

Fairy Tail 37

Chapter 37: At the Castle Ruins

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Hargeon.

May 9, x776.

A few hours later, after having a proper meal and getting her wounds properly tended to, the scarlet-haired girl was standing in front of the orphanage's entrance. Standing opposite her were the staff of said orphanage.

"Are you sure you wouldn't rather spend a night here?" The orphanage's matriarch asked with concern in her tone.

"Yes." The girl said with a nod. "Until I reach Fairy Tail, I will not rest."

"*Sigh* I see." The matriarch said with a bit of sadness in her tone. "Well, since I don't plan to force you, all I can do is wish you luck."

"Thank you, Ma'am." The girl said while bowing her head politely. "I will never forget the kindness you have shown me. And one day, I will repay such kindness."

Smiling in response, the matriarch could only look forward to what the future held for such a polite and determined girl. A moment later, she remembered something and spoke to the girl once again.

"Since you're going to Fairy Tail, could you deliver a message for me?" the matriarch asked.

"Of course." The girl replied without hesitation.

"The message is for a boy and a girl who should be around the same age as you." The matriarch began. "Their names are Alfonzo Marcus and Elicia Taylor. I want you to let them know that even though they did not spend much time here, the staff misses them and would like them to come back for a visit sometime soon."

"Understood." The girl said with a serious expression on her face. "I will deliver this message without fail."

The matriarch smiled at the girl's enthusiasm. A moment later, the girl turned away and began walking in the direction that had been pointed out to her by the staff of the orphanage. Since she did not have any money, taking the train, which would only take a few hours to arrive at Magnolia, was out of the question. So, she would have to walk.

Watching the girl walk away with steady, determined steps, the matriarch continued to smile. However, before the girl traveled very far, she remembered something else that she had neglected due to the girl's horrible condition when she arrived.

"How rude of me, I forgot to ask for your name!" The matriarch shouted after the girl with a bashful smile on her face. "I'm Rebecca Landon, the matriarch of this orphanage!"

Quickly turning around, the girl straightened her back while she answered the question.

"It was a pleasure to meet you, Miss Landon!" The girl shouted back in reply. "My name is..."

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Lupinus.

After reporting what they found to Reno, Alfonzo and Elicia were on their way back to the hotel they had booked for their stay in the town.

"Are we going to the castle ruins tonight, Fonzie?" Elicia asked as she walked next to Alfonzo while holding his hand.

"I don't think that would be a good idea." Alfonzo replied. "The sun will be setting soon. By the time we reach the castle, it will probably be dark."

"Oh, I get it." Elicia replied. "And it wouldn't be a good idea to investigate the castle in the dark, since whatever has been attacking the livestock is probably inside, right?"

"That's right." Alfonzo said with a nod. "Since it is some kind of animal, it probably has better senses than we do. On top of that, we're not used to fighting in the dark."

Nodding in agreement, Elicia continued walking with Alfonzo in silence, just enjoying the comfortable atmosphere. Eventually, the two arrived at their hotel. Then, after getting cleaned up, they had dinner and decided to turn in for the night.

May 10, x776.

The next morning, after breakfast and their morning workout, Alfonzo and Elicia returned to the mayor's office.

"We'll be investigating the castle ruins today." Alfonzo said, informing Reno of their plans.

"Understood." Reno said with a nod. "Although we've determined that the monster should be of the wolf species, we still don't know what kind it is exactly."

"We know." Elicia replied. "Don't worry, we'll be careful."

With that, Alfonzo and Elicia took their leave. Then, they made their way to the town's north gate. When they arrived, to neither of their surprise, there was no one entering or exiting through this particular gate.

"I guess everyone in the town, and probably the surrounding villages, know about what's been happening here, huh?" Alfonzo said while squinting his eyes.

In the distance, though it was not very clear, Alfonzo could make out the silhouette of the castle.

"Yeah, that howl echoes a long way into the distance." Elicia said, looking around at the landscape. "I mean, before I fell asleep, I could hear the howling, too."

"Yeah, considering that the hotel we booked is on the south side of the town, its range is massive." Alfonzo said with a nod of agreement.

After that brief conversation, Alfonzo and Elicia began walking along the road that led to the castle. As they did, they were amazed by all the wild herbs that grew along the road. Though none of them were medicinal, they figured that Lupinus must make a killing in the spice trade.

In fact, Elicia had to drag Alfonzo part of the way to the castle as he stared at some of the more rarely found herbs with the desire to pick them.

"Fonzie~! Come on, we have a job to do." Elicia said while dragging Alfonzo by the arm.

"But Lici, look." Alfonzo said, trying to persuade Elicia to let him go. "That's black paprika. I only got to cook with it once. I feel like if I had more, I could bring my cooking to a whole new level."

