

Fairy Tail 311

Chapter 311: Acnologia; Part 1

While the Fairy Tail wizards were preparing for their trip back to Fiore's mainland, a large, black dragon with white, feathered wings, Acnologia, was flying towards Tenrou island. However, less than five minutes away from his destination, he noticed that he had entered a dome of thinly spread out magic power. Thinking this odd, any doubts Acnologia had about the purpose of this thin veil of magic power were put to rest when he heard a loud shout from the distance.

"Wizards of Fairy Tail! Massive magic power signature inbound. Bigger than anything I've ever felt. And it doesn't feel friendly." Echoed from the direction of Acnologia's destination with clear signs of fear and agitation.

Recognizing the emotions behind the shout, Acnologia's eyes glinted with both amusement and the desire to destroy. However, instead of speeding up, he slowed down in an attempt to bring another level of fear to his prey.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the island, the Magic Council's fleet also heard Alfonzo's shout, despite the fact that they had backed off quite far on Gran Doma's orders.

"I believe that was Alfonzo Marcus, just now." Lahar said while shifting his binoculars from Tenrou Island to the horizon. "Does that mean he already found out about Acnologia's approach?"

"I want to say no." Doranbolt replied. "But the evidence proves that he has. The question is... How?"

"Perhaps a magic item of some sort?" Lahar asked, sounding unsure of his guess.

"We'll just have to report it to the Magic Council." Doranbolt replied. "More than likely, they will request the method from him afterwards. And I doubt he'll be able to refuse sharing it with them."

Hearing that, Lahar only glanced at Doranbolt from the corner of his eye without responding. A moment later, he returned to looking in the direction where Acnologia should be approaching from, according to the reports.

A few minutes later, both Lahar and Doranbolt widened their eyes when they caught sight of Acnologia's silhouette through their binoculars.

"I can't even feel its magic power from here, yet I'm shaking..." Doranbolt said in a trembling voice.

"Those are your instincts telling you to run... far away..." Lahar replied. At this point, I'm feeling the same way. And all I can do is hope that monster doesn't turn its sights to the fleet. Because honestly, there's no way we could run from it if it did."

In response, Doranbolt could only nod weakly while continuing to watch the situation unfold.

Earth land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Tenrou Island.

Around the same time, the wizards of Fairy Tail had all gathered at the clearing used as the base camp. Meanwhile, all the wizards present were looking in the direction from where Acnologia was approaching.

While most of the wizards had detected Acnologia with [Magic Power Detection], there were a few exceptions. First, Happy and Carla, who did not have enough magic power to stretch their [Magic Power Detection] that far. Second were Natsu and Panther Lily. While Natsu simply did not have the patience to learn [Magic Power Detection], Panther Lily had not grasped it well enough in the short time he had been a member of Fairy Tail. And lastly, there was Gildarts. Although Gildarts had excellent control of his magic power, the properties of his magic, [Crash Magic], made it quite dangerous for him to use [Magic Power Detection], as spreading his magic power ran the risk of breaking everything it covered down into cubes.

"What in the world is that?" Makarov asked, trembling at the magnitude of the being he felt approaching.

"It's a black dragon." Alfonzo replied while watching the sky with a pair of binoculars.

"A dragon?" Natsu asked excitedly. "I wonder if it knows where Igneel is."

"From that malicious aura it's giving off, I doubt it would tell you even if it did, Kid." Ur replied.

"Still, I gotta ask." Natsu said in a determined tone.

"Um... If there's such a malicious dragon coming here, why aren't we running away?" Lucy asked in an apprehensive tone.

"Because we wouldn't be able to." Elicia replied while wrapping her arms around the trembling Celestial Spirit wizard. "Even if Fonzie's ship is the fastest in the world, it can't outrun a flying dragon."

"Hey, Alfonzo, let me see those binoculars." Gildarts said, holding his hand out towards Alfonzo. Then after receiving the binoculars, he raised them to his eyes, before continuing to speak a moment later. "I knew it would be that big bastard."

"What are you talking about, Gildarts?" Ur asked with her eyes narrowed.

"Remember when I said that a black dragon took my arm and leg while I was on my way back home after failing the 100-Years Quest?" Gildarts asked, handing the binoculars back to Alfonzo as he did so. "Well, that's the one who did it."

"Then, you mean?" Makarov asked, his expression hardening as he did so.

"We're fucked." Gildarts said bluntly.

In response, the group's morale plummeted immediately.

Smack!

"What the hell, Kid?" Gildarts complained after Alfonzo smacked him upside the head.

"Stop bringing down the mood." Alfonzo said sternly. Then, he looked at the rest of his guild mates. "And can y'all cut that shit out? Even if the chances of us surviving this are small, they aren't zero. Remember, Gildarts survived facing that thing alone. So, if we fight together, we'll be fine. Even if a bit banged up at the end."

Smack!

"Alfonzo is right." Ur said after also smacking Gildarts upside the head.

"Seriously, what the hell?" Gildarts complained.

"We are Fairy Tail!" Ur roared. "We don't give up! And if anything threatens our guild and gild mates, we work together to make them regret it!"

Alfonzo and Ur's rallying cries succeeded in raising the morale of all those gathered. Meanwhile, Makarov, although his mood was not the best after Hades' death, could not help but feel proud after seeing the younger generation of his guild. Then, he put on a resolute expression. Before he could open his mouth to speak his mind, however, he was interrupted.

"Sorry, gramps, that's not gonna happen.' Alfonzo and Elicia said in unison.

"Huh?" Makarov exclaimed while his expression changed from one willed with resolution to one of confusion.

"We're not gonna run away for you to hold back the dragon." Elicia said. "I mean, that would just be silly."

"Especially when we know who that dragon is." Alfonzo added. "Acnologia, the Dragon King of the Apocalypse. The Dragon that kills dragons and Dragon Slayers."

"Meaning, if we run, he'll only chase us down." Elicia continued. "So, it's better if we join forces from the beginning, right?"

With that, Elicia looked back to the rest of her guild mates, especially the four Dragon Slayers.

"Damn right." Laxus said, crossing his arms in front of his chest as he glared at Makarov. "I'm not leaving my grandpa behind."

"Wherever Laxus goes, I will follow." Fried said enthusiastically.

Though not as enthusiastic as Laxus, Bickslow and Evergreen nodded in agreement.

"I-I'll do my best to help." Wendy said softly yet resolutely.

"*Sigh* I guess I'll stay to." Carla added. "Someone has to keep you out of trouble, Wendy."

"This is the first time I'll ever get to fight a dragon." Gajeel said with a grin. "This should be fun."

"*Sigh* I swear." Levy said in an exasperated tone. "All you ever think about is fighting. Though I probably won't be much help, I can at least make iron for you when you run out of magic power."

"If my partner is gonna stay and fight, then so am I." Panther Lily said, taking on his Battle Form as he did so.

"Oh yeah! I'm all fired up!" Natsu shouted as he was engulfed in his magical flames. "Even if that black dragon, or whatever his name is, won't tell me where Igneel is, I'll just have to beat the answer out of him!"

"Aye!" Happy added energetically.

Not only the Dragon Slayers and their friends were enthusiastic about defending their guild from the approaching danger, either. The others were just as enthused. Unfortunately, before they could voice their support, Acnologia reached the island.

Surprisingly, Acnologia did not roar to announce his presence. Instead, while flapping his wings to remain airborne, he simply observed all the insects looking up at him from the ground. And while his gaze lingered on Alfonzo a moment longer than most, due to his [Magic Power Detection] being the first that he noticed on his approach, his gaze ultimately settled on Laxus, Natsu, Gajeel, and Wendy.

"Hey!" Natsu shouted as he took a step forward. "Do you know where Igneel is? If so, tell me, right now!"

"Well, I saw that coming." Gray said in an exasperated tone.

Meanwhile, Acnologia simply glared at Natsu without responding in the slightest. Then, just as Natsu was about to ask his question again, Acnologia opened his mouth and exhaled a breath attack at the pink-haired Dragon Slayer.

"[fire Dragon's Roar]." Natsu chanted as he frantically tried to counter the incoming [Dragon's roar].

A moment later, Natsu and Acnologia's breath attacks collided in the sky. Unfortunately, Natsu's flames were easily pushed back immediately after the collision.

"[Lightning Dragon's Roar]."

"[Iron Dragon's Roar]."

"[Sky Dragon's Roar]."

Immediately after seeing Natsu's breath attack being pushed back, Laxus, Gajeel, and Wendy each launched their own [Dragon roar] to support Natsu's. Eventually, with the power of all four Dragon Slayers, Acnologia's breath attack was cancelled out.

"Well, that sucks." Alfonzo said after witnessing the confrontation. "It took all four of them to break even. And that big son of a bitch wasn't even trying."

"Yeah..." Elicia muttered. "This is gonna be really hard."

"If we're gonna have any kind of chance at surviving this, we need to get him on the ground." Ur said.

"And how the hell are we supposed to do that?" Gildarts asked.

"Why don't you let us give it a try." Alfonzo said with Elicia's left hand in his right.

"Just what do you think the two of you can do?" Gildarts asked. "That big bastard just shrugged off my [Crash Magic] like it was nothing."

"We won't know unless we try, right?" Elicia asked with a smile.

Then paying no more attention to Gildarts, Alfonzo and Elicia stepped forward hand-in-hand. As they did, their magic power swelled and began to resonate.

Surprisingly, after Acnologia launched his breath attack, he simply continued to observe the wizards below. Of course, he was not in a hurry to deal with his prey, either. Especially since no one down on the ground was strong enough to endanger his life. However, when Alfonzo and Elicia's magic power began to rise and fuse together, he looked at them with a bit more interest.

Then, when Alfonzo and Elicia's magic power was perfectly in tune, they each raised a hand towards Acnologia, Alfonzo's left and Elicia's right.

"[Unison Raid: Razor Wire Rhapsody]." Alfonzo and Elicia chanted in unison.

In the next instant, magi-steel threads grew from both Alfonzo and Elicia's fingertips. Then, at speeds faster than most could follow, they shot towards Acnologia. Acnologia, on the other hand, simply watched on, even after the threads wrapped around his limbs, the base of his wings, and tail.

"Now!" Alfonzo and Elicia shouted in unison as they both pulled the hands connected to the threads back with all their might.

Unfortunately, despite the power they used when pulling the steel threads, Acnologia took very little damage. While sparks were produced from the threads rubbing against the black dragon's scales, the scales were completely undamaged. And even though a bit of blood was drawn from the feathered wings, it was obvious that Acnologia would have no issue flying.

"Well, it was a good try." Makarov said.

"We're not done yet." Elicia said as she detached the threads from her right hand's fingertips.

At the same time, she released Alfonzo's right hand and handed him the threads in hers. Then, once the wires were in his hand, Alfonzo raised his magic output to its limit and flowed the strongest electric current he could muster through the wires.

Roar!

To everyone's surprise, Acnologia roared in pain only a moment later. Then, his wings, which were still flapping relaxedly despite having magi-steel wires wrapped around their bases, ceased up. As a result, the giant black dragon plummeted out of the sky.

Boom!

With Acnologia's fall, the entirety of Tenrou Island shook as a giant, mushroom-shaped, dust cloud was kicked up.

"Holy shit, they actually did it." Gildarts muttered in disbelief.

"*Pant* Teamwork *Pant* makes the *Pant* Dream work, baby." Alfonzo said, exhausted from the instantaneous exertion. "Damn, using that much magic power in such a short time is a real bitch."

"We can discuss that later." Makarov said as he began growing with the use of his [Giant Magic]. For now, we have to drive away this beast before he can harm our family!"

By the time Makarov finished growing and speaking, the dust cloud was dispersed by a casual swipe of Acnologia's tail. And although it was clear he was not taking the group of wizards seriously, he did look quite annoyed. On top of that, he was glaring at Alfonzo and Elicia.

"I think we made him mad." Elicia said as she began spreading her threads all over the area.

"I'd be pissed off, too, if someone made me fall from the sky." Alfonzo replied. "Either way, that trick isn't gonna work a second time. So, we'll have to do this the old fashioned way. At least until he gets bored and either leaves or nukes the shit out of the island."

"Although I don't know what 'nuke' means, I get what you're trying to say." Ur said while making her casting gesture. "Let's just hope he leaves once he gets bored. Because if he decides he doesn't like the landscape, there's nothing we can do about it."

With that, the real battle between Fairy Tail and Acnologia would begin at any moment.

Chapter 312: Acnologia; Part 2

"[Ice-Make: Rozen Krone]." Ur and Ultear chanted at the same time.

With the mother and daughter's chat, two massive, thorny, ice stems grew from beneath Acnologia, wrapping around his front limbs and wings before blooming into a pair of ice roses. And although the two spells had the same name and looked nearly identical, there were some major differences depending on the caster.

For example, Ur's version of the spell was much sturdier and more likely to freeze over whoever was entangled by the rose stem. Ultear's spell, on the other hand, incorporated some of the [Iced Shell's] properties, sapping the bound target's magic power for as long as they were bound.

The moment Acnologia's front have was immobilized, Makarov, who had grown to stand as tall as Acnologia, charged forward, grappling Acnologia's head and neck. Unfortunately, Acnologia was not the type to just let himself be controlled. So, once Makarov's arms were wrapped around his neck, he bit into Makarov's shoulder.

"Gah!" Makarov groaned in pain as Acnologia's fangs tore into his shoulder. "Go, my children! Hit him with everything you have while he's not moving!"

And just as Makarov said, the Fairy Tail wizards split up to encircle Acnologia so they could hit him with their strongest spells without fear of hitting their allies.

For the next three minutes, the wizards of Fairy Tail threw as many spells as they could towards the immobile black dragon. Unfortunately, most of them were completely ineffective. The exceptions being those of the Dragon Slayers. Still, they did such little damage that the Fairy Tail wizards were starting to lose confidence.

"Clear the way!" Alfonzo shouted as he formed a large, cone-shaped mass of orichalcum and made it float in front of him.

Then, like he had done when flowing electricity through the wires he made with Elicia, Alfonzo pumped nearly a quarter of his magic power into his right arm.

"[Electromagnetism Magic: Linear Cannon]." Alfonzo chanted as he slammed his electrically charged right fist in to the flat end of the orichalcum cone.

Boom!

Roar!

