

Fairy Tail 421

Chapter 421: Rescuing More Survivors

"Who are you?" The female squire asked harshly while pointing her magic pistol at Elicia. "And what happened here?"

"Okay, take it easy." Elicia said while raising her arms disarmingly. "You can put those weapons down, too. I'm not here to hurt anyone."

"That would be more convincing if you didn't just appear in here with three dead bodies." The squire replied sharply.

"Touché." Elicia replied with a wry smile. Then, she gestured towards the three dead men, who were still lying on top of the women they were violating. "But I think you should pay more attention to the whole situation. Look at those men and the women beneath them more carefully."

Though still suspicious, the squire and the five people, three men and two women she brought along with her all looked towards the dead men and the women in the room. And when they did, they all frowned in disgust. Then, after recognizing the women, their expressions changed once again.

"Leah! Sheila! Anna!" The squire shouted as she holstered her magic pistol and ran towards the three bound women. "We thought you were dead. How did you end up like this?"

Meanwhile, the three women, Leah, Sheila, and Anna, after seeing the squire, finally calmed down from their panicked state. Instead, their panicked expressions were replaced with relief. Then, once the men's

corpses were pulled off them, the damn holding back their emotions was shattered as they began crying loudly.

Though the squire was the first to approach the bound women, the rest of her group also approached and helped to untie them. Meanwhile, they also kept a close eye on Elicia. Elicia, on the other hand, started using her magic without a care in the world.

"What are you doing?" A tall, burly man asked as he raised his magic pistol in Elicia's direction.

"Making something for those women to cover themselves." Elicia replied casually. "Besides, I'd put that gun down if I were you. My friend is starting to get antsy."

With that, Elicia dropped the [Hiding in Plain Sight] spell. In the next instant, Rei and Kohta became visible to everyone else in the room. While Kohta was still hiding behind the cover he found and had his rifle trained on the group of new arrivals, Rei was standing behind the burly man with the tip of her spear pointed at the back of his neck.

Naturally, seeing two people appear from nowhere surprised the other eleven people in the room. However, they were all smart enough not to make any sudden, hostile moves.

"So, are you ready to talk now?" Elicia asked as she finished weaving three blankets for the violated women.

"Yeah." The squire replied with a nod. "We need to thank you for saving Leah, Sheila, and Anna, too."

Then, the squire looked back at the rest of her group and gave an order.

"Lower your weapons." The squire said. "We need to focus on getting medical attention for these three."

Though reluctantly, the other five people who entered the room with the squire lowered their weapons. And once they did, Rei and Kohta also lowered their own weapons. Though, everyone kept their guard up.

After that, everyone left the room. Then, when they were able to get a little more comfortable, the squire finally got an answer to her questions about where Leah, Sheila, and Anna had been.

The day before, the three women, who were trained to defend themselves before everything went down, had volunteered to scout the surroundings. Unfortunately for them, the six men from the opposing factions ambushed them while they were out. As a result, they were captured and brought back to be the men's sexual relief.

Luckily, they were all brothel girls. So, having sex with men they'd rather not was not such a big deal to them. However, they were still scarred mentally by the rape. But since they had been through so much before all this happened, they were rather resilient.

"I guess that means you saved them." The squire, who the three brothel girls had called Asami, said after hearing the three girls' story. "Thank you for helping them."

"Don't worry about it." Elicia replied with a dismissive wave. "That's kinda the reason I'm here in the first place."

"What do you mean?" A short, skinny man asked.

"Well, my husband and I took an emergency quest to investigate the situation in this town." Elicia replied. Then, she pulled up the short sleeve over her left shoulder, revealing her guild mark. "We're members of Fairy Tail. I'm Elicia Marcus Taylor, an S-Class wizard."

Hearing that name, most of the hostility from the group of survivors disappeared. They all knew Fairy Tail's reputation, after all. On top of that, the women in the group's eyes all lit up, too. Elicia was a big name in Ishgar's fashion world. So, most of them owned at least one article of clothing from the Taylor Shop.

"You said your husband came with you, right?" Asami, or Asami Nakaoka, asked curiously. "Then, where is he? I know he's not Alfonzo Marcus."

As she spoke the last part, Asami pointed at Kohta, who could only smile wryly.

"We're moving separately for now." Elicia replied with a smile. "He's been helping some of the people we rescued reunite with their families."

"Speaking of which, you're a squire, right?" Rei asked, cutting into the conversation. "Are there any knights here? Or do you know what happened to Captain Miyamoto?"

"Ah! Now that you mention it, you look a lot like Captain Miyamoto's wife... Just younger. Are you his daughter?"

"That's right, I'm Rei Miyamoto." Rei replied. "So, do you know what happened to my dad?"

"Unfortunately, I don't." Asami replied while shaking her head gently. "I would assume he's either at the knights' barracks in the town or at the shelter on the other side of the bridge."

"He might have even rushed home to check on your mother, Rei." Elicia said while patting Rei on the shoulder. "And since he's a captain in the knights, he's probably pretty strong. Strong enough to get to your house, anyway."

"Yeah, I know." Rei replied with a nod. "Dad is strong. Both he and Mom are the ones who taught me how to use a spear, after all."

"Anyway, can I ask why you came here?" Asami asked, bringing the conversation back to the original topic. "Oh, and what happened to the last of those men."

"Ah... Oops!" Elicia exclaimed as she just remembered the man she left dangling upside down from the third-story window. "Anyway, we can deal with that guy later. But we came to find food. There's a primary school full of teachers and students that were running out of food. So, we wanted to help them. Oh, and I think we'll be setting up shot there, too."

"Hmph! Well then, you better go look somewhere else." A man of average height with a muscular build said arrogantly. "Everything in this outlet belongs to us."

Hearing that, both Rei and Kohta narrowed their eyes. Meanwhile, Elicia tilted her head cutely.

"Do you really think you could stop me if I insisted." Elicia said in a friendly tone. Though, by looking in her eyes, you could tell she was not pleased with that response.

"Be quiet, Shimada." Asami barked. "They only want to help some children. And we have more than enough food to share. With those magic refrigerators, there is enough to feed an entire school for a long time."

"Is there really that much food here?" Kohta asked with an eyebrow raised.

"There is." Asami replied. "That's why, despite having an issue with the men from before, no one was willing to leave."

"I guess that makes sense." Kohta replied with a nod of understanding.

"Anyway, we only need enough food for a couple days." Elicia said, re-entering the conversation. "By then, we'll have this zombie problem taken care of. Right now, the reason we haven't wiped them out completely is because we want to get as many people as we can out of the blast radius."

"Blast radius?" all the other people in the room asked in confused, yet concerned, tones. "Are you gonna blow up the whole town?"

"Hahaha! No, we're not like the rest of our guild." Elicia replied while laughing uproariously and waving her hands. "But with Fonzie's magic, people nearby could be hurt if he uses it on a large scale."

'I don't think there will be too many people that can survive a whole street being flooded with UV radiation, after all.' Elicia thought to herself. 'Though, he'd probably rather use his [Super Flare]. But I think that would destroy large parts of the town along with the zombies.'

["Yeah, hitting big parts of the town with a high concentration of microwaves isn't the best way to keep property damage to a minimum."] Scylla said in agreement.

"I see..." Asami said, sounding a bit apprehensive. "Anyway, I guess it shouldn't be a problem for you to have some food for the school."

"You really should come with us, you know." Elicia said.

"Hell no!" Shimada replied harshly. "We're perfectly safe here."

"I'm not so sure about that." Elicia said, her expression turning solemn. "Both Fonzie and I found a horde of those zombies coming this way. And quite a few of them are the super-strong ones."

"Are you serious?" Asami asked, her expression turning solemn as well.

"Yeah, there are at least five hundred of those things now. And there were almost a hundred strong ones in the group." Elicia replied.

In fact, Elicia had been tracking the group Shido was leading the whole time. So, the numbers she just gave were current numbers. And she was sure that the numbers would rise by the time the horde passed the outlet.

"If she's telling the truth, we should go with them." Asami said sternly.

In response, the three brothel girls, the two women that came with her to investigate the screams, and one of the three men agreed. However, Shimada and the burly man from before were strongly against relocating.

"Even if we believe her, we still have to leave here and walk to that school." Shimada argued. "And that's not a short walk. We'd be in just as much danger as if we stayed here to fight the horde."

"We don't have time to debate this." Elicia said. "They're going to pass this building sooner or later. And personally, I'm not planning on being here when they do. Otherwise, we won't be able to get the food to the school. So, make your choices quickly."

Unsurprisingly, Asami and the other six who agreed with the relocation decided to follow Elicia, rei, and Kohta back to the school. Meanwhile, Shimada, the burly man, and the other people in the outlet decided to stay behind. As a result, only seven people chose to stay behind in the outlet.

So, with the number of mouths to feed in the outlet reduced, Elicia and Asami's groups loaded as much food as they could into the back of the Escalade. On top of that, Elicia created large bags from her threads they fastened to the top of the vehicle, as well.

Despite taking so much, there was still enough food for the seven remaining at the outlet to live comfortably for the next week or so. Unfortunately for them, when Shido passed by the outlet with his horde a couple hours later, he had the zombies break in, kill all the men, and bring all the women to him.

