

Fairy Tail 361

Chapter 361: Catching up with Old Acquaintances

While Tsunade was introducing Alfonzo, Marin, Wendy, and Carla to the members of Mermaid Heel, Makarov, who had become a member of the new Magic Council, thanks to Alfonzo and Ur's plan, was sifting through paperwork with a disgruntled expression on his face.

"Damn those two." Makarov muttered while reading a document. "This is not how I expected to spend my retirement."

At that moment, the doors to the meeting room opened. And through them, Jura Neekis, an S-Class wizard of Lamia Scale as well as one of the Ten Wizard Saints, walked in.

"Good evening, Master Makarov." Jura said upon entering the Magic Council's meeting room.

"Ah... Jura." Makarov replied with a grandfatherly smile. "What can I do for you, my boy?"

"Actually, I have a request for your guild." Jura replied. "Actually, it's a request for Alfonzo Marcus."

"*Sigh* That boy sure is popular." Makarov replied with a smile. Though, to anyone who was looking closely, they would be able to tell that he was gritting his teeth. "Let me guess, you want him to install some training rooms at the Lamia Scale guild hall, too, right?"

"Indeed." Jura replied.

"And just out of curiosity, how did you find out about those?" Makarov asked.

"Ah... It was lady Ritsu who told me about them." Jura replied with a nod. "Also, Lyon had heard about them from Gray."

"*Sigh* I see." Makarov said while shaking his head. "Either way, you'll have to talk about that with Ur and Alfonzo. But I can pass the message along."

"Many Thanks, Master Makarov." Jur said with his palms together and bowing his head.

"Anyway, let's get back to---" Makarov said, turning his head back to the paperwork on his desk.

However, before he could finish his sentence, a messenger entered the meeting room with quick footsteps.

"Master Makarov, there's a letter for you." The messenger said after approaching Makarov's desk.

"Thank you, my boy." Makarov said as he accepted the letter.

Opening the letter, Makarov wasted no time starting to read it. Meanwhile, the messenger made his way out of the room.

"That Ritsu... Is there anyone she didn't tell about this?" Makarov asked in a tone of disbelief. "Bob and Goldmine said they heard about the training rooms from her, too. But wait, why is this the first request we're getting from Quatro Cerberus? Weren't there two members of that guild on the quest to bring in the mad scientists?"

Just at that moment, another messenger entered the room with a letter addressed to Makarov. And just like he did with the first, Makarov opened it and started reading immediately.

"Wow, even the Fabled Village Hidden in the Leaves is asking for training rooms, too?" Makarov said in a surprised tone. "And they were recommended by Tsunade, the master of Mermaid Heel, and a member of Quatro Cerberus, Might Guy. Damn, that boy is making a lot of connections for the guild with his inventions."

"Congratulations, Master Makarov." Jura said, having been listening to Makarov's monologues. "It seems Fairy Tail will grow in strength yet again."

"Yeah..." Makarov replied. "A lot of money will be coming in, too. *Sigh* And it all happened after I retired. Why couldn't the guild's coffers be this full when I was still the guild master? Instead, I had to spend a lot of my own money to clean up after those brats!"

Bang!

As Makarov shouted the last part, he simultaneously slammed his fists on his desk. Meanwhile, Jura could only watch Makarov with a wry smile.

"Either way, I guess I should send a message to Ur so she can make sure Alfonzo is prepared for the influx of orders." Makarov continued, letting his angry expression turn into a proud smile.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Mermaid Heal Headquarters.

"So, Alfie, why didn't you bring Erzie-Werzie with you, meow?" Millianna asked while Marin and Anko were engaged in conversation.

"Because she was on a quest with her team." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "But we didn't even know you were part of this guild, Millianna."

"Oh, yeah." Millianna said in a tone that suggested she just realized that. "I guess I forgot to let her know that I had settled down."

"So, how are the other two?" Alfonzo asked. "Shô and Wally?"

"Oh, they're fine." Millianna replied. "They're still traveling around, meow. And when they run out of money, they find a casino to work in for a while. Sho would take a job as a dealer while Wally becomes a bouncer, meow."

"Well, at least they're doing well." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "Oh, Erza and I ran into Simon about a month ago, too."

"Really?" Millianna asked excitedly. "So, how is he?"

"Well, he became a village chief." Alfonzo replied with a chuckle. "He reestablished his old village, Rosemary Village."

"OH, I remember him talking about that, meow." Millianna said excitedly. "He told us it was destroyed when he and Erzie-Werzie got abducted."

"Yeah, that's right." Alfonzo replied with a nod.

"But why did he tell you about it and not me, Shô, or Wally" Millianna asked while tilting her head in confusion.

"He didn't really tell us about it." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head. "We took a quest that led us there. It was under attack from a flock of Crow Tengu, and they were kidnapping villagers. So, Erza and I--"

"What was that?" a cold female voice asked from behind Alfonzo.

Looking in the voice's direction, Alfonzo and Millianna saw Kagura standing there with her arms crossed and a perturbed expression on her face.

'Oh, shit.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'I forgot she was here, too. And Simon wanted to keep that whole mess a secret from her.'

A moment later, Alfonzo shrugged that thought away.

'Oh well, it's not my problem.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'I'm sure she would have found out eventually, anyway.'

"Oh, hey, Kagura. How's it goin'? Yeah, Rosemary Village was under attack by a flock of Crow Tengu." Alfonzo repeated. "But there's nothing to worry about any more. Erza and I got rid of the whole flock."

"I'm glad to hear that." Kagura replied sternly. "Still, why didn't that stupid older brother of mine tell me about it?"

"Because he didn't want you to worry." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "He probably didn't want to disappoint you, either. You know, making you think he couldn't handle the village on his own."

"It's even more disappointing that he didn't ask me for help when he needed it." Kagura replied.

"I guess." Alfonzo replied. "I mean, family should stick together, and all that shit."

"Exactly." Kagura replied. "Though the profanity was unnecessary."

"Can't help it." Alfonzo replied with another shrug.

"Wait, you know kagura, too?" Millianna asked with her eyes wide open in surprise. "But didn't Simon want to keep that from happening at all costs?"

"We met on the joint mission back in November." Alfonzo replied.

"Indeed." Kagura replied. "Besides, my brother has no right to decide who I associate with."

"Oh..." Millianna said while shrinking back from Kagura's intense gaze.

At that moment, Alfonzo turned his head away from the conversation with Millianna and Kagura when he felt the hem of his shirt was being pulled. And when he looked in the direction of the disturbance, he saw Wendy with a slight blush on her face.

"What's up, Wendy?" Alfonzo asked.

"I'm hungry." Wendy said in a small voice. "Should I go order something from the guild, or are you going to cook something tonight?"

"Personally, we would prefer your cooking." Carla said, having walked over with Wendy.

Before Alfonzo could answer, however, a shadow swept by. Then, Carla was no longer standing next to Wendy.

"Huh?" Wendy exclaimed in surprise. "Carla, where did you go?"

"Ooh~~~~~!" A feminine squeal could be heard from not too far away. "Such acute kitty!"

Hearing that squeal, all the conversation at the table stopped. On top of that, Millianna was no longer sitting in her seat. And when they looked in the direction of the squeal, all those who knew her, saw what they expected to see. Millianna hugging Carla with excitement shining in her eyes.

"How dare you!" Carla shouted while struggling to free herself. "Let go of me this instant!"

"But you're such a cutie!" Millianna said while rubbing her face on Carla's fur.

"Even if that's true, that doesn't give you the right to pick me up without my permission." Carla argued.

Meanwhile, Alfonzo, Kagura, and Anko could only sigh at the antics they've come to expect from Millianna. Meanwhile, Wendy was somewhat panicking. At the same time, Marin found it funny. Though, she tried to keep in her laughter. Otherwise, Carla would have been mad at her for a long time.

"Millianna, let her go." Kagura ordered. "Can't you tell she doesn't like it?"

"But Kagura... It's a kitty." Millianna said reluctantly.

"Yes, I'm aware." Kagura replied. "That doesn't change the fact that she doesn't like what you're doing."

In response, Millianna looked at Carla with tears in her eyes. Still, she put her down after seeing the irritation in the Exceed's eyes.

"Okay... Sorry, Kitty." Millianna said sadly.

Immediately upon release, Carla used her [Aera Magic] and spread her wings before flying over to Wendy and hiding behind her. Then, once she felt she was safe, she glared at Millianna from behind Wendy.

"The kitty can fly, too~~~~!" Millianna squealed again.

"My name isn't 'Kitty'." Carla said aggressively. "It's Carla."

A moment later, Carla's eyes narrowed in pleasure as Alfonzo started scratching behind her ears to calm her down.

"Don't be mad, Carla." Alfonzo said softly. "She just really likes cats. And you're quite the cute one. So, she couldn't help herself. Anyway, I'll cook us some dinner, okay?"

With that, Alfonzo removed his hand from Carla's head. Then, he stood up from his seat.

"Don't scratch my ears without my permission!" Carla shouted. Though, it was clear to see that she was just embarrassed. Then, she turned to Wendy and continued. "And Wendy, you shouldn't get too close to him, he's too good at making girls comfortable."

"Carla..." Wendy said with a blush.

"Oh ho... A man that can cook?" Anko asked with interest. "You don't see that too often outside of restaurants."

"Yeah, Alfonzo's got to be the best cook in Fiore." Marin said with her chest puffed out in pride.

"Really?" Anko asked with mischief swirling in the depths of her pupil-less eyes. "That's a pretty big title to live up to, isn't it? Why don't you let me test your cooking to find out if it's true."

"As long as you got the money." Alfonzo replied. "I don't work for free, after all."

"Fonzie, I don't think that will work here." Marin replied with a wry smile. "We'd be using their ingredients, after all."

"Hmm... Now that you mention it." Alfonzo said in a tone of realization. "Damn it... I should have stopped to get groceries along the way. Oh well, I can make a trip to Cedar some time tomorrow."

Hearing that, Millianna, Kagura, and Anko looked at Alfonzo skeptically. To them, it sounded like he was trying to make an excuse as to why he would not cook for them.

"Anyway, if I can use the kitchen and some ingredients, I'll cook something for you two, Wendy and Carla." Alfonzo continued after thinking about his plans for tomorrow.

"Just for them?" Marin asked in an aggrieved tone.

"Of course I'll cook for you, too, Marin." Alfonzo replied with a wry smile.

"I wanna try it, too." Millianna replied with her hand raised. "Erzie-Werzie said your cooking was really good when I last saw her."

"The She-Devil spoke of your skill in the kitchen, as well." Kagura added. "I'll admit, I'm quite curious."

"And I'm damn sure not gonna be the only one left out." Anko chimed in.

"Fine, fine." Alfonzo said while shaking his head. "But if you want my cooking after today, it won't be free. Anyway, I'll need to borrow the kitchen."

"You can follow me." Ritsu said from the next table over. "Though, I would like the chance to taste your cooking again, as well."

"Fuck..." Alfonzo gasped in surprise. "Where the hell did you come from? And how long have you been there?"

Not only Alfonzo was surprised by Ritsu sudden appearance. Instead, everyone at the table jumped from hearing Ritsu's voice so suddenly.

"If we were at home..." Marin said while patting her chest. "That would have been enough to start a brawl."

"Uh huh." Wendy agreed with a nod of her head.

"Our guild mates are so barbaric." Carla said exasperatedly, not disagreeing with Marin's assessment.

"I've been here ever since the introductions ended." Ritsu replied. "I had no reason to follow Tsunade upstairs, after all."

"*Sigh* We need to put a bell on you." Alfonzo said in an exasperated tone.

'Since I didn't think anyone would be attacking me while I was here, even if there are probably some girls here who hate men, I didn't have my [MPD] spread out.' Alfonzo said while shaking his head internally.

"Anyway, I guess I'll be borrowing your kitchen and some ingredients." Alfonzo said politely. "Any requests?"

That last question was directed at the members of Mermaid Heel. Alfonzo already knew what kind of food Marin, Wendy, and Carla liked. So, as long as he made one of those, they wouldn't complain.

"I like sweets." Anko was the first to reply. "And I don't like spicy food."

"I want fish." Millianna said with a hand raised.

"Anything is fine with me." Kagura said. "I'm not picky."

"I'd like the same dish you served me back in Magnolia." Ritsu replied with a smile as she started walking towards the kitchen. "I believe it was called Fettuccini Alfredo, if I remember correctly."

"Sure." Alfonzo said while mentally noting down the orders and following Ritsu.

Then, about half an hour later, Millianna, Kagura, and Anko were drawing large amounts of attention to themselves as they moaned sensually after their first bite of Alfonzo's cooking. Unfortunately, this also drew quite a bit of attention to Alfonzo, the one who cooked what caused the commotion. As a result, Alfonzo spent the rest of the night cooking, while listening to the food-gasms from the ladies of Mermaid Heel, until it was time for him, Marin, Wendy, and Carla to return to their accommodations for the night.

Chapter 362: Getting to Work

"Damn, I'm tired." Alfonzo said as soon as he stepped into the house that served as his, Marin's, Wendy's, and Carla's lodgings for the duration of their stay with Mermaid Heel.

"I don't even know why you started cooking while we were still in their guild hall." Marin said with a chuckle. "You should have known this would happen."

"Yeah, I know." Alfonzo replied while smiling wryly. "But after Wendy and Carla mentioned that I could cook, there was no way I was going to get out of it."

Though Wendy had fallen asleep part way through the welcome party and was currently being carried in Marin's arms, Carla glared at Alfonzo for his statement.

"Are you trying to say we are responsible for what happened?" Carla asked with her eyes narrowed.

"Well, Wendy did ask if I was going to cook something in front of Anko." Alfonzo replied, completely unbothered by Carla's glare. "And you did say that you'd prefer it if I was the one who cooked. Or did I imagine that?"

"Immediately, Carla looked away in slight embarrassment. Instead, she focused her glare on Marin.

"That may be true." Carla said. "But I'm sure Marin's comment about you being the best cook in Fiore did not help, either."

"Yeah, you're right about that." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "And I plan to punish her for that. But for now, I'll bring in everyone's luggage. It's been a long day, and I'm sure you want to get some sleep, too."

Instead of replying verbally, Carla nodded her head, yawned, and rubbed her eyes. Then, she and Marin took Wendy to one of the bedrooms and put her to bed.

Also, though it was not previously mentioned, the house Ritsu provided for the Fairy Tail wizards was a simple two story house with three bedrooms, two and a half baths, a kitchen, living room, dining room, and a backyard large enough to do some light training.

And right now, the Escalade and the trailer carrying the necessary materials for Mermaid Heel's upgrades were parked in front of this house. In fact, riding back with Alfonzo and the others is the only

reason why Tsunade and Ritsu were able to return so quickly after leaving the guild hall earlier in the day.

Not long later, Alfonzo re-entered the house with everyone's luggage. First, he took Wendy and Carla's luggage to the room where he could feel everyone's presence. However, he only left their things outside of the door.

"Hey, Wendy and Carla's bags are out here." Alfonzo called through the half-open door without looking inside.

"You better not come inside." Carla hissed.

"Yeah, Yeah, I'm not gonna fall into such a cliché development." Alfonzo replied nonchalantly. "Besides, Wendy's a bit too young for me to be interested, anyway."

