

Fairy Tail 41

Chapter 41: Sparring with Erza

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

September, x776.

A few months passed since Erza joined Fairy Tail. Today, shortly after breakfast, she, along with Alfonzo, Elicia, and the rest of their group of younger wizards were in the guild's backyard doing their usual training. While Elicia and the rest of the kids were standing off to the side, cooling down from their training, Alfonzo and Erza were facing each other in a rather intense spar.

Wielding a sword, Erza thrust forward at Alfonzo's throat. Although it seemed vicious, Erza, in only a few months, had enough control of her body to stop the thrust should it become apparent that it would land on Alfonzo.

As it turns out, constantly using your body for manual labor with little in the way of nourishment made stamina and energy control grow immensely. On top of that, Erza had an uncanny knack for wielding swords.

Tilting his head slightly, Alfonzo dodged Erza's thrust. Then, with the Eskrima stick in his left hand, he flicked Erza's sword upward, destabilizing Erza's center of balance for an instant. However, for Alfonzo, that instant was more than enough.

Following his flick, Alfonzo lashed out with the stick in his right hand, aiming for Erza's abdomen. Reacting quickly, Erza blocked the incoming attack with her free, left, arm.

Thump!

"Gah!" Erza groaned as the titanium Eskrima stick slammed into her left forearm.

Causing Erza to wince in pain, Alfonzo lowered his body and swept his right leg at Erza's legs. In response, Erza leapt slightly, clearing the leg sweep. Then, on her way down, she swung her sword, that had been deflected upward previously, down toward Alfonzo's shoulder.

Reacting just as quickly, Alfonzo crossed his Eskrima sticks over his head, catching Erza's sword at the intersection of his two weapons. Then, scissoring the sword between them, he jerked the blade to his left.

In response, a flash of light appeared in Erza's outstretched left arm. An instant later, a second, nearly identical sword appeared in her left hand that she wasted no time swinging down toward Alfonzo.

"[Metal Magic: Spring Dash]." Alfonzo chanted as springs coiled around his calves and feet.

Then, Alfonzo pushed off, flinging himself backward, narrowly avoiding the incoming slash. A moment later, as he regained his footing, Alfonzo, with the springs still equipped on his legs, sprung forward. Jamming the two ends of his Eskrima sticks together, the two rods become one longer one.

With a staff in his hands, Alfonzo thrust forward, using his new found reach to take the advantage. Deflecting Alfonzo's thrust with the sword in her right hand, Erza attempted to close the distance, making Alfonzo's longer weapon useless.

However, just as Erza stepped forward, Alfonzo pulled the staff backward, grabbing it toward the middle with both hands, and began whirling it around with great force.

Cling! *Clang!* *Cling!*

Using the two swords in her hands, Erza had no choice but to stop her advance and begin blocking and deflecting the swinging staff.

"Whoa!" Cana exclaimed in surprise. "It's only been a few months since she got here, and Erza can already keep up with Fonzie in melee combat."

"Yeah." Gray said with a nod. "Is she some kind of genius?"

"That's what it looks like to me." Ultear added.

"Well, she definitely has superb body control." Ur said, walking up behind the spectating youths. "That probably has something to do with how quickly she picks up swordplay."

"Mom." Ultear said with a happy smile on her face.

"Master." Gray said respectfully.

Nodding in response, Ur kept her eyes on the spar between Alfonzo and Erza.

"Still, Alfonzo is going easy on her." Ur said.

"Of course." Elicia said with a big smile. "Fonzie is the best."

Hurriedly, Cana nodded in agreement with Elicia's statement, watching Alfonzo with hearts in her eyes.

Glancing at Cana's expression, Elicia nodded to herself internally.

'Maybe it's about time I talked to Cana about sharing.' Elicia thought to herself. 'Sharing is caring, after all.'

At that moment, Alfonzo felt a chill running up his spine. At the same time, Alfonzo was finally able to land a blow that would end this spar.

As Erza slashed at Alfonzo horizontally, he turned his staff so that it stood upright and blocked the strike. Then, he quickly slammed the butt of his staff into the ground, using the recoil to jab its other end at

Erza's chin faster than she could react. An instant later, Alfonzo stopped his strike just before it struck Erza.

Meanwhile, Erza's other sword was stopped halfway through her swing, knowing that she had lost the spar. Using her magic, [Requip: The Knight], Erza allowed her two swords to disappear in a flash of light. Then, she smiled at Alfonzo while wiping the sweat that ran down her face.

Erza's magic, [Requip: The Knight], is a type of spatial magic that allows her to store and equip different types of weapons, armor, and clothing in/from a separate space. Though [Requip Magic] is not rare, it is relatively uncommon. On top of that, Erza's variant was special in its own right.

Most users of [Requip Magic] can only store weapons or armor. Erza, on the other hand, can store both. On top of that, she can bring up a panel, similar to an inventory window in a video game, that allows her to organize what she has stored in her storage space.

"That was quite the spar." Erza said, clearly happy with the workout. "It's especially impressive how you can change weapons seamlessly."

"Well, I put a lot of work into it." Alfonzo said with a proud smile on his face. "It was nowhere near as smooth a couple of years ago."

"I can imagine." Erza replied with a nod.

While Erza continued discussing the spar with Alfonzo, the rest of the group walked over to them.

"That was awesome." Alzack said, amazed at the skill displayed by the two.

"Yeah, you two are pretty good." Jet said. Then, after raising his head slightly, he continued. "But I'll be better. Just you wait."

"Well, if you don't put more effort into your training, that will be impossible." Laki said, pouring a bucket of cold water on Jet's pride.

Although he wanted to deliver a snappy retort, Jet gritted his teeth instead. He knew what Laki said was right. After watching the way Alfonzo, Elicia, Cana, Gray, Ultear, and Erza trained, he could not bring himself to disagree. Not to say that he and the others did not train hard, but those six were on a whole different level.