At about that time, Elicia, along with all those who chose to follow her, had arrived at the primary school. Unfortunately, they were slowed significantly by the people who had to make the trip on foot. Still, with only a few run ins with normal zombies, they all made it to the school without taking any damage.

Meanwhile, Alfonzo, Saeko, Saya, and a spear wielding woman they picked up along the way had made it to the Takagi mansion around the same time Elicia returned to the school. Unfortunately, there were quite a few zombies between the school and the mansion that needed to be cleaned up. And the reason for that was probably due to the fact that there were so many people gathered there. So, the noise they made was impossible to hide completely.

Chapter 422: The Spearwoman

While Elicia, Rei, and Kohta were headed to the shopping outlet, Alfonzo, Saeko, and Saya were headed to Takagi mansion in the Humvee. However, they came across quite a few pockets of zombies on their way. So, they dealt with them in a way similar to how they dealt with the ones outside the primary school.

"Alright, that's the last one." Alfonzo said as he finished electrocuting a normal zombie. "Let's get back on the---"

Before he finished his sentence, however, Alfonzo heard the faint sound of banging. On top of that, he could hear the faint voice of a woman asking to be allowed into somewhere.

"What's wrong, Alfonzo?" Saeko, while sheathing her katana, asked as she approached the Humvee.

"I'm hearing the sound of banging coming from that direction." Alfonzo said while pointing in a particular direction.

"Really?" Saya asked suspiciously. "I don't hear anything."

"You haven't been manipulating your magic power for very long." Alfonzo replied as he returned to the Humvee, as well. "With more training, you'll be able to hear stuff like that, too."

In response, Saya only snorted before dropping back into the Humvee's back seat through the hatch on the roof.

"Are we gonna check it out?" Saeko asked as she put her hand on the passenger side door.

"Yeah." Alfonzo replied. "I can sense another two groups of undead approaching that location, they're probably being attracted by the noise."

With that, Alfonzo and Saeko climbed into the Humvee before Alfonzo started the engine and started driving.

Meanwhile, a relatively tall, beautiful, buxom, light brown haired woman with red eyes wearing a long white coat with red trim over top of a white blouse, a black leather corset, black leather pants, and black leather boots with a red spear and a bag filled with scavenged food strapped to her back was standing outside of a house several blocks away in a residential neighborhood.

Bang! *Bang!* *Bang!*

"Hey, what are you doing?" The woman asked. "Hurry up and let me in. The undead are coming this way."

"No, it's because of you that we are stuck here." The voice of a man came from the other side of the door.

"What are you talking about?" The woman asked in a disbelieving tone. "I saved all of you from those things. I'm the one who has been keeping you all fed, too."

"Please, Mrs. Miyamoto, just leave us alone." Another man said in a scared tone. "We want the chance to return to our families. But you just want us to stay here."

'Are these people serious?' The woman, Mrs. Miyamoto, or Kiriko Miyamoto, the mother of Rei Miyamoto, asked herself as her hand fell weakly to her side. 'They begged me to take them in and keep

them safe because I was the only one who could fight. And now they're saying it's my fault they've been stuck in this house?'

In fact, this was not Kiriko's fault. Instead, it was thanks to a new survivor they took in the night before. Like the others, he claimed he was unable to fight. So, when it came time to scavenge for materials and food, Kiriko once again went out alone.

However, while she was gone, the new man somehow got into the heads of the few people Kiriko had been keeping safe. With words alone, he was able to turn everyone in the house against her by blaming her for their current situation.

"You should just leave, Mrs. Miyamoto." The man Kiriko had accepted into the group only the night before said from the other side of the door in a smug tone. "We all agree that we no longer want to be beholden to your whims any longer."

'So, it was him... Son of a bitch!' Kiriko roared in her mind. 'I had a bad feeling about him from the moment I met him. But I ignored that feeling, wanting to help as many people as I could. *Sigh* I guess that will teach me to ignore my instincts, won't it?'

"Fine..." Kiriko said while clenching her fists and gritting her teeth. "I hope you don't regret this when it comes to finding food later."

"Speaking of food..." The traitorous man muttered as if he had just remembered. "Why don't you leave the food you found behind before you leave?"

Hearing the smugness in the man's tone, Kiriko had to resist punching a hole in the door with her spear. Instead, she took a deep breath to calm herself down. Then, she took a step away from the door before raising her voice again.

"If you want it so bad, why don't you open the door and take it from me?" Kiriko asked, still resisting the urge to unstrap the spear from her back. "If you do that, I'll leave without a fuss."

The response Kiriko received was a few moments of silence. However, the silence did not last for too long.

"See? This is the kind of person who was claiming to keep you protected." The traitorous man said loudly. "She's holding the food hostage to force us to let her inside. Is that really the kind of person you want to lead you?"

Once again, Kiriko was dumbfounded. On top of that, she could hear the people in the house agreeing with what the traitor said.

"If you were really the kind of leader you claimed to be, you would just leave the food behind and be on your way." The traitorous man continued. "So, why don't you show them what kind of leader you are one last time and leave the food before getting out of here."

Shaking her head in response, Kiriko pulled the spear off her back. However, instead of thrusting it towards the door, she looked to either side at the zombies that had been attracted by the banging and yelling.

"Damn it..." Kiriko muttered. "I got too wrapped up with those fools. I stopped paying attention to my surroundings. "Well, I guess I'll do one last good thing for these people before I die. At least I can thin out these numbers to give them a chance."

With that, Kiriko took her fighting stance. Like Rei, Kiriko also had a more than decent amount of magic power in her body. Unlike Rei, however, she had been trained to use it. She never taught her daughter to do so, though.

When Rei was young, both Kiriko and her husband wanted Rei to have a safe and happy life. So, they did not want her to be a wizard. And the reason for that was because as wizards, they knew how trouble seemed to be easily attracted to them in some way or another.

"[Physical Enhancement Magic: Full Body Enhancement]." Rei chanted before taking a step to her left.

bang!

In the next instant, a magically enhanced zombie whose power was nearing the A-Class slammed his fist down from above, creating a crater in the street.

Immediately, Kiriko could hear the sound of the people in the house panicking. However, she did not have the luxury to pay attention to them. Instead, she swept the butt end of her spear at the enhanced zombies' legs, knocking it off its feet. Then, before it could fall to the ground, she thrust her spear through its head.

A moment later, with the zombie still hanging from her spear, Kiriko took a step towards the zombies on her left and hefted her spear back into a throwing position.

"[Spear Magic: Gungnir]." Kiriko chanted as she threw her spear at the group of zombies in front of her.

In the next instant, the spear in Kiriko's hand turned into a red streak of light as it covered the distance. Then, it pierced through the front most zombie. At the same time, the head of the zombie that was still pierced on the spear exploded on contact with the other zombie's head.

On top of that, Kiriko's spear continued flying forward, piercing through the necks, heads, and chests of all the zombies behind the first one, eventually losing momentum after piercing through at least fifteen zombies.

"[Return]." Kiriko chanted as she held her right hand towards her spear.

A moment later, the red spear, which was pierced into a zombie's upper chest, flicked upward, freeing itself from the zombie's flesh, slicing the zombie's head in half in the process, before spinning back through the horde as it returned to Kiriko's hand.

Easily catching the spinning spear, Kiriko was just in time to parry the outstretched arm of a normal zombie. Then, she lowered her head to avoid a bite from a magically enhanced zombie while simultaneously stepping backwards, placing the butt end of her spear between the enhanced zombie's legs, then raising it to throw the zombie into the normal one in front of her.

As a result, the magically enhanced zombie's open mouth closed on the normal zombie's arm. Then, while distracted by the meal it just bit into, Kiriko stabbed her spear forward, piercing both zombie's heads with one thrust.

Retrieving her spear, in the next instant, Kiriko whipped its bladed end around in a circle, cutting through the heads of a dozen zombies that had approached in the meantime.

Realizing that she had been surrounded, Kiriko took advantage of the space she created for herself, slamming the bladed end of her spear into the ground and using it to fault high into the air.

'Even though they don't deserve it, I should draw these things away from them. *Sigh* I really don't want their deaths on my conscience.' Kiriko thought as she flew towards the edge of the horde of zombies.

A moment later, while still airborne, Kiriko raised her spear above her head while charging it with her magic power. Then, while approaching a zombie from above, she swung it down with all her might.

"[Spear Magic: Meteor Strike]." Kiriko chanted loudly.

Boom!

In the next instant, Kiriko's spear head cut straight through the zombie she had targeted before slamming into the street. Then, immediately upon making contact with the street, the magic power Kiriko charged into the spear was released. As a result, a shockwave sent all the nearby zombies flying while a crater was created in the ground.

Clang! *Clang!* *Clang!*

"Come on you undead sons of bitches!" Kiriko shouted as she leapt out of the crater and slammed the butt of her spear into the ground repeatedly. "I was expecting more from an entire horde of you ugly mother fuckers."

Immediately, the zombies, both normal and magically enhanced, were attracted to the sound Kiriko was creating. As a result, they completely ignored the panicked sounds coming from inside the house.