Though Carla wanted to be upset at Alfonzo for some reason, she did not know what to say. So, she chose to remain silent while continuing to help Marin change Wendy out of her clothes.

"Anyway, I'm gonna go put my own stuff away." Alfonzo said as he started walking away. "Oh, and I'm gonna put your stuff in the other empty bedroom, Marin."

"Huh?" Marin exclaimed in confusion. "But I'm sleeping with you, aren't I?"

"Sure, if you want." Alfonzo replied without stopping. "But won't it be easier to pack up your stuff if you don't have to worry about it being mixed up with mine?"

"I guess." Marin replied as she stepped out of Wendy's bedroom to pick up the luggage. "As long as that doesn't mean that I have to sleep in that room, I don't really care where my stuff is. I mean, I have my own room back in the mansion, too."

With that, Alfonzo put Marin's luggage down before making his way to the house's master bedroom. Then, after taking some time to inspect the room, he started putting his belongings away.

"*Sigh* This is gonna be a really tiring month." Alfonzo muttered to himself while hanging his clothing in the closet.

["You're the one who set the timeframe for a month."] Bedlam replied from Alfonzo's inner world. ["It's not like you couldn't have stretched it further than that."]

"Yeah, I know." Alfonzo replied. "But I really don't wanna make Lici wait any longer. Two years in our past life and another twenty in this one. I'm surprised she hasn't already given me some kind of ultimatum for our marriage."

["It's because our Lici is understanding and caring."] Riot said, cutting into the conversation. ["Because the circumstances were what they were, she knew that she had to wait. *Sigh* She's so wonderful."]

["Super-simp."] Bedlam said with a bit of derision in his tone.

["The fuck did you just say?"] Riot asked angrily.

["If you're not super-simping, I don't' know what else to call it."] Bedlam replied, seemingly unbothered by Riot's angry outburst. ["Or did you forget, she helped another girl take advantage of Alfonzo while he was drunk?"]

In response, Riot could only grit his teeth. Though he was created from the feelings of love Alfonzo held for Elicia, he was also created from Alfonzo's anger. So, even with his feelings for Elicia, every time that incident is brought up, he almost completely loses it and wants to tell Alfonzo to cancel the engagement. However, that feeling only really lasts for about a second. Then, he would start trying to convince Alfonzo to forgive her.

"Okay, kids, that's enough." Alfonzo said in an exasperated tone. "Riot, chill out. We've already gotten past that. And Bedlam, even if what you're saying isn't wrong, stop egging him on with it all the damn time."

["Tch!"] Riot only clicked his tongue before falling silent.

["Fine... I'll stop."] Bedlam said with a cocky smile on his face. ["but like what Alfonzo said, I wasn't wrong."]

["I'll fucking kill you!"] Riot exploded.

Instead of trying to stop the bickering, Alfonzo simply cut off the connection with his [Armament Spirits] for a while.

"Were you talking to your [Armament Spirits] just now?" Marin asked as she entered the bedroom.

"Yeah." Alfonzo replied while continuing to hang his clothing.

"*Sigh* I wonder when I'll be able to hear my [Armament Spirit's] voice." Marin said wistfully as she clung onto Alfonzo's back.

"Soon." Alfonzo replied with a smile as he reached up and patted Marin on the head. "You only transformed your [Soul Armament] from its embryo state earlier in the month. I'd bet that you'll be able to talk to it by the end of summer at the latest."

"I hope so." Marin replied before pecking Alfonzo on the cheek. "Still, I have no idea how long it will take until I can release its first seal. I'm not nearly as talented as you, Lici, and Erza, after all."

"Don't sell yourself short." Alfonzo replied as he returned to putting his clothing in the closet. "I mean, you made A-Class in less than four years when you hadn't been training at all before that. So, you're pretty talented."

"Yeah, but in the same amount of time, both Erza and Mira made S-Class." Marin said, sounding a bit downcast.

Hearing Marin's tone, Alfonzo decided that he could finish putting away his clothes later. Then, he pulled her around to his front.

"You know there's no point in comparing yourself to everyone else, right?" Alfonzo asked as he placed his forehead against Marin's. Then, while looking into her eyes, he continued. "Otherwise, you'll start having really stupid thoughts like Cana did. And you know how that ended."

Hearing that, Marin couldn't help but start to giggle at the thought of Cana laying over Alfonzo's lap while being spanked like a naughty child.

"Or... Maybe you want to be punished." Alfonzo said in a lecherous tone.

"Kya!" Marin yelped as Alfonzo tossed her onto the king sized bed in the room.

"Speaking of punishment." Alfonzo said as he started walking towards the bed. "You need to be punished for adding to the chaos earlier."

At the same time, the entire room was covered in a thin sheet of metal. Though, there were a few openings to let air circulate. A moment later, runes were carved into the metal, creating a silencing barrier around the room.

"Oh, no!" Marin said dramatically with a smile on her face. "Please, I'm sorry. I don't wanna be punished."

Hearing Marin's words and tone, Alfonzo only rolled his eyes while starting to take off his clothes.

"Sure, you don't." Alfonzo said before pouncing on Marin, who accepted her punishment with grace and poise.

Around three and a half hours later, the metal surrounding the room was dispelled. Meanwhile, Alfonzo was standing next to the side of the bed, fully dressed. At the same time, Marin, with a satisfied smile on her face, was fast asleep while hugging a pillow.

"Alright, it's time to get to work." Alfonzo said while adjusting his collar. "I only have about five hours until sunrise. So, I'd better get going."

["Did you ever figure out where you'd start the work?"] Bedlam asked curiously.

"Yeah." Alfonzo replied as he opened a window. "There's a small uninhabited island with a lake that's almost as large and just as deep as Lake Sciliora a few miles off the coast. And I bought that island just before going on the quest with Erza. It'll be a good place to test the airship's weapons when I finish building it, too."

["But will you have enough to buy Lake Sciliora?"] Bedlam asked.

"Don't worry." Alfonzo replied. "After introducing the line of muscle cars, magic vehicle sales have gone through the roof. So, money isn't an issue."

["That's good."] Bedlam replied.

["Get going already."] Riot ordered. ["It's not like you have all the time in the world."]

"*Sigh* Even though I know you're right, it wouldn't kill you to shut the hell up, would it?" Alfonzo asked as he jumped out of the window.

["Eat a dick."] Riot replied angrily.

At the same time, Alfonzo's body was covered in arcs of blue electricity. Then, in a flash, he vanished from outside the house.

Meanwhile, Tsunade, who was still in her office, put down her sake cup. And when she noticed the blue flash in the night, she looked towards the house where Alfonzo, Wendy, and Carla would be staying for the next month.

"I wonder where he's going?" Tsunade muttered. Then, she shook her head and returned to looking over the blueprint of the guild hall, making sure that everything would be perfect when Alfonzo started installing the training rooms. "Well, as long as he's back in time to start his work, I don't care what he does."

A few moments later, Alfonzo appeared over an uninhabited island off the coast of Fiore. And just like he told Riot and Bedlam, it had a large lake near its center.

["Yeah, that looks about the same size as the one back home."] Bedlam said. ["I'm actually surprised you were able to find it."]

"Actually, I wasn't the one who found it." Alfonzo replied as he pulled Riot and Bedlam from the strap on his lower back. "Gramps found it for me after becoming a member of the Council. He scolded me for making him work so hard after retirement the whole time, though."

["Ah... The benefit of having friends in high places, huh?"] Bedlam asked in an enlightened tone. ["But seriously, how do I not know about this? I mean, I should know everything you do."]

["Yeah, how are you shielding your thoughts from us like that?"] riot asked.

"This time it's on the two of you." Alfonzo replied with a chuckle. "You two were having one of your fights. And it lasted for almost four full days. And during that time, I talked with Gramps about it. Anyway, we don't have time for idle chatter. Let's get to work. [Run Wild with Destruction on your Fingertips. Usher in Pandemonium with Creation in Your Hands. Riot, Bedlam]."

With that, the first seal on Alfonzo's [Soul Armament] was released. Then, he got to work creating materials for his new residence/the venue for his and Elicia's wedding. All the while, he checked off the materials from a list he was holding in his hands.

A few hours later, exhausted of his magic power, Alfonzo returned to the house where he would be living for the next month and slipped in through the same window he used to leave. Then, he took off his clothes and crawled into bed next to Marin, where he slept for the next two hours.

Two hours later, Alfonzo was gently awakened by attender kiss on the lips.

"Ugh... I'm so tired." Alfonzo groaned as he opened his eyes.

Upon opening his eyes, he saw Marin smiling at him gently.

"I know you're tired, Fonzie." Marin said. "But you've got work to do. Besides, Wendy will be up soon, too."

"*Sigh* I know." Alfonzo said as he pushed himself into a sitting position. "Let's go take a shower and get ready for the day. Oh, and I'll write you a shopping list. Can you go to Cedar and get some groceries? You can take the Escalade."

"Sure." Marin replied. "that's why I'm here, after all. To make sure you don't have to worry about the little things."

"Thanks, Marin." Alfonzo said before leaning in for a quick kiss. "By the way, do you know who will be coming next?"

"It's supposed to be Lucy." Marin replied with a smile while waggling her eyebrows. "You make sure to take care of her, alright?"

"Of course." Alfonzo replied. "Though, I thought it was supposed to be the other way around."

Marin could not help but giggle in response. A moment later, however, she slumped her shoulders.

"*Sigh* I wish I had decided to follow you out here instead of ride with you." Marin said dejectedly.
"Now, I'm gonna have to take the train back."

As Marin alluded to, Alfonzo and Elicia had taught all the girls to drive. Or tried to, anyway. Erza, after several accidents, had been forbidden from driving. So, for their most recent birthdays, Alfonzo gave each of them a magic vehicle of their own. In fact, that was the whole reason most of them agreed to visit Alfonzo in shifts while he was at Mermaid Heel. Otherwise, they would have chosen someone to stay with him for the entire month and ride back when the job was done.

"Come on, it's not so bad, right?" Alfonzo replied. "I mean, you booked a few modeling jobs with Sorcerer Weekly. So, you won't have to spend all that time on the train all in one go."

"I know." Marin replied. "Still, I'd rather drive than take the train."

"Hey! Alfonzo, Marin, it's almost time to go." Wendy said from outside the master bedroom's door. "Are you two up yet?"

Hearing that, Alfonzo and Marin exchanged glances. Then, they got out of bed.

"Yeah, we'll be ready soon." Marin replied as she and Alfonzo made their way to the bathroom to get cleaned up for the day.

Chapter 363: Wendy's Training Begins

"Wendy's training with Tsunade should start today." Ur said while seated at the bar in the Fairy Tail guild hall with a glass of wine in her hand. "I hope she'll be okay."

"You've really taken a liking to that girl, haven't you?" Ren asked with a smile. "But still, she's been training with you for more than half a year, now. I'm sure she'll be fine."

"I'm not worry about her safety." Ur said after taking a sip from her wine glass. "But I'm afraid of her picking up Tsunade's bad habits."

Hearing that, Ren could only look at Ur skeptically. Then, her gaze shifted to the glass of wine in Ur's hand.

"I really don't think you have to worry about that." Ren said while shaking her head. "If she hasn't started drinking by now, I doubt a month with Master Tsunade will make a difference."

"What do you mean?" Ur asked with a hint of annoyance in her tone.

"Ur, Sweetie, you do realize it's only 7 a.m., right?" Ren asked exasperatedly.

Hearing that, Ur froze momentarily. Then, she looked down at the glass of wine she was holding.

"*Sigh* Maybe I really am a bad influence." Ur muttered.

A moment later, Ur raised her glass, chugged down its contents, and placed the glass on the bar.

"*Sigh* I guess I'll try not to drink so much." Ur said, sounding disappointed in herself. "I wouldn't want little Elicia to pick up my bad habits, either."

As she spoke, Ur turned on her bar stool with the intention of standing up. However, as she turned around, her elbow grazed the wine glass.

Shatter!

As a result, the wine glass was knocked off the bar, shattering after falling to the floor.

"Damn it, I'm gonna have to pay for that." Ur muttered while staring at the shattered pieces of glass on the floor.

Before she could call for a waitress to clean up the mess, however, Ur widened her eyes when she saw the pieces of shattered glass start moving on their own. Then, both she and Ren watched as the glass pieced itself back together. And at the end, the glass lay on the floor, completely whole, as if someone had placed it there.

"You really should be more careful, Mom." Ultear said as she and the residents from Alfonzo's mansion approached from the guild hall's entrance.

"Ultear, you just...?" Ur asked in a tone filled with disbelief.

"Yup." Ultear replied proudly. "I've made some real strides towards mastering this [Arc of Time Magic], haven't I?"

"You really are talented." Ren praised genuinely. "It's only been what? Six months since you started learning it?"

"Yeah." Ultear replied. "But other than rewinding time on an object for a few seconds, I can't really do anything else with it."

"Oh, come on, Tear." Elicia said with a smile. "It's only been six months. Do you remember how long it took me and Fonzie to learn a second magic to a point we could use it in combat? It was almost a year."

"Lici's right." Cana chimed in. "Besides, you're learning an ancient magic, which is a lot more difficult to learn in the first place."

With that as the starting point, all those near the bar began discussing the difference between learning normal magic and ancient magic. After a few minutes, however, the conversation was brought to an end when the voice of a young girl echoed through the guild hall.

"Master Ur, I'm here!" Elicia Hughes shouted as she entered the guild hall with her parents. "I'm ready to start training."

Hearing that, Ur, Ren, and the residents of Alfonzo and Elicia's mansion turned their heads towards the guild hall's entrance. And when they did, they could not help but smile.

"Alright everyone, let's break it up." Ur said as she walked away from the bar. "Get to training. Fairy Tail wizards don't slack off."

As Ur said those words, she turned her head towards the quest board.

"And Nab, if you don't take a job today, I'll take charge of your training after I'm finished with little Elicia." Ur said in a menacing tone.

Immediately, Nab chose the quest he was currently looking at, ran over to Vijeeter, who was dancing around the guild hall, and dragged him out of the guild hall to complete the quest.

Then, after Nab and Vijeeter were gone, everyone looked at Ur in disbelief while thinking the same thing.

"Mom, what did you do to Nab?" Ultear asked, putting the other's thoughts into words.

"Nothing." Ur replied. "I've only helped him train a few times, that's all."

Deciding it would be better for their mental health that they did not know more, everyone moved towards the elevator to start their own training.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Mermaid Heel Headquarters.

Around the same time Nab dragged Vijeeter out of the guild hall, Alfonzo, Wendy, and Carla entered the Mermaid Heel guild hall. Meanwhile, Marin, driving the Escalade, had gone to Cedar to stock up on groceries.

"You all get started pretty early." Anko said after noticing the trio enter the guild hall. Then, she looked around. And after not finding what she was looking for, she asked about it. "Hey, where's Marin?"

"She took a trip to Cedar to buy a few things for us." Alfonzo replied.

"Damn, I wish I had known she was going." Anko said with a pout. "I've never ridden in one of those new Magic Vehicles. And I've heard they're pretty comfy."

"Yeah, they are." Wendy replied with a nod.

