

Fairy Tail 292

Chapter 292: Fried and Bickslow Vs. Elfman and Evergreen

"I wonder who this cave will lead us to." Elfman said as he and Evergreen walked through the cave path they chose.

"As long as it doesn't lead to one of the S-Class wizards, we should be fine." Evergreen replied. "But even if it does, at least we know we won't have to fight Laxus, Alfonzo, or Elicia."

"You don't think you can take the others?" Elfman asked curiously. Then, he puffed out his chest and continued. "That's not how a real man should act."

"I'm not a man, you muscle bound moron." Evergreen snapped back. "But that's not it. I'm confident If I have to face Erza, Mirajane, or Ultear. But if we have to fight Gildarts or Ur, then that's probably the end of the road for us."

Although Elfman wanted to retort, he could not, in good conscience, say that he had a chance against Gildarts or Ur. Though, he did have one point that he disagreed with.

"You shouldn't underestimate my big sister." Elfman said in a solemn tone.

"What? Are you some kind of sis-con, or something?" Evergreen asked in a teasing tone.

To her surprise, Elfman did not respond to the sis-con comment. Instead, his expression became even more serious as he replied.

"Mira may seem nice and friendly most of the time." Elfman said. "but when she fights, she's much more vicious than most other wizards I know."

Hearing that, Evergreen looked at Elfman skeptically. Even so, she did not refute his statement. As a matter of fact, even after all the years they've been guild mates, Evergreen has never fought against Mirajane. So, she does not have much information about the way she fights, other than the fight she saw between Mirajane and Ultear during the tournament a couple months ago.

"Even so, if you don't have the confidence to win, you're limiting your chances of winning severely." Evergreen said in a tone of teaching a junior. "Remember that."

Hearing Evergreen's tone, Elfman glanced at her with a bit of surprise in his gaze. Then, after a moment, he nodded in understanding.

"I'll keep that in mind." Elfman said seriously.

Hearing Elfman taking her advice so seriously, Evergreen glanced at him. Then, she looked away while trying to hide the happiness she was feeling from being taken seriously.

Around that time, Elfman and Evergreen entered an open area in the cave system. Looking around the area, they noticed two other entrances. One of the entrances was sealed. More than likely, that was the path leading to the next part of the exam. While the other had another team standing in front of it.

"So, we're facing Fried and Bickslow." Elfman said, cracking the joints around his body in preparation for the fight.

"I must say, I never thought I'd be facing you in this exam, Ever." Fried said. "Even so, I won't hold back."

"Yeah, we're gonna have to take you down, Ever." Bickslow added.

"Take you down! Take you down!" Bickslow's dolls parroted.

"That should be my line." Evergreen replied. "Come on, Elfman. Let's show them who the stronger team is."

"Yeah!" Elfman roared as he charged forward. "[Take Over: Beast Soul Weretiger]."

With Elfman's chant, his body was covered in the light of his [Take Over magic]. A moment later, his figure was revealed. Now with orange fur covering his entire body, most of that fur was covered in spots reminiscent of a leopard's, despite the name of his [Take Over]. Also, the structure of his legs changed to match that of a feline, while his hands and feet now sported dark claws. On top of that, he gained a feline nose, a long dark main growing from the top of his head, his ears became pointed and elongated, and he grew a tail from his lower back.

Not only those changes could be seen, either. As far as his attire went, his shirt disappeared and his pants were replaced with a pair of baggy pants that reached to the middle of his calves.

Meanwhile, Evergreen, using her [Fairy Wings] floated from the cave floor as she pointed both her hands at their opponents.

"[Fairy Machine Gun: Leprechaun]." Evergreen chanted as a large amount of [Fairy Dust] was ejected from her body and condensed into a number of glowing needles. Then, as she waved her arms, all the needles were fired towards Fried and Bickslow.