Naturally, the first to arrive at the source of sound was a magically enhanced zombie. And like she had done before, Kiriko thrust her spear at its head.

Clang!

However, before her spear could pierce its skull, the zombie opened its mouth and bit down on the spear tip, stopping it in its tracks.

'Shit! This one is a lot stronger than the rest.' Kiriko thought to herself as she tried to pull her spear back.

Unfortunately, Kiriko was unable to pull her spear away. On top of that, two weaker magically enhanced zombies were approaching her from either side. So, at this point, she only had two options, continue struggling to free her spear, or abandon her spear and fight barehanded.

Although fighting barehanded was a possibility, Kiriko's combat prowess would drop drastically. So, she gave up on fighting barehanded immediately.

'Damn, I would have liked to get a bit further away from the house before dying.' Kiriko thought to herself as she threw a kick at the S-Class zombie's legs. 'But I did all I could for them. I hope they can appreciate my last show of kindness.'

With her kick having next to no effect on the zombie, and her spear lodged between its teeth, Kiriko had all but given up. Before she could close her eyes, however, a pair of kunai, crackling in violet arcs of electricity, flashed past her.

Boom! x 2

In the next instant, the heads of the two magically enhanced zombies on either side of Kiriko exploded.

"What the hell was that?" Kiriko wondered aloud.

Vroom!

Instead of an answer to her question, Kiriko heard the sound of a magic engine. Before she could look in its direction, a shout from the distance stopped her. Instead, she followed the instructions that were shouted from the distance.

"Let go of the spear and get down!" Alfonzo, while driving the Humvee towards the horde, shouted at the top of his lungs while his left arm was sticking out of the window with his palm pointing at the horde. "Get down on the ground and dig your fingers into the street! Hurry!"

Doing exactly as the shout told her to, Kiriko dropped down to the ground on her back. At the same time, she dug her fingers into the street.

'Fuck! I just broke a nail.' Kiriko thought while trying to escape reality for a moment.

At the same time, Kiriko noticed several short spikes piercing the ground around her. Then, she heard the chanting of a spell.

"[Electromagnetism Magic: Lightning Shell]."

A moment later, a violet flash passed over Kiriko. On top of that, this flash was discharging small bolts of electricity, which were mostly drawn to the spikes in the ground next to her. However, she was hit by one, as well. Luckily, she had dug her fingernails into the street, partially grounding the shock. Meanwhile, the rest of taken care of by her natural defenses.

The rest of the flash, on the other hand, continued forward, obliterating the zombie with her spear in its mouth, before continuing on to the rest of the horde. Then, when it reached roughly to the center of the horde, it exploded into bolts of horizontal lightning.

Boom~~~!

"I guess that's the end of my spear." Kiriko muttered, though no one would be able to hear her over the sounds of striking lightning. "Those ingrates are probably dead, too. Oh well, I did what I could to save them. This wasn't my fault."

By the time all the sound had ended, and Kiriko's eyes returned to normal, Alfonzo had parked the Humvee next to her.

"You alright?" Alfonzo asked from the driver's seat while looking down at Kiriko.

"Yeah." Kiriko replied as she sat up and pulled her fingers out of the street. "I broke a nail, though."

"I'd say that's a pretty small price to pay for surviving a horde like that one, don't you think?" Alfonzo asked with a smile.

"Yeah, and if that were all, I wouldn't have anything to say." Kiriko replied. "But the spear I've been using for decades is gone now, too."

"Oh, are you talking about this spear?" Alfonzo asked while lowering a red spear with a zombie head biting down on its tip. "I could tell this was a pretty good spear, so I decided to save it."

Hearing that, Kiriko looked up at the spear that was floating down from the sky. Then, she jumped to her feet, grabbed the spear's shaft, and yanked the zombie's head off the end.

"I'm glad I didn't lose you." Kiriko said with a smile while holding her spear. "It would have taken forever to find another spear as good as you."

After gushing over her spear for a few moments, Kiriko finally remembered the people she was trying to protect. Then, she looked back at the explosion sight, expecting to see a large crater and the debris of destroyed houses. And although she did see a large crater, it did not extend past the edge of the street. Instead, lining the road was a row of large metal spikes.

"Well, at least my effort didn't go to waste." Kiriko muttered.

"Oh, were you trying to protect the people in that house?" Alfonzo asked while pointing at the house with the people that betrayed Kiriko.

"Yeah, one last act of kindness before I left." Kiriko replied.

"Well, if you're leaving, wanna catch a ride with us?" Alfonzo asked. "We're on our way to Takagi mansion. "Their little princess is with us, too."

"Don't call me that!" Saya shouted from the back seat.

"See." Alfonzo said with shrug.

"Wait, Saya?" Kiriko asked, finally looking into the interior of the Humvee. "You're okay. How are Rei and Takashi?"

"Hi, Mrs. Miyamoto." Saya said politely. "they're fine. This guy and his wife saved us on the first day. Right now, they should be near the primary school with Takashi's mother."

"I see, I'm glad you're all safe." Kiriko said in a relieved tone. Then, she finally looked at Alfonzo for the first time. "I should have known it was you after seeing the spear float, the electric spell, and the metal spikes. Thank you for saving me, Master of Metals, Alfonzo Marcus."

"No problem." Alfonzo replied nonchalantly. "It's part of my job. Anyway, you wanna come with us to Takagi mansion?"

"Of course." Kiriko replied as she pulled open the back door.

"Wanna say anything to the people in that house before we leave?" Alfonzo asked as Kiriko shut the door behind her.

"No." Kiriko replied bluntly.

Shrugging his shoulders, Alfonzo stepped on the accelerator and continued driving towards the Takagi mansion, completely ignoring the shouting coming from the people in the house.

Chapter 423: The Takagis

"That took longer than I thought it would." Alfonzo said while driving the Humvee up to the gates of Takagi mansion. "But we're finally here."

"Yeah, but at least we got rid of quite a few of the undead." Saeko said, looking quite refreshed as she spoke.

"I'm actually surprised you kids are so skilled in combat." Kiriko said from the back seat. "I mean, you all just found out that you have magic power a couple of days ago, right? Yet, you're wielding it like you've been doing it for a while."

"What can I say?" Alfonzo said proudly. "I'm just a bad ass teacher."

"You act like you're so much older than them." Kiriko replied while rolling her eyes. "You're what? Twenty at the very most."

"That's true." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "But I've been leading other wizards in training since I was eight. So, I'm really not just boasting."

"I see..." Kiriko replied, though it was obvious that she was skeptical of Alfonzo's claim.

"Anyway, why are you so quiet, Saya?" Alfonzo asked, looking back at Saya through the rear view mirror. "Aren't you happy to be back home?"

"Huh?" Saya exclaimed in surprise after being mentioned so suddenly. "Uh... Yeah... I'm glad to be home. I wanna see if my parents are safe."

Hearing Saya's somewhat downcast tone, Alfonzo, Saeko, and Kiriko exchanged glances. However, none of them knew what to say.

'She's probably upset that no one ever came looking for her... Just like in the source material.' Alfonzo thought as he stopped the Humvee outside the Takagi mansion's main gate. 'But it probably would have been more dangerous for her parents and their forces to start combing the streets for her at the beginning. Of course, I know I can't tell her that.'

"Halt!" A guard manning the mansion's gate shouted, though he was a bit late. "Identify yourself! And explain how did you get here with that magic vehicle despite all the obstacles that were set up along the way?"

In response, Alfonzo rolled down the driver's side window and stuck his head out.

"I'm Alfonzo Marcus of the Fairy Tail guild." Alfonzo replied calmly, completely unbothered by the magic rifles aimed at the Humvee. "And I'm only here to bring the Takagi princess home to see her family. As for the obstacles, they were all made of metal... So..."

At the end, Alfonzo shrugged his shoulders. However, it seems he ran into a group of people that did not recognize him or his name immediately. Because his explanation of how the obstacles were cleared was not taken well.

"That's not an explanation!" The guard shouted. "Now, please get out of the vehicle and come with us for questioning."

"Hahaha! I guess you're not as famous as you thought, huh?" Kiriko laughed.

"I guess not..." Alfonzo said while scratching his head. "And did they just ignore the fact that I said I have the Takagi princess with me?"

"That's what it sounds like." Saeko replied with a nod.

"So, can you say something to them, Saya?" Alfonzo asked, looking back at Saya over his shoulder.

"*Sigh* Fine." Saya said as she stood up and opened the hatch on the ceiling. Then, once her head was sticking out, she shouted. "Hey, I'm back home! Go inform my mother and father that their daughter is back!"

Immediately, the guards showed shocked expressions after hearing Saya's voice. Then, when they focused on the head sticking out of the magic vehicle's roof, they finally lowered their guard. On top of that, one of the guards immediately sprinted back towards the mansion to relay the news.

Even so, they did not open the gates.

"I guess they need permission before opening the gates." Kiriko muttered.

"It's a sound strategy to keep the people inside safe." Saeko replied.

"Yeah, but the young lady of the house just came home." Alfonzo said. "You'd think they could make an exception for that, right?"

Meanwhile, Saya, instead of participating in the conversation, only clenched her fists in frustration. It was rather embarrassing to be forced to wait outside your own home, after all.