"They're passable." Carla added with her arms crossed.

"Carla..." Wendy muttered.

"Anyway, we're here to have some breakfast before we get started for the day." Alfonzo replied while smiling wryly at Carla, who turned her head away.

"Oh, are you going to cook?" Anko asked with her eyes lighting up.

"Nope." Alfonzo replied quickly. "I don't wanna be stuck in the kitchen for hours... again."

"Tch!" Anko clicked her tongue in response.

With that, Alfonzo, Wendy, and Carla ordered breakfast. Then, after eating, they asked Anko to lead them to Tsunade's office.

Knock! *Knock!* *Knock!*

"Lady Tsunade, Alfonzo, Wendy, and Carla are here to see you." Anko said after knocking on the door to Tsunade's office.

"Come in." Tsunade replied from the other side of the door.

"Alright, I'll go start my training." Anko said as she turned around. "Why don't you come have a drink with me after you're done working, Alfonzo. I have a few questions for you. Especially after seeing how infatuated Yoruichi is with you."

"Sure, why not." Alfonzo replied with a casual shrug of his shoulders.

With that, Anko nodded at Alfonzo and the others. Then, she made her way back to the guild hall's first floor. Meanwhile, Alfonzo turned the doorknob and pushed the door open.

Upon entering Tsunade's office, Alfonzo, Wendy, and Carla saw Tsunade sitting behind her desk while Ritsu sat in front of it and sipped from a cup of tea.

"Good, you're here." Tsunade said with a serious expression on her face. "Please, have a seat."

Following Tsunade's instructions, Alfonzo and Wendy took a seat in the two unoccupied chairs in front of Tsunade's desk. Meanwhile, Carla flew up and landed on top of the desk, just to the side of Wendy.

"Wendy, I'll be with you in a moment." Tsunade said as he glanced at Wendy. Then, after receiving a nod in response, she turned her attention to Alfonzo. "These are the blueprints to our guild hall. Naturally, I've marked out anything you're not supposed to know about. I've also marked where I want the four training rooms to be installed."

As she spoke, Tsunade pushed a few sheets of paper with building designs towards Alfonzo. Then she waited for him to look over them.

"This shouldn't be a problem." Alfonzo replied after examining the blueprints. "but, do you have the extra marble?"

"don't worry about that." Tsunade said, waving off Alfonzo's question. "We only expect you to take care of creating the training rooms. Making them match the rest of the building from the outside is for the contractors to take care of later."

"If you say so." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "Well then, the only thing I ask is that you keep people away from the work sites."

"I don't know how possible that will be." Ritsu said, inserting herself in the conversation. Then, she pointed at the blueprint. "The places where we want you to build the training rooms are right next to the showers and changing rooms. And our wizards will need to get cleaned up after training."

"*Sigh* That's why I wanted you to keep the sites clear." Alfonzo replied. "For as long as I'm working at each site, at least. If one of them thinks I'm trying to peep and attacks me, I won't hold back in defending myself."

"What's the matter, Alfonzo?" Tsunade asked with a teasing smile on her face. "I thought you were supposed to be good at handling women."

Rolling his eyes, Alfonzo decided he would not dignify that joke with a response.

"You don't need to worry about that." Ritsu said, also ignoring Tsunade's little joke. "I'll be nearby while you work. That way, if there are any questions about the building's structure, I'll be there to answer them. I'll also be able to keep the ladies from having any wrong ideas."

"Okay, I guess that works." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "Just show me where you want the first one to go."

"Very well." Ritsu replied with a gentle smile after finishing the contents in her teacup. "Follow me."

As soon as Alfonzo and Ritsu left the office, Tsunade stood from her desk. Then, she stepped towards a bookshelf. After reading the titles on the spines of the books, she pulled a few from the shelf and returned to her desk.

"Okay, before we begin your training as a healer, we need to make sure you have enough knowledge about the human body." Tsunade said. Then, she dropped the six books she was carrying on the desktop. "So, I want you to read these. If you have any questions, feel free to ask. Meanwhile, I'll be working on this damn paperwork."

Hearing Tsunade's instructions and seeing the stack of books that was taller than Carla, Wendy looked on in shock.

"You didn't think this would be easy, did you?" Carla asked, snapping Wendy out of her daze. "You only have a month to learn as much as you can, Wendy. You don't have the time to be surprised."

Smack!

"Right." Wendy replied as she slapped her cheeks. "I don't have time to waste. I need to learn this so I can help my friends."

Hearing that, Carla nodded while Tsunade smiled at Wendy as she opened the book on the top of the stack.

'Good. At least she's determined.' Tsunade thought to herself as she picked up a cup of tea.

Taking a sip from her teacup, Tsunade turned her head to look out the window at the morning sky.

Spurt!

However, instead of a blue sky, what Tsunade saw was a large amount of metal material floating past her window.

At the same time, Wendy and Carla's attention was drawn to Tsunade when they heard her spit out her tea. A moment later, they noticed all the building materials floating past the window, as well.

"I guess Alfonzo is getting to work." Wendy muttered as she turned her attention back to the open book in front of her. "I better work hard, too. I don't wanna waste the opportunity he got for me."

"That's right." Carla said with a nod. "The best way to repay him for giving you this opportunity is to do all you can to learn the art of healing while we're here."

"Yeah." Wendy muttered as she continued to read.

Meanwhile, Tsunade could only look at the girl and her cat with disbelief swirling in her eyes.

'Am I the weird one for reacting like that?' Tsunade wondered. 'When they saw tons of metal just floating through the air, they didn't even twitch. Then, again, I guess you get used to it after being around someone with [Metal Magic] for long enough, huh?'

With that thought, Tsunade shrugged her shoulders, took another sip of her tea, and finally got back to her paperwork.

About two hours later, while Alfonzo was working on the first training room and Wendy was reading medical books in Tsunade's office, Marin returned to the house she was staying in with Alfonzo, Wendy, and Carla. And when she did, she found Yoruichi waiting outside the front door.

'Well, I knew it would happen eventually.' Marin thought to herself with a shrug as she parked the Escalade in front of the house. 'I guess it's better to just rip the band-aid off.'

"Hey, Yoruichi." Marin said with a slightly stiff smile as she stepped out of the driver's seat. "Since you're here, mind helping me bring in the groceries. After that, we can talk."

Taking a deep breath, Yoruichi nodded in response. Then, she followed Marin to the back of the Escalade to help with the groceries.

"Yeah, we can talk after we're done." Yoruichi said as she started helping transport the groceries.

Chapter 364: Ripping off the Band-Aid

After bringing the groceries in the house and getting them put in their proper places, Marin and Yoruichi sat in the living room of the Fairy Tail wizards' temporary home, each with a cup of tea.

"I don't think I've ever seen anyone buy that many groceries at one time." Yoruichi said after taking a sip of her tea.

"Well, no matter where he goes, Fonzie needs his ingredients." Marin replied. "And he's very particular about the way he does things."

"I feel that last sentence had a double meaning." Yoruichi said with a wry smile.

"*Sigh* That's because it did." Marin said as she put her teacup down on the coffee table. "Look, Yoruichi. Me and the girls have come to a decision about you."

Hearing that, Yoruichi put her teacup down on the coffee table, as well. Then, she focused all her attention on Marin's next words.

"To make a long story short, we can't accept you." Marin said bluntly with no sympathy for Yoruichi in her gaze. "And if you want to know the reason why, most of us have little to no respect for you. Erza is probably an exception to that, though. Especially after her duel with you."

"Well, I can't say that I didn't see that coming." Yoruichi replied with a wry smile while hanging her head. "But it still hurts."

"Well, can you blame us?" Marin asked sternly. "If the thing between you, Alfonzo, and Lici happened by accident, no one would have said anything." Marin said. "I mean, Alfonzo would have probably been upset because of his principals. But it would have just been an accident. But you planned for it after seeing him drunk. And somehow convinced Lici that it was a good idea, too."

Hearing someone spell it out for her again, Yoruichi could not help but lower her head even further.

"And to be honest, that scares us even more than the fact that you were willing to do that to Fonzie." Marin continued. "I mean, of all of us, we'd expected that Lici would be the least likely to ever hurt Alfonzo in anyway. But you somehow convinced her to do so."

"But I didn't mean..." Yoruichi started to say as she raised her head.

"You didn't mean to hurt anyone?" Marin asked. "Believe it or not, but I actually believe that. But the fact of the matter is you did. Fonzie laid it out for you. He told you exactly what you had to do to get in his bed. And you basically said: 'Yeah, fuck that.'"

With her mouth opening and closing like a fish out of water, Yoruichi wanted to defend herself. However, she could not find the words to do so.

"But the thing that hurt him the most in this whole incident is the fact that he can't trust Lici the way he used to anymore." Marin continued. "The unconditional trust they had for each other has changed into something where, if only for a moment, Fonzie will scrutinize everything she says and does."

In response, Yoruichi could only stare at Marin blankly, having not expected her little plan to sample the goods to have caused so much trouble.

"And for that..." Marin said, drawing Yoruichi's attention.

Bang!

And as she spoke, Marin lunged across the coffee table and punched Yoruichi squarely in the jaw, causing her to flop over sideways onto the couch.

"You should expect at least one of those from Cana, Ultear, Mirajane, Sun, and Lucy when they come to visit." Marin continued while shaking off the soreness in her right hand. "As for Lici, I don't know what the two of you talked about the last time you were in Magnolia. Nor do I understand how you got her to forgive you. But I can guarantee your manipulations will never work on her again."

"Yeah, I deserved that." Yoruichi said while lying on the couch and staring up at the ceiling of the living room blankly. "I'm just grateful you didn't use any of your magic power in that punch."

"That's only because I hit you in the face." Marin replied. "If it had been anywhere else, I would have used as much as I could. But I know better than to leave a mark on another woman's face. It's not like I wanted to ruin your life, after all."

"*Sigh* Thanks, I guess." Yoruichi said as she pushed herself upright.

"Anyway, most of us aren't against getting to know you, despite all that happened." Marin continued once the throbbing in her fist stopped. "For some reason none of us can understand, Lici still sees you as a friend. So, we'll try to see why. But that doesn't include Cana. She'd be happy if you never showed up in front of her again."

"Yeah, I could tell." Yoruichi replied.

"And that goes for Sui-Feng, too." Marin said as she glanced towards one of the living room's windows. "She has no empathy for what happened back then. And because Fonzie is a man, she can't even see anything wrong with what you did."

"Actually, that's changed by now." Yoruichi replied. "But she still thinks I should be forgiven."

"I guess that's progress." Marin said as she looked away from the window when she felt the presence that had been spying through it disappear.

"*Sigh* I told her not to follow me." Yoruichi said when she also felt Sui-Feng was no longer outside the house.

"Fonzie told me that you were from a noble family back on the continent you came from, is that right?" Marin asked as she picked up her teacup once again.

"Yes. That's right." Yoruichi replied.

"So, judging by the way Sui-Feng acts, she was raised to be a servant and bodyguard for you from early childhood, right?" Marin continued.

"That's right." Yoruichi replied once again.

"Then, why haven't you put her in her place for stepping out of line and acting out of turn so often?" Marin asked curiously. "I mean, I was there when Fonzie hoisted her up by the throat in the guild hall. And we all know that he flooded her with killing intent around the time you and Erza sparred at our house. Yet, you keep letting her get away with saying and doing whatever she wants."

"*Sigh* I used to in the past." Yoruichi replied in a tired tone. "But she just never changes."

"Well, if I were you, I would have let her go a long time ago." Marin replied before taking a sip of her tea.

*Boom~~~~~!"

Spurt!

The sound of impact was both loud and sudden enough to make Marin to spit out all the tea in her mouth from surprise.

"*Cough* *Cough* What was that?" Marin asked with tea dripping out of her mouth and nose.

Unfortunately, Yoruichi was sitting directly opposite her on the other side of the coffee table. As a result, she ended up covered in Marin's used tea.

"Oops! Sorry about that." Marin said sheepishly as she got up to get a towel for Yoruichi.

Meanwhile, Yoruichi could only stare at Marin blankly as she ran into the kitchen.

'Something tells me that was on purpose.' Yoruichi thought to herself. 'But after seeing the tea dripping from her nose, I'm not completely sure.'

At the same time, Marin was rifling through the kitchen cabinets, looking for towels that both she and Yoruichi could use to wipe their faces with a slightly malicious grin on her face.

'I've wanted to spit in her face ever since I found out what happened that day.' Marin thought to herself. 'And I finally got the chance to do it. Even though I really am curious what that sound was. I hope Fonzie, Wendy, and Carla are okay.'

Meanwhile, at the training field in the Mermaid Heel courtyard, Tsunade was pulling her right leg out of a patch of crumbled ground.

"Were you trying to kill her?" Carla shouted angrily.

"It's just like you said before, Carla." Tsunade said with a sharp gaze trained on Wendy. "This isn't going to be easy. On top of that, this is one of the most important parts of training to be a capable healer under me."

"How is trying to kill Wendy part of becoming a capable healer?" Carla continued to shout angrily.

"The most important thing for a healer on any battle field is to be able to heal their comrades and allies." Tsunade replied. "But to do so, they have to be in the proper shape to heal them. Which means, they can't be injured themselves. And I'm gonna make sure that Wendy can avoid taking damage with the best of them."

"This is ridicu---" Carla began to shout.

"Carla! That's enough." Wendy said, drawing Carla's attention onto herself.

"But Wendy..." Carla said, clearly unwilling to allow this to happen.

"If this is what it takes to support the rest of the guild, then I'll do it." Wendy said with determination burning in her eyes.

Although Carla was still against Wendy being in such danger, she could not say anything else when she saw the emotions in her eyes. Meanwhile, Tsunade once again nodded her head at Wendy's determination.

'*Sigh* I wouldn't mind taking her on as another disciple.' Tsunade said. 'That look in her eyes reminds me of Shizune when she was young. I wonder how she's doing. She's been away on that quest for almost half a year. Then again, training a capable doctor isn't something that can be rushed.'

"Anyway, let's continue." Tsunade said as she dashed forward with her right hand reeled back.

'Alfonzo was right.' Wendy thought to herself as she dodged Tsunade's punch with [Magic Power Detection] active. 'Master Tsunade really does empower all her punches and kicks with her magic power. And the way she does it is crazy. How does anyone focus and compress that much magic power on their fist, then explode it all outward in the split-second it connects with its target.'

Like that, Tsunade continued chasing Wendy around the training field. And although Wendy was able to dodge the first two strikes from Tsunade with little issue, she was not as fortunate for the rest of the training session, with more of Tsunade's attacks hitting rather than missing.

Luckily, the natural defense every wizard erected using their magic power was enough to keep Wendy from being seriously injured. Though she had no doubt that Tsunade could have made her injuries much worse, should she have wanted to.

About an hour later, Wendy's physical training ended with her lying at the bottom of a crater one of Tsunade's punches created.

"We'll definitely have to work on the way you block, dodge, and parry." Tsunade said while standing at the top of the crater. "But your instincts are incredible. I guess that's one of the perks of being a Dragon Slayer, huh?"

In response, Wendy could only smile up at Tsunade weakly.

"Anyway, go get cleaned up." Tsunade said as she turned away from the crater. "After that, I'll treat you to lunch. Then, it's back to studying."