In response, Fried and Bickslow remained calm. While Fried was slashing at the air with his sword, using his [Dark Écriture] to place runes in the air, Bickslow made his five dolls take a formation above him.

"[X-Formation], my babies." Bickslow ordered.

Immediately, by linking the corners of the dolls, they made an X-shape. Then, the all released a blast of magic power that flew forward in the same shape.

While it looked like Elfman was fated to be caught in the middle of these two spells, with the use of his [Take Over], he vanished from his spot in a burst of speed just before the two attacks collided in mid-air, resulting in an explosion.

A moment later, Elfman appeared to Fried's right with both hands raised and preparing to slash him with his claws.

"No, don't attack!" Evergreen shouted in panic.

Before Elfman could stop, however, Fried finished his spell.

"[Dark Écriture: Reflection]." Fried chanted.

Hearing Fried's chant, Elfman's eyes opened wide. Still, he did not panic. Although he was unable to stop his attack completely, he was able to slow it to a crawl. So, when his claws came in contact with Fried's [Enchantment], the reflected force barely registered and the [Enchantment] vanished.

"I saw this trick during the tournament." Elfman said in a much more beastly tone. "Don't think you can just use the same tricks over and over."

With that, Elfman thrust the claws on his right hand forward, aiming to incapacitate Fried as quickly as possible.

"I see, it seems I've underestimated you." Fried replied as he flicked his sword upward.

Clang!

With that flick, Fried was able to deflect Elfman's claws to the outside. Still, Elfman followed up by slashing his left hand at Fried almost immediately afterward.

'I gotta stay close to him.' Elfman thought as he continued to exchange attacks with Fried. "If I give him time to use his [Enchantments, it's over for us.'

Meanwhile, Bickslow and evergreen were both flying around the cavern while firing at each other with long range attacks. Yet, neither was able to gain the upper hand so far.

"Do you really think Elfman is strong enough to beat Fried, Ever?" Bickslow asked with his usual manic smile on his face. "if you don't go and help him, he's gonna lose pretty quick, you know."

"Oh, don't worry, I already know all your tricks, so taking care of you won't take long." Evergreen said in an aggressive tone.

Like that, Evergreen and Bickslow continued to exchange long ranged attacks in mid-air.

Meanwhile, back on the ground, Elfman had just avoided a slash from Fried's sword. Unfortunately, he had to move back further than he wanted to do so. However, as he tried to close the distance again, he was caught off guard when Fried rushed forward while swinging his sword in rapid succession.

"Argh!" Elfman shouted after being slashed several times.

If that had been all, Elfman would have been able to shrug off Fried's attack. But Fried was only getting started.

"[Dark Écriture: Pain]." Fried chanted and the runes he slashed onto Elfman's body took effect.

In the next moment, Elfman came to a complete stop as his senses were flooded with an overwhelming amount of pain. Even so, Fried did not stop his onslaught. Slashing his sword several more times, he inscribed the runes for two more spells on Elfman's body.

"[Dark Écriture: Fear]. [Dark Écriture: Suffering]." Fried chanted twice more in short succession.

Like before, Elfman felt pain flood his body. Though, it was on a much larger scale than before. On top of that, his mind was overwhelmed by incredible fear, sapping his will to continue his fight with Fried.

"That should end things on this end." Fried said as he turned around to help Bickslow defeat Evergreen.

Boom!

Before Fried could act to assist Bickslow, however, the sound of a heavy impact on the cave's floor drew his attention. Glancing back over his shoulder, he was surprised to see Elfman on his knees while holding his head in his hands.

Boom!

"No!" Elfman roared, drawing the attention of Bickslow and Evergreen, as well. "No! I'm a real man! And a real man will never be defeated by fear and pain!"

With every few words, Elfman would slam his head into the floor, causing the sound of impact that drew Fried's attention. In fact, Elfman was slamming his head against the floor with such force that a small crater, which was splattered with his blood, began to form underneath him.