It did not take long for a response to come from the mansion. Though, it did not come in the form of the guard returning to open the gate. Instead, a relatively tall, beautiful, fair-skinned woman with long purple hair, purple eyes, a slender figure and large breasts wearing a thin red evening gown and a shawl wrapped around her arms and lower back came sprinting towards the gate with the ferocity of an enraged bull.

"Saya! My baby!" The lady of the house, Yuriko Takagi, shouted as she approached the main gate.

"Mama!" Saya shouted in return as she jumped through the roof hatch.

Then, in a display of superhuman strength, Yuriko jumped and cleared the gate. At the same time, Saya leapt from the top of the Humvee. Then, the mother and daughter embraced in midair.

"Damn, that was pretty bad ass." Alfonzo muttered.

"Yeah, I didn't know Yuriko was so strong." Kiriko added.

"But isn't she concerned about flashing the guards?" Alfonzo asked. I mean, she's doing all that in a dress.

"I don't think she cares about that right now." Saeko replied with a smile.

"Yeah, I guess you're right." Alfonzo said with a nod.

However, Alfonzo continued to watch. And to his surprise. Even when descending to the ground, Yuriko's dress was not raised by the wind. Instead, it looked as if something was actively keeping her dress down.

'I'm not even gonna ask.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'If I do, these two are gonna look at me like some kind of pervert who was hoping to catch a peak.'

"Saya, I'm so glad you're safe." Yuriko said with Saya in her arms as she landed in front of the Humvee. "I'm sorry we couldn't come to find you sooner. But clearing the area around the mansion took all our attention."

"*Sigh* I know." Saya said as she buried her head in her mother's bosom. "But if it weren't for Alfonzo and Elicia, you probably would have never seen me again."

"What do you mean?" Yuriko asked in a much sterner tone. "What happened?"

"Uh... Sorry to interrupt your reunion." Alfonzo said, once again sticking his head out the window. "But should we leave? Or can we come in?"

Hearing Alfonzo's voice, Saya looked embarrassed that she had forgotten about the others. Meanwhile, Yuriko turned her head towards the voice's direction. Then, she looked down at her slightly blushing daughter.

"Oh, it looks like someone has a little crush." Yuriko whispered into Saya's ear.

"What are you talking about, Mom?" Saya shouted back, her face even redder than before.

In response, Yuriko only giggled. Then, she unwrapped her arms from around her daughter and started walking towards the Humvee's driver's side.

"So, when Saya mentioned that Alfonzo and Elicia saved her, she was talking about Alfonzo Marcus and Elicia Taylor, huh?" Yuriko asked once she was standing in front of the driver's door. "Thank you for taking care of my daughter. I cannot thank you enough."

"Don't worry about it." Alfonzo said with a smile. "It's kind of my job."

"And it looks like you found Kiriko, too." Yuriko said while looking into the vehicle. "Oh, and the daughter of Master Busujima, as well."

"Yeah, he pulled me out of a pretty sticky situation." Kiriko replied with a shrug. "But because of him, there's a chance I'll get to see Tadashi and Rei again."

"Indeed." Yuriko replied. Then, she pulled the door to the backseat open. "Anyway, let's return to the house. We can talk more there."

As she spoke, Yuriko signaled to the guards manning the gates to open them. Then, she ushered Saya back into the Humvee before climbing in herself. After that, once the gates were open, Alfonzo drove through them before they were quickly close behind them.

Considering the fact that Alfonzo was not driving very fast, the drive from the gate to the front of the mansion took about five minutes. And in those five minutes, they were able to see quite a few tents set up.

"You've saved quite a few people in only a few days." Alfonzo said as he scanned the surroundings with both his eyes and [Magic Power Detection].

"Yes, while securing the area around the mansion, we came across quite a few of them.

"But why aren't they doing anything to help?" Alfonzo asked, his eyebrows furrowing in discontentment.

"*Sigh* It's because they are too scared to fight." Yuriko said. "Or at least, that's what most of them say."

"Yeah, but there are many other ways to help in a situation like this than to just fight." Saeko said. "They could help prepare meals, maintain weapons, or any number of non-combat related tasks."

"Yes, I realize that." Yuriko replied in an exasperated tone. "But they refuse to do so. And my husband won't force them."

"I know I probably shouldn't say this as a wizard who came here to stop this shit show." Alfonzo said. "But if they're not willing to help, then they don't deserve your protection."

"Alfonzo's right, Mom." Saya added. "If they don't want to help with little things, then they don't deserve to be protected. I mean, you're providing shelter and food for them."

"I understand what you mean." Yuriko replied. "But as nobles, it's our duty to protect the common citizens."

"Ah... That noblesse oblige shit, huh?" Alfonzo said. "I've heard a lot of nobles talk about it in my career as a wizard. But this is the first time I've actually seen it taken seriously."

While Saya frowned slightly at Alfonzo's crass language, Yuriko giggled.

"I see... So, a foul mouth can be passed on from generation to generation." Yuriko said in an amused tone.

Hearing that, Alfonzo could only smile wryly. Meanwhile, Saeko, Saya, and Kiriko were a bit confused by the seemingly out of place comment.

"So, you knew my mom, huh?" Alfonzo said with the wry smile still present on his face.

"I did." Yuriko replied. "She actually saved me from a Dark Guild when I was younger. I think I was only twelve back then. When she brought me back home, she said something about completing her first S-Class quest successfully."

'Her first S-Class quest, huh?' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'Gramps told me that she made S-Class when she was seventeen. So, that would make Mrs. Takagi---"

"It's rude to guess at a woman's age, young man." Yuriko said playfully. However, there was a hint of sternness in her tone, as well.

In response, Alfonzo could only smile wryly once again.

"Wait, so who was his mother?" Saya asked curiously.

"The Mage Killer, Bianca Rollen." Yuriko announced.

Immediately, Saeko, Saya, and Kiriko opened their eyes wide in surprise.

"Mom had so many fans." Alfonzo said with a smile.

"It's probably because she didn't destroy everything like the rest of your guild." Kiriko said.

"Yeah, I guess I can see that." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "From what Gramps told me, only Mom and Lici's dad were like that."

"By Lici, you're referring to Elicia Taylor, correct?" Yuriko asked.

"That's right." Alfonzo replied with a nod as he pulled the Humvee up to the front of the mansion.

"Indeed. The Shockwave, Orlando Taylor, was another one who kept property damage to a minimum."

With that, Alfonzo put the Humvee in park and the five climbed out once the engine was turned off.

"Saya, it's good to see you back, safe and sound." A tall, intimidating man with jet black hair and fierce, red eyes with a predatory gaze said from the mansion's front door.

Hearing that voice, Saya's head snapped in its direction.

"Father... It's good to see you, too." Saya said politely in a subdued tone.

'I guess he's pretty shit at expressing himself in this world, too.' Alfonzo thought to himself.

"She called you father." Alfonzo said, stepping forward. "Then, does that mean you're Souichiro Takagi, the Marquis in charge of this town?"

"That is correct." The black-haired man, Souichiro Takagi, replied with a stern nod.

"Good." Alfonzo replied. "Then, I would suggest you relocate everyone here as fast as possible. There's a horde of nearly---"

"I won't be relocating." Souichiro said, cutting off the rest of what Alfonzo had to say. "I refuse to abandon my home... No, I will stay here and fight to the very end."

"*Sigh* I expected you to say that." Alfonzo muttered. "Luckily, there's nothing in this town I can't handle yet. But if there were, I'd knock your stubborn ass out and drag you to somewhere safe."

While Souichiro was too far away to hear Alfonzo's muttering, Saeko, Saya, Kiriko, and Yuriko were able to hear it just fine. And while Saeko and Saya were surprised to hear that Alfonzo was willing to treat a marquis like that, Kiriko and Yuriko, a former knight and a marquis's wife, respectively, could only shake

their heads with bemused expressions on their faces. They had heard a lot more about the wizards of Fairy Tail over the years, after all.

"Well, since you're not planning on going anywhere, I guess I'll have to wipe out that horde." Alfonzo said. "But if you had relocated, I could at least set up an ambush when they showed up here. Now, I'll have to fight them on the road leading to the gate. And there are a lot of houses and shit along that road."

"How are you so sure there's a horde on its way here?" Yuriko asked curiously.

"A detection spell I came up with a long time ago." Alfonzo replied. "I've pretty much got the whole town under surveillance. Though, I can't tell exactly what anyone is doing."

"Impressive." Kiriko said. "Having a spell like that would have been nice when I was on duty as a knight. You wouldn't mind sharing, would you?"

"He won't." Saya said in a huff. Then, she continued in a mocking tone. "It's a Fairy Tail secret, after all."

"I see." Kiriko replied with a nod of understanding. "Well, then I won't ask again. I know better than to dig into a guild's secrets."

Yuriko and Souichiro nodded along, as well.

"On top of a horde coming this way, I think the one who started this whole mess is leading them this way, too." Alfonzo added, deciding to get the conversation back on track.

Hearing that, everyone widened their eyes in surprise.

"Do you have any idea who that could be?" Souichiro asked in a stern tone.

"Not a clue." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "I'm not familiar with the magic power signature. But they are driving here in a magic vehicle with a few other people. And the horde is following behind them."