A moment later, the cone-shaped projectile slammed into Acnologia's right side, just behind his front leg. At the same time, the sound of the sound barrier breaking over twenty times in an instant could be heard while some of the weaker wizards, Happy, Wendy, and Carla, were blown away by the air pressure.

Acnologia, on the other hand, though he was knocked over and fell on his left side, pulling Makarov down with him, had taken very little damage from Alfonzo's attack. In fact, instead of piercing through the dragon, the projectile was flattened against the sturdy scales. Though, he did manage to heavily crack those at the center of the impact. On top of that, Acnologia released a loud roar in response. Though, it sounded as though it was filled with more annoyance than anything else.

"*Pant* Are you fucking shitting me? *Pant*" Alfonzo asked in a tone mixed with equal parts irritation and fatigue. "What's the point of charging that much magic power into my attacks if that's all that's gonna happen?"

"Now's not the time to complain, Kid." Gildarts said as he leapt into the air and aimed his hands at the damaged scales on Acnologia's right side. "You can worry about that when this big bastard is gone. [Crash Magic: All Crush]!"

With Gildarts shouting his chant, an orb of [Crash Magic] was formed on his palms. Then, a moment later, he fired it in the form of an energy beam at Acnologia's damaged scales.

Unfortunately, just like the other spells that hit it from a distance, Gildarts' [All Crush] seemed to have done no damage. Naturally, this left the guild's ace dumbfounded.

"It looks like he's immune to purely magical attacks." Elicia said just as her threads were wrapped around most of the wizards on the island. "I guess only spells with a physical component can hurt him."

"Then, something like this?" Erza shouted as she was covered in the light of her [Requip Magic]. "[Purgatory Armor]."

A moment later, now clad in her [Purgatory Armor], Erza raised her spiked mace as she charged at the downed Acnologia with blinding speed. Then, once she was close enough, she leapt into the air.

Reaching the peak of her leap, Erza felt that her descent was being aided by the threads that were wrapped around her waist. On top of that, using his [Electromagnetism Magic], Alfonzo was also speeding up her fall, as well.

Boom!

As soon as she was in striking range, Erza swung her mace down with all her might, caving in a few more of Acnologia's scales while creating a shockwave from the impact. At the same time, Alfonzo's magic was dispelled while she was yanked away by the thread around her waist.

Swoosh!

Not even a second after Erza was pulled away from where she was, a long, black blur slashed through the swordswoman's previous location. Meanwhile, Erza, after feeling the air pressure that blur created, could not help but be covered in cold sweat.

"Was that... his tail?" Erza asked as she landed next to Elicia.

"Yeah." Elicia replied, her complexion a little paler, as well.

"Get out of the way, Gramps!" Laxus shouted not even a second later.

Looking up, everyone could see that Laxus was falling from high above with his fists locked together.

Understanding what Laxus was about to do, Makarov quickly pried Acnologia's jaw open and separated himself from the black dragon. A moment later, in the form of a yellow lightning bolt, Laxus fell atop the damaged portion of Acnologia's scales while bringing his fists down with great force.

"[Lightning Dragon's Jaw]!" Laxus shouted.

Boom!

Upon impact, the ground under Acnologia cratered while an electric discharge spread in all directions, bathing Acnologia and the ground around him in yellow lightning.

"Damn.... That hurt like hell." Laxus said after flashing next to the Thunder God Tribe and shaking his numbed hands. "It felt like I just slammed my fists against adamantine."

Roar!

Before anyone could respond, Acnologia quickly picked himself up off the ground. Then, with wrath in his eyes, he glanced at the few people who managed to damage him, even if it was very little. Namely, Alfonzo, Elicia, Erza, and Laxus.

"Aww, hell..." Alfonzo muttered. "He's really fucking pissed now."

"Yeah, you'd be pissed too if you were dropped from the sky, and had your scales cracked like that." Cana replied while continuing to throw out combinations of cards, to no effect.

"Like I said, we don't have time to complain." Gildarts said while casting [All Crush] over and over again. "Just keep going."

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

"They actually hurt it..." Doranbolt muttered in a tone filled with disbelief while watching the ongoing battle through his binoculars.

"I know, it's unbelievable." Lahar replied while doing the same. "But at least we have some idea as to what kind of attacks can hurt it. Even if it's not much."

"Yeah, we definitely need to report this to the Council." Doranbolt replied with a nod.

"If we survive long enough to do that." Lahar added.

Like that, for the next few minutes, Lahar and Doranbolt watched as the Fairy Tail wizards continued attacking Acnologia with all they had while Acnologia seemed completely unbothered. At the same time, they could see the giant dragon swinging its tail, wings, and front limbs at the pests that were bothering it.

Still, none of the wizards of Fairy Tail were injured by Acnologia's attacks, other than Makarov, who was bitten while he held it down at the beginning. And they had Alfonzo and Elicia to thank for that.

While Alfonzo would use any metal the wizards were wearing to move them away from danger, Elicia would use her threads to do the same.

"It looks like Acnologia is starting to get annoyed." Lahar said while looking into the dragon's eyes from a distance.

"Then, this is going to end soon." Doranbolt said in a solemn tone. "Although I'm not a fan of Fairy Tail, no one deserves to be killed like this."

Roar!

And just as Doranbolt said, Acnologia, ignoring the incoming attacks, shook off the ice roses restraining him, flapped his wings, and flew to a height that most of the wizards from Fairy Tail could not reach with their magic.

Naturally, Alfonzo, using the [Linear Cannon], had the means to damage Acnologia at that range, but considering he had an idea of what was coming next, he decided against it.

A moment later, just as Acnologia reached the optimal distance, he opened his mouth and began amassing magic power between his jaws.

"Get us further away from the island!" Lahar shouted upon feeling the pressure from the attack Acnologia was preparing.

Wasting no time, the entire fleet retreated from the island at full speed.

Earth land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Tenrou Island.

"Well... fuck..." Gildarts muttered while watching Acnologia amass magic power in its mouth. "There's nothing we can do about that, is there?"

"*Sigh* That seems to be the case." Makarov said in a downtrodden tone. "I really am a failure of a guild master, huh? I couldn't even protect my children."

"Alright, cut that shit out." Alfonzo said, producing a magic item shaped like a metal spike with an orichalcum orb at the top with is [Metal Magic]. "Although I didn't expect us to have to fight the big, black, fuck off dragon up there. I did plan for something like this after I got that bad feeling about Mest."

Hearing that, all the members of Fairy Tail turned their attention towards Alfonzo.

"Now, for obvious reasons, I don't have time to explain everything right now." Alfonzo said. Then, using his magic, he extended several long tubes towards the members of his guild. "Just flow as much of your magic power as you can into these magic power receptors. And I'll take care of the rest."

At this point, following Alfonzo's instructions was the only thing they could think to do. Meanwhile, Alfonzo pierced the magic item into the ground. At the same time, it connected remotely to the surveillance items he had set up around the island when the S-Class wizards arrived on the island to set up for this year's S-Class Promotion Exam.

'*Sigh* I really hope this works.' Alfonzo muttered. 'I spent a long time studying the [Fairy Sphere] spell. And a few months trying to create a magic item that could use it. *Sigh* But even if it doesn't Mavis should still be able to use all the gathered magic power in the central core to trigger the spell the regular way. Still, I'd rather not be stuck outside of time for seven years.'

Just as that thought passed, Acnologia launched his attack down at the island. Then, in a flash of light, the entirety of Tenrou Island vanished from the sea.

Boom!

At the same time, tidal waves were kicked up in all directions. Unfortunately, despite their distance, not all the Magic Council's ships were safe from the damage. On top of that, where Tenrou Island used to be, there was now a straight corridor leading to the ocean floor that was quickly filling up with sea water.

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

"Hurry up!" Lahar shouted. "We need to save as many men as we can! [Water magic] specialists! Use your magic to fish as many out as you can!"

"The island... is gone..." Doranbolt, who was once again looking in the direction of the confront action between Acnologia and Fary Tail muttered in disbelief.

"What did you say, Doranbolt?" Lahar asked, having not heard his colleague over the hustle and bustle of the fleet.

"Tenrou Island... It's gone!" Doranbolt shouted. "Acnologia wiped it off the map with that last breath attack!"

Hearing that, Lahar's eyes opened wide in shock. Then, he, like Doranbolt raised his binoculars to see the aftermath of Acnologia's attack.

And when he did, what he saw was exactly the same as what Doranbolt said. There was no sign of Tenrou Island. The only thing he could see was Acnologia flapping his wings above the spot where the island used to be.

A moment later, however, Acnologia looked in the fleet's direction, causing everyone on the ships and in the water to freeze momentarily. Instead of attacking the fleet, however, Acnologia simply flew away after acknowledging their presence.

Eventually, Lahar snapped back to his senses.

"Someone report everything that happened to the Magic Council!" Lahar ordered loudly, trying to break the fear filled atmosphere. "As for the rest of you, rescue as many of our men as you can. Then, once everyone has been saved, we'll sail over to where the island used to be and look for possible survivors."

With that, all the sailors and Rune Knights moved at double time while Doranbolt took the task of reporting to the Council upon himself.

Chapter 313: Fairy Sphere

Four hours have passed since Acnologia left the area where Tenrou Island used to be. In that time, the Magic Council fleet managed to save all the surviving sailors and Rune Knights who were thrown overboard when the tidal wave caused by Acnologia's last attack washed over the ships. Unfortunately, not all the men survived the encounter.

While some were drowned, some simply took an unfortunate fall when the ships were wrecked. Then, there were those who were hit by debris, as parts of the ships were damaged when the tidal wave passed through. Still, although the morale of all those on the ships had been lowered by quite a bit, they had received orders from the Magic Council to carefully search the area for surviving Fairy Tail wizards.

Unfortunately, even after the full four hour period, the fleet was unable to find anything.

"This is quite the tragedy." Lahar muttered while adjusting his glasses. "We've been searching for the better part of three hours. And we haven't even found any remains."

"Yeah..." Doranbolt replied. "It's as if Acnologia's last attack vaporized everything on the island. Even the ship they sailed here on is completely gone."

Shaking his head in response, Lahar looked to the spot where the Great Tenrou Tree stood. Then, he breathed out another sigh.

"Well, after the search teams return, I guess we should return to Council HQ and give our entire report." Lahar said as he started walking towards the ship's cabin, intending to take a rest.

"Right." Doranbolt replied with a nod.

Like Lahar, Doranbolt also started making his way towards the ship's cabin. However, after only a few steps, he cast his gaze towards the waters that used to house Tenrou Island. And to his surprise, he was hit with an intense feeling of melancholy, though he could not put his finger on the reason for it.

A few moments later, Doranbolt shook his head to rid himself of this strange feeling. But before he could start walking again, the ethernano in the area began to shift.

"What's going on?" Doranbolt asked in a confused tone.

Doranbolt was not the only one to feel the change in the atmosphere, however. So, with this change, the crew of each of the remaining Magic Council ships began to look around with confusion written all over their faces. Even the search parties resurfaced after feeling the shift, as well.

A few moments later, the sea surface began to swell, lifting all the ships and sailors who were currently in the water high above the surface.

"What in the world is going on?" Lahar asked as he made his way towards Doranbolt.

"I have no idea." Doranbolt replied with a mixture of confusion and concern in his tone. "Do you think Acnologia left some kind of trap behind for anyone who went looking for Fairy Tail?"

Hearing Doranbolt's hypothesis, Lahar could not help but remember the glance Acnologia threw at the fleet before flying away to God knows where. And just the memory of meeting eyes with that dragon made him break out in cold sweat.

"For our sake, I hope that's not the case." Lahar replied while adjusting his glasses nervously.

A few moments later, the swelling of the sea's surface finally came to a stop. Then, all the water drained back into the ocean. Now, in its place was a glowing, yellow sphere with the Fairy Tail mark on the surface.

"What is this?" Lahar asked in a tone filled with confusion.

"I don't know." Doranbolt replied. "But we need to find a way to get down from here with the fleet. Otherwise, there's no telling what could happen."

Unfortunately, the members of the Magic Council's fleet and the Rune Knights were unable to see the Fairy Tail guild mark from their current positions. Otherwise, although they would have been even more confused. The chances that they would have thought they were in any danger would have decreased significantly.

Meanwhile, floating a short distance away from the newly emerged sphere, the silhouette of a little girl with pastel yellow-blonde hair and green eyes looked on with confusion.

"How is this possible?" Mavis, the first guild master of Fairy Tail, asked in a confused tone. "Judging by the amount of magic power gathered, the [Fairy Sphere] should have lasted for close to ten years. But it looks like it's about to dissipate and it's only been a little over four hours since it was cast. How curious."

Just as Mavis' finished thinking aloud, the surface of the [Fairy Sphere] spell began to flicker before the bright yellow color making up the defensive membrane quickly dimmed. Then, in less than a minute, the spell was dispelled, causing the entire Magic Council fleet to drop on top of the landmass that was held up by the Great Tenrou Tree.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Tenrou Island.

Meanwhile, the wizards from Fairy Tail who were just defending against Acnologia, from their own perspective, looked around in confusion.

"Hey, Kid." Gildarts said, noticing that the magic power receptor he was holding had disappeared. "What did you do? And where is Acnologia?"

"More importantly..." Ur said, narrowing her eyes at Alfonzo. "It feels like you were already prepared for Acnologia to appear."

Hearing Ur's assumption, all eyes turned to Alfonzo. Although they were happy that he was prepared for whatever happened, the fact that he didn't tell anyone about it was a bit off putting.

"*Sigh* I saw this coming." Alfonzo muttered while grabbing at the hair on the back of his head. "Well, it's seriously because of that Mest guy. I mean, having someone infiltrate your guild is a good way to make people start doomsday prepping and shit."

Hearing Alfonzo's explanation, most of the people present lowered their suspicions. Unfortunately, Ur's eyes remained narrowed. In fact, they narrowed even further.

"That still doesn't explain how... Or rather, why you had a defensive spell ready that could defend the entire island against something like Acnologia." Ur replied, raising the suspicion surrounding Alfonzo once again.

'Damn it, Ur.' Alfonzo muttered internally. 'Can't you just leave well enough alone? I don't like lying to you. But you're leaving me no fucking choice.'