"Okay..." Wendy said in a shaky voice as she tried to pick herself up from the ground.

"Wendy, are you okay?" Carla asked as she flew down into the crater.

"Yeah, I'll be fine." Wendy said as she stumbled to her feet.

"That woman is crazy." Carla said as she latched on to Wendy's back. Then, she continued as she flew Wendy towards the Mermaid Heel guild hall. "She could have really killed you."

"I don't think so." Wendy replied while shaking her head. "I saw the way she used her magic power. And she had all of it under nearly perfect control. She might even have better control than Master Ur."

"Really?" Carla asked, exclaiming in surprise as she did so.

"Yeah." Wendy replied while nodding her head. "And if you combine that with her medical knowledge and her knowledge about the human body, she will only inflict as much damage as she wants to when she hit me."

Hearing that, Carla was visibly amazed. However, she still spoke in a huff.

"It wouldn't have killed her to tell us about that." Carla replied.

"Carla..." Wendy said in an exasperated tone at her best friend's overprotectiveness.

While Wendy and Carla were leaving the training field, Alfonzo and Ritsu, who were drawn over when the first explosion occurred, watched them leave.

"That girl's determination is impressive." Ritsu said with a gentle smile. "It's a pity that she does not wield a sword. I would love to train her. Perhaps I should assist Tsuna in teaching her healing magic."

"You're a healer too, Master Unohana?" Alfonzo asked, though he already knew the answer.

"Yes, I learned the art of healing in the past for... personal reasons." Ritsu replied with a smile that screamed: "Don't ask." "But over the years, I became rather skilled in the art. Though, Tsuna is much more capable in that regard than I am. Then, again, we use different systems of magic. So, I wouldn't want to overload the girl with too many concepts."

'Luckily, I don't need to ask.' Alfonzo thought in response to Ritsu's gaze. 'She's a battle junkie, through and through. She's just gotten rather good at hiding it over the years. But if someone were to flip her switch, there would be no stopping her.'

"Anyway, now that I know Wendy is alright, I should get back to work." Alfonzo said as he turned back to his work site.

Chapter 365: Movements in the Background

Deep under the city of Crocus in a long-forgotten cave system, a group of five individuals were meeting. The most peculiar thing about the cave where they were meeting was the fact that there was an intact dragon skeleton on one side of the cave.

And sitting atop that dragon skeleton was a large, stone throne with a tall, broad-shouldered, middle-aged man with shoulder-length, golden blond, a long beard of the same color, and red eyes wearing a long white robe.

Meanwhile, the other four individuals, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, and the newest addition, Org, or rather Greed, who had been transformed into a homunculus after Bradley, or rather Wrath, introduced a Philosopher's Stone into his blood stream, were standing around the dragon skeleton.

"Has there been any news about Wrath's reappearance?" The golden-haired man asked in an eerily calm tone.

"No, Father." Lust replied respectfully. "Although we saw that he had been sent high into the air, we never witnessed him falling back to the surface."

"I say we catch that kid, Alfonzo Marcus, and force him to tell us where Wrath is." Envy said in an agitated tone. "And if that doesn't work, we can just grab one of his little girlfriends and threaten him with their life."

"That's an option worth considering." The golden-haired man, Father, replied while stroking his long beard. "But there are other pressing matters we need to consider, as well."

"What do you mean, Father?" Lust asked.

"It would seem that the information about you all has been revealed to the ruling bodies on the continent." Father replied. "To think that only two young people have disrupted our plans so much in such a short time."

"Then, what should we do about this, Pops?" Greed asked, sounding as if he could not care any less about the predicament the homunculi found themselves in.

"Just give the order." Envy growled. "And we'll wipe out those nuisances and their entire guild."

"We can worry about them later." Father replied. "If we're lucky, more than a few of them will be caught in the transmutation circle once we activate it."

Hearing that, Lust, Envy, and Greed nodded their heads in understanding. Gluttony, on the other hand, simply looked on with a blank expression on his face, leaving the others unsure if he was even able to follow the conversation.

"Speaking of which, how is the transmutation circle coming along?" Father asked. "According to the estimates, it should be almost complete."

In response, a shadow extended from one of the walls. However, unlike other shadows, on top of moving on its own, there were glowing red eyes and mouths lined with sharp teeth scattered throughout the shadow. And when those mouths moved, an androgynous young voice could be heard echoing through the cave.

"Father, there is a slight problem." The voice from the shadows said. "A part of the tunnel serving as the transmutation circle was collapse near Rosemary Village. However, it was filled with a seemingly living liquid metal."

"It was that boy again!" Envy shouted angrily.

"It seems that man, Lt. Colonel Hughes, really did figure out our plans." Father said. "Have Sloth clear it."

"That's the thing, Father." Pride replied. "No matter how much Sloth digs at the metal, it comes back together on its own."

Hearing that, Father's eyes began to glow subtly.

"It would seem something needs to be done about this boy, after all." Father said.

"Unfortunately, that's not all." Pride said, continuing to report. "Though, this issue is much harder to explain."

While Pride fell silent to compose this thoughts, all the homunculus in the cave waited to hear the report that even gave Pride pause.

"The section of the tunnel running under the village where Lust and Gluttony confronted Elicia Taylor has been closed as well."

"I would assume you have more to report, correct?" Father asked.

"Indeed." Pride replied. "In this case, it was as if the sides of the tunnel were pulled together... As if a hole was sewn shut."

"Sewn, you say?" Father asked in an intrigued tone.

"Yes, much like the way Gluttony's False Gate of Truth was sealed." Pride continued.

Once again, the cave fell into complete silence. However, that silence was broken before long.

"It would seem something, indeed, must be done about those two." Father said with a hint of irritation in his tone.

"Just give the word, and I'll go and rip his head off his neck." Envy growled in irritation. His irritation becoming more apparent, especially after hearing about the liquid metal that was injected into his body, almost rendering him immobile.

"Once they appear at a location inside the circle, I will have you all go and end their lives." Father said, bringing an end to the conversation.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Floating Cube Island.

"Damn that bitch!" Jackal shouted as he exited a device that recreated his body.

As Alfonzo and Elicia alluded to after the battle with Jackal and the homunculi in Crocus, just shredding Jackal apart with her threads was not enough to end his life. Like most Etherious, after being defeated, Jackal's consciousness was drawn back to Tartaros' base, the Cube, a floating island in the shape of a cube where the strongest Etherious reside.

"It would seem you failed your mission, Jackal." Said the voice of a young man. "To think you would have so much trouble with a bunch of humans."

Turning his head in the voice's direction, Jackal saw a young man with shoulder-length, dark purple hair tied into a large ponytail with messy bangs that obscured most of his face. However, his dark, malevolent eyes were completely visible. On top of that, he wore a disdainful smirk on his lips. As for clothing, he wore a black, tattered jacket trimmed with a white flame pattern over a frilly black shirt, a pair of white pants, and a simple pair of black boots.

"Those humans will pay for what they've done, Lord Mard Geer." Jackal growled angrily. "Just give me another chance. I'll bring in their heads."

"Pathetic." A female voice cut into the conversation before the young man, Mard Geer Tartaros, the leader of the Dark Guild, Tartaros could reply.

Snapping his head in the voice's direction with a scowl on his face, Jackal saw a woman with pale grey skin, an exceptionally large pair of breasts, and an hourglass figure wearing a tight leotard that emphasized her breasts even more, a striped jacket that covered her shoulders, arms, and most of her hands, that resembled talons, a pair of tight bands on her legs that extended down from her thighs to just above her bird-like feet, and an intricate helmet on her head that covered most of her face, excluding her mouth and eyes.

"You were defeated by humans." The woman continued. "You've brought shame to the name of the Nine Demon Gates."

"Grr!" Jackal growled angrily.

"But you were right." The woman said. "They will pay for what they've done. No human shall live to regret humiliating the Nine Demon Gates. I'll be sending Seilah, Keyes, Tempester, and Ezel to deal with them."

"What? Kyôka, are you serious?" Jackal bellowed in disbelief. "Those humans are my prey!"

"Someone who has already been defeated has no right to question my decisions." The woman, Kyôka, replied dismissively.

"Damn you!" Jackal shouted angrily as he glared at Kyôka.

"Actually, that won't be necessary." Mard Geer said, cutting into the conversation. "We have more pressing matters to attend to. We need to find the location of [Face], as well as the way to activate it."

"Understood." Kyôka replied with a respectful bow of her head.

And although Jackal's anger was not quelled, he calmed down enough to refrain from attacking Kyôka.

"I think we should contact that young woman." Mard Geer said while stroking his chin in contemplation. "What was her name again? Uh... Remembering the names of humans is so difficult. Ah, now I remember, it's Junko.... Junko Enoshima. She's the one that gave us the information about that ex-Magic Council chairman, after all."

"As you command, Lord Mard Geer." Kyôka replied respectfully. "I'll contact her, at once."

With that, Kyôka turned around and left the resurrection chamber without sparing Jackal a glance. Meanwhile, Jackal stared at Kyôka with wrath burning in his eyes. Even so, he dared not make a move on Kyôka for two reasons.

First, Kyôka was the leader of the Nine Demon Gates. In other words, in terms of power, she stood at the top among them. And second, Mard Geer was watching with an interested gaze. And Jackal was under no illusion that the most powerful of all Zeref's demons would stand by and watch an internal struggle take place among his forces.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Pegasus Village.

In a village located near the Legal Guild, Blue Pegasus, there is an elegant hot spring enclosed by a bamboo building. This hot spring, owned by the Blue Pegasus guild is specifically used for the members of Blue Pegasus to relax.

At the moment, however, there are no members of Blue Pegasus in the area. Still, the hot spring was not unoccupied. Instead, there was a young blonde woman enjoying the hot spring all by herself.

"*Sigh* And it was such a good chance to have Zeref under my control." The blonde woman, Junko Enoshima, said to herself while letting all her stress melt away with a relaxed smile on her face. A moment later, however, her expression changed into something much more vicious. "And if it weren't for that bitch from Fairy Tail, this world would be wallowing in despair by now. It's too bad Acnologia wasn't able to wipe her and her guild mates off the face of the continent. Ooh~~~! The despair that would have brought to the rest of the guild would have been wonderful."

As she spoke of despair, Junko's expression changed once again. Now, instead of an expression filled with malice, she wore an expression filled with euphoria. On top of that, she began cupping one of her breasts while there was movement from her other hand below the water's surface. However, thanks to the milky color of the hot spring, it was unclear exactly what she was doing.

At that moment, one of the communications lacrima Junko kept with her at all times to communicate with her co-conspirators began blinking.

"Hmm..." Junko hummed after noticing the blinking lacrima. "I wonder who it could be."

Picking up the chain of communications lacrima with the hand that was previously cupping her breast, Junko looked at the blinking lacrima to ascertain the identity of the one trying to contact her. At the same time, the hand moving below the water's surface did not stop.

"Mmm~! It's Kyôka from Tartaros." Junko said in a sultry tone. "I wonder what she could possibly want."

With that, Junko injected a bit of her magic power into the lacrima. A moment later, an image of Kyôka, from the waist up was projected from the lacrima in Junko's hand.

"Kyôka, to what do I owe the... Mmm~! Pleasure?" Junko asked once the image was stabilized.

In response, Kyôka examined Junko's body. Then, she licked her lips.

"One day, I will turn you into a demon." Kyôka said with a sadistic glint in her eyes. "Oh, how I love transforming beautiful young women into demons."

"As despair inducing as that sounds, I doubt you contacted me for that." Junko replied with a radiant smile.

"Of course." Kyôka said with a nod. "I'm sure you are aware that Crawford Seam met his end before we could get the information about Face from him, are you not?"

"I am." Junko replied with a nod. "I would have loved to see the look on his face just before he died. The unwillingness... it must have been incredible."

"I'm sure it must have been." Kyôka replied. "However, because of his untimely demise, we were unable to get the information we wanted."

"And you're hoping that I can find out where Face is and what is needed to activate it, correct?" Junko asked.

"That's right." Kyoka replied. "And in return, we will gather the necessary humans for your little game."

Hearing that, Junko's eyes lit up with excitement.

"I'll be able to bring them to hope's peak, before dropping them to the pits of despair. The back stabbing, the accusations, the deaths... It will be nothing short of a trigger happy havoc."

"I assume that means we have a deal?" Kyôka asked with a smile, completely unconcerned with the fates of the humans who will be sacrificed in Junko's death game.

"Most definitely." Junko replied.

"Very good." Kyôka replied. "You will receive your humans after we get the information we want."

With that, Kyôka cut the communication.

"*Sigh* I can't wait." Junko replied as she placed the chain of lacrima back on the side of the hot spring. "But gathering the information Kyoka wants will be tedious if I do it by myself. I guess I should break Himiko out of prison again. Having her to assist me will make my job much easier. Oh, and I should really let Mukuro know, too. I'm sure she'll be thrilled to get the game started."

With that, Junko stood from her spot in the hot spring. Then, after picking up the chain of communications lacrima, she left for the changing rooms. And just like that, without anyone from Blue Pegasus knowing she was ever there, Junko left Pegasus Village to plan Himiko Toga's break out... again.

Chapter 366: Goodbye, Yoruichi

After a day spent working on the first of Mermaid Heel's new training rooms, Alfonzo, closely followed by Ritsu, returned to the guild hall's main hall.

"Ah~~~! I'm hungry." Alfonzo said while stretching his arms over his head.

"I think you've earned a good meal after working nonstop for the whole day." Ritsu replied with a gentle smile. "So, what will you be making for dinner tonight?"

"Nice try, Master Unohana." Alfonzo said with a wry smile. "But I told you yesterday, I won't be cooking anymore... At least not for free."

"Tch!"

Hearing the sound of a clicked tongue, Alfonzo turned his head in its direction. More specifically, towards Ritsu.

"Master Unohana, did you just...?" Alfonzo asked in a tone of disbelief.

"Did I just... what?" Ritsu asked with a smile while tilting her head in confusion.

Although Ritsu was smiling, her smile gave off so much pressure that Alfonzo, although he was not intimidated, decided it was not worth it to push the woman in front of him any further.

"Nothing." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head. "I must have been hearing things because of hunger."

"I see." Ritsu replied with an approving nod. "Then, you should get something to eat. And while you do that, I'll let Tsunade know about the progress you made today."

"Sure." Alfonzo replied with a smile.

With that, Alfonzo and Ritsu separated. While Alfonzo moved towards the guild hall's bar to place an order for dinner, Ritsu moved upstairs to Tsunade's office.

A moment later, Alfonzo reached the bar. And when he did, he found Yoruichi sitting there with her left cheek resting in her left hand.

"Yo, Yoruichi, what's up?" Alfonzo asked casually while raising a hand to get the waitress' attention.
"Hey, can I have a T-bone, medium rare, with a baked potato and green beans? Thanks."

"Sure thing." The waitress replied before taking the order back to the guild's chef.

"So, how's the work going?" Yoruichi replied while leaving her head resting against her palm.

"Just as I expected it to go." Alfonzo replied.

'Honestly, I could have this whole job finished in a few days if I wanted to.' Alfonzo mused. 'But if I did that, I wouldn't have the time or energy to work on my other project. So, I'll do this at a leisurely pace. Though, I'm sure Ritsu will report that to Tsunade, as well.'