Ignoring Jet after her statement, Laki pulled on Alfonzo's clothes, gaining his attention.

"I need to feed my stomach." Laki said. "Cook something."

"You know if I cook something, it will cost you, right?" Alfonzo asked with a smirk.

"Stop it, Fonzie." Elicia said, playfully smacking Alfonzo on the arm. "As long as they pay for the ingredients, you don't mind cooking for them, right?"

"*Sigh* Lici, you're messing up my money making operations." Alfonzo said as he glanced at the brightly smiling Elicia. "*Sigh* Fine. Just pay for the ingredients. I won't charge you any labor fees."

"Yeah!" Everyone else, including Ur, cheered happily.

"Unfortunately, you'll have to wait 'til dinner." Alfonzo said, taking the wind out of their sails. "I have to visit Master Goldstein this afternoon."

"Ugh!" The group groaned simultaneously.

After that, the entire group returned to the guild hall. While Ur went to the bar and ordered a drink, the kids all went to the showers to clean up after their training session. Then, when they were all cleaned up, they ordered lunch and ate together.

"So, Lici told us that the project you've been working on will be complete soon." Cana said before putting a fork full of spaghetti into her mouth.

"That's right." Alfonzo said excitedly. "In fact, if everything goes well, you'll get to see it tonight."

Hearing that, most of the kids at the table were excited. They knew that Alfonzo had been working on this project for almost three years now. So, they were curious to know exactly what it was. Erza, on the other hand, had only been in the guild for three, or so, months, so she did not know exactly what everyone was talking about.

"A project?" Erza asked.

"Oh, that's right." Elicia said, knocking her knuckles on the side of her own head. "You haven't been here that long, and I don't think it has come up yet. Fonzie is apprenticed under Master Goldstein and he's quite the magic item craftsman."

"Master Goldstein?" Erza asked, clearly unsure of what that name represents.

Seeing the confusion in Erza's eyes, everyone did their best to explain who Nell Goldstein was. Eventually, around the time they finished eating, Erza had some understanding of who she was and what she did.

"That's impressive." Erza said, looking at Alfonzo with stars in her eyes. "Does that mean you could make magic swords and armor for me in the future?"

"Shouldn't be a problem." Alfonzo said, standing up from his seat at the table before picking up his dirty plate. "As long as you provide the materials, I don't see why not. Oh, but it will cost you."

Like he does any time he talks about money, Alfonzo held up his right hand, rubbing his thumb and index finger together.

"Understood." Erza said with a nod.

"But we can talk about that later." Alfonzo said, turning away from the table. "I have to go and meet Master Goldstein. I'll see you guys this evening."

Like that, Alfonzo left with his dishes in hand. Meanwhile, the rest of the group continue to chat without him.

"So, how was the new eye during the spar, Erza?" Elicia asked, curious to know how it felt.

As Elicia's question indicated, Erza had a new eye implanted shortly after she joined the guild. However, since the process of healing and adapting to the new organ was delicate, Porlyusica did not allow her to participate in any spars or any activities that could result in her taking a blow to the head.

In fact, it was only yesterday that she was cleared to spar and to do any intense training. Although, she never really followed the last instruction. In fact, in the beginning, it was common for Makarov to have to stop Erza from training after seeing how hard she went at it. Eventually, after a month of constantly stopping her and telling her to take it easy, he gave up. As long as Porlyusica did not find out, then it was fine.

"Honestly, it feels just like my old one." Erza said. "From what I can tell, there is no difference in my vision. No, I guess that's not completely true. It feels like my field of view has expanded ever so slightly."

"That's a good thing, right?" Droy asked.

"Yes... In the long term." Erza replied. "But as of now, it feels a little weird that I can see further to my right than I can to my left."

Hearing that, everyone nodded in understanding.

"Well, you'll get used to it." Elicia said in an optimistic tone.

"Indeed." Erza replied with a nod. "And with all the excellent training partners here in the guild, I'm sure it will happen sooner rather than later."

Like that, the kids continued to chat for the rest of the afternoon. And like every day, there were several brawls that broke out in the guild hall. However, the most brutal brawl of the day was when one of the older wizards was knocked into the kids' table, crushing Erza's strawberry shortcake underneath him.

Immediately after it happened, the entire guild hall fell silent as a dark, ominous aura began flooding the hall. At its source was Erza with her head down and her bangs covering her eyes. When she raised her head, no one she looked at, not even Makarov, was able to move. A moment later, she identified those who were responsible for the loss of her cake and... Let's just say it was not a pretty sight.

Several hours after showing her dominance, Erza was still sulking at the loss of her shortcake. Unfortunately, as she had not been granted permission to take quests yet, she did not have the funds to buy another slice.

"Don't worry, my shortcake." Erza muttered to herself in a resolute tone. "I was able to avenge you. And I promise, there will never be another lost to senseless violence as long as I am present."

"That's intense." Gray said, looking at Erza with a weirded-out expression on his face.

"Just let her be, Gray." Cana said. "Everyone has something they are passionate about. Even if they don't know it yet."

Though he was not completely sure what Cana was talking about, it seemed to make sense. So, Gray nodded in understanding and let it be.

"Oh, by the way, Gray." Cana continued.

"Yeah?" Gray asked curiously.

"Nice undies." Cana said with a giggle. "The ice cubes are cute."

"Huh?" Gray exclaimed, simultaneously looking down. "Ah, what happened to my clothes."

"While Gray quickly gathered his clothing and got dressed, the other kids laughed. However, a moment later, not only the kids' laughter, but all the noise in the guild hall stopped when they heard a noise from outside.

Honk! *Honk!*