"Are you seriously asking that, Ur?" Alfonzo asked while glancing at Ur from the corner of his eye. "Me, Lici, Cana, Ultear, and Erza have already been in a situation where the Magic Council fired the Etherion at us. Why the hell wouldn't I prepare for such an eventuality?"

"So, you're saying that you thought Mest was a spy from the magic Council the whole time?" Carla asked while looking at Alfonzo angrily. "And you let him team up with Wendy without telling us?"

'God damn it.' Alfonzo muttered to himself once again. 'And now I have to deal with questions from the overprotective mama cat.'

"I already told the S-Class wizards about my suspicions of Mest." Alfonzo replied, sounding annoyed that his good intentions were being questioned over and over. "Why the hell do you think Ur was so hard on the guy while they were getting ready for the exam?"

Though Carla still wasn't happy, Alfonzo decided that he'd had enough of the interrogation.

"Either way, you all are sounding real fucking grateful, aren't you?" Alfonzo said in a disgruntled tone. "Because of my new magic items, not only did we get proof that the Magic Council is working against us by just watching us fight Grimoire Heart, but we also survived an attack from Acnologia. But instead of thanking me, I get the third fucking degree. That's the last time I help any of you mother fuckers for free."

With that, Alfonzo turned around and started walking towards Sixth Sense. Meanwhile, all the others could only watch him with disbelief on their faces.

"Mom, I think you went overboard this time." Ultear said in a slightly reproachful tone.

"I agree." Laxus said with his arms crossed, surprising everyone with his support of Alfonzo. "Why are you looking at me like that? What Alfonzo said is right. He just saved all our lives. But instead of thanking him, which he probably didn't even really want or need, you made it look like he had done something wrong."

With that, the group of Fairy Tail wizards fell silent. Though it was natural to feel suspicious when things were too convenient, they knew they were in the wrong. Unfortunately, their emotions from the near death experience were running wild at the time.

"That was Fairy Sphere, right?" Makarov asked after a few moments of tense silence.

"That's right." Elicia replied with a nod.

"But how did he know how to cast it?" Makarov asked with genuine curiosity. "Even more impressive, how did he manage to imbue its effects into a magic item?"

Unlike the others, Makarov was never suspicious of Alfonzo. He believed in his children, after all. However, knowing the intricacies of the [Fairy Sphere] spell, he knew Alfonzo's feat was much more impressive than simply saving everyone's lives. Especially since the only way to cast the spell was to gather not only the guild members' magic power, but also the power of their bonds and faith in one another.

"Fonzie told me he found a book written by the first guild master in the library shortly after our trip to Akane Resort." Elicia replied. "So, he studied it quite extensively after the Magic Council fired the Etherion on the Tower of Heaven. We were lucky that the Tower of Heaven was made to absorb a lot of magic power. But if that hadn't been the case, we would have all died that day."

Hearing that, even more of the guild members suspicions were lessened significantly.

"Then, why didn't he say anything to us about it?" Gray asked curiously.

"Why did he have to?" Elicia asked, tilting her head in response. "Since when did Fonzie need to tell everyone what kind of magic item he was creating? Or rather, when has he ever done that before?"

"Lici's right, you know?" Sun added. "Besides, it's not like he was keeping it a secret that he was making something. I mean, he spent, like, two months in the library without taking quests. Other than the one to find those two scientists, right?"

By this point, not only Elicia, Ultear, and Sun, but the rest of Alfonzo's girlfriends, Laxus, Natsu, and Lucy were looking at everyone unhappily.

Clap!

"Alright, that's enough." Makarov said in a stern tone while drawing everyone's attention to himself with a firm clap. "I know you're all just letting your emotions do the talking after surviving an attack from Acnologia. But do you really think Alfonzo would do anything to harm the lot of you?"

With that, all the guild members who were suspicious of Alfonzo hung their heads with a bit of shame on their faces.

"The fact of the matter is, Alfonzo's actions were correct. Especially since most of you could feel the Magic Council waiting just off the island's coast. Still, I doubt he's all that angry. Instead, he's probably just disappointed. So, just go and apologize to him later, and I'm sure everything will be alright."

'And that's why he's been the guild master for over forty years.' Elicia thought to herself after Makarov finished speaking. 'He knows all his children so well. Like he said, Fonzie wasn't angry at all. The only reason he stormed off like that was because he didn't want to lie to the people he cares about anymore. But he probably really was serious about not helping anyone for free after this.'

A few moments later, while the Fairy Tail wizards were contemplating Makarov's words, the silence was broken by the voice of a young woman. A voice that did not belong to anyone present on the island.

"Hey, how did the [Fairy Sphere] dispel so quickly?" Mavis, flying quickly towards the group, asked excitedly.

"First Master?" Makarov asked after catching sight of Mavis' spirit.

"Yeah, it's me, maki." Mavis replied cheerfully. "Anyway, how did the [Fairy Sphere] dispel so quickly. From what I could tell, it should have lasted almost ten years. Instead, you came back after only about four hours, or so."

"Huh?" the members of Fairy Tail exclaimed collectively. "And how is the first master here?"

Realizing that most of the wizards present did not know much about Fairy sphere, Mavis explained it to them. She let them know that it was an absolute defense spell, something the wizards accepted immediately. She also mentioned that the spell defended against the passage of time, as well.

"Does that mean we could have been frozen in time for almost ten years?" Fried asked.

"That's how it should have been." Mavis replied with a nod. "But somehow, you're all up and about only four hours after it was cast."

"I think we have Alfonzo to thank for that." Makarov replied.

"Alfonzo... Hmm..." Mavis muttered while tapping her chin with her right index finger as she tried to remember the name. A moment later, her eyes lit up with the signs of recognition. "Oh, he's the one that uses [Metal Magic], right?"

"How does she even know that?" Cana asked curiously as this was the first time she'd ever seen Mavis' spirit.

"Oh, because I watch the S-Class Promotion Exam every year." Mavis replied happily. "I only got the chance to see him take it once, but I remember he was pretty impressive. He even won a two on one fight against another candidate and an S-Class wizard that year. Then, he fought against Gildarts with his girlfriend at the end of the exam. It was pretty memorable."

Before the conversation could continue any further, however, it was interrupted when a young man, Doranbolt, appeared in the middle of all the Fairy Tail wizards.

Immediately after Doranbolt's appearance, and before he could say anything, he felt the pressure from all the Fairy Tail wizards' magic power come crashing down on him.

'I really should have seen this coming.' Doranbolt thought to himself while feeling all the Fairy Tail wizards' hostility aimed at him.

Chapter 314: Leaving Tenrou Island

"Give us a reason why we shouldn't send you back to the Magic council on a stretcher." Natsu growled with flames covering his body.

"Yeah, I can understand why you feel that way." Doranbolt replied while raising his hands disarmingly. "Believe me, I wouldn't have come here to bother you if I wasn't truly in need of your help."

"Oh, so, you need someone to get your ships off the top of the Great Tenrou Tree, huh?" Elicia asked with a smile.

Hearing Elicia's question, Doranbolt could not help but open his mouth and eyes wide in surprise.

"H-how did you know that?" Doranbolt asked.

"That's classified." Elicia said with a wink and a smile while imagining a busty, redheaded, time traveling, second year high school student.

Naturally, that response dumbfounded Doranbolt. Before he could regain his senses, however, Makarov cut in.

"Even if we wanted to help you, there's only one person among our group who could do so." Makarov said. Then, with a wry smile on his face, he continued. "But he's not really in the best of moods right now."

Hearing that, all those present, except Doranbolt, knew Makarov was referring to Alfonzo. Unfortunately, many of them were not sure that he would even listen to their request after what happened earlier.

"Huh? What do you mean?" Doranbolt asked in confusion.

After scanning the faces of those present, however, Doranbolt quickly realized who Makarov was talking about.

"So, the Master of Metals isn't here right now, huh?" Doranbolt said in a disappointed tone. "I guess we'll just have to---"

Before he could finish, Doranbolt caught sight of all the Magic Council's ships floating from the top of the Great Tenrou Tree.

A moment later, all the Fairy Tail wizards looked in the same direction as the dumbfounded Doranbolt.

"I guess he's feeling better now?" Gildarts asked while scratching the back of his head.

"Probably not." Elicia replied while shaking her head. "But he's probably gonna get a huge~~~~ paycheck for this."

Just as Elicia said, shortly after Alfonzo left, he flew up to the top of the Great Tenrou Tree. In fact, from the moment Tenrou Island re-entered the normal time flow, he had spread his [Magic Power Detection]. It would not have been good if Acnologia had still been waiting when they got back, after all.

During that scan of his surroundings, Alfonzo noticed all the magic power signatures on top of the tree. So, to take his mind off of what just happened, he decided he would fly up there and fleece the Magic Council.

And by the time he arrived at the fleet, Doranbolt had already left, making the negotiations with Lahar much easier than they would have been otherwise. As a result, Alfonzo and Lahar agreed on a reward of 1,000,000 Jewels for every ship Alfonzo returned to the sea surface.

Meanwhile, Doranbolt and the wizards of Fairy Tail could only watch blankly as the nine Magic Council ships floated through the air before being placed on the sea.

"Well, now that you got what you came here for, you should leave." Carla said in a very hostile tone.

"Yeah, I guess I should." Doranbolt replied.

A moment later, Doranbolt [Teleported] away from the island and appeared next to Lahar, who was still speaking with Alfonzo, on the deck of the Magic Council fleet's flag ship.

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

"Now, I hope you folks from the Magic Council don't try to go back on your word." Alfonzo said while waving around a recording lacrima. "I do have video evidence, after all. And let me tell you, I don't take too kindly to people messing with my money."

"The Magic Council would never do something like that." Lahar replied in a stern tone while adjusting his glasses.

"Yeah, just like they'd never sit back and watch a Legal Guild fight a member of the Balam Alliance without raising a finger to help, right?" Alfonzo said in a sarcastic tone. "And they would definitely never send a spy to infiltrate that same Legal Guild, right?"

Lahar could only look away in response. At the same time, Doranbolt appeared on the ship's deck.

"Oh, speak of the devil." Alfonzo said with narrowed eyes. "I really should beat the shit out of you for trying something with our little Dragon Slayer."

Despite wanting to retort, Doranbolt chose to remain silent. He already knew that the Magic Council was in hot water, and any excuses he could make would only make their situation that much worse.

"*Cough* Anyway..." Lahar said with a fake cough to change the subject. "Could we make one more request of you, Mr. Marcus?"

"That depends." Alfonzo replied in a clearly uninterested tone.

"We would like to request that you hand over the members of Grimoire Heart that you captured along with their airship." Lahar continued.

"Oh, don't worry, I plan on handing over the members of GrimoireHeart." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "Hades died last night in his sleep, though. Still, I don't think that will affect the total I get when I hand them over for their bounties, right?"

When Lahar and Doranbolt heard that Alfonzo would be handing over the dark wizards, they were both surprised and overjoyed. However, when they heard that Alfonzo wanted their bounties, those feelings of joy vanished immediately.

"Did you really think I would just let you have the credit when you did jack shit to help?" Alfonzo asked disdainfully. "And as for the airship and everything it holds, that's a big fuck no. Those are the spoils of our subjugation. What in the fuck makes you think you have any claim over them?"

While Doranbolt gritted his teeth and clenched his fists at the disrespectful, vulgar, and profane language, Lahar only sighed in resignation. In fact, he knew his request would more than likely be shot down. But he had orders from the higher ups to make the request, anyway.

"Well, if that's all, I'm going back." Alfonzo said in a bored tone. "I've had a really long couple of days and I wanna get some rest."

Then, without waiting for a response from anyone on the ship, Alfonzo flew away from the flag ship and headed back to Tenrou Island.

"The Magic Council is really in trouble this time." Lahar said once he was sure Alfonzo was no longer within earshot.

"Yeah, I wouldn't be surprised if it were disbanded once again." Doranbolt added. "And it's only been a little over a month since it was reinstated."

"*Sigh* Anyway, let's just return to HQ and give our reports." Lahar said, sounding like he had aged by a few years.

With that, Lahar gave the orders to set sail and the fleet began their journey back to Era.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Tenrou Island.

"Let's get loaded up and head back to the mainland." Alfonzo said while flying back to where the rest of Fairy Tail was gathered. "I'm sure the guys at the guild are getting worried by now."

"You're probably right, Alfonzo." Makarov replied. "We should have already been back by now, after all."

With that, Alfonzo nodded before flying towards the camp to pack up his tent and gather his belongings.

"Well, I guess he's still upset." Ur muttered, sounding a bit disappointed in herself.

"Just give him some time." Makarov said while approaching Ur from behind. Then, he raised his hand to pat her on the back.

Smack!

"Don't even try it, Perverted Old Geezer." Ur said while slapping Makarov's hand away from her butt.

"Urgh!" Makarov winced from the pain of having his arm slapped away. Especially since that was the same arm that Acnologia had bitten.

"Hmph! Serves you right." Ur snorted while walking towards the camp.

Not long later, all the Fairy Tail wizards were on their way to the camp to pack up. Meanwhile, Mavis, who was still interested in what Alfonzo had done with [Fairy Sphere], was floating around him and bombarding him with questions while he packed up.

"Hey, you're Alfonzo, right?" Mavis said while floating in front of Alfonzo.

"That's right." Alfonzo replied. "And you're the first master of Fairy Tail, Mavis Vermillion. So, to what do I owe the pleasure?"

"I wanna know how you did it." Mavis replied with an excited glint in her eyes. "How did you make it so that the [Fairy Sphere] dissipated so quickly. From my assessments, you should have been frozen in time until this time in x794."

"Wait, are you serious?" Alfonzo asked in a surprised tone while dropping the bag he had just picked up. "But I thought it wouldn't have lasted any longer than x791 if my magic item didn't work."

'Actually, now that I think about it...' Alfonzo thought to himself while he fell into deep contemplation. 'I was only basing that on the canon. It makes sense that it would have lasted longer. Especially since we

have different guild members here. Plus, there were a lot more S-Class wizards present than in the canon, too.'

"Well then, for your sake, it's good your magic item worked." Mavis said energetically. "But still, you haven't told me how you made it dispel.

"Oh, that..." Alfonzo replied while shaking his miscalculation out of his head. "That was a lot harder than you'd think. But to make a long story short, I made the core of my magic item a temporary piece using my [Metal Magic]. The hard part was making it so that my magic power dissipated, instead of being frozen in time, as well."