"Then, I'll be coming with you when you go to deal with them." Souichiro said in a tone that would not accept no for an answer. "I'd like to see who had the audacity to sink my town into such chaos."

"If that's what you want." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "They should be arriving at around sunset. If they keep their current pace, that is."

Chapter 424: Shido and the Horde Arrive

After the small talk ended, Alfonzo, Saeko, and Kiriko followed the Takagi family into the mansion where they were led to a meeting room.

"It would seem my daughter's magic power has been awakened in the last couple of days." Souichiro said as he took a seat at the head of the table in the meeting room."

"Wait!" Saya exclaimed after hearing her father speak. "Does that mean you knew I had the potential to be a wizard?"

"That's right." Souichiro replied calmly.

"Then, why didn't you ever tell me about it?" Saya asked with a frown on her face.

"It wasn't--" Souichiro began to say.

"Because we both know how dangerous the life of a wizard can be." Yuriko cut in while shooting a quick glare at her husband. "We wanted you to live a safe life. So, we thought it would be better to develop your mind rather than your magic."

Although Saya was clearly unhappy with that decision, she could at least understand where her parents were coming from.

Meanwhile, Yuriko, after saying her piece, leaned over to whisper into her husband's ear.

"We talked about this already, Souichiro." Yuriko said quietly. "She's no longer a child. She can understand the things we want to tell her if we explain them to her."

"Yes, I know." Souichiro replied while lowering his head. "But she should never have to worry about these kinds of things."

"Unfortunately, it's too late for that." Yuriko said as she took Souichiro's hand in her own. "At this point, all we can do is let her decide how she would like to live her life."

"*Sigh* You're right, Yuriko." Souichiro replied while squeezing his wife's hand lovingly.

"Anyway, I wanted to ask you all if you could provide some aid to the people we've managed to rescue since we got to Takanosu." Alfonzo said after the husband and wife's conversation seemed to end.
"Right now, there are two places where Lici and I have help people set up a small shelter."

"And where would those places be?" Yuriko asked curiously.

"The first place we set up was a warehouse on this side of the river." Alfonzo replied. "And the second is at the primary school. In total, there are about a hundred people."

"Hmm... That may be difficult." Souichiro said. "Making our way through the town with a force large enough to move them all safely will cause a lot of noise..."

"And that would attract the undead." Kiriko said, finishing Souichiro's sentence.

"That's right." Souichiro said with a nod.

"I was partly expecting that answer." Alfonzo said, sounding slightly disappointed. "I was hoping we could get everyone somewhere safe. That way, I could use some of my more destructive spells."

"Aren't you worried about destroying the town?" Yuriko asked. "Your reputation says that you don't cause much property damage during your quests."

"That's not what I meant." Alfonzo replied while waving dismissively. "What I wanted to do was flood the streets with UV radiation in high amounts. Although that would cause the buildings to degrade slightly and cause discoloration, it would incinerate the zombies... I think."

"It's like spending too much time in the sun, right?" Saya asked.

"That's right." Alfonzo replied. "Just crank that up to eleven. But if there are people nearby, they could suffer from all kinds of skin and eye diseases. And I can't have that."

"I see your point." Souichiro replied with a nod. "Still, there's nothing we can do to move all the people to a safe distance."

"Yeah." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "And for the same reason, I can't use microwaves, either. Plus, they would do much more damage to the surroundings."

"Then, we'll just have to deal with them the old-fashioned way." Saeko said, a glint of sadism flashing through her eyes as she did so.

"Looks that way." Alfonzo replied. "Unfortunately, it will slow us down by quite a bit."

With that, Alfonzo, Saeko, Saya, Kiriko, Yuriko, and Souichiro continued to discuss the plans for helping the people of the town until close to sunset. And around that time, Alfonzo noticed that the horde and the magic vehicle leading it had come rather close to the mansion's front gate. So, they all made their way to the walls surrounding the Takagi mansion and waited for them to arrive.

"I really should have gone out there and attack preemptively." Alfonzo said as he looked down the path between the Takagi estate and the rest of the town.

"If you had done that, however, I would have missed the chance to see who was behind all this." Souichiro said from beside Alfonzo.

Glancing at Souichiro, Alfonzo noticed the katana on his hip. However, he doubted that he would be much of a challenge for the coming horde of undead. He could sense around thirty zombies that had reached the S-Class, after all.

'OH well, I'll just have to act quickly to take out the strong ones.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'I'm the only one here who could take on an S-Class threat, after all.'

["Even if they're faster and stronger than the rest, they still have no technique to speak of."] Riot scoffed. ["So, what is there to worry about."]

["Riot's right."] Bedlam replied with a nod and a confident smile. ["What is there to worry about?"]

'Even so, I can't be careless.' Alfonzo replied internally while rubbing his left arm.

[<*Sigh* I guess you're right.] Bedlam said.

At that moment, a magic vehicle approached the gate of the Takagi mansion. However, none of the zombies were visible. Then, after approaching the gate, the magic vehicle came to a stop.

"Hey, that's the same vehicle we escaped the school with, isn't it?" Saya asked quietly.

"That's what it looks like." Saeko replied with a nod and a solemn expression on her face. Then, she tightened the grip on the katana on her hip as she continued. "We should have figured this out a long time ago."

"Yeah, who else could be responsible for this mess other than that bastard, Shido?" Saya asked through gritted teeth.

Hearing that, Kiriko, Yuriko, and Souichiro frowned. They all knew what Shido Saeko and Saya were talking about. They also knew his father, a marquis of Fiore, as well. And they were both disgusting excuses for human beings. Especially Yuriko, Koichi Shido was the reason her daughter's studies were delayed, after all.

"Halt!" The same guard who stopped Alfonzo and the others shouted. "State your identity!"

Rolling down the magic vehicle's window, Shido stuck most of his upper body out the window before responding. Then, he scanned the people on the top of the wall. And when he saw Saeko, Saya, Kiriko, and Yuriko, he smiled widely. At the same time, he completely disregarded the presences of Alfonzo and Souichiro, considering them dead men walking.

"I am Koichi Shido!" Shido shouted, announcing himself to the guard. At the same time, a pulse of magic power rippled from the clip on his tie. "I have several survivors inside. We came here to seek shelter. So, could you please open the gates."

'So, that's how he [Charmed] his victims, huh?' Alfonzo asked himself. 'We definitely need to do something about that.'

At that moment, just before the guards, who had been [Charmed] by Shido's tie clip could move to open the gates, Alfonzo vanished from atop the wall. Then, in the next instant, he reappeared in front of Shido with his hand wrapped around the tie clip.

"What the...?" Shido exclaimed in shock. "Who the hell are you? Wait, I know that face, you're Alfonzo Marcus of Fairy Tail."

'If he's here, I wonder if that wife of his is here, too?' Shido asked as the thought of violating an S-Class wizard crossed his mind. 'Hahaha! I sure hope so. I've wanted to have her in my bed ever since I first saw her in Sorcerer Weekly.'

As if he could tell what Shido was thinking, Alfonzo's expression turned dark. Then, with his hand still wrapped around Shido's tie clip, he yanked him through the window before slamming him into the street.

"Gah! *Cough* *Cough*" Shido gasped as the air was forced out of his lungs before coughing up a mouthful of blood.

Crack!

At the same time, Alfonzo crushed the tie clip, releasing all those who had been [Charmed] from its effects.

"What have you *Cough* done?" Shido asked with bloodshot eyes in a pain-filled tone.

"I've met a lot of disgusting douche nozzles like you in my life." Alfonzo said in a frigid tone. "And a lot of them have had bad thoughts about Lici. I could basically see it in your eyes. And although you're nowhere near strong enough to do anything to her, even with your horde of zombies, I thought I needed to nip that shit in the bud. Then, make you pay for your crimes."

"Hahahahaha!" Shido began laughing uproariously. "You made a big mistake! You should have just let yourself be killed. At least it would have been painless. But now, I'll make you watch as I have my way with that whore you call a wife. Now, kil all the men and bring the women to me. But leave this one alive!"

Bang!

As soon as Shido's command was given, Alfonzo's fist landed on his face. As a result, his nose collapsed, all his teeth were knocked out, and the back of his head hit the street so hard that a two foot crater was formed from the impact. Yet, Shido's head somehow stayed intact, for the most part.

"Wrong answer, cock sucker." Alfonzo said as he released Shido's tie. "And as much as I'd like to kill you, this is the perfect incident to get that disgusting, greasy man you call a father put on trial for high treason. Because I'm sure you're not smart enough to do something like this on your own."

'I'm pretty sure Junko played a big role in getting all this shit started, too.' Alfonzo thought to himself as he used his magic to levitate the magic vehicle out of the way of the incoming horde. 'But it would probably be better to keep her name away from the public. Don't wanna give that crazy bitch the satisfaction of causing more despair, after all.'

A moment later, the magic vehicle was placed on the other side of the wall. At the same time, Saeko, Kiriko, and Souichiro had all jumped down to face the horde. Meanwhile, Saya and Yuriko stayed on the wall with the guards with magic guns in their hands.

"I always knew he and his father were disgusting." Souichiro said while glaring down at Shido. "But I never thought they would do something like this."