"Is he fighting off my magic with his will alone?" Fried asked in an amazed tone.

"Now isn't the time to be impressed." Bickslow shouted. "Take him out while you have the chance."

"I won't let you!" Evergreen shouted, waving her arm in Fried's direction and sending a volley of her [Fairy Machine Gun: Leprechaun] in his direction.

In response, Fried spun on his heels and slashed the air behind him, erecting another [Dark Écriture: Reflection] before spinning again and charging towards Elfman with his sword in position to strike.

Meanwhile, after firing her spell at Fried, Evergreen intended to charge at him to buy time for Elfman to regain his senses. Unfortunately, thanks to Fried's [Reflection], she was forced to alter her flight path. As a result, she would not reach Fried before he reached Elfman.

"It's over." Fried said as he raised his sword overhead and swung it down at Elfman's torso.

Just before the slash landed, however, Elfman raised his head. Then, his left hand shot out and caught Fried's blade. Though the edge of the blade dug into his palm, Elfman was able to stop Fried's attack.

"[Take Over: Beast Soul]." Elfman chanted once he had a bit of breathing room.

At the same time, using the index finger of his free hand, Fried quickly started inscribing runes onto his own body.

Roar!

While Fried was busy, Elfman was covered in the light of his magic before he transformed into the Beast, the monster he almost lost his mind to in the past. Then, once his [Take Over] was complete, Elfman drew his free hand back, balled that hand into a fist, and threw a devastating punch that landed on Fried's torso.

As a result of Elfman's attack, Fried was sent flying into the cave wall behind him, creating a hole on impact. Meanwhile, Evergreen used that time to disengage from Bickslow and approach Elfman.

"You actually broke the effects of Fried's magic." Evergreen said in an impressed tone while keeping her eyes on Bickslow. "I'm just glad you're al--- Urgh."

Before Evergreen could finish, she was forced to a stop when the large hand of a beast wrapped around her neck and lifted her from the floor.

"Elfman... why?" Evergreen asked in pain and confusion.

However, as soon as she looked at Elfman, she knew exactly what had happened. Especially when she saw that Elfman's eyes were now red and the coloration of his body was a shade darker.

"[Figure... Eyes]..." Evergreen muttered as she struggled to breathe.

A moment later, Evergreen flicked her eyes in Bickslow's direction and noticed that his eyes were glowing in the same red color through his visor.

As it turns out, after landing his punch on Fried, Elfman raised his head as he was rising to his feet. Unfortunately, when he did, he met eyes with Bickslow, who had activated his [Eye Magic], [Figure Eyes]. Which led to the current situation.

"Well done, Bickslow." Fried said, climbing out of the hole that was created when he was knocked into the wall.

When Fried reappeared, however, his appearance had changed completely. His size had increased, his skin had turned grey, and he grew a few sharp horns on his head. On top of that, scales grew around his right eye.

"And now, it's time to end this. [Darkness Breath]." Fried chanted as he amassed [Darkness Magic] for his next attack.

A moment later, taking advantage of the fact that Elfman was under Bickslow's control and Evergreen was immobilized, Fried fired a tornado-shaped, highly destructive blast of [Darkness Magic] at his opponents.

Boom~~~~!

As a result of the attack, both Elfman and Evergreen were thrown against the wall behind them and were left unconscious in the crater the attack created in the wall.

"I thought that spell was a last resort type of spell." Bickslow said, lowering himself to the ground next to Fried.

"If I didn't use it, I would have been defeated by Elfman's last attack." Fried said while dispelling his transformation. Then, as soon as he was back to his normal state, he took a few deep breaths to calm his magic power. "Still, that spell uses up too much magic power at once. Even if it didn't empty my reserves, losing that much at once is still tiring."

"I see." Bickslow replied with a nod. "Either way, the entrance that leads out of here is open now. Should we go?"

"Yeah." Fried replied with a nod. "I'm sure someone will be along to collect those two before too long, as well."