With that, Alfonzo and Mavis continued discussing the intricacies of [Fairy Sphere], Alfonzo's magic items, and the encounter with Acnologia. Their conversation even continued after Alfonzo finished packing up not only his things, but those of his girlfriends, as well.

And by the time the rest of the guild arrived, those who wanted to apologize to Alfonzo felt like interrupting such a passionate conversation would only make things worse with him. Eventually, the whole camp was packed, the prisoners were secured, and the S-Class Promotion group were back on Sixth Sense and heading back to Hargeon.

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

About an hour into the voyage back to the mainland, Mavis had finally stopped with all the questions. By now, the sun had set and most of the members of Fairy Tail were resting in their cabins on the ship. Meanwhile, Alfonzo was sitting alone in the wheel house and steering the ship back to Hargeon.

“*Sigh* I wanna sleep in my own bed.” Alfonzo muttered while his attention shifted between the sea chart and the water in front of the ship. Unfortunately, we’ll have to show our faces at the guild first to let everyone know that we’re all okay. *Sigh* I really need to make a simpler means of communication. Communication lacrima have too many limitations. Maybe I should make cell phones or something. Somehow bringing the internet to this world might work, too. But for that, I’d have to learn [Archive Magic]. Or work with someone who already knows it. Hmm... I wonder how Hibiki would feel about getting rich with me.”

Just as he finished monologuing, Alfonzo heard the sound of footsteps approaching the wheel house.

“Um... excuse me...” Lucy said while poking her head into the wheel house.

“Oh, hey, Lucy.” Alfonzo replied with a smile. “What’s up?”

“Nothing really.” Lucy replied as she stepped into the wheel house while twirling her side tail around her finger. “I just wanted to see how you were doing. I mean, you seemed pretty upset when everyone was accusing you.”

“Oh, you don’t have to worry about that.” Alfonzo replied with a wry smile. “Although I was pretty annoyed, I wasn’t really mad about it. I can understand why they were so suspicious, after all.”

“Lici said the same thing.” Lucy said with a small smile as she drew nearer to Alfonzo. Then, when she was standing next to his seat, she continued. “But still, I just wanted to make sure you were okay for myself.”

“Well, I definitely appreciate the care.” Alfonzo replied with a wide smile.

In response to Alfonzo's smile, Lucy's cheeks reddened slightly. Then, she lowered her head before she spoke once again.

"Anyway, it's because of you that all of us survived." Lucy said in a sincere tone. "So, I just wanna say---"

Before Lucy could finish, however, Alfonzo's hand shot out. Then, he placed a finger on Lucy's lips to stop her.

"We're all members of the same guild, Lucy. We're basically family in all but name." Alfonzo said in a stern tone. "So, there's never a need for thanks when it comes to stuff like that."

At first, Lucy was taken aback when Alfonzo stopped her words of gratitude. Then, when she realized Alfonzo's finger was pressed against her lips, her cheeks reddened even more. And finally, when she processed what Alfonzo said, her eyes began to well up with tears. At the same time, a giggle escaped her lips, as well.

"Hmm...?" Alfonzo hummed in a slightly confused tone. "What's so funny?"

"Oh, it's nothing." Lucy said with a smile. "It's just after you walked away earlier, Laxus defended you and said that you probably didn't want or need anyone's thanks. I guess he really does know you pretty well, huh?"

"Well, there aren't usually all that many people that know you better than your worst enemy." Alfonzo replied with a shrug and a smile. "Not that I considered him an enemy. But he definitely thought of me as one until recently."

With that, Alfonzo and Lucy continued to chat in the wheel house until the ship docked at Hargeon's port. Alfonzo also rented another space at the port for Grimoire Heart's airship, that he had connected to Sixth Sense with a sturdy chain to tow it away from Tenrou Island.

And when Alfonzo exited the wheel house with Lucy sleeping in his arms, Elicia and the rest of his girlfriends only looked on with knowing smiles while everyone unloaded their belongings.

Meanwhile, after putting Lucy in a vehicle, Alfonzo made his way over to the Magic Council's branch office in Hargeon and handed over the members of Grimoire Heart to get their bounties for the guild. Then, after all that was taken care of, the Fairy Tail wizards left Hargeon and made their way back to Magnolia.

Chapter 315: There's no Place Like Home

"They sure are late." Macao said while nursing a mug of ale. "Do you think something happened during the exam."

"Nah, they probably just decided to relax a little longer after everything was settled." Wakaba replied before taking a drag from his pipe.

"Yeah, you don't have to worry, Macao." Reedus added while putting the finishing touches on a painting he had been working on all day. "All the strongest members of the guild went along to Tenrou Island. So, everything should be fine."

"*Gulp* *Gulp* I guess you're right." Macao said after finishing off the contents of his mug. "Still, they really are quite late."

"Stop blubbering like a heartbroken woman." Gozaburo said from another seat at the bar.

"What was that?" Ren asked while narrowing her eyes.

"Um... I mean... Honey, you know that's not what I meant." Gozaburo replied in a slightly fearful tone.

"Calm down, Ma'am." Masa said, trying to defuse the situation "The Boss only meant that there was nothing to worry about."

"Exactly!" Gozaburo exclaimed. "Masa's right. I'm sure all of them are fine."

"Mhmm." Ren replied, her eyes still narrowed at her husband.

"Anyway, have any of you seen Natsu?" Macao asked. "I haven't seen him since the day before they left."

"He's probably off doing something stupid." Chico said with a shrug. "I mean, he was pretty upset that he wasn't a candidate for the S-Class Exam this year."

In response, everyone in the guild hall nodded in agreement.

"Speaking of the exam, who do you think passed this year?" Wakaba asked in an excited tone.

"Do you even have to ask?" Gozaburo said in the tone of a proud father. "Of course, it was my precious Sun."

"I'll admit Sun is strong, Gozaburo." Alzack said while cutting into a fillet of fish. "But she's not the only strong member of the guild who was eligible for the exam."

"Yeah, Fried was a candidate this year, too." Bisca added. "And he's probably the strongest member of the Thunder god Tribe."

"Don't forget about Cana, too." Laki said with a smile.

"Gray's pretty strong, too." Reedus added.

Like that, everyone in the guild threw out their predictions for the newest S-Class wizard. And in the typical Fairy Tail fashion, the discussion got rather heated, before eventually turning into an argument that resulted in a guild-wide brawl.

"*Sigh* I hope they come back soon." Ren said in a bored tone while swirling a glass of wine. "Without Ur here, I have nothing to do or anyone to talk to when the boys get all rowdy like this."

A few moments later, as if to grant Ren's request, the sound of several vehicles coming to a stop outside of the guild hall could be heard. Unfortunately, most of the guild was too preoccupied with the brawl to notice. Ren, on the other hand, looked in the direction of the guild hall's front doors with anticipation in her gaze.

"Fairy Tail! We're home~~~~!" Makarov shouted as soon as the guild's doors slid open.

Bang!

Unfortunately for Makarov, he did not have the time to react to the bar stool that had been flung towards the guild's front doors. As a result, he was hit in the face and sent flying back through the still open doors.

"Hahaha!" Natsu laughed happily after seeing the ongoing brawl. "It looks like they threw a party for our return!"

With that, Natsu sprinted into the guild hall and joined the brawl immediately.

Meanwhile, the other returning members of the guild only looked down at Makarov with slight pity and great amusement in their gazes. Makarov, on the other hand, after feeling all the gazes on him gritted his teeth before picking himself up off the ground.

"You damn brats!" Makarov shouted before rushing back into the guild hall to give his rowdy children a piece of his mind.

"*Sigh* There really is no place like home, huh?" Elicia said with a smile while snuggling up against Alfonzo's right side.

"Yeah." Cana, who was snuggled up on Alfonzo's left side, replied with a smile. "Even though we were only gone for a couple of days, it always feels great to come back home."

"Right now, I'd much rather go home and sleep." Alfonzo said, sounding a bit tired.

"Before we do that, we have a celebration party to throw!" Gildarts said while patting Alfonzo strongly on the shoulder. Then, he swept Cana up in his arms and rushed into the guild hall. "Hey, everyone! My little girl is Fairy Tail's newest S-Class wizard!"

Hearing Gildarts' shout, the brawl paused momentarily. Then, the members of the guild either cheered in glee or broke down in disappointment. And the reason for those reactions was simple. The members of the guild who did not attend the S-Class promotion Exam had a little bet going for who would pass this year's exam.

Then, the brawl intensified while the wizards who lost took out their frustrations on anyone they could get their hands on, while those who won simply defended themselves as they were ecstatic about the money they just won.

After fifteen minutes, the brawl finally came to an end. While many of the guild's wizards were covered in bruises, no one was unconscious. So, when the stage was lowered from the wall, everyone was able to hear the announcement of the new S-Class wizard.

"As Gildarts said, Cana Alberona passed this year's S-Class Promotion Exam." Makarov said while gesturing to Cana, who was standing on the stage with him. "So, give her a big round of applause."

Despite some of the wizards still being unhappy that they lost their bet, everyone in the guild hall cheered happily for Cana's success.

"With her partner, Lucy Heartfilia, Cana was able to overcome all the trials that were placed before her to reach the goal of all those who took part in the exam this year."

After finishing his announcement, however, Makarov's expression turned much more solemn.

"Unfortunately, there was much more that happened on Tenrou Island than just the S-Class promotion Exam." Makarov said in a serious tone that changed the atmosphere in the guild hall to a much more solemn one.

From there, Makarov explained everything that happened on Tenrou Island over the last two days, without leaving out any details. And even when Makarov did not have all the information about an encounter, the wizards who dealt with a particular issue would chime in to fill in the blanks.

"Are you saying the island was attacked by Grimoire Heart?" Macao asked in disbelief. "But how did they even get to the island with the barrier that hides it from view?"

"*Sigh* Apparently, the master of Grimoire Heart, Hades, was actually the second master of our guild, Precht Gaebolg." Makarov said in a downtrodden tone. "I don't know what made him change so much, but he wanted everyone on the island dead for whatever he was planning."

While none of the wizards present were old enough to remember the time when Hades... or rather, Precht was the guild master, none of them could believe there was someone who would betray Fairy Tail, even after leaving the guild.

"But that's not even the worst of what happened." Makarov said, the atmosphere becoming solemn once again. "We survived an attack from the Dragon King of the Apocalypse, Acnologia."

Though many of Fairy Tail's wizards were not the biggest on studying history, therefore being unfamiliar with the name Acnologia, there were still a few whose eyes widened in disbelief.

"Are you serious, Master?" Reedus asked in an astonished tone. "Why would Acnologia attack you all?"

"If I had to guess, it's because he felt the power of our Dragon Slayers while we fought with Grimoire Heart." Makarov replied.

"I'm not sure who this Acnologia is." Jet said excitedly. "But since you all came back safe and sound, that means you defeated him, right?"

"Yeah, that's right!" Droy added. "That's just more proof that Fairy Tail is the strongest."

"Yeah~~~~~!" The other members of the guild, who were unaware of Acnologia's identity, cheered loudly.

Those who did know about Acnologia, however, did not join in on the cheering. Instead, they watched the expressions of those who had to fight him. And when they saw the downcast expressions, they knew things weren't as positive as the others thought.

"No, we didn't defeat him." Makarov said with his head down, teeth gritted, and fists clenched. "He played with us. And when he got bored..."

Noticing how Makarov trailed off in his speech, the guild's atmosphere cooled rather quickly.

"If you didn't win, then what happened?" Gozaburo asked sternly.

"*Sigh* we only survived thanks to Alfonzo." Makarov said in a tone mixed with gratitude and frustration.

Hearing that, all the eyes in the guild fell on Alfonzo, who seemed really tired of being there. Still, he explained what he did and why he created such a magic item. Unlike those on the island, however, the members of the guild who did not take part in the S-Class Promotion Exam showered him with only gratitude for saving those they considered friends and family.

"*Sigh* And now I feel even worse about the way I acted." Ur said before chugging down the wine in her glass.

"What do you mean?" Ren asked, concerned about the tone Ur spoke in.

"*Sigh* It went like this..." Ur said, starting her explanation about the aftermath of the [Fairy Sphere] spell.

Not only Ur, but all those who were suspicious of Alfonzo having a spell like that prepared explained how they acted on Tenrou Island to the people they were closest to in the guild. And when the explanations were done, they all got the same advice.

"Just go and apologize."

And after getting enough drinks in them, that's what they all did. Lucky for them, Alfonzo had also downed quite a few drinks. So, at that point, everyone was his favorite person in the world, and he replied to all the apologies the same way.

"Don't mention it!" Alfonzo said energetically as he wrapped Ur in a hug with a big smile on his face. "Tensions were high, and emotions were out of control. There was nothing we could do about it back then. But I know you, and you know me. And we both know that we don't wanna hurt anybody, right? So, let's just have another drink and enjoy the night!"

Although his responses were worded slightly differently every time, Alfonzo basically said the exact same thing to everyone who apologized to him. Then, after he said it to Ur, he just passed out from all

the alcohol he had consumed, most of which was bought for him by Gozaburo, who was so grateful that his little girl was able to come back from such a dangerous situation.

"I think this is the first time I've seen Alfonzo pass out from alcohol consumption." Erza said with Alfonzo's head on her lap, while she ran her fingers through his hair.

"I know, right." Cana replied with a smile. "*Hiccup* He can usually keep up with me."

"*Sigh* This is my dad's fault." Sun said in a slightly embarrassed tone. "I can understand why he's happy but..."

With that, Sun looked over in her father's direction, an action that was followed by everyone else sitting at the table. And what they saw was the shirtless Gozaburo dancing on top of one of the guild's tables with a bottle of liquor in each hand and a big smile on his face.

"Yeah, but can you blame him?" Lisanna asked with a smile. "Actually, we're all lucky to have even come back."

"Yeah, Alfonzo protected his family like a real man!" Elfman added.

"Although it doesn't happen often, Elfman." Mirajane said with a smile. "But you do sometimes use that phrase in the right way."

"Still, we all need to find a way to thank Alfonzo." Meredy suggested.

"Oh, you don't have to worry about that." Elicia said while licking her lips seductively. "I think we'll be able to thank him enough for everyone."

In response, the girls in Alfonzo's harem nodded in agreement. Though, some of them nodded with flushed cheeks, some of them nodded with seductive smiles like Elicia, and one, namely Erza, nodded sternly as if she were about to carry out a sacred duty.