"Hmph!" Kiriko snorted. "Then you had no idea just how disgusting they really were."

"We can talk about what kind of fuck boys the Shido father and son are later." Alfonzo said as he turned his head towards the town. "For now, we have a horde to deal with."

Nodding in response, Saeko, Kiriko, and Souichiro each drew their weapons. A moment later, the sound of footsteps could be heard approaching from the direction of the town.

"I guess knocking this son of a bitch out didn't cancel his orders, huh?" Alfonzo asked as he stood up straight. Then, with much more force than necessary, he kicked Shido in the ribs as he continued. "Well, I better restrain him to make sure he doesn't escape while we're working."

Crack!

"Urgh!" Shido grunted unconsciously.

With Alfonzo's kick, not only were two of Shido's ribs broken, but a restraint harness formed on Shido's torso while pulling his arms behind his back. Then, a number of anti-magic sigils were inscribed into the harness.

"*Sigh* I'm not trying to look down on the rest of you, but there are more than a few of those things that are out of your leagues." Alfonzo said as he stepped forward and pulled Riot and Bedlam from the strap on his lower back. "So, I'm gonna thin the numbers a little if you don't mind."

With that, Alfonzo took a few more steps forward, confusing the others as he did so.

"What are you talking abo---" Kiriko asked with furrowed eyebrows.

Before Kiriko could finish asking her question, however, Alfonzo flared his magic power to its limit, causing everyone else to open their eyes wide in surprise.

"[Run wild with destruction on your fingertips. Usher in Pandemonium with creation in your hands. Riot, Bedlam]." Alfonzo chanted, causing his tonfa to melt down into liquid metal that covered his hands.

At the same time, instead of feeling pressure from Alfonzo's magic power, everyone present nearly fell to their knees. In fact, the only reason they did not is because Alfonzo was controlling his output. Otherwise, everyone other than Kiriko, Yuriko, and Souichiro would be lying on the ground, completely incapable of moving. Meanwhile, the aforementioned three would have been forced to their knees.

"What in the world is this boy?" Souichiro asked in an incredulous tone while everyone else was thinking something similar.

"Now, let's do something about those S-Class threats. [Electromagnetism Magic: Thunder Storm]." Alfonzo muttered just before vanishing from where he stood in a burst of speed.

At the same time, dark clouds began to gather over the Takagi mansion. Then, a bolt of lightning fell from the gathered clouds, landing on one of the S-Class zombies, with the shockwave sending many weaker zombies flying.

As time went by, more of the S-Class zombies were struck by lightning while the shockwaves split up the weaker zombies. On top of that, thanks to the loud cracks of thunder, all the zombies in the area were overloaded with sound. Plus, even more zombies were drawn to the battlefield, as well.

'I hope Lici realized what's going on.' Alfonzo thought to himself as he touched the S-Class zombies, attracting the falling lightning to them by changing their electric charge, at high speed. 'Things are gonna get pretty hectic by the time this shit is over and done with.'

Chapter 425: Coming Across the Bridge

"Looks like Fonzie is getting serious." Elicia said as she turned her head in the direction of the Takagi mansion.

Currently, Elicia was playing with the children at the primary school along with Takashi and Kohta while all those capable of cooking made dinner for everyone taking shelter in the primary school.

"What do you mean?" Takashi asked curiously.

"Look out the window in the direction of Saya's house, and you'll see." Elicia replied with a smile.

Instead of Takashi, it was Kohta who moved towards a window in the direction where Elicia turned to. And when he did, he was thoroughly confused.

"When did those clouds roll in?" Kohta asked in a dumbfounded tone. "It was completely clear only a few minutes ago."

"Clouds?" Takashi asked as he, too, stood up to look out the window. "Holy... What the...?"

Takashi's loud exclamation drew the attention of the children. His mother, Sayuri also came out of the kitchen to see what was the cause of the commotion.

"Takashi, why are you making so much noise?" Sayuri asked with a slight frown.

"It's because of that?" Takashi said while pointing his finger towards the storm clouds in the distance.

Deciding to take a look as well, Sayuri made her way over to the window Takashi was standing in front of. Then, when she finally saw what Takashi was pointing at, she frowned slightly.

"Such a sudden storm isn't a good omen." Sayuri murmured.

"This time it is." Elicia said with a smile as she stood up and started walking towards the school's front entrance. "For the people of this town, anyway. Not so much for the zombies, though."

"What do you mean?" Sayuri asked as she turned her head in Elicia's direction. "Uh... And where are you going?"

"To help Fonzie." Elicia replied as she reached the door. "Although he probably doesn't need my help, it will be faster if I go."

"But it's about to storm." Sayuri said in a concerned tone.

"I'll be fine." Elicia said as she pulled the door open, walked through it, and closed it behind her.

"I really don't think you have to worry, Mrs. Komuro." Kohta said as he returned to playing with the children. "Before any of us noticed the storm clouds, she said something about Alfonzo getting serious. So, those clouds are probably his doing."

"But how is that possi---" Sayuri began to ask.

Rumble!

Before she could finish, however, a flash lit up the surroundings, followed by the sound of thunder. However, it did not take long for the lightning to strike for a second, a third, and even more times. In fact, it struck so many times and in such close succession that it was impossible to see or hear anything for nearly a minute.

By the time the onslaught of lightning ended, the younger children were screaming in either fear or excitement, while the older children and adults were covering their ears and closing their eyes.

"Well, now I know what she meant..." Kohta muttered.

Meanwhile, Elicia was making her way towards the Takagi mansion to offer her assistance. However, she did not go there in a straight line. Instead, she made a quick detour to intercept all the zombies who were drawn in that direction by the rumbles of thunder.

"Wow! There are at least fifteen magically enhanced zombies heading that way." Elicia said in an amazed tone. "There were already around seventy in the original horde."

["Does that mean you're gonna put on a show like Fonzie?"] Scylla asked, the smile on her face audible from her tone.

"Might as well." Elicia replied as she flared her magic power. "Mend the Seams of Reality, Scylla]."

With that, the wristband on Elicia's left wrist began to glow before covering her hands and transforming into golden scales. On top of that, with the surge in her magic power, Elicia's speed tripled.

Then, after about thirty seconds, Elicia found the first magically enhanced zombie.

"[Cross Stitching]." Elicia chanted as she shot one of the dragon scales on her right hand at the zombie.

Mid-flight, the dragon scale transformed into a golden needle with a dragon motif. Then, the eye of the needle was threaded by one of Elicia's threads. A moment later, it pierced through the zombies upper lip before stitching its mouth closed.

"There, now we don't have to worry about it biting anyone." Elicia said.

["Yeah, but don't their scratches transmit the curse, too?"] Scylla asked.

"You're right." Elicia replied.

By now, the zombie, while not reacting to having its mouth stitched shut, turned in Elicia's direction thanks to the fact that she had not lowered her voice while speaking to Scylla. Then, at a speed comparable to Elicia's base speed, it dashed at her with its arms outstretched.

"I guess I should do something about that, too, huh?" Elicia said as she ejected threads from the tips of her fingers.

In the next instant, before the zombie could get into striking range, the threads looped around its wrists.

"[Thread Magic: Thread Guillotine]." Elicia said as she constricted the threads around the zombie's wrists.

Swish!

Once again not noticing the state of its body, the zombie's hands fell off. Then, it swung its stumps at Elicia in an attempt to scratch her.

"Eww!" Elicia exclaimed as she frantically dodged the blood spraying from the zombie's wrists. "In hindsight, that was a really bad idea."

["Yeah, I thought you would stitch its fingertips to its palms."] Scylla replied.

While continuing to avoid the spraying blood, Elicia opened her eyes wide at Scylla's reply.

"I didn't think about that." Elicia said in an enlightened tone.

["You didn't think?"] Scylla replied in an exasperated tone. ["Why doesn't that surprise me?"]

"You don't have to be so mean about it, Scylla." Elicia replied with a pout.

["I'll be nicer when you start thinking about your words and actions."] Scylla replied mercilessly.

Instead of replying, Elicia continued to pout as she yanked the fingers of her left hand.

"[Thread Magic: thread Slicer]." Elicia chanted.

A moment later, all the threads Elicia released while she was dodging the rotten, spraying blood came flying towards the zombie. Then, with little resistance, they mince the zombie into small pieces of flesh and bone fragments.

"Alright, the rest should be coming this way soon." Elicia said as she stood in the middle of the street.
"Looks like this group was drawn away from the bridge."

["That should take a lot of pressure off the knights defending the shelter on the other side of the bridge, then."] Scylla said. ["I wonder if that's where Rika was stationed. I mean, there's no airport to defend in this town."]

"Who knows." Elicia replied. "But maybe I should start working my way in that direction instead of waiting for them to come to me. Then, I might get to meet her."

["That's actually a pretty well thought out plan coming from you."] Scylla replied in a tone that made it clear she was smirking.

Once again, Elicia could only pout at her [Armament Spirit]. However, that did not slow her down or change her decision. So, like a whirlpool of threads and needles, Elicia dashed down the street while lashing her threaded golden needles around her.

At the same time, the knights guarding the shelter on the other side of the bridge were watching the zombies in the area start moving towards the lightning storm in the distance.

