

Fairy Tail 297

Chapter 297: Danger Approaches

"Six teams have moved on to participate in the second part of the S-Class Promotion Exam." Makarov said. "And with this part, we will bring that number down to one."

By now, all the participants had recovered from their earlier battles while the teams who were eliminated were moved to the base camp.

Meanwhile, Makarov was standing in front of the six teams he mentioned with Elicia, Ultear and Mirajane standing behind him, as he explained the rules of the second part of the exam.

"As you all know, this island, Tenrou Island, was the place where our guild, Fairy Tail, was established." Makarov continued. "What you may not know, however, is that the grave of our first master, Mavis Vermillion is also located on this island."

Although some of the participants knew about Mavis Vermillion's grave and some did not, they were all confuse as to why that topic was brought up at this time.

"I can see that you are all confused." Makarov said with a grandfatherly smile on his face. "Well, the objective of this part of the exam is to find the first master's grave. The leader of the team that finds it first will be the newest S-Class wizard of Fairy Tail."

With that, all twelve of the participating wizards narrowed their eyes as they radiated determination.

"The grave is somewhere in this forest. And there are all manner of magical beasts that roam this forest, so be careful." Makarov said as he spread his arms and gestured behind him. "On top of that, Elicia, Mira, and Ultear will be roaming the forest as well. And should they encounter any of the teams, they will attack. Though, they will only be aiming to delay, not disqualify whomever they run into."

Hearing that, the six participating teams looked at the smiling young women behind Makarov warily. While Elicia winked at her guild mates playfully after noticing their stares, and Mirajane wore her usual pleasant smile. Ur smiled sadistically, causing some of the participants to shiver involuntarily, especially Gray and Meredy.

"Now..." Makarov said, drawing the attention back to himself. Then, he reached into his cloak and pulled out an ornate pocket watch. "The time is 5:55 p.m. and the trial will begin at 6. Until then..."

Makarov turned around and looked at the three S-Class wizards upon reaching that point.

"You three should make your way into the forest and prepare." Makarov continued with a smile.

In response, Elicia, Ultear, and Mirajane only nodded before they turned around and ran off into the forest. Then, once the three S-Class wizards were gone, Makarov pointed towards a small table that was set up nearby.

"On that table, there are six signal flares." Makarov said as he turned towards the S-Class candidates once again. "Once any of you find the first master's grave, use the flare to signal the completion of the trial."

Hearing that, the leaders of the six teams, Fried, Juvia, Levy, Cana, Sun, and Gray, made their way over to the table and picked up a flare each. Then, they all returned to their partner's sides.

"You will have a total of six hours to complete the trial." Makarov said once all the teams were together again. "Keep in mind, should no one find the grave in that time, then no one will be promoted to S-Class."

Once again, the participants wore solemn expressions after hearing Makarov's warning.

"And lastly, like the S-Class wizards roaming the forest, the teams are allowed to engage in combat with each other. Though, you all are not restricted to simply delaying your opponents. As if you are able to incapacitate your rivals, they will be disqualified from the exam."

With that, Makarov had explained all the rules of the second part of the Promotion Exam. Now, all there was to do was wait until the clock struck 6 p.m.

Meanwhile, Elicia, Ultear, and Mirajane split up upon entering the forest.

"I'd better go set up near Zeref." Elicia muttered to herself as she leapt from one tree branch to another. "It would be better if no one encountered him in this forest. We don't have Natsu to tank a blow from his [Death Wave, after... all...]"

As Elicia reached the end of her sentence, she felt a certain quartet of trouble makers enter the range of her [Magic Power Detection].

"It looks like I talked him up." Elicia muttered with a shrug. "Oh, well. Having him here will help with Grimoire Heart's attack, I guess. Still, I doubt he'll show up in the forest. But I wonder who's gonna end up fighting who."

With that, Elicia continued traveling in Zeref's direction, though she had no intention of getting too close. Although she was strong, stronger than most S-Class wizards on Fiore, she was under no illusion that after only thirteen years of training that she could compete with Zeref, a four hundred year old, immortal dark wizard.

Unbeknownst to Elicia, however, there was another presence floating above the forest looking in a certain direction.

"Precht, why have you come here?" The presence, a transparent female with wavy, pastel-yellow hair that flowed down to her feet, a small ahoge, large, pupilless, green eyes, and wearing a frilly, layered robe with a red ribbon tied in a bow around her neck, asked to no one in particular with dismay in her tone before floating back down into the forest.

Meanwhile, as Elicia mentioned, Natsu, Happy, Carla, and Panther Lily had just neared the island after several hours of flight. Despite that, they immediately started searching for anything they could find to indicate the exam's progress.

"We're finally here!" Natsu shouted as Happy carried him over the shore of Tenrou Island.

"I wonder if the exam has already ended." Panther Lily said while looking around the beach.

"Judging by all those craters, I think it has." Happy said.

Looking down at the beach, Natsu, Carla, and Panther Lily saw the aforementioned craters in the sand that had been left by Alfonzo and Laxus' lightning strikes from earlier in the day.

"It looks like the exam this year was pretty intense." Natsu said as his eyes narrowed. "I wonder if anyone has been eliminated already."

While Natsu, Happy, and Panther Lily discussed the possible goings on of the exam, Carla remained silent as she looked for any evidence of what could have happened to Wendy.

"Carla, is everything alright?" Panther Lily asked curiously.