At the same time, Lucy's face reddened as well while thinking how she would thank Alfonzo, as well.

'As soon as we finally have our date, I'll make sure he knows how grateful I am that he saved everyone.'

Lucy thought to herself while clenching her fists under the table.

Chapter 316: Naming a New Guild Master

"Ugh... Where am I?" Alfonzo groaned as he slowly opened his eyes. "It feels like someone smashed me in the head with a sledgehammer."

Clang!

Though his eyes were open, Alfonzo was having trouble seeing his surroundings. So, he decided he would sit up and try to explore his surroundings while getting a glass of water for his hangover. Unfortunately, before he could raise his head too high, his forehead bumped into something cold and hard.

"Oww... What the hell is that?" Alfonzo muttered while raising his right hand to feel what he just bumped into.

Immediately, Alfonzo realized that his head had bumped into something metallic. But thanks to his hazy state of mind and the pounding from the hangover, he could not immediately identify the object. So, he ran his hand along its surface.

"This feels really familiar." Alfonzo muttered once again as he ran his hand along the curves of the metallic object hanging over his head. "Is this a chest plate? And are these curves for... titties? Big Titties...?"

As that thought escaped his lips, Alfonzo felt the chest plate shift slightly. As a result, more light fell on his face. It also allowed him to see the scarlet red hair that hung along with the chest plate.

"I see... So, I was sleeping on Erza's lap." Alfonzo muttered as he let his hand run down the curves of Erza's armor until it reached her plump thighs. Then, his hand slid along Erza's skirt until he reached her butt, before giving it a little squeeze. "And I guess Erza passed out while leaning on the table, huh? Well, I could think of... and have definitely experienced worse places to wake up with a hangover."

With that, Alfonzo carefully pushed himself from between Erza's thighs and chest plate, doing his best not to wake her up. Then after freeing himself, he stood up and stretched. At the same time, he looked at the state of the guild hall after last night's party.

"Well, pretty much everyone is here." Alfonzo said after scanning the room. "I wonder what happened after I passed out. I can tell there was definitely a lot of drinking involved, at the very least."

Shaking that unnecessary thought out of his head, Alfonzo looked towards the bar, more accurately, the kitchen.

"I guess I'll go make something for this hangover." Alfonzo muttered as he staggered over to the kitchen's entrance.

Unfortunately for Alfonzo, once he started cooking his hangover remedy, the smell reached the rest of the guild. As a result, he did not get to eat for the next few hours while the others ordered breakfast.

A few hours later, Alfonzo, sitting at his usual table, shoveled eggs, toast, and honey into his mouth to combat his hangover.

"Seriously, you guys couldn't wait until my hangover was gone?" Alfonzo asked.

"Sorry, Alfonzo." Lisanna replied with a wry smile. "We smelled the food and got hungry."

"What the hell did you even smell?" Alfonzo asked in a disgruntled tone. "I barely even seasoned the eggs, and I didn't add anything to the toast, either."

"It's instinct." Natsu replied while eating his own breakfast. "We just know when you're in the kitchen, Alfonzo."

In response, everyone at the table nodded in agreement with Natsu's statement. Alfonzo, on the other hand, pouted in response.

"Anyway, last night was really fun." Cana said with a smile while sipping a Mimosa. "I really like it when Fonzie is drunk. He's so affectionate."

Hearing that, Most of Alfonzo's girlfriends nodded in agreement. Meanwhile, Lucy, whose face was now beet red, lowered her head in embarrassment.

"What's wrong Lucy?" Elicia asked while nudging the shy blonde with her elbow. "You looked really happy to spend all that time in Fonzie's lap last night."

"Lici~~!" Lucy squealed in embarrassment while covering her face with her hands.

Just like Elicia said, last night, there was a rather long stretch, before Alfonzo got too drunk, where Lucy sat in Alfonzo's lap with his arms wrapped around her waist. And the reason for that was simple, while standing next to Alfonzo and chatting with Cana and Marin, Cana playfully bumped her with her hip. Unfortunately, that caused the slightly intoxicated Lucy to lose her balance. But before she could fall, Alfonzo caught her and sat her on his lap. Something that Lucy enjoyed immensely at the time.

"Anyway, *Cough* so what are everyone's plans for today?" Lucy asked, trying to change the subject.

"Sleep!" Everyone who took part in the S-Class exam replied simultaneously.

Everyone else decided to carry on as usual. Meaning, they would train, take quests, or just hang out at the guild hall.

A little while later, after everyone finished their breakfast, they were just about to break up to do their own things. However, just at that moment, the doors to the guild hall opened. And through the open doors Lahar, Doranbolt, and an entourage of accompanying Rune Knights walked in.

Needless to say, the two from the Magic Council were not welcomed warmly.

"What does the Magic Council want with us after all that they didn't do over the last two days?" Laxus, with his arms crossed, asked in a hostile tone.

'*Sigh* I knew this would happen.' Lahar grumbled internally while adjusting his glasses. 'Couldn't the Council at least give them some time to cool down after all that happened? Instead, they send us here immediately to make demands.'

"The Magic Council demands that the method used to detect Acnologia from a distance be shared." Doranbolt said in an authoritative tone. "Our job of keeping the continent safe would become much easier were we to have this method."

Hearing Doranbolt's demand, the entire guild looked at Lahar and Doranbolt as if they were idiots.

"I think it would be best if you returned to Era." Makarov said as the elevator doors slid open. "On top of the Magic Council not having the authority to demand a guild hand over their secrets, Fairy Tail and the Magic Council are on even worse terms than usual at the moment. And if we were to go to war with the Council at this time, I'm sure that all the legal guilds on the continent would side with us."

"What insolence..." Doranbolt replied angrily.

Before he could continue, however, Lahar placed a hand on Doranbolt's shoulder to calm him down.

"You may not be happy to hear it, but Master Makarov is correct." Lahar said. "We don't have the authority to make such demands."

After speaking his piece, Lahar bowed towards Makarov.

"Please forgive our rudeness." Lahar said politely. "Since our request was declined, we shall take our leave."

With that, Lahar dragged Doranbolt and their entourage away from the Fairy Tail guild hall before things could get any worse. Meanwhile, the Fairy Tail wizards looked on in confusion, thinking they would be insulted and threatened until the Magic Council got what they wanted.

"Anyway, now that that little interlude is over..." Makarov said, drawing everyone's attention to himself. "I have an announcement to make."

Hearing that, all the wizards in the guild began to murmur. Before that could go on for too long, however, Makarov continued speaking.

"After the events of this year's S-Class Promotion Exam, I feel it's about time that I retire as Fairy Tail's guild master." Makarov said calmly.

With Makarov's announcement, the guild hall fell into silence. But after a few moments of tense silence, it was broken by a cacophony of uncertain shouts and complaints.

"Calm down, my children!" Makarov shouted, cutting through the noise. "I know this is quite sudden. But I realized just how old I've gotten during the Grimoire Heart and Acnologia attacks. And unfortunately, that has made me realize that I am no longer suited for the position of guild master."

While it was clear that most of those present still did not like Makarov's decision, they could see the fatigue in his eyes. So, they decided to let it go... for now.

"Naturally, since I'll be stepping down as the guild master, I will be naming a successor, as well." Makarov continued. "Before I make my decision, however, I will discuss it with the guild's S-Class wizards and take into account their opinions."

By that point, everyone knew there was no changing Makarov's mind. However, since the new guild master would more than likely be chosen from the S-Class wizards, no one really had anything to complain about. Well, except for two of the possible candidates. Namely, Laxus and Cana.

While Laxus' attitude had improved greatly over the last few months, the way he treated everyone before that was still fresh in everyone's minds. Cana, on the other hand, would have to do something about her drinking problem before she ever had a chance at being approved by the rest of the guild. The guild already knew what it was like to have a drunk hooligan as their guild master, and they did not want to go through it again with an even heavier drinker.

"Before I go back to my office, I would ask that none of the S-Class wizards take any long term quests until the matter of the new guild master has been decided." Makarov said, ending his announcement.

Either way, with his announcement made, Makarov made his way back into the elevator and returned to his office to consider his options. Meanwhile, the Fairy Tail wizards took some time to process what just happened.

January, x785.

A few weeks have passed since the participants in the S-Class Promotion Exam returned to Magnolia. And in that time, the calendar closed on x784. On top of that, none of the S-Class wizards had taken any quests that took longer than two days to complete. Also, over that time span, Makarov had called each of them into his office to discuss their thoughts on the new guild master.

To Makarov's surprise, despite how much he had done for the guild, Alfonzo denied his request to become the new guild master immediately. And his reason was quite simple. He had no interest in being stuck in the guild hall and doing paperwork.

Despite the disappointment he felt at Alfonzo's refusal, he did ask everyone about their opinions on who they thought would be a good guild master. And something else that surprised him was the fact that Laxus did not nominate himself, siting that he did not have the best track record with the other guild members.

But eventually, Makarov did come to a decision for the new guild master. And when he did, he called all the wizards of the guild to meet on the guild halls first floor.

"Does this mean that the new guild master has been decided?" Jet asked from his seat in the audience in front of the stage.

Probably." Levy replied.

"Then, who do you think it will be?" Droy asked curiously.

"It'll probably be Gildarts, Ur, or Alfonzo." Levy replied.

"Seriously?" Jet asked. "You really think Alfonzo is in the running?"

"But he's so young." Droy added.

"Yeah, but he's done a lot for the guild." Levy said. "And no one can deny that."

Usually, Jet and Droy would oppose most things having to do with Alfonzo due to jealousy, since Levy spends a lot of time talking to him about magic theory. But since Alfonzo saved everyone from Acnologia's [Dragon's Roar], they have scaled back their disagreements quite a bit over the last few weeks.

Like Levy, Jet, and Droy, most of the other wizards in the guild were discussing the possible new guild master as well. Before the conversations could continue any longer, however, the lights in the guild hall dimmed as a spot light fell on the stage.

"My children, let me thank you for gathering once again on such short notice." Makarov said as he stepped into the spot light. "I'm sure you all have speculations for this meeting. And let me tell you, your speculations are more than likely correct."

The murmurs in the guild hall started once again while Makarov gave his children time to digest his words.

"Alright, Old Man, don't keep us in suspense!" Gildarts shouted from his seat at the bar. "Just tell us who's gonna be the new guild master, already."

Gildarts exclamation silenced the crowd and caused all eyes focus on Makarov with anticipation.

"Ahem... Very well." Makarov said after clearing his throat. Then, with a solemn expression on his face, he continued. "From today forward, the Fourth guild master of the Fairy Tail guild will be..."

Once again, Makarov paused for dramatic effect. Then, just as the audience started to get restless, he continued.

"The Ice Witch, Ur Milkovich!" Makarov shouted with enthusiasm.

Spurt!

Immediately after Makarov made his announcement, the sound of someone spitting out a mouthful of liquid could be heard echoing through the guild hall.

Hearing that noise, all the wizards present looked back to the bar and saw Ur with a shocked expression on her face and wine trickling from her lips and down her chin.

"Are you fucking serious?" Ur roared in confusion. "Why the hell didn't you pick Gildarts?"

"Do you really think I could stay in one place long enough to do the job of a guild master?" Gildarts asked with a chuckle.

"Shut up, Asshole!" Ur shouted in an irritated tone. "I wasn't asking you!"

Meanwhile, Alfonzo, who was seated in the audience in front of the stage with his girlfriends, had just wiped a bead of sweat from his forehead.

'I'm just glad it wasn't me.' Alfonzo thought to himself while a wide grin spread on his face. 'Even though I refused outright when Gramps asked me to be the next guild master, I was still worried. I mean seriously, there's no way I would be able to handle all the paperwork that comes with being a guild master. Anyway, now that the whole business with the fourth guild master is over, I can focus on my date with Lucy and the trial against the Magic Council.'

Chapter 317: A Date with Lucy; Part 1

After Makarov announced Ur as his successor, guild business returned to normal for everyone other than Ur. While the other Fairy Tail wizards went back to taking quests, training, and goofing around, Ur was stuck going over all the rules a guild master was expected to follow.

And after seeing the state Ur was in each day, Alfonzo thought it was only a matter of time before she threw Makarov through one of the walls on the top floor of the guild hall, which was now her office. And the reason for that was simple. The smug smile Makarov wore while he walked Ur through all the paperwork would be enough to send anyone off the deep end.

Alfonzo, on the other hand, spent most of his time researching the mechanisms in the Grimoire heart airship, which he docked on the shore of Lake Sciliora behind the mansion. And although he had no plans to use the Grimoire heart airship as is, he did plan to sell it to the guild after removing the Grimoire Heart emblem and modifying it for ease of use.

And today was no different for the Master of Metals. What was different, however, was that he had plans to take Lucy out for the evening.

"So, have you decided where you're gonna take Lucy yet?" Elicia asked while sitting on one of the engine blocks in the airship's engine room.

"Yeah." Alfonzo replied while running his magic power through the entire airship's engine. "I hear Yajima opened his restaurant in Hargeon last week. So, I thought I'd take her to have dinner there. Then, we could walk around the town and talk. Maybe I'll even buy her a little gift if I see anything that suits her."

"Oh, that doesn't sound too bad." Elicia replied with a smile while swinging her legs. "What time are you supposed to pick her up?"

"Around 3." Alfonzo replied just as he got a full image of the engine.

"Then, you should probably get going sooner rather than later." Elicia said while looking at her wrist watch.

"Huh? What time is it?" Alfonzo asked in a surprised tone.

Unfortunately, as a habit he picked up from his past life, Alfonzo never wore a watch while he's working. Even though the chance of damaging his timepiece was much lower now that he could use magic.

"2:15" Elicia replied casually.

"Shit!" Alfonzo said while springing to his feet. "I completely lost track of time."

With that, Alfonzo dropped everything and rushed out of the airship to get ready for his date. Meanwhile, Elicia just watched him go with a smile on her face.

"I wonder if this is what it will feel like when I watch my own son get ready for his first date." Elicia wondered aloud as she locked up the airship on her way back to the house.

Half an hour later, Alfonzo, wearing a black polo shirt, blue jeans, and white sneakers, was standing in the mansion's garage, unlocking the doors to his Vanquish, while Elicia, Cana, and Sun saw him off.