"Does anyone have an idea what's going on over there?" A middle-aged man with black eyes and hair, greying at his temples, asked.

"It's probably magic, Captain Miyamoto." A young knight replied.

"I'm aware." The middle-aged man, Tadashi Miyamoto, replied in an irritated tone. "The question is who could have used a spell that powerful? There shouldn't be anyone in this town with that much power."

In response, all the knights stationed at the shelter could only exchange unsure glances.

"Well, if no one is sure, I think we should go and find out." A tan-skinned woman standing at around 5'7" with shoulder-length purple hair tied in a ponytail, wearing a light armored chest plate, that did not cover her midriff, revealing her stomach and a small part of a white crop top, and a pair of dark shooting glasses covering her red eyes suggested. "And I volunteer to make the trip."

As she spoke the last part, The purple-haired woman leaned the large caliber magic rifle in her hands on her right shoulder.

"*Sigh* Of course you do." Tadashi said in an exasperated tone. "However, you're right this time, Chief Minami. But I can't send you alone."

Hearing that, Chief Rika Minami smiled happily. Meanwhile, the other knights focused their attention on Tadashi to see who would be accompanying her on his potentially suicidal mission.

'Good.' Rika thought as she waited to see who her teammates on this mission would be. 'If I'm lucky, I'll even get to check on Shizuka while I'm on the other side of the bridge, too. I wonder if she went to stay at my place after all this shit started.'

With that thought, Rika slung the rifle she was holding onto her back. Then, she reached into the pocket of her pants' pocket and pulled out a pack of cigarettes, pulled a cigarette out of the pack, and lit it by making a small spark with her magic power.

'*Sigh* There's no better reason to learn just a little fire magic than this.' Rika thought as she inhaled the smoke from her cigarette.

"Crawford, Sato, and Tendo, you will be going with Minami on this investigation mission." Tadashi said after finally deciding on the team assignment. "The rest of you will be staying here to continue guarding the shelter."

"Sir!" All the knights shouted while saluting.

"Now, get your gear and take one of the Humvees." Tadashi ordered. "Dismissed."

"Sir!" Rika, Crawford, Sato, and Tendo replied in unison.

A moment later, Crawford, Sato, and tendo ran off to get geared up. Meanwhile, Rika, who was always carrying a sniper rifle, a shotgun, and a pair of pistols, looked at Tadashi.

"We'll check for news about your wife and daughter while we're on the other side, Captain." Rika said as she turned around to head to the magic vehicles.

"I appreciate it." Tadashi replied with a light smile. "But don't put yourselves in any extra danger because of that."

Waving over her shoulder while taking another drag from her cigarette, Rika kept walking towards the magic vehicles.

"Don't worry, I'll keep those boys safe." Rika said. "I don't like unnecessary risks, you know. On top of that, comrades don't die on my watch."

Nodding in understanding, Tadashi saluted at Rika's back.

A few minutes later, with Sato driving the Humvee, Rika, Crawford, and Tendo were on their way across the bridge.

"Even though we don't know who cast that lightning spell, it really helped us out, didn't it?" Sato asked from behind the wheel. "I mean, all the noise basically pulled all the zombies in one direction."

"Yeah, but the guys back at the shelter might have a hard time dealing with all those things trying to get to the bridge, though." Tendo replied in a slightly concerned tone.

"Don't worry about them, Captain Miyamoto will keep them in top form." Rika said after blowing a cloud of smoke out of the window in the backseat.

"Hey! What is that?" Crawford asked from his spot on the opposite side of the back seat while pointing out the window.

With Crawford's exclamation, Rika and Tendo turned to look in the direction he was pointing.

"Is that... a wall?" Tendo asked while squinting at the massive black object down the river.

"Stop for a minute, Sato." Rika ordered as she gripped her sniper rifle.

With that, Sato slowly brought the vehicle to a stop. Then, Rika stood up, opened the hatch on the roof, and looked down the river through the scope of her rifle.

"It really is a wall." Rika muttered. Though, it was loud enough for the other three knights to hear. Then, as Rika turned around to look in the opposite direction, she continued. "I wonder if... Yup, there's a wall on the other side, too."

"Where the hell did that wall come from?" Sato asked with a frown on his face.

"More importantly, did whoever cast this ritual put up walls to keep anyone from escaping?" Crawford asked.

"Or did someone raise walls to keep the undead from spreading?" Tendo asked.

"*Sigh* We'll have to find out once this mess is over." Rika replied while closing the hatch as she sat back in her seat. "For now, let's keep going."

"Ma'am!" Sato replied as he stepped on the accelerator once again.

Not long later, the Humvee began approaching the zombies who were heading for the Takagi mansion. Although Alfonzo had ended the [Thunderstorm] spell when all the S-Class enhanced zombies were destroyed, many of his spells still utilized lightning and electricity. And to keep as many zombies heading towards their location as possible, he did not lower the volume on any of the bolts.

"Ma'am, we've caught up to the horde." Sato said. "What should we do?"

"Just keep following them." Rika said, once again standing up in the back seat and opening the hatch. "I'll clean up as many as I can while we're moving."

"Understood." Sato replied while matching the speed of the back row of zombies.

"Alright, just like shooting ducks n a barrel." Rika said as she held the magazine to her sniper rifle. "[Bullet-Make: Spread Shot]."

In the next instant, a bullet appeared in the chamber of her rifle. Meanwhile, four more appeared in the magazine in her hand. Then, she took aim at the zombies in front of her.

"[Target Magic: Multiscope]." Rika chanted as she looked through her rifle's scope and aimed at five running zombies.

Bang!

Then, once her aim was locked on the heads of the five zombies, Rika pulled the trigger. In the next instant, the bullet flew out of the rifle's barrel. Then, while mid-flight, it split into five needlelike shells, with each needle piercing through the back of the targeted zombie's heads.

"*Sigh* Seeing the Chief work never gets old." Tendo said while he watched the five zombies lose momentum and slide forward after falling.

"Yeah, she's got to be one of the top five shots in the knights." Sato replied.

"And that's why there have never been any rumors of men getting into the Chief's bed." Crawford said with a chuckle.

"Damn right!" Rika shouted as she lined up her next shot. "If a man can't even out shoot me, there's no way in hell he's getting into my pants."

Bang! *Bang!* *Bang!* *Bang!*

As she spoke, Rika emptied the remaining rounds in the magazine. However, just as she was about to create more ammo with her [Bullet-Make Magic], she noticed that the number of zombies in front of the Humvee was reducing with no input from her.

'Damn, are there a bunch of those strong ones devouring the weaker ones while they run?' Rika asked herself as she hurriedly created more powerful ammo. 'The [Spread Shot] shells won't be enough for those.'

"[Bullet-Make: Inferno Shot]." Rika chanted before loading her rifle once again.

However, when she looked through her scope once again, Rika was thoroughly surprised.

Bang!

"Hey, Sato, stop!" Rika shouted after pulling the trigger and causing a B-Class zombi to be engulfed by intense flames.

Following the order, Sato brought the Humvee to a stop once again.

"What's wrong, Chief?" Sato asked in confusion.

Bang! *Bang!* *Bang!* *Bang!*

"Someone is ripping straight through that horde in front of us." Rika said as she took aim at four more magically enhanced zombies with her [Multiscope] spell and pulled the trigger four times in succession. "And I don't want you to run into them by mistake."

'Otherwise, if the way those zombies are getting minced up, we wouldn't survive the collision.' Rika thought to herself. 'But still, I didn't think anyone from outside the town would be here. But I guess she's not bad back up. And I'd bet my next month's salary that I know who cast that lightning storm now after seeing her.'

Naturally, the one Rika saw ripping through the horde was Elicia. So, instead of speeding forward, Rika continued picking off zombies while Elicia approached. Eventually, once the entire horde was dealt with, Elicia approached the Humvee.

"Wow, you might even be a better shot than Bisca." Elicia said with a smile as she walked up to the passenger side of the Humvee and looked up at Rika, who was still sticking out the hatch on the roof.

"That sounds like a challenge, Magic Seamstress." Rika replied with a smile after blowing out a cloud of smoke. "I might have to make a trip to Magnolia to see just how good a shot this Bisca is."

"I think you should, Miss Minami." Elicia replied with a smile.

"Oh, you know who I am?" Rika asked as she raised her shooting glasses.

"Yeah, Shizuka talks about you a lot." Elicia replied with a nod. "A tall, tan-skinned, purple-haired knight with big boobs, though not as big as hers, and a good, really good, shot."

"You met Shizuka?" Rika asked, her tone rising in both anticipation and worry. "How is she?"

"You don't have to worry, she's fine." Elicia replied. "Anyway, if you're willing to give me a ride to Takagi mansion, I don't mind telling you what she's been up to on the way."

"Sure, climb in." Rika replied in a carefree, yet somewhat excited tone as she dropped back into the Humvee and closed the hatch. Then, she opened the door on the passenger side of the vehicle as she continued. "By the way, do you know who cast that lightning spell earlier?"

"Yeah, that was my husband." Elicia said while smiling proudly.

"That's what I thought after seeing you here." Rika said as she scooted towards the middle of the back seat and Elicia climbed in. "Anyway, tell me about Shizuka."