After hearing that, Elicia was tempted to let go. Just the thought of Alfonzo's food improving in taste made her drool. However, before she could give in to temptation, Alfonzo managed to regain his sense.

"Damn, why am I trippin' like that?" Alfonzo asked himself while shaking his head. "The herbs aren't going anywhere, I hope. I'll just grab them on the way back."

Hearing that, Elicia was enlightened.

'That's right, we don't have to give up on even yummier food.' Elicia thought with her eyes shining and the saliva in her mouth accumulating. 'Once we find out exactly what kind of monster this is, we can come back and pick the herbs.'

With a new level of resolution, Elicia began pulling Alfonzo by the arm even more forcefully than before.

"Come on, Fonzie! Let's get to work." Elicia said with a righteous expression on her face. "We can't allow this wolf monster to terrorize the town anymore."

Smiling wryly at Elicia's determination, Alfonzo allowed himself to be dragged along.

'I'm getting the feeling of déjà vu.' Alfonzo thought with a smile. 'It's kinda like how her attitude changed before my quest to kill the horned rabbits.'

With that, the duo continued their trek toward the castle. Then, after about forty-five minutes, they arrived. What they saw at first glance was a castle wall that had definitely seen better days. On top of that, there were vines growing all over the walls that had massive cracks and missing sections all over. Surprisingly, the large wooden gates were still intact, though.

"Alright, let's get started, Fonzie." Elicia said with a serious expression on her face.

A moment later, Elicia pointed her hands toward the top of the wall. It was clear she intended to use her threads to pull herself up so that she could get a look at what lay inside.

"Hold it, Lici." Alfonzo said, putting his hand on Elicia's shoulder. For all we know, it could be lying in wait for us at the top of the wall. We have no way of knowing if it has detected us or not."

"Then what are we supposed to do?" Elicia asked, lowering her arms. "My [Thread Detection] spell won't work as well if I have to stuff all my threads through those cracks. The vibrations will mess up my senses when the threads are touching."

"Leave it to me." Alfonzo said, puffing out his chest proudly.

A moment later, Alfonzo closed his eyes. Then, a weak pulse of magic power was sent out in all directions.

"Hmm... Instead of making a dome, you're sending it out in pulses." Elicia muttered as she sensed Alfonzo's magic power. :That's like a radar, right?"

"Exactly." Alfonzo replied with his eyes still closed. "Although I can't see exactly how things move this way, it uses less magic power and is a bit harder to detect."

With that, Alfonzo opened his eyes. Then, he turned his head toward the west.

"I found it." Alfonzo said. "Looks like we're dealing with a lycan."

"You man a werewolf?" Elicia asked, turning her head to follow Alfonzo's line of sight.

When she looked where Alfonzo was looking, Elicia was able to catch the sight of a tall, maybe 9 feet, (2.74 m) or so, tall humanoid wolf with dark brown, almost black, fur, yellow eyes, and sharp claws growling from its hands and feet. On top of that, the wolf monster, or lycan was growling at them threateningly.

"No, werewolves or lycanthropes are what humans turn into after they are bitten by lycan during the full moon." Alfonzo said, slowly preparing himself to fight. "And like what we're used to from movies in our past lives, they only change into their wolf forms during the full moon."

Understanding Alfonzo's explanation, Elicia took a couple of slow steps behind Alfonzo while she also prepared to fight.

"I get it, I guess I should spend some more time reading in the library, too." Elicia said.

"Yeah, knowledge is power, as they say." Alfonzo replied.

"Anyway, what are we gonna do about this thing?" Elicia asked. "How strong is it?"

"Lycan are classified as high-tier A-Class monsters." Alfonzo said. "So, we should be able to take it. If we're careful, that is."

"The question is, what do you want to do, Fonzie?" Elicia asked, having a good idea of the answer she would receive.

And just as Elicia expected, a battle hungry grin appeared on Alfonzo's face.

"I think it would be good to test our limits." Alfonzo replied excitedly.

"*Sigh* I knew you would say that." Elicia said while rolling her eyes.

Meanwhile, as Alfonzo and Elicia talked, the lycan was growing impatient. It had been growling at them in an attempt to let them know that if they just left, it would not pursue them. However, the small, weak looking humans were not heeding its warning. Eventually, after its patience wore out, it decided to attack. A little extra meat at the next meal would never be a bad thing, after all.

Howl~~~~~!

Raising its head to the sky, the lycan released a long, loud howl before it rushed toward Alfonzo and Elicia with a violent glint in its eyes.

"Incoming." Alfonzo said as he took his fighting stance.

A moment later, a pair of silver magic circles appeared in front of his hands. Then, a pair of Eskrima sticks, made of a metal that naturally produced electricity when enough force is applied to it, appeared from the magic circles. Catching them in his hands that were wrapped in titanium strips, Alfonzo used the stick in his left hand to block the incoming claw strike from the lycan.