On a side note, the other girls were all off on quests.

"So, should we expect to see you tonight or tomorrow morning?" Cana asked with a playful smile.

Shrugging his shoulders, Alfonzo pulled the car door open before sitting in the driver's seat.

"Honestly, I don't know." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "But I doubt we'll go all the way tonight."

With that, Alfonzo pulled his car door shut, put the key in the ignition, and started the car. Then, after opening the garage door, he backed out before heading towards Fairy Hills, where Lucy had been living since the Phantom Lord attack.

Meanwhile, Lucy, wearing a hot pink, single-shoulder tank top, a mid-thigh length white skirt, and black, high heels was constantly checking herself out in front of a full length mirror.

"I look okay, right?" Lucy asked in a somewhat panicked tone.

"You need to calm down, Lu." Levy, who spent most of the day with Lucy to help her get ready for her date, replied in an exasperated tone. "You look great. Where's all that confidence you usually have in your looks."

"Yeah, but all his girlfriends are so pretty." Lucy said while smoothing out a non-existent wrinkle on her skirt. "I just don't know how I---"

Smack!

"Kya!" Lucy yelped before glaring at Levy, who had just slapped her on the butt. "What was that for."

"Good, the fire in your eyes is back." Levy replied with a smile instead of answering Lucy's question. Then, she grabbed Lucy's hands and spoke in a sincere tone. "Lu, you're gorgeous. Easily one of the most beautiful girls I've ever met. Plus, you have a body that most girls would kill to have."

As she spoke the second part, Levy glanced at Lucy's curvy body before looking down at her own petite body. Then, she sighed in resignation before she continued.

"Anyway, I'm sure everything will be fine." Levy said with a smile. "Especially since Alfonzo is actually making the effort to spend time with you instead of the other way around. So, just be your usual confident/vain self and everything will be fine."

Deciding that she hadn't heard Levy call her vain, Lucy smiled brightly as she pulled her best friend into a hug. And Levy returned the hug with a smile of her own on her face.

"Anyway, do you know where Alfonzo is taking you for your date?" Levy asked as she released the hug.

"Yeah, it's a new restaurant called 8-Island in Hargeon." Lucy replied.

"Oh, that's the one that Yajima opened not too long ago, right?" Levy asked excitedly. "I heard the food there is really good. Like, almost as good as Alfonzo's."

"Really?" Lucy asked with anticipation in her tone. "Then, I'm looking forward to it."

Knock! *Knock!* *Knock!*

"Hey Lucy, Alfonzo asked me to tell you that he's waiting outside." Chico's voice sounded from the outside of Lucy's dorm room door.

"Uh... Okay." Lucy replied, sounding a bit nervous again. I'll head out now. Thanks for letting me know, Chico."

"Don't worry about it." Chico replied as the sound of footsteps leaving from in front of the door could be heard.

"Now's the time." Levy said as she put her hands on Lucy's shoulders. "Go get 'im, girl."

"Yeah." Lucy replied with a resolute expression after taking a deep breath to calm her nerves.

With that, both Levy and Lucy left the latter's dorm room and made their way to the front entrance of Fairy Hills. And when they arrived, they found Alfonzo leaning against the driver side door of his Vanquish.

"Alright, girl." Levy said quietly while pushing Lucy forward. "Go knock 'im dead."

"Right." Lucy replied with a nod while walking towards Alfonzo.

Meanwhile, Alfonzo, after hearing the sound of high heels clicking towards him, looked up and caught sight of Lucy. Then, after admiring her looks for a moment, he put on a smile and walked around to the passenger side door. Then, like a gentleman, he opened the door for her.

"Hey, Lucy, you look great." Alfonzo said with a smile while holding the door open.

"Thanks." Lucy replied bashfully while pushing her bangs to the side. "You look pretty good yourself."

"Thanks." Alfonzo replied with a smile of his own.

At the same time, Lucy climbed out of the passenger seat, and Alfonzo carefully closed the car door. Then, he made his way around to the driver's side.

"You better take good care of Lu!" Levy shouted from the dorm's front doors while waving her fist at Alfonzo threateningly.

"Yes, Ma'am." Alfonzo replied with a nod before opening the door and climbing into the driver's seat.

"Bye, Levy!" Lucy said, rolling down the window and waving at Levy.

"See ya later, Lu!" Levy shouted as she waved back. "And I expect to hear all the juicy details when you get back!"

Rolling her eyes with a smile, Lucy rolled the window back up as Alfonzo started the car.

"So, what kind of juicy details were you expecting to be able to share when you get back?" Alfonzo asked playfully as he pulled away from Fairy Hills.

Upon hearing Alfonzo's playful question, Lucy's face reddened immediately. Even so, she decided to return fire. So, she turned towards Alfonzo and raised her right hand. Then, she stroked his cheek.

"Well, that all depends on you, doesn't it?" Lucy said in a flirty tone. "If you play your part well, you might be rewarded."

The moment after she finished speaking, not only Alfonzo froze in surprise, but even Lucy froze, as she had surprised herself.

'O.M.G. What did I just say?' Lucy asked herself as her face reddened even further in embarrassment. 'I'm not such a loose girl. But what if Alfonzo thinks I'm some kind of floozy after saying something like that? Oh my God, what is wrong with me today?'

'Holy shit, I wasn't expecting that.' Alfonzo said to himself while making sure to keep the car steady. 'I've seen Lucy try to be seductive several times in the anime, to no effect. So, I didn't think anything of it. But holy hell, that was fucking sexy.'

While both young people's thoughts were racing, the Vanquish's interior fell into an awkward silence. However, around the time they reached the town gate heading towards Hargeon, Alfonzo had broken the ice again. Then, for the next two hours, they chatted happily, if not a little awkwardly, until they reached 8-Island in Hargeon.

Earth land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Hargeon.

"Well, we're here." Alfonzo said as he took the key out of the ignition.

In front of the Vanquish was an average sized, two-story building. On top of that, it was quite close to the harbor.

"it's smaller than I thought it would be." Lucy said while looking through the front wind shield.

"That's what she said." Alfonzo muttered.

In response, Lucy glanced at Alfonzo with a helpless expression.

"Anyway, let's head inside." Lucy said as she reached for the door handle.

"Don't touch that handle." Alfonzo said sternly.

Looking back, Lucy gazed at Alfonzo with confusion. Then, she watched as he quickly opened his own door, climbed out of the car, closed the door, walked around to her side of the car, and opened the door for her. Then, with a bright smile on his face, he offered her his hand.

Blushing slightly, Lucy accepted Alfonzo's offered hand and stepped out of the car. Then, once Lucy was clear of the door, Alfonzo closed it. A moment later, he offered his elbow.

"Shall we?" Alfonzo asked with a smile.

"Let's." Lucy replied with a smile of her own as she linked arms with Alfonzo.

Like that, Alfonzo and Lucy made their way toward the restaurant's entrance.

"So, Levy told me that the food here is supposed to be almost as good as yours." Lucy said with a smile.
"What do you think about that?"

"Well, it makes sense." Alfonzo replied as he reached for the restaurant's front door. "Gramps asked me to help Yajima with the recipes, after all."

"Seriously." Lucy asked with a shocked expression on her face.

"Yeah, but I never got to taste the finished products." Alfonzo replied. "So, I don't know how close Yajima got to my standard."

At that point, Alfonzo and Lucy had reached the front doors. And just as Alfonzo pulled the door open and held it for Lucy to enter, Lucy spoke once again.

"Now, I'm even more excited to try the food here." Lucy said excitedly with anticipation shining in her eyes.

"Good evening, and welcome to 8-Island." A familiar voice said as soon as Alfonzo and Lucy walked through the door. "Table for two, I assume."

Hearing that voice, both Alfonzo and Lucy froze up. Then, like machines needing oil, they slowly turned their heads towards the restaurant's hostess. And at the end of their lines of sight was a fair-skinned, blue eyed woman standing at about 5'6" with long, wavy white hair and a an upward styled ponytail in

the front wearing a frilly, orange, strapless, thigh-length maid dress that revealed her shoulders and a healthy amount of cleavage with the name of the restaurant printed on the front, a white collar with a maroon ribbon tied around it, a white apron tied around her waist, and a pair of white stockings.

"Mira? Why are you here?" Lucy asked in a confused tone.

'*Sigh* For some reason, I feel like I should have seen this coming.' Alfonzo thought to himself while shaking his head in exasperation.

Chapter 318: A Date with Lucy; Part 2

"Mira? Why are you here?" Lucy asked in a confused tone.

Smiling brightly, though she was slightly confused to see Alfonzo and Lucy, Mirajane replied to Lucy's question without showing it.

"I'm on a quest." Mirajane replied. "Yajima hasn't filled all the positions here yet, since the restaurant opened not too long ago. So, he commissioned a quest for waiters and waitresses."

"Oh..." Lucy replied.

Then, Lucy looked over the uniform Mirajane was wearing. And when she saw how much cleavage and thigh it showed, she could not help but shake her head.

"Well, that uniform makes it obvious that Yajima is one of Master Makarov's best friends." Lucy said with a wry smile. "I mean, look how much skin you're showing."

"Yeah, they're both old perverts." Alfonzo added with a wry smile on of his own.

"Really?" Mirajane asked while looking down at herself. "But I think it's cute."

"Of course, you do." Alfonzo replied while rolling his eyes. "Anyway, yeah, can we get a table for two?"

"Of course!" Mirajane replied enthusiastically. "Right this way."

With that, Mirajane picked up a couple of menus. Then she gestured Alfonzo and Lucy to follow her while making her way towards a small table for two.

A moment later, Alfonzo, Mirajane, and Lucy were standing in front of a table in the corner of the restaurant near a window that gave a great view of the harbor and the ocean. Then, Alfonzo pulled Lucy's chair out for her before helping her get closer to the table, before taking his own seat. Meanwhile, Mirajane looked at all this with a bit of envy in her gaze.

"Then, please have a look at the menu." Mirajane said, hiding her envy with a bright smile. "Your waitress should be here shortly to take your orders. In the meantime, can I start you off with something to drink?"

'I'm definitely gonna get him to take me out on a date like this, too.' Mirajane thought to herself.

A few moments later, Mirajane left the table after taking Alfonzo and Lucy's drink orders.

"That was a real surprise." Lucy said as she opened the menu. "I really wasn't expecting to see Mira here."

"Yeah, something tells me she's not the only one here, either." Alfonzo replied.

"Really?" Lucy asked, looking up from the menu.

Nodding his head, Alfonzo also looked over the menu. And although he had not spread his [Magic Power Detection], his instincts were telling him that he would meet more people he was acquainted with during his date with Lucy.

"So, since you helped with the menu, is there anything you recommend?" Lucy asked while reading the menu.

"That depends." Alfonzo replied. "Is there anything you're in the mood for?"

"Hmm... Something light, I guess." Lucy replied.

"Then, how about this?" Alfonzo said after taking a few more looks at the menu. A moment later, he turned his menu around to face Lucy and pointed at a particular dish. "The Guillotine Crab Meat Salad should be pretty good."

Finding the dish in her own menu, Lucy took a moment to read its description. Then, she nodded her head in agreement.

"Sounds good, I'll have that." Lucy said with a smile. "What about you, what will you have?"

"I think I'll go with the Beastman Curry." Alfonzo replied. "I'm in the mood for something with deep flavor."

"Oh..." Lucy muttered while checking the description of the Beastman Curry. Then, with a slight frown, she continued. "It looks really spicy..."

"It can be." Alfonzo replied. "But you can choose the spice level."

"I see." Lucy replied with a nod. "Then, maybe I'll try it next time."

Thud!

Before the conversation could continue any further, Alfonzo and Lucy felt the table shake, accompanied by the sound of something being placed on it. Assuming that it was their waitress with their drinks, they both looked towards the sound.

"Yup, my instincts were right." Alfonzo muttered with a wry smile on his face.

"Good evening. I'm Erza, and I'll be your waitress tonight." Erza said with half of her butt on the table, her skirt flipped to reveal most of her thigh and half of her butt, her left hand supporting herself on the table, a tray with two glasses in her right hand, and a seductive smile on her face while her hair, styled into a pair of low ponytails, hung in front of her chest with the tips of her ponytails disappearing into the valley of her cleavage.

Meanwhile, Lucy could only gawk at Erza with her eyes and mouth wide open in surprise.

"Hey, Erza." Alfonzo said. "So, is this your trick to get tips from the male customers?"

"Oh, Alfonzo, it's you." Erza said, her smile becoming much more sincere after seeing her fiancée. Then, she glanced at Lucy. "And I see you brought Lucy with you. I guess that means today was the day for your date, was it?"

"That's right." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "But you really don't have to do all that. I promise the tip will be good, so just act normal, okay?"

"Of course." Erza said as she stood up from the table. "Here are your drinks."

With that, Erza placed the drinks on the table. Then, she pulled a small notebook from behind her apron.

"Have you decided what you'll be having tonight?" Erza asked. "If so, then I'd be happy to take your order."

With that, Lucy snapped back to her senses. Then, she and Alfonzo gave Erza their orders.

After receiving the two's orders, Erza stayed to chat for a few moments before taking the orders back to the kitchen. And after she left, Alfonzo and Lucy continued to chat.

Not much later, the couple's dishes were served. However, instead of Erza, it was Marin who brought out their orders.

"Wow, you really all took the same quest?" Lucy asked, surprised to see so many people she knew in the restaurant.

"Yup." Marin replied with a smile. "Originally, it was just supposed to be me and Mira. But after Erza saw the uniform, she insisted on coming, too. To be honest, we were really worried about bringing her with us. I mean, she tends to break just about everything she touches."

"And how's that been working out?" Alfonzo asked as Marin placed his curry in front of him.

"Better than expected." Marin replied with a smile. "Since Yajima knew her... track record... he only lets her take drink orders."

"That's probably a good call." Lucy said as Marin placed her salad down in front of her.

"Yeah, I can only imagine how many broken dishes and how much wasted food would have happened as a result. Luckily, she's only broken thirteen glasses today. So, our pay shouldn't be docked too much."

Hearing that, Alfonzo and Lucy could only smile at Marin with sympathy.

"Anyway, I hope you enjoy your meal." Marin said with a small bow and a bright smile. "If you need anything, just call out and one of the waitresses will be happy to help."