And just as Alfonzo expected, Ritsu was currently reporting to Tsunade that he was not exerting himself fully. However, Tsunade casually dismissed it, stating that there was no hurry. Besides, the cost for the job would not change, either way.

A moment later, Alfonzo was pulled out of his musings by a rather intense glare. And when he looked to its source, he saw a beautiful young woman with long, honey blonde hair and pinkish-purple eyes wearing a white chef's uniform with a chef's hat staring at him with fire in her eyes.

'Is that Erina Nakiri?' Alfonzo thought to himself. {A/N: It's just a cameo. She won't get much many more, if any, appearances after this chapter.}

Breaking eye contact with the competitive chef, Alfonzo turned his attention back to Yoruichi.

"So, do you have any idea where Marin is?" Alfonzo asked. "I thought she'd be here by the time I was finished working."

"She took Wendy back to your house." Yoruichi replied. "Apparently training under Master Tsunade was more than she was ready for. She basically passed out on her feet after coming down the stairs a few minutes ago."

"Oh, got it." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "So, what's up with that bruise on your cheek?"

As he asked, Alfonzo pointed towards Yoruichi's left cheek, the one she was covering with her hand.

"*Sigh* That Marin has a hell of a right hook." Yoruichi said while rolling her eyes.

"So, I guess she told you the girls' decision, huh?" Alfonzo asked.

"Yeah." Yoruichi replied. "And she said I should probably expect a few more punches, too."

"Yeah, you probably should." Alfonzo said with a nod. Then, he continued in a much chillier tone. "Oh, and you should probably keep that little chihuahua of yours on a leash, too. Because if she turns rabid, I might have to put her down."

With that, Yoruichi lowered her left hand, revealing the large, swollen bruise on the left side of her face. Then, she pushed herself up from her seat at the bar.

"*Sigh* I know." Yoruichi said in an exasperated tone. "At first, I thought she was just watching her. But now, I can feel her killing intent from here. Marin was right, I really am going to have to cut her off if she doesn't get her shit together."

With that, Yoruichi vanished in a burst of speed. And somehow, she managed to leave the guild hall without the sound of any doors or windows opening.

"I gotta learn how to do that." Alfonzo muttered while waiting for his food to arrive.

"So, what happened between you and Yoruichi that's had her so mopey for the last two months?" A female voice asked from the seat next to Alfonzo.

"Hey, Anko, it's nice to see you, too." Alfonzo replied without even looking in Anko's direction.

"Yeah, yeah, I'm sure it is." Anko replied. "Of course, that would be more convincing if you were actually looking at me. Anyway, can you answer my question."

"Yoruichi hasn't told you about it?" Alfonzo asked while glancing at Anko.

"Nope." Anko replied. "She always says that she'll tell me later. But later hasn't come yet."

"Then, if Yoruichi, someone you're clearly pretty close to, hasn't told you, why do you think I, who only met you yesterday, would?" Alfonzo asked curiously.

"Because I'm hot as hell." Anko replied cheekily.

"Yeah, you are." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "But I don't see what that has to do with this."

"*Sigh* You're no fun." Anko replied in a deflated tone. "*Sigh* Yoruichi's my best friend. And I really don't like seeing her mope around like that. But if she doesn't tell me what's wrong, I can't help her with her problem."

"Unfortunately, there's nothing you can do to help her with this problem." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head. "Trust me on that one. Besides, going behind her back to get information like this isn't exactly cool."

"Yeah, I know." Anko replied while leaning forward and resting her elbows on the bar. "I just didn't know what to do."

At that moment, the doors to the guild hall opened. And through them, Yoruichi walked in while carrying Sui-Feng by the scruff of her neck.

"And just what the hell were you thinking?" Yoruichi asked exasperatedly.

"Since that girl used her right hand to strike you, Lady Yoruichi, she no longer needs it." Sui-Feng replied defiantly. "For disrespecting you like she did, I think I'm being rather lenient."

"*Sigh* Marin was right." Yoruichi said in a tired tone. "I really should have disciplined you more in the past. You overstep your bounds far too often."

Hearing that, Sui-Feng opened her eyes wide in surprise.

"Lady Yoruichi, surely you are not serious?" Sui-Feng asked in a scared tone. "But I was only acting to protect your honor."

"Without any input from me." Yoruichi replied sternly. "The one you have sworn to serve."

In response, Sui-Feng could only lower her head.

"It's not like your little sneak attack would have worked, anyway." Alfonzo said, casually inserting himself into the conversation from his seat at the bar. "Marin started injecting her magic power into her weapon the moment you started leaking killing intent."

Hearing Alfonzo's words, both Yoruichi and Sui-Feng looked in his direction. While Yoruichi was just as amazed as always at Alfonzo's ability to detect magic power, Sui-Feng's anger started growing out of control.

"This is all your fault!" Sui-Feng shouted. "If you had just been grateful and---"

Smack!

Before Sui-Feng could finish her tirade, she was silenced by a slap across the face from Yoruichi.

"I've had enough, Sui-Feng." Yoruichi said angrily. "I don't know how you became such a fanatic, but the Shihouin Clan clearly did something wrong while educating you."

"Lady Yoruichi..." Sui-Feng whimpered with her eyes open wide in surprise while she covered her reddening cheek with her hand.

"We'll be returning home." Yoruichi said sternly. "I need to see that you are properly reeducated. And right now, I can't trust you to obediently return on your own. *Sigh* And I'll probably be punished for my stupid actions, as well."

With that, and without another word to anyone in the, now, silent guild hall, Yoruichi dragged Sui-Feng towards the stairs, undoubtedly headed to Tsunade's office to inform her of her decision to return home.

"Wow, I don't think I've ever seen Yoruichi get so angry with her little bumble bee before." Anko said with amazement in her tone. "You must really mean a lot to her for her to get so mad on your behalf."

"No, that's not it at all." Alfonzo replied. "But if you knew the whole story, you'd be pissed off at Sui-Feng, too."

"Damn it, now I'm getting even more curious." Anko muttered.

"Order up." A female voice said from in front of Alfonzo.

"Looking in the voice's direction, Alfonzo saw the young woman he had just identified as Erina Nakiri placing his order on the bar top in front of him.

"Please, enjoy your meal." Erina said while staring at Alfonzo with fire in her eyes.

'I think I lit a fire under the Queen of the Culinary world with what I showed last night.' Alfonzo thought to himself as he created a fork and knife with his magic.

Seeing Alfonzo creating his own cutlery, Erina could not help blushing slightly. In her bid to show Alfonzo who was the better cook, she completely forgot about silverware. Then, again, that's why waiters are the ones who usually serve customers, and not the chefs.

Even so, she watched as Alfonzo cut into the steak and took a bite.

'Hmm... It feels like I've been transported to a field of grazing cows and bulls.' Alfonzo thought to himself as he looked around the mental illusion. 'And they're all showing me such love, as if I was the one who had been taking care of them all their lives.'

As soon as Alfonzo finished chewing and swallowed the mouthful of food, the illusion ended.

"Damn, that's pretty good." Alfonzo muttered as he decided to try the baked potato next.

Meanwhile, Erina could only look at Alfonzo with mounting frustration. Even though it was clear he was affected by her cooking, his reaction was nowhere near as exaggerated as the reactions the girls of Mermaid Heel had to his cooking the night before.

And while Erina was brooding over her perceived defeat, Alfonzo had tried all the food on his plate. Then, he stopped to think for a moment. And once that was done, he shrugged his shoulders. Then he looked at Erina, who was about to return to the kitchen.

"You're really good at what you do." Alfonzo said with a smile. "Why don't you come work for me? I'll pay double... no triple whatever Mermaid Heel is paying you."

Immediately, Erina turned around with the flames of anger burning in her eyes. However, before she could say anything, someone else addressed him from the landing in the middle of the staircase.

"Hey, Kid. I'd appreciate it if you didn't try to poach my guild staff." Tsunade said as she, Ritsu, Yoruichi, and Sui-Feng climbed down the stairs.

"She's a fucking awesome cook." Alfonzo replied with a shrug as he turned towards Tsunade. "Can you blame me for trying?"

"Even if you're one of the richest men on the continent, do you really think she'll gain more prestige in the culinary world by becoming your personal chef than working as the head chef in a popular guild. Or were you trying to poach her for Fairy Tail?"

"Nope." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "But trust me, accepting my offer would get her much more prestige than working here."

"Oh really?" Tsunade asked while crossing her arms under her breasts, emphasizing them more than they already were. "And just what kind of offer is that?"

"That's a secret." Alfonzo replied as he reached into his pants pocket and pulled out a business card.

Then, Alfonzo placed the business card on the bar top with its information pointed towards Erina. At the same time, he used his hand and [Metal Magic] to shield it from everyone else's eyes.

Scoffing at Alfonzo's attempt to be mysterious, Erina looked down at the business card, prepared to mock him publicly for trying to poach her. However, when she saw what was printed on it, her eyes widened in surprise.

'Sixth Sense Holdings. Alfonzo Marcus, Owner and CEO.' Erina read silently before raising her head and staring at Alfonzo in disbelief.

A moment later, Erina slowly walked back to the bar. Then, she picked up the business card with that same amazed expression on her face.

"You don't need to respond now." Alfonzo said with a smile. "But you should give it some consideration."

In response, Erina only nodded her head absent-mindedly before returning to the kitchen.

Meanwhile, Tsunade could only stare at Alfonzo with an annoyed glare. At the same time, Yoruichi and Anko watched him with interest and curiosity. Ritsu, on the other hand, watched the entire exchange with an amused gaze. Then, there was Sui-Feng, who was leaking so much killing intent that the rest of the guild hall was completely silent.

"Could you get her to reel that shit in?" Alfonzo said as he returned to eating his dinner. "It's making the food taste bad."

Instead of responding, Yoruichi chopped Sui-Feng on the back of her neck, knocking her unconscious. Although Alfonzo did not say anything, it was clear that if she did not do something about Sui-Feng, he would have. And he had no intention of being so gentle.

"Anyway, I'll be taking her back home." Yoruichi said as she slung Sui-Feng over her shoulder. "I don't know when I'll be back, but I'll miss you, Alfonzo."

"Have a safe trip." Alfonzo replied without looking in Yoruichi's direction. "And for both of your sakes, I hope the two of you improve while you're away."

"Yeah, I'll do my best." Yoruichi replied with a sad smile.

A moment later, Yoruichi [Flash Stepped] next to Alfonzo, kissed him on the cheek, then [Flash Stepped] to the guild hall's main entrance.

"Goodbye for now, everyone." Yoruichi said with her back turned to the rest of the guild.

"And I really am sorry for what I did, Alfonzo."

Then, she pushed the guild's doors open and left without another word.

"Damn it, you never told me what happened!" Anko shouted as she stood from her seat at the bar and rushed after Yoruichi.

With Yoruichi and Sui-Feng's departure, Mermaid Heel would be weakened for a while. Losing two S-Class wizards, while one of them was their current ace, would do that to any guild. However, with talents like Kagura and the new training facilities Alfonzo was installing, Tsunade hoped it would not take long for Mermaid Heel to regain its strength. On top of that, when Yoruichi eventually returned, they would be even stronger than ever.

Chapter 367: Girl Talk Back at the Guild

A few days have passed since Yoruichi made the decision to return home with Sui-Feng. And after she left the guild hall, that was the last time anyone saw her.

A few minutes later, Marin returned to Mermaid Heel's guild hall. And when she did, she noticed the gloomy atmosphere. So, she immediately asked Alfonzo what happened. And naturally, Alfonzo told her.

The next day, Marin wrote a letter and sent it back to Magnolia. She thought that the others living in the mansion needed to know that there was no longer a reason to come out there to get to know Yoruichi. However, she also mentioned that it would not be a bad idea to have someone there to take care of the menial tasks for Alfonzo, Wendy, and Carla.

And today, the girls received the letter just after they finished their morning training at the guild hall.

"Looks like Yoruichi went back to wherever she came from." Ultear said after reading the letter from Marin.

"Seriously?" Mirajane asked. "Why?"

"Good riddance." Cana said spitefully.

Ultear then explained the series of events that led to Yoruichi's decision to return to her continent of origin. And when she did, the girls flared up in anger.

"If that little bitch comes back..." Mirajane muttered in an ominous tone.

"That's why you should have never stopped me, Lici." Cana said while glancing at Elicia. "That girl needed to be put in her place."

"Yeah..." Elicia replied with melancholy in her tone.

"Lici, what's wrong?" Sun asked curiously.

"*Sigh* That means that Yoruichi won't be here for the wedding." Elicia said. "Although we don't have an exact date yet, Alfonzo said it would happen when he finished preparing the venue."

While most of the other girls did not care either way if Yoruichi attended the wedding, and Cana was happy that she would not be here for it, they could all understand why Elicia was down. She, unlike the other girls in Alfonzo's harem, still considered Yoruichi a friend. Though, no one could understand why.

"Feeling bad about it won't help." Erza said. "The best thing to do is move forward."

"Erza's right." Lucy added. "And if you really want her to see your big day, I'm sure Alfonzo will be recording the whole thing. You can just send her a copy."

"Yeah, that's true." Elicia said, her mood picking up as she did so. "I can always ask Master Unohana to send it to her for me."

"That's right." Cana said while taking a sip from a bottle of liquor. "And that way, everyone wins. We don't have to see that scheming bitch and she gets to see the wedding."

Sigh x 5

Hearing Cana's statement, everyone other than Erza could only sigh.

"Anyway, now I'm a little jealous of Marin." Ultear said as she laid the letter on the table.

"Why?" Sun asked curiously.

"Because she got to punch Yoruichi." Ultear replied with a shrug and a wry smile. "I was kinda looking forward to that part."

With that, everyone started to giggle and laugh.

"By the way, now that we don't have to rotate, what are all of you gonna do about the trip to Mermaid Heel?" Elicia asked curiously.

"What about you?" Mirajane asked in return. "What are you gonna do, Lici?"

"I don't think I'm gonna go." Elicia replied while shaking her head. "I was really only going to make sure Cana didn't go overboard."

"Wait, seriously?" Cana asked in a tone filled with disbelief. "That's the only reason you offered to drive me over there? There's no way I'd let things get out of hand... right?"

As she asked the last question, Cana looked around the room for support. However, any time she made eye contact with one of her harem sisters, they would avert their gazes.

"Come on, you all can't be serious." Cana said in a disgruntled tone.

"It's not that we don't think you would be able to keep your cool with Yoruichi, Cana." Elicia said with a wry smile. "But if Sui-Feng started mouthing off, no one doubts that you would have been ready to put her in her place... with violence."

In response, the rest of the girls nodded their heads vigorously.

"Yeah, I mean, you were ready to fight her on Alfonzo and Lici's birthday, remember?" Lucy asked.

"Not to mention, you just finished saying that Elicia shouldn't have stopped you back then." Erza added.

"You know, I can accept anyone else commenting on me doing something reckless." Cana said while staring pointedly at Erza. "But you have no right to do so, Erza."

Once again, all the other girls nodded in agreement. Erza, on the other hand, tilted her head in confusion.