"Everything is fine." Carla replied while shaking her head.

"Worried about Wendy, huh?" Happy asked.

Instead of replying verbally, Carla only nodded her head with a solemn expression.

"Well, I don't think you need to worry." Natsu said while sniffing the air. "She's nearby. And she's with Mest."

Hearing that, Carla's eyes opened wide as she turned her head towards Natsu.

"Where is she?" Carla asked frantically.

"She's over there." Natsu replied while pointing towards a spot on the beach.

Looking in the direction Natsu pointed, Carla saw Mest and Wendy sitting under a palm tree. Then, without hesitation, Carla spread her wings to the fullest and flew towards Wendy at high speed.

"I'll go with her." Panther Lily said as he left to follow Carla.

Meanwhile, Natsu started sniffing the air again as he picked up another scent approaching the island.

"That smell...." Natsu muttered as he looked over his shoulder. "What is---"

Natsu, what's wrong?" Happy asked after Natsu stopped mid-sentence.

Looking back in the same direction as Natsu, Happy could not help but open his eyes wide.

"What is that?" Happy asked in a shocked tone.

"I don't know." Natsu replied while narrowing his eyes. "But I don't like it... It smells dangerous. Come on Happy, let's go check it out."

Earth land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Open Seas.

Meanwhile, on the sea near the island, Lahar, who had been standing at the Magic Council flag ship's bow since they arrived at the spot where they dropped anchor suddenly looked up.

"Is that an airship?" Lahar asked curiously after seeing a black dot on the horizon. Then, he turned his head back towards the rest of the ship as he barked an order. "Someone, get me a pair of binoculars!"

Hearing Lahar's order, the soldiers on the ship's deck looked at each other for a moment before one of them ran into the cabin to retrieve a pair of binoculars per Lahar's orders. Meanwhile, the captain of the flag ship ran over to Lahar after hearing him shout.

"Captain Lahar, is something the matter?" the flag ship's captain asked with concern in his tone.

"Maybe." Lahar replied as he watched the dot on the horizon grow in size.

"Sir!" the soldier who ran off shouted as he returned with a pair of binoculars. "The binoculars you requested."

"Thank you." Lahar replied as he took the binoculars from the soldier.

Quickly looking through the binoculars, Lahar was able to confirm his suspicions. The dot he saw in the distance was indeed an airship.

"That symbol..." Lahar muttered as he inspected the large, black airship that was approaching his location. "It's Grimoire Heart. But what are they doing here? Are they going to attack us?"

"Sir, did you say, Grimoire Heart?" The flag ship's captain asked in a frightened tone.

"Prepare for battle!" Lahar shouted, ignoring the captain's question. "We have a Dark Guild, a member of the Balam Alliance, Grimoire Heart, inbound."

With his voice empowered by magic, Lahar's orders were heard by everyone in the fleet. At first, all the soldiers and members of the Forth Custody Enforcement Unit were surprised. However, due to their years of training, they quickly followed their orders and moved to man their battle stations.

"Report this to the Magic Council, immediately!" Lahar ordered again. "We need orders on how to proceed."

"Yes, sir." The flag ship captain saluted as he ran towards the ship's communications room.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Era.

Though the flag ship captain reported to the Magic Council, the request for orders was brought directly to Org, who was reviewing documents in his office.

"So, they finally arrived." Org muttered to himself. "Good, with this, we should finally be rid of those ruffians from Fairy Tail."

"Sir, what are your orders for the fleet?" A communications officer asked respectfully.

Although this particular communications officer had no issue with Fairy Tail, in fact, his younger sister had been saved years ago when Gildarts defeated Deliora, as no one knew where the demon would strike next, he was trained to follow orders to the letter. So, even though he wanted to give the order to assist Fairy Tail in their inevitable battle against Grimoire Heart, he could not bring himself to do so.

"Order them to stand by." Org replied as he placed the report on his desk. "They are only to act if Doranbolt is in danger. They may also act when they believe the combat to have finished. It should be a good opportunity to bring in the members of Grimoire Heart after they are weakened by Fairy Tail."

Hearing that, the officer's expression turned slightly uncomfortable. Still, he saluted and turned around to carry out his orders.

"Oh, and one more thing." Org said in a solemn tone. "I am the one responsible for this mission. So, do not seek the advice of the other members of the Council without my permission. Is that understood?"

"Sir!" The officer replied with another salute.

A moment later, the officer left Org's office and was on his way to relay the orders. Meanwhile, Org sat back in his chair with a solemn expression. However, as time passed, his expression slowly turned into a smile before he started chuckling which turned into full-blown laughter after a few more seconds.

"Don't hate me, Fairy Tail." Org said after getting his laughter under control. "I'll make sure you'll be remembered as heroes. It's the least I can do for your sacrifice and all the patents we'll receive with your demise."

Earth land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Open Seas.

"Sir, we've received a response from the Council!" The flag ship's captain shouted as he rushed towards Lahar.

"What did they say?" Lahar asked as he continued to watch the Grimoire Heart airship.

"They told us to stand by and only act if Doranbolt is in danger." The captain replied. "We were also ordered to clean up any members of Grimoire Heart after the combat between the two guilds has completed."

Hearing that, Lahar lowered the binoculars and gazed at the captain with a surprised expression on his face. Still, as one raised by the Magic Council, all he could do was follow his orders regardless of how uncomfortable they