"Thanks." Alfonzo and Lucy replied with smiles of their own.

After receiving their meals, Alfonzo and Lucy spent the next half hour talking, eating, and being teased by their friends on the wait staff. They even ordered dessert, with Lucy ordering a Ruby Parfait and Alfonzo ordering vanilla ice cream smothered in hot raspberries and raspberry sauce.

And to their surprise, Yajima himself brought out their desserts. Then, after chatting with them for a few minutes, he waived their bill as thanks for Alfonzo helping him with the recipes. Then, after saying goodbye, Alfonzo and Lucy left the restaurant with satisfaction.

"That was really good." Lucy said with a smile while holding Alfonzo's arm as the two left 8-Island. "And Levy was right, it was almost as good as your cooking."

"Yeah, Yajima really is a great cook." Alfonzo replied with a smile of his own. "Anyway, now that dinner is over, how about a walk around Hargeon?"

"Sure." Lucy replied with a nod. "I haven't really walked around Hargeon since the day I met Natsu."

"Hahaha!" Alfonzo laughed after thinking back to that day more than half a year ago. "Natsu destroyed the bell in the clock tower, and I had to clean up his mess."

"Yeah, and I was almost tricked into becoming a slave on another continent." Lucy added while hanging her head.

"But because that guy... what was his name? Bora, I think... was pretending to be from Fairy Tail, he really pissed Natsu off." Alfonzo said.

"Yeah, then with Happy, he came flying to the ship." Lucy said, regaining her smile. "And then, he crashed through the cabin's ceiling and... got motion sickness immediately. Hahaha!"

Reaching that point, Lucy could not help but laugh loudly, drawing attention to the couple as they walked through the streets of Hargeon.

"Luckily, the distraction he provided was enough for Happy to whisk me off of the ship before he ran out of magic power and we both fell into the sea." Lucy continued after she got her laughter under control. "Then, I found my [Celestial Spirit Keys], which that creep, Bora, had thrown away, and I forced the ship back to the shore with Aquarius."

"And shortly after that, Lici and I showed up and forced Natsu to apologize for all the damage he caused while he beat up Bora and his goons." Alfonzo said, concluding the story.

"Yup." Lucy replied with a smile and a nod. "And that day, even though it started off so badly, was probably the luckiest day of my life. Because of all that stuff, I got to join Fairy Tail... And meet you."

Lucy said the last part so quietly that if Alfonzo's body hadn't been strengthened by magic power for more than a decade, he would have missed it. However, instead of responding, Alfonzo simply grabbed Lucy's hand and smiled at her warmly.

And with that, the two continued to chat as they visited a few shops. They even stopped at the Taylor Shop to see how things were going. Then after walking around for a couple hours, they returned to 8-Island, where they left Alfonzo's Vanquish, before hopping in the car and starting their trip back to Magnolia.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

A little more than two hours later, Alfonzo pulled up outside of Fairy Hills. And during the entire trip back from Hargeon, he chatted happily with Lucy, though they did not really talk about anything too deep. Well, other than magic. That conversation got pretty deep. But as wizards, that was to be expected.

"*Sigh* I guess I'm home." Lucy said, sounding a bit reluctant.

"Yeah." Alfonzo replied, sounding a bit reluctant as well. "I almost don't wanna let you leave."

Hearing that, Lucy wore a small smile. Before she could respond, however, Alfonzo continued.

"But, like they say, all good things must come to an end." Alfonzo said as he opened his car door.

Then, like he did at 8-Island, Alfonzo walked around the car and opened Lucy's door for her before offering her his hand.

"I guess you're right." Lucy said as she took Alfonzo's hand.

Then, after closing the door, Alfonzo walked Lucy to the front doors of the women's dormitory.

"I had a really good time tonight." Lucy said while twirling a lock of her hair around her finger after she and Alfonzo stopped just outside the doors.

"Me too." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "I even got a little something that I thought would look good on you."

"Huh? When did you do that?" Lucy asked in a disbelieving tone.

"I have my ways." Alfonzo said as he reached into the front pocket of his pants. "I hope you like it."

Once Alfonzo pulled his hand out of his pocket, he was holding a small box, though it was much bigger than a ring case, so Lucy did not have any weird misunderstandings. And when Alfonzo eventually opened the box, Lucy's eyes sparkled.

Lying in the box was a black butterfly hair clip encrusted with pink gem stones. Something that would match her current outfit perfectly.

"It's so pretty." Lucy said as she reached for the hair clip.

A moment later, she removed the hair clip she was wearing to fasten her side tail in place and replaced it with the one Alfonzo bought for her.

"How does it look?" Lucy asked with a smile.

"It looks great." Alfonzo replied with a smile of his own. "I guess spending all that time with a fashion designer made it so I'm not too bad at picking out accessories, huh?"

Hearing that, Lucy could not help but giggle.

"Thank you, Alfonzo." Lucy said softly. "I really did have fun tonight."

"Then, we'll have to do this again." Alfonzo replied with a smile.

Smiling in response, Lucy looked up at Alfonzo. Then, she slowly closed her eyes while slightly puckering her lips.

Understanding what Lucy wanted, Alfonzo lowered his head and planted a chaste kiss on her soft, pink lips.

Separating their lips after a few seconds, Alfonzo smiled at the lost expression on Lucy's face.

"Well, it's about time I---" Alfonzo started to say before he was interrupted.

Before he could finish speaking, Lucy grabbed the front of Alfonzo's shirt with both hands and pulled him down into another, much more passionate, kiss. Though, she did not insert her tongue.

Then, after about a minute, Lucy finally let go of Alfonzo with her face completely red.

"Well, it's getting late, so I'm gonna go to bed." Lucy said very quickly. Then, she turned toward the dorm's entrance and pulled the door open. "I really had fun and I hope we can go out again, soon. Okay, good night, bye!"

With that, Lucy ran inside and slammed the door behind her, leaving Alfonzo standing there thoroughly confused. Still, after a few seconds, Alfonzo smiled as he turned away from Fairy Hills and got returned home.

Lucy, on the other hand, had made it to her room in record time. And she was currently sitting on the floor of her room with her back against the door while banging her fists on the sides of her head.

"Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!" Lucy shouted at herself. "After doing all that, I ran away and forgot to ask him to be my boyfriend. Ooh! I'm so stupid!"

Chapter 319: Two Letters

"Ooh~~~~~! Lu, you're so bold!" Levy squealed excitedly while Lucy told her about her date with Alfonzo the day before.

"Levy~~~! Keep it down.' Lucy said while covering Levy's mouth with her hands. "I'm telling you, not the whole guild."

"Okay, okay, I'm sorry." Levy said with a smile after peeling Lucy's hands away from her mouth.
"Anyway, did you invite him inside?"

"Of course not." Lucy replied while shaking her head. "*Sigh* I ran away..."

Levy could only look at Lucy in dumbfounded amazement.

"... Even worse, I didn't even ask him to be my boyfriend." Lucy said while covering her face with her hands.

With that, the small table where the two girls sat fell silent.

"*Sigh* What am I gonna do with you, Lu?" Levy asked while smiling wryly.

"Hey, Lucy!" Natsu shouted as he approached the table where Levy and Lucy were sitting. "Erza, Happy, the streaker and I are gonna take a quest. You wanna come with us?"

"*Sigh* Fine..." Lucy said while uncovering her face. "It will at least help me take my mind off my major screw up last night."

"Don't worry about it so much, Lu." Levy said with a conciliatory smile. "I'm sure things aren't as bad as you think."

"I hope so." Lucy said as she walked away from the table. "I'll see you later, Levy.'

"Bye, Lu." Levy replied with a wave.

Meanwhile, at a table on the other side of the guild hall, Alfonzo, Elicia, Mirajane, Marin, and Sun watched Lucy join Erza, Gray, Natsu, and Happy for their quest.

"You know, Fonzie." Elicia said with a wry smile on her face. "If I hadn't heard the story from you last night, I would have thought that your date with Lucy went absolutely horribly."

"I know, right." Marin said in a cheerful tone. "But still, seeing her freak out like this is kinda... No, really cute, isn't it?"

While Elicia and Mirajane agreed with Marin, Sun watched Lucy leave with a concerned expression on her face. Then, once Team Natsu had left the guild hall, she turned to Alfonzo.

"I think you should talk to her about this, Alfonzo." Sun said in a caring tone.

"*Chuckle* Do you really think I haven't tried, Sun?" Alfonzo asked while shaking his head. "In fact, I tried this morning before training started. But she ran away as soon as I got close. Though, seeing her face that red was pretty cute."

"Anyway, Lucy's just embarrassed." Mirajane said with a pleasant smile on her face. "I'm sure she'll get over it soon. Then, she'll be back to normal again."

"Mira's right." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "Anyway, does anyone know where Cana went? She was with us until we finished training. But I haven't seen her since we split up to take a shower."

"Oh, she'll probably be gone for the next few days." Marin said. "Her dad ambushed her outside the locker room. Said something about taking her out on her first S-Class quest."

"I guess I should have seen that coming." Alfonzo replied while smiling wryly. "Anyway, what do you ladies plan to do for the rest of the day?"

Before Elicia, Mirajane, Marin, or sun could respond, the guild's doors slid open, drawing their attention in that direction.

"Finally, we're back." Ultear said as she walked through the open guild doors.

"I never wanna take a quest like that ever again." Meredy said, sounding like she might pass out at any moment.

"Tear and Meredy are back!" Elicia shouted happily.

Hearing Elicia's exclamation, Ultear and Meredy's attention was drawn in her direction immediately. Then, after seeing her waving at them energetically, they both could not help but smile.

"Hey, guys." Ultear said with a smile. "We'll be right back, we have to report to Mom on our quest. Then, we'll come back down and tell you all about it."

"See you later!" Meredy said with a wave of her own as she and Ultear made their way to the elevator to give their report in Ur's office.

"What quest did they take, anyway?" Sun asked curiously. "I mean, they look exhausted."

"I'm not sure." Marin replied. But I remember when they left, they thought it would be pretty easy."

"We'll just have to wait until they come back, I guess." Alfonzo said while resting his right elbow on the table and using his palm to support his cheek.

Nodding at Alfonzo's assessment, the girls continued to chat happily. Then, after about half an hour, the elevator doors opened, through which, Ultear and Meredy re-entered the main hall.

"So, what quest did you take?" Mirajane asked curiously when Ultear and Meredy neared the table.

"*Sigh* We had to investigate a pub and its inhabitants in a small town in the south called Dublith." Ultear replied as she plopped down in a seat at the table. "It seemed like a simple B-Class quest at first. But we found and saw some stuff that would definitely raise the rank to S-Class if we knew about it beforehand."

Hearing that, Mirajane, Marin, and Sun leaned forward with interest. Meanwhile, Alfonzo and Elicia exchanged concerned glances."

"Oh, before I get too into the story..." Ultear muttered as she turned her attention to Alfonzo. "Mom told me to have you go up to her office, Alfonzo. I ran into the mail man on my way back, and two of the letters had something to do with you."

"*Sigh* Fine." Alfonzo said as he picked himself up from the table. "You'll just have to tell me the story when I get back."

"Of course." Meredy replied with a smile. "And when you hear it, I bet it will blow your socks off."

"Damn... Now I really wanna hear it." Alfonzo muttered as he walked away from the table. "Maybe I should just go see Ur after the story is over."

"Do you really wanna talk to a grumpy Ur?" Elicia asked with a wry smile. "Just go. It's not like you can't hear the story later, right?"

"Yeah, yeah, I know." Alfonzo said as he walked away. "See ya later."

"Anyway, what was so weird about that pub?" Marin asked curiously. "Were they hiding some kind of monster that made their drinks addictive or something?"

"If that had been it, we wouldn't have had so much to worry about." Ultear replied.

"Then, what was the big deal?" Sun asked, her curiosity peaking as well.

"Have you ever heard of the term, homunculus?" Ultear asked. "Or maybe, Chimera?"

At that point, the elevator doors closed, separating Alfonzo from the sounds in the guild's main hall.

"Dublith... Homunculus... Chimera..." Alfonzo muttered to himself while the elevator rose to the top floor. "So, they probably ran into Greed. I wonder if the Elrics were there, too. But if they were, then they probably ran into Bradley, as well. Or maybe they just ran into Izumi Curtis and her swell ass husband, Sig. Then again, since we're in a different world, the whole timeline could be different, too."

Before he could think any further, however, the elevator doors opened once again, and Alfonzo was pulled back to the present.

"Good, you're here." Ur said from behind her desk. "Come, have a seat. There are a few things we need to discuss."

Curious about the letters that made Ur call him up to her office, Alfonzo stepped out of the elevator and made his way over to Ur's desk before taking a seat.

"Ultear said there were two letters that came in, and had something to do with me." Alfonzo said after making himself comfortable. "So, what's up? I'm pretty sure I didn't break anything on my last quest."

"We both know that's not why I called you up here, Kid." Ur said with a wry smile. "It's actually for a much bigger deal than that."

As she spoke, Ur slid the first of two letters lying on her desk towards Alfonzo.

Picking up the letter, Alfonzo read it quickly before raising an eyebrow.

"So, a group from Mermaid Heel is coming to visit?" Alfonzo asked as he put the letter back on the desk. "I guess they really were interested in our training facilities after I met up with Yoruichi for that quest, huh? But their guild master is coming with them, too? You know, now that I think about it, I don't even know who she is."

"I've actually never met her, either." Ur said while lightly shaking her head. "But according to the rumors, she might be the best swordsman on all of Ishgar."

'I wonder if she's another crossover that shouldn't even be in this world.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'Still, I'm really curious to know who she is. I mean, even in the Fairy Tail canon, I don't think Mermaid Heel's guild master was ever mentioned.'

"Seriously?" Alfonzo asked with interest. "Then, we probably shouldn't let Erza meet her. You know how gung ho she can get about sparring with strong swordsman."

"Yeah..." Ur said while rubbing her temples. "I just hope things don't get out of hand if they meet. Anyway, I want you to be present for negotiations. Like you said, I'm sure they want you to build training rooms for them."

"And I assume the guild wants a cut, correct?" Alfonzo said while lacing his fingers together under his chin and resting his elbows on Ur's desk.

"I don't even know why you asked." Ur replied while rolling her eyes. "You already know when it comes to matters between guilds like this, the guild gets a cut. But you don't have to worry, we'll only be taking fifteen percent. So, I hope you fleece them for as much as you can."