"I'm not really sure of what you could be referring to, Cana." Erza said in a tone of genuine confusion.

Sigh x 6

"And this is why she never gets any better." Mirajane said while shaking her head. "She doesn't remember the mistakes she makes. So, how can she ever learn from them."

"Erza, I may not know every reckless thing you've ever done." Sun said with an intense gaze. "But should I remind you about when you tried to take that attack from Yoruichi head on?"

As she spoke, Sun was cracking her knuckles in preparation to throw a punch.

In response, Erza began rubbing her jaw reflexively.

"No, I don't think that will be necessary." Erza replied. "I'll try and be more careful from now on."

Hearing that, the other girls opened their eyes wide in surprise.

"Holy shit..." Cana muttered. "Is Sun to Erza, what Lici is to my dad?"

"It looks that way." Ultear said in an astonished tone. "I think we might have found a hard counter for Erza."

"We should test that." Mirajane said with her usual pleasant smile returning to her face. Then, she turned to Lucy. "Since you're on the same team as Erza, you should take note of all Erza's reckless actions and report them to Sun whenever you guys get back from a quest."

"Wait, are you asking me to tattle on Erza?" Lucy asked with a weird expression.

"Seriously, it sounds like you're telling Lucy to be a snitch, Mira." Elicia said with an equally strange expression on her face.

"Yeah, and like Fonzie always says, 'Snitches get Stitches'." Cana said with a chuckle.

"That was actually the name of the first sewing supply shop I ever bought supplies from after coming to Magnolia, too." Elicia muttered while rubbing her chin in thought.

"Wait, seriously?" Cana asked in an incredulous tone.

"Yeah." Elicia replied with a nod. "Fonzie and I always thought it was a weird name for a store."

Like that, the girls continued to chat, laugh, and have fun. Eventually, a topic came up that made all the girls take it seriously.

"By the way, who do you think will be Alfonzo's best man at the ceremony?" Mirajane asked curiously.

"It'll probably be Alzack." Elicia said with a smile. "You know, until now, he's the only one he makes things for for free."

"Really, I thought it would be Laxus." Sun said with her head tilted.

"Yeah, me, too." Cana said. "After he got his ass kicked in the tournament, they've been a lot closer."

"They may be closer, but they still aren't part of our group." Ultear said. "It's not like all the years of antagonism just disappeared with that defeat."

"That makes sense." Sun replied with a nod.

"Oh, and speaking of the wedding, next time you see him, can you tell Gildarts I wanna talk to him, Cana." Elicia asked.

"Sure." Cana agreed easily. "But what could you possibly want to talk to my dad about? Especially about the wedding?"

"Well, since he was my dad's best friend, I wanted to ask him if he could walk me down the aisle." Elicia replied with her head lowered and tears pooling in her eyes. "Since Daddy isn't here to do it..."

In response, the table fell silent. In fact, the atmosphere fell so quickly that quite a few of the wizards present in the guild hall noticed the change as well.

"I'd be honored to walk you down the aisle, Lici."

In the next instant, before the atmosphere in the guild hall could fall any further, Gildarts, who had just finished reporting about his last quest and having a drink with Ur, appeared behind Elicia, picked her up from the table, and wrapped her in one of the warmest hugs he had given anyone other than Cana.

"What the...?" Elicia exclaimed in surprise while blinking her eyes repeatedly from Gildarts' embrace.

"Dad, where did you come from?" Cana asked, just as confused as everyone else at Gildarts' sudden appearance.

With that, Gildarts put Elicia back down on her seat. Then, he rushed over to Cana and wrapped her in a hug as well.

"I guess you were training in one of the sound proof rooms this time, huh?" Gildarts asked. "None of you even heard the alert for the Gildarts Shift. I got back about an hour ago. Then, I went up to report to Ur. After that, we had a drink together."

With that, the atmosphere in the guild hall returned to normal. No, it was actually a little more positive than usual. And the rest of the day passed in the usual Fairy Tail fashion with drinking, laughter, and a few brawls.

Eventually, the girls decided to go home. And without Alfonzo there, they did the things they like to do most, other than Alfonzo, until it was time to go to bed.

Like the others, Elicia spent her time doing what she loved most, making clothing. However, unlike most times, she was not worried about making clothes for other people. Instead, she was stitching her own wedding dress. And this time, she was not using her magic to do so, at all.

"I can't wait for the surprise Fonzie talked about when he said he'd take care of the venue." Elicia said as she sewed. "I wonder where it will be? The suspense is killing me."

At the same time, Lucy was in her apartment in Fairy Hills making sure she had everything she would need for her trip to Mermaid Heel's headquarters.

"I think it's finally time." Lucy said with a flushed face. "We'll be alone for a while, this time. So, I don't think there's any better time than now."

"You better not chicken out, Lu." Levy said while watching Lucy get packed. "I'm gonna ask you about all the juicy details when you get back. And I expect a detailed account."

In response, Lucy managed to blush even harder.

"And if you somehow mess up like you did after your first date, I'll never let you live it down." Levy added with a mischievous smile.

"Ugh... Do you have to keep bringing that up, Levy?" Lucy asked while hiding her face with her hands. "I don't get that nervous anymore."

"Yeah, well, this is a much bigger step than a first date or a first kiss, you know." Levy replied. "I just don't want you to mess it up."

"Whatever." Lucy replied while rolling her eyes. "Anyway, how are things between you and Gajeel? I've noticed he's even started training with you, Jet, and Droy."

"Ugh!" Levy groaned. "And those two make it impossible for me to get any closer to him. Any time I start talking to him, one or both of them insert themselves into the conversation."

"*Sigh* A man's jealousy can be quite ugly." Lucy said while shaking her head. "Not that a woman's jealousy is any prettier."

"That's true." Levy replied with a nod. "Anyway, you'll never guess who I saw walking around together today."

"Who?" Lucy asked in a curious tone.

"Evergreen and Elfman." Levy said excitedly. "They were even holding hands."

"Really?" Lucy exclaimed in excitement. "When did this happen?"

"It was when I was on my way back to the guild hall after checking out the bookstore's new shipment." Levy said as she started explaining the situation.

Like that, Levy and Lucy continued to chat. Eventually, Lucy took a look at the clock and realized how late it was. So, she ended the conversation with Levy, finished packing as fast as she could, and went to bed. She would have a long drive ahead of her tomorrow, after all.

Chapter 368: A Failed Sneak Attack

At about noon, instead of working on the Mermaid Heel training facilities, Alfonzo was standing on a train platform, at the train station in the town of Cedar. However, he was not alone. Instead, Marin, who had to leave for a modelling job with Sorcerer Weekly, was clinging to him while they waited for her train to arrive.

"*Sigh* If I knew all that stuff with Yoruichi and Sui-Feng was gonna happen, I would have never taken these jobs." Marin said with a rather pronounced pout on her face. "Having you all to myself was, like, really nice. I should totes stand them up."

"Yeah, right." Alfonzo replied while rolling his eyes. "Even if you did that, you wouldn't have me all to yourself anymore. And is it really worth it to cut off any avenue for future work with Sorcerer Weekly over that?"

"Yeah, I know." Marin replied, her pout deepening as she did so. "I just don't wanna go. I wanna stay with you."

"You make it seem like we won't see each other when I get home." Alfonzo said with a wry smile while combing his fingers through Marin's hair. "Besides, if you really wanted to, couldn't you just drive back out here when you're done with the photo shoots?"

"Nope!" Marin replied quite strongly. "If I had to make such a long trip by myself, I'd definitely take the train. I hate driving that far by myself."

"Seriously?" Alfonzo asked in disbelief. "So, you'd rather sit on a train for that much longer?"

As he spoke, Alfonzo shook his head uncomprehendingly.

"Yeah, If I'm not the one driving, I can fall asleep whenever." Marin replied. "But if I drive, I have to stay alert the whole time. No thank you."

"I guess that's something I'll never understand." Alfonzo replied while smiling wryly.

{"Attention Passengers."} A female voice said over the station's P.A. system. {"The train to Shirotsume will arrive on platform four in two minutes. Please make sure you have all your belongings and wait behind the yellow line. I repeat..."}

"*Sigh* And that really means my little vacation is over." Marin said dejectedly.

"Stop being so dramatic." Alfonzo said with a chuckle. "Besides, you were actually out here to work, remember?"

"If you call acting like a housewife taking care of her husband, her daughter, and her daughter's cat, that for some reason can talk, working, then I wouldn't mind working all the time." Marin replied

"Yeah, right." Alfonzo shot back while rolling his eyes. "We both know if you had to stay home for too long, you'd go stir crazy."

"I know, right." Marin replied with a smile. "Still, it was nice. In small doses, anyway."

Like that, Alfonzo and Marin spent the rest of the time until the train arrived chatting about everything and nothing. Then, after the train pulled up, it took a few more minutes for the passengers to exit. And after that, Marin and the other passengers headed to Shirotsume, and the other towns in that direction, were able to board.

"I'll see you when you get back to Magnolia." Marin said before kissing Alfonzo goodbye. Then she made her way to the open train door. "I'm gonna miss you!"

"I'll miss you, too." Alfonzo replied with a wave of his own. "And have fun."

"Thanks, Bye~~~!" Marin said as she disappeared into the train.

Less than a minute later, the train doors were closed. And only a few moments after that, the train pulled away from the platform and was on its way.

"And there she goes." Alfonzo muttered as he turned to leave the station.

However, once he left the station, Alfonzo's instincts flared and warned him of incoming danger.

"I found you." A happy female voice said from behind Alfonzo.

At the same time, Alfonzo activated his [Metal Magic], stopping a knife from piercing his back.

"Aww... I thought I got you." The female voice said in a sad tone.

At the same time, the people nearby who saw what just happened began to panic. Which led to the area around Alfonzo and his attacker being cleared rather quickly.

"So, that crazy bitch broke you out of prison again, huh?" Alfonzo asked in a cold tone while his right hand sparked with violet electricity. "*Sigh* How many pieces does she have in all these countries? Mind telling me, Himiko toga? Or would you prefer if I called you Draculina?"

"OMG! He knows my name!" Himiko exclaimed excitedly while cupping her flushed left cheek with her left hand. A moment later, however, she answered Alfonzo's question in an infatuated tone. "It's okay if you just call me Himiko. Unfortunately, I can't tell you that. Not even if you were to let me cover you in your own blood before fucking me silly."

"Well, you don't have to worry about that." Alfonzo replied as he swung his right hand back at Himiko, who was still trying to push her knife into Alfonzo's back. "I would never do either."

Reacting quickly, Himiko Limboed under the lightning clad back hand. Then, she summersaulted away from Alfonzo, leaving the knife behind.

"That's such a pity." Himiko said with an unhinged smile. "But I know it will happen eventually. Love can make anything possible, after all."

Before Alfonzo could reply, Himiko's appearance and clothing started to melt away into a grey, viscous liquid. A moment later, she had transformed into Mest Gryder/Doranbolt.

"Damn, when the hell did she get his blood?" Alfonzo asked himself with a frown on his face.

Unbeknownst to Alfonzo, after getting out of prison a few days ago, Himiko attacked Doranbolt and drained a large amount of his blood, almost killing him in the process. Luckily, she was driven away before she could finish the job.

"Anyway." Himiko said while taking on Mest's appearance. "I was just taking a little break. I actually have to get back to work. Otherwise, my boss will dock my pay. And if she does that, I won't be able to look so pretty for you, Darling. So, I'll see you later. Bye~~~~!"

As she spoke, Himiko smiled brightly while waving at Alfonzo. Then, before Alfonzo could say or do anything, she used [Teleportation Magic] to leave the scene without a trace.

"She said she had to get back to work." Alfonzo muttered as he dispelled the lightning arcing around his right hand. "Just what is that Junko up to this time? Last time she wanted to get her hands on Zeref. But he should be back on Alakitasia by now."

Taking a deep breath, Alfonzo did his best to calm down. Then, once he was calm, he shook his head with a wry smile on his face.

"I don't think I can make fun of Lici for her group of weird admirers anymore. Well, at least I know her magic power signature, now. So, she shouldn't be able to sneak up on me again." Alfonzo muttered while making his way towards the Escalade that was parked nearby. However, when he got close, he could not help but frown. "Damn it, is this an old mafia movie? She actually put an explosive under the car that would go off when I started the engine."

Instead of an actual explosive, what Alfonzo felt was a lacrima with very volatile magic power stored within. And due to this unstable magic power, Alfonzo would not be able to remove the lacrima by manipulating the metal of the engine with his magic. And starting the engine would have the same result, an explosion that would destroy the entire vehicle. Though, the chances of him being harmed in an explosion of that scale would be minimal at best.

Not long after that, the knights responsible for policing Cedar arrived to see what the reason for the commotion was. And unfortunately for Alfonzo, they asked him to return to their barracks with him for questioning.

Four hours later, Alfonzo was finally released by the knights.

"In any world, I only have one thing to say about the cops." Alfonzo said as he made his way back to the train station. "Fuck the police. Not only do they always show up after the incident is over, But how many fucking times do I have to give the same statement. It's not like the fucking story would change depending on who asked me about it."

While grumbling and cursing the knights, Alfonzo eventually made it back to the train station. More specifically, to the side of his Escalade. Then, while making sure to keep his magic power a safe distance from the unstable lacrima, Alfonzo floated the entire Escalade off the ground. At the same time, using his [Electromagnetism Magic], he also flew up into the air and returned to Mermaid Heel's HQ.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Mermaid Heel Headquarters

"Did that kid just ditch his work all day?" Tsunade asked in a frustrated tone while Wendy, Carla, and Ritsu were sitting in her office.

While Wendy was reading a medical textbook, Carla was reading a book of her own. Meanwhile, Ritsu was sipping a cup of tea with a gentle smile on her face.

"Alfonzo would never do that." Wendy said, looking up from the book before closing it. "He takes his work very seriously."

"Indeed, he likes money too much to possibly mess that up." Carla replied sharply.

"Carla..." Wendy muttered. Though, she did not know how to retort. "Anyway, I'm sure something must have happened."

"I agree with Wendy." Ritsu added. "I've seen his work ethic for the past few days. He doesn't seem like the type to slack off."

"If you say so." Tsunade replied. "Either way, he's gonna have some explaining to do when he gets back."

At that moment, Wendy, Carla, and Ritsu's eyes widened in surprise as they caught sight of something strange through the window behind Tsunade.

"What's with those faces?" Tsunade asked in a curious tone. "Is there something on my face?"

"I think you should look behind you, Tsuna." Ritsu replied calmly as she got her expression back under control.

Skeptically, Tsunade turned around to look out the window of her office. And just like the other three, when she caught sight of what drew their attention, her expression turned strange, as well.

"What the hell is he doing?" Tsunade asked in a bewildered tone.

What the ladies saw was Alfonzo flying over the Mermaid Heel headquarters with the Escalade in tow, which was undoubtedly a strange sight.

"I wonder what happened?" Wendy muttered while watching Alfonzo draw near.

"I'm not sure." Carla replied. "But someone must have done something to his magic vehicle. I mean, look at his face. He looks pretty upset."

While Tsunade and Ritsu agreed with Carla's assessment, they could tell there was more to it due to their years of experience. So, instead of guessing at what happened, they decided to leave Tsunade's office and wait for him at the guild's entrance.

