once again. Unfortunately for him, Gajeel bit down on the sword too fast. As a result, many of the sigils necessary to activate the ability were destroyed.

Chomp! *Chomp!* *Chomp!*

"Hmm... not as good as the metals Alfonzo makes, but not bad, either." Gajeel said while licking his lips.

Once again, Panther Lily could only look on at his companion of many years with disbelief. This time, however, it would seem that he would be looking upon it for the last time.

Meanwhile, Gajeel had already eaten nearly half of the extremely long blade. Then, he yanked the rest of it out of Panther Lily's hand while he was confused.

"Hey, Alfonzo, can you keep the rest of this for me?" Gajeel asked as he tossed the remainder of Panther Lily's Bustermarm in Alfonzo's direction. "It will make a great midnight snack."

"Sure." Alfonzo replied as he caught the sword's hilt. "But I'll be taking the lacrima for myself."

"Whatever." Gajeel replied. "It's not like I have any use for them, anyway."

By this time, Panther Lily had finally come out of his confused state. Instead of retreating, however, he adopted a hand-to-hand fighting stance.

"Even if my weapon is gone, I will not give up as long as I have the strength to stand." Panther Lily said.

"That's the spirit." Gajeel said as he slapped his wings and darted towards his opponent. "[[Iron Dragon's Club]."

While flying towards Panther Lily, Gajeel threw a punch, his arm elongating as he did so. In response, Panther Lily calmly flapped his wings and avoided the iron fist narrowly. Then, once Gajeel's momentum brought him close enough, the Exceed threw a devastating right hook into Gajeel's ribs.

"Gah!" Gajeel grunted from the force behind Panther Lily's blow.

At the same time, Panther Lily winced in pain as he felt like the bones in his fist were about to shatter. Before he could recover, however, he was forced to flap his wings to avoid another punch from the Iron Dragon Slayer.

Like that, the back and forth between Gajeel and Panther Lily continued in midair. Though they were both able to fly, Gajeel was not experienced enough with aerial combat to catch Panther Lily. Meanwhile, although Panther Lily was able to land many successful attacks on Gajeel, to do any real amount of damage, he risked crippling himself.

"Well, it looks like this is gonna take a while." Alfonzo muttered as he looked up at the midair combatants. "I wonder if Lici found the key to the Anima yet?"

And just as that thought left Alfonzo's mouth, Elicia had finally caught up to Coco in the Castle's underground.

Edolas, Edolas Continent, Royal Capital.

"Hey, stop!" Elicia shouted as she swung down the corridors of the Royal Capital's underground area. "I'm not with the ones who want to use the Anima for evil. I promise, I'm not a suspicious person."

"Only a suspicious person says that." Coco replied while running at full speed.

"Oh, come on!" Elicia shouted back. "I'm from Earth land. There's no reason for me to turn the Exceed into lacrima crystals, is there?"

Hearing that, Coco started to consider Elicia's words. Before she could slow down, however, she ran through a door and ended up in an underground amusement park with Elicia following shortly afterward.

"Great." Elicia muttered, casting [Hiding in Plain Sight] as soon as she entered the amusement park. "I was hoping to stop her before we got here."

"Well, well, well... Look who it is." Hughes said, walking towards Coco from the depth of the amusement park. "It's quite amazing that you could get away from the captains for so long, Coco."

"Hughes...." Coco muttered as she skidded to a stop. "Ouch!"

"Oh my, it looks like you've hurt your feet." Hughes said in a carefree tone. "Now, it's time to end this game. Give back that amazing key you stole and your punishment will be lighter.""

"No.." Coco muttered as she tried to take a step back. "Ow!"

Unfortunately, the damage to Coco's feet from running around the stone floors barefoot for so long, mixed with the stop she just made, was too much for her to bare. As a result, she fell backward, landing on her butt.

"Now, now, don't be so stubborn." Hughes said as he approached. "I promise, His Majesty's generosity is amazing. Your punishment won't be too harsh."

At this point, Hughes' hand was less than an inch (2.54 cm) away from the key in Coco's arms. Before he could grab it, however, it, along with Coco, was yanked away from Hughes' grasp.

"You know what?" Elicia asked from the ceiling of the underground amusement park. "I think I'll take her with me, 'kay?"