Meanwhile, as she planned to earlier, Elicia used her threads to climb to the top of the castle wall. As soon as she arrived, she looked down just in time to see Alfonzo sliding backward after blocking the swipe from the lycan's claws.

"Damn, I knew it would be stronger than me, but I didn't think the difference would be this big." Alfonzo said as he shook his slightly numbed left arm. "Even so, I bet its not feeling all that great, either."

As Alfonzo thought, currently the lycan was feeling quite uncomfortable. The electric shock it received when Alfonzo blocked its attack not only numbed its hand and arm, but it also burned its fur as well. Then, after regaining the feeling in its arm, it growled angrily before sprinting at Alfonzo once again.

This time, instead of blocking as the lycan swung its claws, Alfonzo ducked below them and struck it in its ribs with the stick in his right hand. Then, he followed up with a strike to its left knee with the stick in his left hand. After that, when the lycan buckled from the hit to the knee, Alfonzo sent a kick to its jaw, causing its head to be raised.

While the lycan's head was tilted back, a bundle of threads wrapped around its snout and neck. Then, from behind, it felt an impact on its back, causing it to stagger forward into a barrage of strikes on its torso and head from Alfonzo.

A few moments ago, while the lycan was regaining its bearing from the shock it received from Alfonzo's Eskrima sticks, Elicia fastened some of her threads to the top of the wall. Then, she began lowering herself down the wall. Eventually, she reached the halfway point of the wall and waited for her chance to attack.

As soon as the lycan began charging forward, using her threads as support, Elicia began running along the wall in the same direction. Then, after Alfonzo kicked it and made its head tilt back, Elicia jumped toward it and shot her threads at its snout and neck, wrapping them tightly around the two areas, before shortening them and slamming feet first into its back.

Just as Alfonzo's combo ended, Elicia pulled on the threads she had wrapped around the lycan's neck, hurling herself upward. Then, at the peak of her ascent, she performed a somersault and dropped the heel of her right foot on the top of the lycan's head before jumping toward Alfonzo and landing at his side.

"Good job, Lici, that was pretty bad as." Alfonzo said with a smile still on his face.

Elicia smiled happily at Alfonzo's praise. However, when he continued, her expression became serious once again.

"But it isn't over, yet." Alfonzo said as the lycan began to stir.

"What are we gonna do, Fonzie?" Elicia asked. "I tried to use my [Thread Scythe] when my threads were wrapped around its neck, but they couldn't cut through."

"Yeah, I doubt I have enough magic power to kill it either." Alfonzo said, watching the lycan shake off the dizziness Elicia's kick caused. "So, we're gonna have to use that."

"But we can only make it work, like, half the time!" Elicia exclaimed.

"Well, we don't really have a choice, do we?" Alfonzo said in reply. "We never had a chance to escape it, we both know that. So all we could do was fight."

"*Sigh* Fine." Elicia said, resolution clear in her tone. "But you know we only have one chance at this, right?"

"I know." Alfonzo replied. "So, let's make it count."

Immediately after that, both Alfonzo and Elicia started running. While Alfonzo dashed toward the lycan, Elicia began circling the area, letting her threads spread out as she went. Occasionally, she would even fling herself at the lycan with kicks, just so it could not focus all of its attention on Alfonzo.

Then, after about five minutes of preparation, Alfonzo stepped away from the lycan after Elicia landed a kick to its chest that sent it stumbling back in pain.

"Damn, how many times did I hit that big son of a bitch?" Alfonzo asked as Elicia landed next to him. "And after all that, only a few broken ribs? Are you fucking kidding me?"

"Fonzie, we don't have time to complain." Elicia scolded. "Let's just do this before we don't have enough magic power left."

"*Sigh* I know." Alfonzo replied.

In the next instant, Elicia extended her left hand toward Alfonzo palm down. Then, Alfonzo placed his right hand on top of hers. With that, they began matching the wave lengths of their magic power. A second later, when that was complete, they both dropped to one knee and slammed their hands into the ground.

"[Unison Raid: Razor Wire Rhapsody]!" The two shouted in unison.

In an instant, all the threads Elicia had laid out around the area were coated in a thin, sharp coating of steel. A moment later, Alfonzo and Elicia jerked their hands back simultaneously. With that, all the razor wires were pulled toward the lycan, who was just about to charge at the duo once again.

Before it could figure out what was going on, the sharp sides of the razor wires cut through the lycan like a hot knife through butter, leaving a mess of blood, guts, meat, and bone splattered all over the area.

After a few seconds, Alfonzo and Elicia finally realized that their spell casting succeeded. As they did, they released their tension and...

Hurl! x 2

... they both emptied the contents of their stomachs after seeing such a gruesome scene in person.