Naturally, when Tsunade and Ritsu got up to leave, Wendy and Carla followed them.

Eventually, the four ladies, while drawing the attention of the rest of Mermaid Heel, passed through the main hall and waited just outside its entrance. A few moments later, Alfonzo landed in front of them with the Escalade right behind him.

"What happened, Kid?" Tsunade asked as soon as Alfonzo landed. "And why the hell are you flying your magic vehicle around like that?"

"*Sigh* It's a long story." Alfonzo said in a disgruntled tone. "But the short version is, after Marin got on the train, this crazy bitch tried to sneak up on me and stab me. And when that didn't work, she turned into someone else before [Teleporting] away. Then, I got questioned by the dumb ass Cedar knights for four hours. On top of that, my fucking car was rigged to explode if I started the engine. And what made it worse is that I couldn't use my magic to remove the explosive, either. And what makes all that even worse? I haven't eaten since breakfast and I'm fucking starving."

"Could you please watch your language in front of Wendy?" Carla said in an admonishing tone.

"Carla, I'm not a little kid anymore." Wendy complained.

"Not now, Carla." Alfonzo said, sounding quite exhausted. "I really don't need that right now."

Surprisingly, Carla did not insist after hearing Alfonzo's tone. She did, however, fly behind Wendy in preparation to cover her ears, just in case.

"Carla..." Wendy whined in protest.

"Yeah, it sounds like you had a pretty terrible day." Tsunade said in a tone filled with schadenfreude.
"But we need to talk about you just leaving your work like that."

To Tsunade's surprise, Alfonzo shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly.

"Well, if there's an issue, I don't mind removing all the work I've done and putting everything back the way it was." Alfonzo said as he stepped forward to enter the guild hall. "I mean, it's not like I took a down payment for this job. So, we can just pretend like none of this ever happened and I was just here to accompany Wendy while she learned under you."

Hearing that, Tsunade could only grit her teeth. By bringing that up in the manner she did, it was obvious she was hoping to get some benefits out of Alfonzo's little disappearing act. However, she did not expect him to fire back the way he did.

'Although I'm still younger than you, Tsunade.' Alfonzo thought to himself with a smirk forming on his face. 'If you add up both of my lives, I'm forty-seven years old now. I'm not some inexperienced kid you can take advantage of.'

"Anyway, Lucy should be here soon to take Marin's place." Alfonzo said as he made his way over to the bar. "And when she shows up, you'll definitely know it's her. Her magic vehicle has a very distinct sound. Plus, it's painted hot, metallic pink."

Hearing that, Tsunade and Ritsu exchanged glances. Then, they sent the information about Lucy's magic vehicle to the ones looking over the main gates to their HQ. After that, Wendy, Carla, Tsunade, and Ritsu sat down with Alfonzo to hear the details of his day, while he waited for his dinner to be served.

Chapter 369: Lucy's Arrival

"So, I heard you had a pretty shitty day." Anko said, approaching Alfonzo's table in the Mermaid Heel guild hall after Tsunade and Ritsu heard his explanation of why he was gone all afternoon.

"Why do all of you have to use such foul language around Wendy?" Carla asked in an irritated tone.

"Carla! Stop treating me like a little kid!" Wendy shouted, finally getting fed up with Carla's coddling.
"I'm older than you, remember?"

Surprised at Wendy raising her voice, everyone turned their attention to her with shocked expressions on their faces. In response to all the attention, Wendy could not help but blush fiercely.

"Anyway, I don't need you to baby me, Carla." Wendy said as she stood up from the table before running out of the guild hall.

Meanwhile, Carla could only stare at Wendy's retreating back with a dumbfounded expression on her face.

"Wow!" Anko exclaimed in surprise. "I really didn't think she had it in her. She's usually so quiet and polite."

"Well, she's at that age, after all." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. Then, he turned his attention to Carla, who was still stunned into silence. "But she's right, you know. Wendy's old enough to work as a wizard. So, that means she's old enough to not need anyone to hold her hand all the time."

"But she's only thirteen..." Carla muttered.

"Yeah, and you're only seven." Alfonzo said, reminding Carla of her own age. "Sure, you're quite mature for your age. But you can't always hold her hand. Except for when it comes to picking up Ur and Master Tsunade's bad habits."

Hearing that, Anko could not help but start laughing. Meanwhile, Carla looked at Alfonzo with a lost expression.

Before Carla could ask any questions, however, a waitress arrived with Alfonzo's dinner, a salmon fillet glazed with a peach sauce, steamed rice, and mixed vegetables.

"Damn, that looks good." Anko said while staring at Alfonzo's dinner. "I've tried everything on the guild's menu, and I've never seen anything like that before."

"Well, that's because I introduced this recipe to Erina yesterday." Alfonzo replied as he cut into his salmon fillet. It's one of Lici's favorite dishes. So, I taught it to her. I plan on hiring her to cook the food for my wedding, after all."

Hearing that, Anko was surprised. She had heard from Yoruichi that Elicia was Alfonzo's fiancée, but Yoruichi never said anything about when they would be getting married. That news was even enough to bring Carla to come out of her stupor, for a moment, at least.

"Damn, Yoruichi's gonna be pissed when she finds out about this." Anko muttered as she continued to stare at Alfonzo's plate.

"Yeah, I know." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "We were planning to send out invitations after I was done with this job. But I never expected her to go back home just like that."

Vroom~~~~!

Before the conversation could continue any further, loud engine sounds could be heard from outside, gaining the attention of everyone currently in the guild hall.

"Looks like Lucy is here." Alfonzo muttered as he put down his cutlery. "Come on, Carla. Let's go greet our guild mate."

"Okay." Carla replied absent-mindedly as she stood up to follow Alfonzo to the guild hall's entrance.

Curious about what kind of magic vehicle could make such a loud noise, Anko also stood up to follow.

A few moments later, Alfonzo, Carla, and Anko opened the guild hall's doors and saw Lucy climbing down from a large magic vehicle resembling a Dodge Ram 1500 painted in a metallic hot pink.

"What the hell is that?" Anko asked, having never seen such a large magic vehicle. "It's so big..."

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

"... and pink." Anko said as she turned to stare at Alfonzo incredulously. A moment later, however, she began laughing uproariously.

"Hey, Alfonzo, I'm finally here." Lucy said, sounding a little exhausted. "This is the first time I've ever driven for that long in one stretch. I really don't know how you and Lici do it so often."

"You get used to it." Alfonzo replied with a smile while shrugging his shoulders. "Anyway, you didn't run into any problems on the way, did you?"

"No." Lucy replied while shaking her head. "The weather was nice, and the roads were clear. It would be nice if there was someone to talk to, though. The silence was almost deafening."

'Hmm... I guess I should come up with a way to make radio stations, too.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'Then, again, that can be done when I made the internet. But maybe it would be easier to do if the old-fashioned way. I can do a lot with radio waves, after all.'

"I'll find a way to do something about that." Alfonzo said as he stepped forward and wrapped Lucy in a hug. "Either way, it's good to see you."

"You, too." Lucy replied with a smile as she returned the hug.

"So, are you gonna introduce us?" Anko said in a mischievous tone. "Or did you forget about your new friend now that your girlfriend showed up."

Hearing that, Alfonzo only rolled his eyes in response. Meanwhile, Lucy tilted her head to look around Alfonzo to the source of the voice. And when she saw Anko, she glanced back at Alfonzo with skepticism in her gaze.

"Don't look at me like that." Alfonzo said in reply to Lucy's stare. "I didn't get a new one."

"For now, anyway." Anko said with a smirk.

In response, Lucy's glare grew in intensity. Meanwhile, Alfonzo only rolled his eyes again.

"Anyway, did you wanna grab a bite here and introduce yourself to the ladies of Mermaid Heel?" Alfonzo asked. "Or did you wanna get settled at the house and do that tomorrow?"

"You're no fun." Anko muttered.

"That depends, if I get settled at home, will you cook dinner for me?" Lucy asked, expectation shining in her eyes.

"Of course, I will." Alfonzo replied with a smile.

"Hey, let me come over, too!" Anko shouted after hearing that Alfonzo would cook.

Once again, Lucy looked at Alfonzo suspiciously.

"Seriously, stop looking at me like that." Alfonzo said with a wry smile.

"Then, why is she so eager?" Lucy asked.

"You can blame Marin, Wendy, and Carla for that." Alfonzo replied.

That statement was enough to finally get Carla out of her stupor for good.

"What do you mean it's our fault?" Carla asked while putting her paws on her hips. "If you hadn't cooked for the guild on our first night here, none of this would have happened."

"Yeah, but if you and Wendy hadn't asked me to cook, and Marin hadn't bragged about how good I was, none of it would have happened either."

"You could have just said, no." Carla argued.

"Yeah, I could have." Alfonzo agreed easily. But then I would have had to see you and Wendy's puppy-dog eyes. And I would have ended up agreeing anyway."

"I don't make puppy-dog eyes!" Carla shouted in protest.

While Alfonzo and Carla continued to bicker, Lucy and Anko simply watched from the side.

"It looks like he really dotes on those two." Anko said with a smile. Though, unlike her usual mischievous smile, this one was quite gentle.

"Yeah, he does." Lucy replied with a similar smile on her face. "It's not just them, though. He dotes on all the younger members of the guild, actually. Everyone except for happy, that is."

"Happy?" Anko asked in a curious tone.

"He's another talking cat." Lucy replied. "But he's a lot more... playful than the others."

"I see." Anko replied while focusing on Alfonzo once again.

'Now I see what Youichi was talking about.' Anko thought to herself. 'I've only known him for a few days, but I can already see a lot of good points. If I'm not careful, I'll be wrapped around his little finger instead of the other way around.'

"Anyway, let's go, Lucy." Alfonzo said, ending his bickering with Carla. "Let's go back and have dinner. I'll introduce you to the members of Mermaid Heel tomorrow."

"Hey, I wasn't done yet!" Carla shouted in protest.

"Then, you can order dinner from the guild hall." Alfonzo replied with a cheeky smile.

"Hmph!" Carla snorted in reply while turning her head away.

However, she did not insist on continuing the argument. Instead, she cast her [Aera Magic] and spread her wings, before flying towards Lucy's vehicle.

In response, Alfonzo smiled at Carla's actions. Then, he approached the Escalade and carefully wrapped it with his magic power.

"Okay, you can follow me to the house, Lucy." Alfonzo said as he began levitating the vehicle.

"Wait, why aren't you driving?" Lucy asked in confusion.

"*Sigh* It's a long story." Alfonzo replied in a tired tone. "I'll tell you about it over dinner."

"Oh, okay." Lucy replied. Then, she turned towards her truck. A moment later, however, she turned to Anko. "Oh, and it was nice to meet you. I'm Lucy Heartfilia."

Hearing the name Heartfilia, Anko raised an eyebrow. Like most people, she had heard of the Heartfilia Kanzen. And like most people, she had heard about its fall. However, since neither Alfonzo nor Lucy seemed to mind about that, she decided not to say anything.

"Nice to meet you, too." Anko replied with a smile. "I'm Anko Mitarashi."

"Then, I'll see you tomorrow, I guess." Lucy said as she turned back to her truck.

"See you tomorrow, Anko." Alfonzo said, as well.

Naturally, Anko was dumbfounded.

"Hey, wait a second." Anko said. "You're seriously not gonna invite me over for dinner?"

"Nope." Alfonzo replied with a friendly smile. "It's been a long day, and we just want to relax. Anyway, see ya."

With that, Alfonzo, along with his Escalade, began flying towards the house that served as the Fairy Tail wizards lodgings. At the same time, Lucy started the engine to her truck and followed closely.

"Damn, he's not making this easy." Anko muttered as she turned around and returned to the guild hall.

A few minutes later, Alfonzo, Lucy, and Carla arrived at the house. When they did, Alfonzo parked the Escalade outside the house. Then, he covered it in an adamantine barrier for safety's sake. After that, he helped Lucy bring her luggage in the house from her truck.

When the trio entered the house, they immediately saw Wendy sitting in the living room. And they could see that she looked a little down. Most likely because she had shouted at Carla not long ago.

"Go talk to her." Alfonzo said while reaching down to pat Carla on the back. "And remember, she really isn't a little kid anymore."

Glancing up at Alfonzo, Carla eventually made her way over to Wendy. Meanwhile, Alfonzo and Lucy headed upstairs to put Lucy's luggage in the room Marin had been using to store her belongings until she left earlier in the day.

"Well, this is it." Alfonzo said as he put down Lucy's luggage on the floor.

"Thanks for the help." Lucy said with a smile.

"Don't mention it." Alfonzo replied with a smile of his own. "Anyway, while you start unpacking, I'll go get dinner started."

"Okay, just let me know when it's ready.' Lucy replied happily as she waved at Alfonzo as he left the room.

A moment later, after hearing Alfonzo's footsteps climbing down the stairs, Lucy quietly closed the door to the bedroom. Then she opened a certain bag and pulled out a sheer, lacy, white night gown before holding it against her chest.

"Tonight's the night." Lucy said with determination burning in her eyes.

A moment later, Lucy laid the night gown on the bed. Then, she pulled out a pair of matching stockings and a rather risqué t-back thong to complete her ensemble for tonight's battle. After that, she started putting the rest of her things away.

About forty minutes later, Alfonzo called everyone for dinner, and they all talked about how their days went. On top of that, Alfonzo and Lucy noticed that Wendy and Carla seemed to be doing a little better after having a heart-to-heart. Though, Carla still seemed to be a little awkward.

After dinner, Lucy took it upon herself to do the dishes. That was part of the reason she was here, after all. Then, she returned to her bedroom.

"Seriously, I can't believe that girl broke out of prison again." Lucy said as she prepared a change of clothes. "And to think she was targeting Alfonzo. It's really a good thing that his instincts are so sharp. *Sigh* I don't think I would have noticed her before it was too late."

After saying that, Lucy's eyes began to burn with resolve.

"I'll just have to get stronger." Lucy said as she left her room with a towel and her change of clothes.

Forty-five minutes, or so, later, Lucy was done with her shower. Then, she made her way to Alfonzo's bedroom door with nervous steps.

'Okay, Lucy, calm down.' Lucy said to herself. 'It's not weird if I come to his room at night, right?' I mean, I'm one of his girlfriends, too. Besides, it's not like I've never been present to see what I'm about to do. But man, it's a lot more nerve wracking when I think I'll be doing it rather than just watching.'

Smack!

At that point, Lucy smacked her hands on her cheeks to psych herself up.

'No, there's nothing to be nervous about.' Lucy told herself. 'Alfonzo would never do anything to hurt me. So, I'll be just fine. *Sigh* Okay, here goes nothing.'

Knock! *Knock!*

"Alfonzo, are you still awake?" Lucy asked in a slightly nervous tone.

Chapter 370: Look at Me (R-18)

While Lucy was washing the dishes after dinner, Alfonzo had returned to the master bedroom. And like Lucy, the first thing he did was take a shower. After that, he got dressed to leave for his second project.

However, before he could go, he felt Lucy approaching the room from the bathroom on the second floor.