By the end, Ur was grinning devilishly.

'*Sigh* The position of guild master has turned Ur into a dirty capitalist.' Alfonzo thought to himself while putting on a similar grin. 'And I like it.'

"Sure, I'll do what I can, within reason." Alfonzo replied. "But if I'm gonna be negotiating with a guild master, I'm sure they'll have a few tricks up their sleeves."

"I know." Ur replied. "But since you're the only one who can build training chambers like ours, for now, we'll still have the advantage in negotiations."

Nodding in response, Alfonzo let his gaze fall on the second letter that was lying on Ur's desk.

"So, what's the other reason you called me up here?" Alfonzo asked.

"*Sigh* It's something I'd rather not have to deal with at all." Ur replied, her mood souring visibly. Then, she slid the second letter to Alfonzo and leaned back in her chair. "Here, take a look for yourself."

Picking up the letter, Alfonzo read it quickly. Immediately upon seeing the contents of the letter, his face split into a vicious smile. And that smile only widened the more he read.

"So, the Magic Council wants to settle, huh?" Alfonzo said calmly while putting the letter down. "They want to let us punish Org, who was the one that ordered that Mest... or Doranbolt... or whatever he's going by to infiltrate our guild and try to kidnap Wendy. Oh, he's also the one that ordered the naval fleet to just watch us fight with Grimoire Heart, too. And they think that will be enough to drop the fact that they fired the fucking Etherion on us? Yeah, fuck that."

"*Sigh* I can already see where this is going." Ur muttered while rubbing her temples again. And I can already feel the headache that will come along with it. But I'll admit, we can't let them off so easy."

"Yeah, that Magic Council needs to be completely rebuilt." Alfonzo said with a grin. "And if my plan works, you'll be able to wipe that smug smile off of Gramps face, too. And according to this letter, we've got about two months to prepare"

Hearing that, Ur perked up immediately.

"Ooh... Tell me more." Ur said, her devilish grin reappearing on her face.

Like that, Alfonzo and Ur discussed, in detail, the plans for the trial of Fairy Tail Vs. the Magic Council. Meanwhile, in a large house on the shore of Lake Sciliora, a short old man, Makarov, sneezed several times in a row while sitting at a small table holding a chess board.

"What's wrong, Gramps?" Laxus asked while moving a piece on the board. "You catching a cold?"

"No, I don't think so." Makarov replied while wiping his nose with a handkerchief. "There are probably some beautiful ladies talking about me, that's all. By the way, did I ever tell you about how popular I was when I was your age, Laxus? You know, I had more girls interested in me than Alfonzo does..."

'*Sigh* Here we go again.' Laxus thought as he contemplated his next move. 'Grandpa really has gotten delusional in his old age. But at least he's not making me wait for him to make his move while he tells his clearly fictional story of the popularity he had in his youth.'

Chapter 320: We Are Venom

After his discussion with Ur, Alfonzo returned to the first floor of the guild hall with a pretty devious smile on his face. Naturally, this drew the attention of the people sitting at his table. And although he did not go into great detail, he did tell them about the two letters Ur received.

Like Alfonzo, Elicia was also looking forward to Mermaid Heel's visit in a couple of weeks. Because as Alfonzo mentioned previously, the Mermaid Heel's guild master was never mentioned in the canon. And considering Yoruichi Shihouin was a member of the guild, that means the guild master could be any powerful woman from across anime, manga, and light novels.

Then, after Alfonzo finished his explanation, Ultear and Meredy told the story about their most recent quest again. And it went a lot like the Dublith Arc in Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood. While investigating the Devil's Nest, Alphonse Elric, a young teenage boy wearing a massive suit of armor, was kidnapped. Then, the girls found out that the seemingly normal people were anything but normal.

A group of chimera led by an immortal homunculus, that's what they were.

After that, Alphonse's older brother, Edward Elric showed up and fought with the homunculus, Greed. And Meredy, seemingly having fallen in love at first sight, insisted on helping him.

Naturally, when Ultear mentioned that part, Meredy reddened like a tomato while everyone else laughed at her adorable reaction.

Back to the story... While Greed was fighting Edward and Meredy, the chimera's took Alphonse away, escaping into the sewer system. And though she was not thrilled about it, Ultear chased after them.

Eventually, Commander Bradly, leading a detachment of the Cherry Blossom Holy Knights as well as an Alchemist from the kingdom, a towering, muscular man, Alex Luis Armstrong, code named the Strong Arm Alchemist, arrived at the pub and dispatched all the chimera following Greed. They even captured Greed and took him to God knows where.

Then, at the end of it all, after thanking them for their assistance, Bradley offered Ultear and Meredy a place in the military. An offer that both wizards naturally declined.

After hearing the story, most of the group had a lot of questions. Alfonzo and Elicia, on the other hand, shared a glance before Elicia decided it was time to open a branch store of the Taylor shop in Crocus.

And that brings us to the present. A few days after Ultear and Meredy returned to the guild, Alfonzo and Elicia took a trip to Crocus to buy a plot of land for Elicia to build the new Branch of the Taylor Shop. And Alfonzo came along to help build it with the best materials, as well as to design the security systems.

"Since the Dublith incident happened a few days ago, do you think we're too late to save Lt. Colonel Hughes?" Elicia asked with a little fear in her voice. "I mean, he was definitely one of the best characters in FMA. And his funeral made me cry every time I saw it."

"I'm not sure." Alfonzo replied. "But we'll have to keep an ear open for news of a high-ranking knight passing away. If we don't hear anything, there's a good chance we could save him. But if we do, then it's probably too late."

"*Sigh* I guess you're right." Elicia replied, sounding a bit downcast. "By the way, do you think 'The Truth' exists in this world?"

"Probably not." Alfonzo replied. "If I had to guess, because Human Transmutation defies the laws of life and death, Ankhseram is probably responsible for what happens to the alchemists in this world. It's probably a form of a curse, like the one Zeref and Mavis were afflicted by. But because the magic system is different, the curse probably affects them differently, as well. But that's just my guess."

"Well, considering we're talking about a god, it's as good an explanation as any." Elicia replied with a shrug. "Anyway, we're almost at the real estate office. We can continue the conversation later."

"Yeah, besides, it will be dark soon, too." Alfonzo added. "So, while you negotiate for your plot of land, I'll go find us a hotel for the night."

"Sounds good." Elicia replied with a nod and a smile.

Like that, the two lovers split up. While Elicia entered the real estate office, Alfonzo drove to the hotel where he and Elicia usually stay when they take a trip to Crocus. At the same time, Alfonzo kept his [Magic Power Detection] active, not wanting to run into a certain perverted female knight.

In all honesty, Alfonzo didn't have an issue with Darkness, as long as her switch was not flipped. The issue with that is that he never knew what would trigger her. So, at least until their little personal mission was completed, it would be better if Alfonzo and Elicia did not get tangled up with her.

Eventually, Alfonzo managed to book a luxurious room in their usual hotel. Then, a few hours later, he went to pick up Elicia from the realtor. And before they returned to the hotel, they decided to have dinner at a restaurant.

While dinner was a pleasant enough affair, Alfonzo and Elicia were more concerned with monitoring everything that was going on in the city than just enjoying their meal. And that attention to their surroundings eventually paid off.

Just as they were paying their bill, they noticed a scuffle happening in one of the military buildings. Then, one of the magic power signatures involved in the altercation left the area slowly. Though the one left behind was in much better shape.

"That's probably Hughes." Alfonzo muttered as he and Elicia left the restaurant.

"Yeah, and it's really amazing that he could even put up a fight with a monster like that." Elicia said in a tone filled with admiration. "I mean, he's just a regular human. Definitely not a wizard of any kind. And

judging from the way his opponent's magic power appeared for a moment while stretching, only to disappear completely again, that was probably Lust, right?"

"Probably, and it looks like Envy is already on his trail, too." Alfonzo added. "Lici, you take the car back to the hotel. With your [Camouflage Magic], no one should find anything suspicious if I go. Well, unless Bradley is nearby. But I can't even feel his presence in the city. So, we should be fine."

"Okay, got it." Elicia replied with a nod of her head. "But what are you gonna do so that they don't recognize you?"

"Haha... Did you forget?" Alfonzo said as his body was covered in black, liquid metal with white spots over his eyes and a strange white spider pattern on his chest. "I can do this."

"I want a super hero identity, too." Elicia said with a pout while watching Alfonzo climb out of her Z3. "I'm gonna make a Spider-Gwen or Silk suit for myself."

Chuckling at Elicia's cute reaction, Alfonzo leaned back into the car and stole a quick kiss before shooting a line of liquid metal at the top of a nearby building.

"I think you should go with Spider-Gwen." Alfonzo suggested. "You're pretty well-known in Fiore, after all. And Silk's mask only covers the bottom half of her face."

With that said, Alfonzo catapulted himself towards the magic power signatures he had been tracking. Meanwhile, after a quick smile, Elicia drove back to the hotel, where she would wait for Alfonzo to return. Though, she would be ready to head out at a moment's notice, as well.

"Damn it... I need to find a way to contact Roy." Lt. Colonel Maes Hughes, a tall, yet lean man with spiky black hair with a lock that falls over his forehead and hazel eyes wearing a blue military uniform, said while putting pressure on a large wound on his arm. "Unfortunately, all the secure communications lacrima at HQ are definitely being monitored by the military."

"You're quite good for a human." A female voice said seductively from behind the Lt. Colonel.

Looking back, Maes saw the woman he had been fighting with in the headquarters building. While he was surprised that she caught up so quickly, he was even more surprised that she was even alive. Especially since before he left the HQ, he had thrown a knife that buried itself up to the hilt in her forehead.

This woman was fairly tall with pale skin, a curvaceous body, mauve colored eyes, and mid-back length, wavy, black hair parted in the center with short bangs curling to the left that partially cover her left eye. Also, she wore a form-fitting, strapless, black gown that showed off the ouroboros tattoo just above her cleavage, black heels, and long black gloves.

"It's not every day you see someone walk off a knife to the head, you know." Maes said with a wry smile while letting a throwing knife fall into his palm from the inside of his sleeve.

"And it's not every day I have to kill such a brilliant man." The woman, Lust, replied while lengthening her finger nails into sharp spears.

Bang! *Bang!* *Bang!*

Before Lust could lunge forward to finish the job she started in the military HQ, three gunshots sounded out from nearby. A moment later, three holes opened up on Lust's head, neck, and chest. Then, another black haired woman ran by and pulled Maes away with her.

"Let's go, Lt. Colonel." The black-haired woman, wearing a similar military uniform, shouted as she pulled Maes along.

Meanwhile, what appeared to be red electricity began sparking on Lust's wounds as they quickly closed up without leaving a scar.

"Did you really have to shoot me in the face?" Lust asked while running her fingers over the place where the bullet wound on her face just disappeared from. "I know you're envious of my good looks, but this is ridiculous."

A few minutes later, after running a few blocks, the black-haired woman finally stopped when she no longer felt like they were being followed.

"Sir, what was going on back there?" The black-haired woman asked as she turned around.

Shunk!

Instead of an answer to her question, however, the only thing the woman received was a throwing knife buried in her wind pipe.

"It was a pretty good disguise, you know." Maes said as he turned away from the woman with a knife in her throat. "But you missed the mole under Lt. Ross' left eye."

"Oh, how careless of me." The black-haired woman, who should be incapable of speech, said before Maes could take more than a few steps.

Surprised, Maes quickly turned around only to see the woman, Lt. Ross, or rather her imposter, pulling the knife out of her throat like nothing was wrong. On top of that, her wound was healing at a visible rate with red electricity crackling around it.

Then, once the wound was healed, the woman tapped her index finger just below her left eye, and in another burst of red electricity, a mole appeared in that spot.

"There, this should be better." The woman said with a smile.

"That's a pretty impressive trick." Maes said while readying another knife.

"Oh, if you think that's good, you ain't seen nothin' yet." The woman replied with a smile as her whole body started sparking with red electricity.

Then, Maes watched as the short black hair on the woman's head turned flaxen in color while her eyes turned a bright blue. On top of that, her clothes turned from a military uniform to a lavender dress with a light, white jacket.

"Gracia..." Maes muttered the name of his wife after seeing the woman's new form.

"Hehehehehe!" The woman chuckled as she raised the pistol in her hand. "OH, the look in your eyes, the shock on your face... It's delicious. Taking the form of your wife was definitely worth it. Now, it's time to say goodbye, Lt. Colonel Maes Hughes."

Unable to react due to the shock, Maes could only watch as the woman in front of him slowly squeezed the pistol's trigger.

Bang!

Ting!

Out of reflex, Maes raised his hand to cover his chest. However, when he touched the front of his uniform, there was no wet sensation. Then, after looking down, he was even more surprised to see that he had not even been shot.

"Who's there?" The woman in the form of Gracia Hughes shouted angrily after glancing at the bullet that had been deflected away from Maes.

"You know, that was pretty fucked up." A male voice, Alfonzo, replied from the roof of a nearby building. "I mean, seriously. Taking on the appearance of the guy's wife before trying to kill him? There's got to be a limit to having bad taste, right?"

"OH yeah, why don't you get down here an let me show you what bad taste looks like?" The woman growled.

"Why not?" Alfonzo replied with a shrug before hopping off the top of the building, landing between Maes and his attacker.

Naturally, both Maes and the woman were surprised to see Alfonzo in his Venom appearance.

"Before you teach me about bad taste, though." Alfonzo said as he turned towards Maes. Then, he placed his hand on the Lt. Colonel's shoulder as he continued. "We should get this guy some medical attention."

While he was speaking, a thin thread, nearly invisible due to the darkness of the night, unraveled from around Alfonzo's wrist. Then it extended to wrap around Maes' torso, neck, and mouth, before Maes disappeared from where he stood.

"No! What did you do?" the woman shouted angrily as she pointed her pistol at Alfonzo.

"We just sent him somewhere safe." Alfonzo said as he turned around. Then, the spot where his mouth should have been on his mask split open, revealing a set of sharp teeth and a long, wriggling tongue. "And now, we're going to show you that we don't like having guns pointed at us."

"Just who the hell are you?" The woman asked in a shocked tone.

"We. Are. Venom." Alfonzo replied dramatically as he raised his right arm in the woman's direction.