"I guess I'll wait before I leave." Alfonzo muttered to himself. "I'll see what Lucy needs from me before I go."

Although Alfonzo was not particularly dense when it came to a woman's feelings, he never expected that Lucy would be ready to take the next step in their relationship. Still, he waited patiently for Lucy to knock on his door.

Smack!

However, when he heard the sound of a pair of slaps from the other side of the door, Alfonzo was thoroughly confused.

Knock! *Knock!*

"Alfonzo, are you still awake?" Lucy's slightly nervous sounding voice followed shortly after.

With that, Alfonzo made his way over to the door to open it. And when he did, he saw Lucy standing on the other side, as expected. However, when he saw what she was wearing, he was completely mesmerized.

Currently, Lucy was wearing a sheer, lacy, white night gown that barely reached past her butt and showed off a large amount of cleavage, a pair of sheer white stockings with lace at their tops, and a white, t-back thong that could be seen through the sheer fabric of the night gown.

On top of all that, despite her relatively short height of only 5'5", her measurements were comparable to the taller Erza's. As a result, her body seemed just that little bit more voluptuous.

Although she was happy to see Alfonzo's eyes being drawn to her body, Lucy was confused to see that he was fully dressed, even though she knew that he had taken a shower.

That could not be helped, however, since Alfonzo had not told anyone about the work he was doing each night. Since he wanted to keep his project a secret from the girls, especially Elicia, he had been sneaking out after everyone else in the house was asleep.

"Um... Were you about to go somewhere?" Lucy asked in a confused tone.

"Uh... Kinda..." Alfonzo replied while scratching the side of his head awkwardly.

"Where?" Lucy asked suspiciously. "You were going to see that girl I met today... Anko, right? You already have a harem, is there really a reason to sneak around like that? All you have to do is let us know. Then, after letting us get to know her---"

"Seriously, Lucy, that's not it." Alfonzo said, cutting off Lucy before she could work herself into a frenzy. "I swear on my magic, I'm not fooling around behind you and the other girls' backs."

"Then where are you going?" Lucy asked as she rested her hands on her hips.

As a result of Lucy placing her hands on her hips, Alfonzo's eyes were once again drawn to them. And subconsciously, he licked his lips.

Seeing that, Lucy gained a crafty glint in her eyes.

"You know I came here to do exactly what you're thinking about, right?" Lucy asked in the most seductive tone she could muster.

"Yeah, I kinda figured that out." Alfonzo replied.

"But if you insist on keeping secrets, I'll have to reconsider." Lucy continued.

Hearing that, Alfonzo's eyes regained some clarity, which surprised Lucy.

"As much as I don't like keeping secrets, I'm sorry." Alfonzo replied. "Although I really want to tell you, I can't risk it getting out."

"So, you think I would tell the others?" Lucy asked, sounding a bit discontented.

"Not really." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head. "But I'd rather be safe than sorry."

With that, Alfonzo and Lucy held eye contact for a while. Then, after a few moments, Lucy sighed before raising her hands and placing them on Alfonzo's chest.

"Well, I tried." Lucy said wistfully. "You promise that you're not sneaking around behind our backs, though, right?"

"I swear it." Alfonzo reiterated.

"Fine." Lucy replied as she pushed Alfonzo backwards. "Then, that will have to be good enough, I guess."

Allowing himself to be pushed back, Alfonzo watched as Lucy closed the door behind her just after entering the room. On top of that, he glanced at her butt when her back was turned to him.

"Yeah, that girl is dumb thick." Alfonzo muttered internally.

A moment later, after locking the door, Lucy spun on her heels, leaned forward slightly, clasped her hands in front of her thighs, which squeezed her breasts together, and smiled seductively.

"You can at least wait until we're done before you leave to do whatever it is you were about to do, right?" Lucy asked.

Although Alfonzo nodded his head, he was thinking something totally different.

'Not working on it for one night won't be a deal breaker, right?' Alfonzo asked himself. 'Because, there's no way I would just leave her alone after taking her virginity.'

Meanwhile, after seeing Alfonzo nod, Lucy's smile widened. Then, she stepped forward and wrapped her arms around his neck.

"You know, today marks one year since the day we met, right?" Lucy asked with a smile.

Hearing that, Alfonzo stopped to think.

"Now that you mention it..." Alfonzo muttered quietly.

"So, that makes today special." Lucy said as she simultaneously pulled Alfonzo, who stood at just under 6'6", down to her level and raised herself onto her tip toes. "And I felt today was the perfect day to show just how much I love you, Alfonzo."

In the next instant, Lucy sensually pressed her lips against Alfonzo's and started sucking gently. Meanwhile, Alfonzo wrapped his arms around Lucy's waist. And for the next few minutes, the two exchanged a passionate kiss.

Over time, the kiss deepened, with Lucy inviting Alfonzo's tongue into her mouth by slightly parting her lips. Naturally, Alfonzo accepted the invitation. At the same time, he let his hands fall slowly to her ass.

"mm~." Lucy moaned softly into the kiss as Alfonzo began squeezing and massaging her ass.

At the same time, Lucy pulled herself even closer to Alfonzo, causing her hardening nipples to rub against his chest through their clothes.

A moment later, Alfonzo, with his hands on her ass, lifted Lucy off the floor. As a result, Lucy instinctively wrapped her legs around his waist. Then, Alfonzo started making his way over to the bed. And with every step, one of the bedroom's walls, floor, and ceiling were covered with a thin sheet of metal.

Then, as Alfonzo reached the bed, each of the newly erected metal surfaces were engraved with runes to create a silencing barrier. And finally, Alfonzo knelt down, sitting Lucy on the edge of the bed in the process.

Then, while kissing Lucy passionately, Alfonzo used his hands to slide the straps of her night gown down her shoulders. At the same time, Lucy released her arms from around Alfonzo's neck and allowed herself to be undressed.

"Mmm~." Once again, Lucy moaned into the kiss as Alfonzo used his left hand to squeeze her right breasts gently.

At the same time, Alfonzo used the fingertips on his right hand to gently brush the exposed skin on Lucy's left thigh.

In response, Lucy could not help but squirm from the ticklish, yet pleasurable feeling. Then, with her hands now free, Lucy reached down to Alfonzo's waist and pulled his shirt upwards. Eventually, the two had to break the kiss so that Lucy could pull the shirt over his head.

However, as soon as his shirt was off, instead of returning to Lucy's lips, Alfonzo started kissing down the left side of her neck.

"Ah~~!" Lucy gasped.

Yet, she did not remain idle. Instead, Lucy started running her hands all over Alfonzo's chest and abdomen, enjoying the feeling of his muscles under her palms and fingertips.

"Mmm~ I've been imagining what tonight would be like for a long time now." Lucy said as she ran her hands over Alfonzo's abs. "And it's much better than I imagined."

"And we're just getting started." Alfonzo said as he reached the base of Lucy's neck.

In the next instant, contrary to Lucy's expectation, Alfonzo lowered himself and wrapped his lips around her right nipple. Then, while sucking gently, he flicked its tip with his tongue.

"Ooh~!" Lucy moaned from the sudden stimulation.

At the same time, the fingers of Alfonzo's right hand were inching closer to the base of Lucy's thigh. Eventually, just as he switched his attention to her other breast, his fingers reached the now damp fabric between her legs.

"Ahn~~!" Lucy moaned once again.

Like that, Alfonzo continued to suck, lick, and kiss allover Lucy's breasts and nipples while his hand gently rubbed her pussy, over her panties. And while he did so, Lucy's body shuddered in pleasure.

Then, after a few more moments, Alfonzo started kissing down Lucy's abdomen. All the while, he continued to play with her pussy over her panties. At the same time, he continuously lowered her night gown. Until it was eventually bunched up around her hips.

When it got to that point, Alfonzo raised his head before making eye contact with Lucy. Then, he gently pushed her shoulders back, causing her to lie down on the bed. Still, Lucy continued to maintain eye contact by staring at Alfonzo through the space between her breasts.

Not breaking eye contact, Alfonzo continued to stare into Lucy's eyes as he pulled the night gown past Lucy's hips, and down her legs, finally slipping it past her toes a moment later. Then, he repeated the process with her panties after that. He decided to leave the stockings on, though.

In the next instant...

"Ahn~~~! Oh my God!" Lucy moaned as Alfonzo buried his face between her thighs and dragged his tongue down from her clit to between her pussy lips. "That was... Mmm~~~!"

Before she could give her impression of her first experience with oral foreplay, Alfonzo began bobbing his head back and forth, letting his tongue go in and out of Lucy's pussy. Naturally, that interrupted the inexperienced girl's words.

"This is... Mmm~ Amazing... Ahn~~!" Lucy moaned continuously as Alfonzo tongue fucked her.

A moment later, Lucy opened her eyes wide when Alfonzo pulled his tongue from her pussy, dragged it back up to her clit, and sucked on it while massaging it with his tongue simultaneously.

"Ahh~~~~~!" Lucy screamed as her legs involuntarily closed around Alfonzo's head.

Spurt!

At the same time, Alfonzo was sprayed in the face by a much more viscous liquid than the usual vaginal juices.

'Holy shit, she's a squirter.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'And she squirts without penetration, too.'

A moment later, Lucy's legs loosened, allowing Alfonzo to raise his head. And when he did, he saw Lucy breathing heavily with a somewhat lost expression on her face.

"I guess I don't have to ask how it was." Alfonzo said with a smile while using his hand to wipe his face.

Hearing Alfonzo's voice, Lucy sat up quickly. Then, she pulled him into a deep kiss. After a few moments, however, she noticed that his face was all wet. And when she did, she broke the kiss.

"What happened to you?" Lucy asked while wiping Alfonzo's face with her hands. "Why are you all wet?"

"You did." Alfonzo replied with a cheeky smile. "I would have never expected you to be a squirter."

Hearing that, Lucy's face flushed instantly. Then, she lowered her head with a mixture of embarrassment and fear in her expression.

"Is that... bad?" Lucy asked meekly.

Instead of responding verbally, Alfonzo took hold of Lucy's chin and raised her head gently. Then, when they made eye contact, he leaned in for a kiss.

"You don't have to worry about that." Alfonzo said with a cheeky grin. "I'll cover you in my juices later, too. Then, we'll be even."

In response, Lucy blushed even harder than before. However, before she could say anything, Alfonzo pushed her back on the bed once again. At the same time, he hooked his arms under her knees and scooted her back towards the center of the bed.

While moving Lucy back, Alfonzo also climbed up onto the bed, too. Then, while kneeling over Lucy, he unbuttoned his pants before pulling both his pants and boxer-briefs down in one go, causing his dick to spring up and stand at attention.

Alfonzo's exposed dick drew Lucy's attention to it naturally. And she subconsciously opened her legs a little wider after seeing it.

Eventually, Alfonzo took his pants and underwear off completely. After that, he positioned himself between Lucy's legs. Then, they made eye contact. And when they did, Lucy nodded.

Nodding back in return, Alfonzo pressed the tip of his dick between Lucy's pussy lips. Then, he rubbed it up and down to make sure it was properly lubricated.

"Mmm~~!" Lucy moaned from the stimulation.

Eventually, once he felt that he was lubed up enough, Alfonzo began pushing forward slowly. To his surprise, however, he felt an obstruction before he could get very deep inside.

'She still has her hymen.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'Well, she's not really a physical fighter. So, I guess that makes sense. She doesn't train her body as hard as the others do. But still, this is the first time I've experienced this since my reincarnation.'

Understanding that asking if she was sure would be redundant at this point, Alfonzo drew his hips back slightly. Then, he pushed past Lucy's hymen with a bit of force.

"Ahh~~~!" Lucy screamed in pain as tears began pooling in her eyes.

Seeing Lucy's tears, Alfonzo immediately leaned forward and kissed her, in order to take her mind off the pain. And when he did, Lucy immediately wrapped her arms around his neck.

After kissing to the point where she almost ran out of breath, Lucy broke the kiss, looked into Alfonzo's eyes, and urged him to continue with her gaze.

And that's exactly what Alfonzo did. Starting slowly, Alfonzo started pumping his hips. And with each stroke, although he did not increase the speed, he stretched Lucy's pussy more and more. Getting just a little deeper every time.

Even when Lucy's moans turned from ones filled with pain to those filled with pleasure, Alfonzo still didn't increase his speed. Instead, he put more force into ever thrust while pulling out slowly each time.

"Oh! My! God!" Lucy shouted as she dug her nails into Alfonzo's back. "This is amazing! I'm cumming! Oh my God! I'm cumming! I'm cumming! I'm cumming!"

Eventually, after, nearly, twenty minutes of having her insides ground into the shape of Alfonzo's dick, Lucy reached her second orgasm of the night. And when she did, her pussy clenched like a vice grip, she dug her nails into his back even further while subconsciously wrapping her legs around his waist. On top of that, she squirted all over his abdomen, too.

"Hmph!" Alfonzo grunted as he came from the extra pressure on his dick.

With Alfonzo cumming as well, Lucy's entire body began to shudder as she was filled up.

About a minute later, Lucy finally loosened her hold on Alfonzo. And as she did, Alfonzo pulled out of her slowly. Then, he looked into her eyes tenderly.

"How do you feel?" Alfonzo asked the heavily breathing Lucy.

"Great." Lucy replied with a smile while swiping her hair out of her face. "But I still want more."

With that, Lucy pushed herself up and positioned herself on her hands and knees. However, her ass was not pointed at Alfonzo. In fact, she was facing a completely different direction.

"I want you to do me from behind." Lucy said with a smile while turning her head towards Alfonzo.

Glancing in the direction Lucy was facing, Alfonzo noticed the mirror on the wall. And when Lucy noticed where he was looking, her smile widened.

"And I want to be able to see your face while you do it." Lucy continued.

Smiling back in return, Alfonzo positioned himself behind Lucy. Then, he lined his dick up with her pussy once again. And that was when he noticed the virgin blood that was smeared on his dick. Quickly creating a metal that produced water when magic power was injected into it, Alfonzo rinsed off his dick, not caring if the mattress ended up drenched in the process.

He also did not bother to clean out Lucy's pussy, thinking the sight of his cum dripping out of her was hot, and that he could take the time to clean her up later.

Then, after dispelling the metal, he once again pushed into Lucy.

"Ahn~~~~!" Lucy moaned as she looked at herself and Alfonzo in the mirror.

'That's right, look at me.' Lucy thought to herself as Alfonzo started pounding her from behind. 'I love to see your eyes on me.'

"Alfonzo, you don't have to hold back just because it's my first time." Lucy said as she glanced over her shoulder. "Do me like you do the other girls."

"But if I do that, you probably won't be able to walk for all of tomorrow."

"Don't worry about that." Lucy said with a smile. "Just do it."

Deciding to give her what she wanted, Alfonzo picked up the pace. Tomorrow's problem was something for tomorrow's Alfonzo to deal with.

"Ahh~~~~~!" Lucy screamed with a mixture of pleasure and pain as she orgasmed almost immediately after Alfonzo sped up.

And like that, Alfonzo continued pounding Lucy in all sorts of positions. A good number of them being in front of the mirror, since Alfonzo had noticed that Lucy liked to be able to see him looking at her. Eventually, Lucy's stamina gave out, and she passed out after a particularly intense orgasm.