With that, Elicia closed the door. Then, Sato started driving once again as Elicia talked to Rika about Shizuka and everything she had been up to since Alfonzo and Elicia arrived in town.

Chapter 426: The End of the Battle

Around the same time Elicia met up with Rika and her team, Alfonzo, along with Saeko, Kiriko, and Souichiro, was cutting through the horde Shido brought with him. However, it felt like no matter how many they put down, more took their place.

"I think you over did it, Kid." Kiriko said as she avoided a lunging zombie while using the butt of her spear to trip it and cause it to fall on another. "You basically called every zombie in the town."

"Yeah, but it will make clean up faster this way." Alfonzo replied before chanting a spell. "[Metal Magic: King of Wallachia]."

In the next instant, two dozen black steel spikes sprouted from the ground under just as many normal zombies, impaling them from crotch to head.

["You know no one other than you and Lici will understand the name of that spell, right?"] Bedlam asked with a smirk.

["Yeah, people are gonna look at you the same way they look at Laki."] Riot said with a similar smirk.

"What does that spell name even mean?" Saeko muttered while beheading a C-Class magically enhanced zombie.

["See?"] Riot and Bedlam asked simultaneously.

'Sometimes, I really hate you two.' Alfonzo replied internally.

"Don't worry about it." Alfonzo replied. "It came from a story my mom told me when I was a kid." Alfonzo said dismissively. "Let's just worry about cutting down all these things. We've got a long fight ahead of us."

Nodding in response, Saeko continued to cut through every zombie at C-Class or below that she came across. However, with everyone her sword cleaved through, her eyes would glow just a bit more. On top of that, the smile on her face widened proportionally.

Meanwhile, Kiriko and Souichiro focused almost exclusively on B-Class and above threats. Luckily, thanks to Alfonzo's [thunderstorm] spell, no one had to worry about S-Class threats from within the horde. Though, whenever an S-Class zombie approached from the distance, Alfonzo would swiftly take care of it before returning to helping clean up the weaker zombies.

"That young man is truly impressive." Yuriko, who was firing down on the zombies from the mansion's walls with a magic gun resembling a Tommy Gun, said in an impressed tone. Then, with a small smile on her face, she glanced at Saya as she continued. "It's no wonder you've developed a crush on him in such a short time."

"Mother, must you continue to speak such nonsense?" Saya asked in an annoyed tone. Though, the blush on her face and the way her eyes followed Alfonzo's movements, as best they could considering his speed, gave away her true feelings.

"Saya, Sweetie, if you're gonna act like that, then you'll never catch his heart." Yuriko said in a gentle tone with an equally gentle smile on her face. Quite the jarring contrast considering how many zombies she was gunning down with every passing second. "Why do you think that Komuro boy never realized how you felt about him?"

Hearing that, Saya visibly panicked. And it was clear that she was hoping that a certain someone could not hear her mother's words.

"Mother, what are you talking about?" Saya asked, her voice quite a bit louder than intended, as if she wanted to make sure that certain someone could hear her. "I don't have feelings for Takashi, and I never did."

"Oh my? Why did you get so loud, Saya?" Yuriko asked in a teasing tone. "Is there someone you want to know--- Saya, look out!"

Hearing her mother's panicked warning, Saya was surprised. A moment later, she looked up and saw a pair of A-Class zombies jumping towards her from the horde. Unfortunately, they were moving too fast for anyone on the wall to react. And the only person who was fast and strong enough to do anything, Yuriko, was in the process of reloading her Tommy Gun.

Forgetting about her weapon, Yuriko threw herself in front of Saya and wrapped her arms around her daughter defensively, intending to use her body to shield her daughter. Unfortunately, this would result in Yuriko being both bitten and scratched by the approaching zombies.

"Mama! No!" Saya shouted, drawing the attention of Saeko, Kiriko, and Souichiro from below.

However, none of them were close enough to stop the zombies before tragedy could befall the mother-daughter duo. Luckily, there was one person among those present that could do so.

"*Sigh* I'm glad he's here." Souichiro muttered as he returned to cutting down zombies. "Still, you monster's will pay for what you tried to do just now. [Sword Magic: Dimensional Decapitator.]"

In the next instant, Souichiro's magic power started flowing around his sword. However, instead of one continuous stream, it flowed on either side of his blade before meeting at the edge, causing an even sharper edge. And with each swing of the blade, a thin black line was left in the air, cutting through the zombies with next to no resistance.

At the same time, Yuriko finally realized that the expected impact never landed on her back. Then, she opened her eyes. After that, she looked up at Saya's face. Seeing the relief and even deeper blush, she had a pretty good idea what had happened. So, to confirm her suspicions, she looked back over her shoulder.

At the end of Yuriko's line of sight, Alfonzo, floating in front of the wall, was holding the two A-Class zombies by their faces as they clawed at his metallic forearms. However, he seemed to be completely unbothered by their attacks.

"You two alright?" Alfonzo asked from over his shoulder.

"Yes, we're fine." Yuriko said as she released Saya. "Thank you for your help, Alfonzo."

"Don't mention it." Alfonzo said as his arms started sparking with violent electricity. "[Electromagnetism Magic: Spark Cannon]."

With his chant, the lightning coursing around Alfonzo's arms gathered in his palms, destroying the two zombies' heads in the process. Then, as the headless bodies fell to the ground, Alfonzo fired the two orbs of electricity into the horde. And as they detonated on contact, they spread webs of electricity to all the nearby zombies.

"Anyway, it looks like a bit of reinforcement should be here soon." Alfonzo said as he floated Yuriko's magic gun in front of her.

Bang! *Bang!* *Bang!* *Bang!* *Bang!*

In the next instant, as if to prove his words true, five gun shots rang out over the battle. And with those five shots, twenty five zombies lost their heads.

"Oh, that's a pretty good shot from so far away." Alfonzo said. "Anyway, I'll get back down there. You two be careful."

With that, Alfonzo flashed. Then, he reappeared in the midst of the horde. This time, with his [Circular Cutters] on his wrist as he dismembered the undead with ease.

"Thank you for saving my mom, Alfonzo." Saya muttered quietly as she watched Alfonzo disappear.

"Oh my, Saya." Yuriko, once again with her gun in her hand, said playfully. "If you speak so quietly, he'll never hear you."

"Mlom~~~." Saya whined as she shook her head to focus her thoughts back on the fight.

Meanwhile, the Humvee carrying the knights and Elicia was driving through Takanosu on the road leading to the Takagi mansion. And Elicia and Rika were standing with their upper bodies sticking out of the hatch on the roof.

"*Whistle* There really are a lot of these things gathered on this one street." Rika said as she used her magic to create more ammo.

"Yup, I guess Fonzie thought gathering them all in one place was the best way to deal with them." Elicia replied with a nod. "Especially since he couldn't just blow up the whole town with all the people in it."

"Are you serious?" Crawford, who was still seated in the back seat asked. "Is he really strong enough to do that?"

"Yeah." Elicia replied with a nod. "I mean, he's the only person I've seen who could destroy a lacrima with a magic spell. That's how he toppled the Tower of Heaven, after all."

Hearing that, Crawford, Sato, and Tendo fell silent. Meanwhile, Rika began laughing uproariously.

"I guess he's on par with the Ten Wizard Saints at the very least, huh?" Rika asked after getting her laughter under control. "I wonder if he'll get one of the open slots, then. I mean, after Master Porla and that traitor left, there are two open spots, right?"

"Probably not." Elicia replied with a shake of her head. "I doubt the Council will want two Wizard Saints from the same guild."

With that, Elicia stopped to think.

"Actually, Warrod and Gramps are both from the same guild." Elicia muttered while rubbing her chin. "But since they've both retired, are they not looked at as members of Fairy Tail anymore? Either way, they'd probably give it to Ur before Fonzie."

Getting to that point, Elicia nodded at her own thoughts. Then, she raised her head and looked at the horde once again.

"Anyway, I think we're close enough." Elicia said as she climbed through the hatch. "So, I'll see all of you again when this is all over. Oh, and Rika, I'll take you to Shizuka when we're done, too."

"Good." Rika said as she lined up her next shot.

With that, Elicia nodded her head. Then, she shot out her threads, sticking them into the sides of two buildings.

"[Cross Stitching]." Elicia chanted.

In the next instant, threads appeared between the two buildings. Then, the two buildings were dragged towards the middle of the street, crushing all the zombies between them.

"[Release]." Elicia chanted after the two buildings stopped moving.

Then, as if they were moving in reverse, the two buildings returned to their original positions, the only evidence of their movement the trench that was dug when they, along with their foundations, were dragged into the street.

"Oops!" Elicia exclaimed in embarrassment. "I didn't think the foundation would get dragged along, too."

[Once again, I'm not surprised that you didn't think.] Scylla said in exasperation.

'Scylla~~~!' Elicia whined internally.

Even so, Elicia retracted her threads quickly, throwing herself towards the horde in the distance and leaving a group of dumbfounded knights behind in the Humvee.

"You've got to be fucking kidding me." Tendo muttered in disbelief.

"Yeah, that was insane." Sato added in a similar tone.

"She literally sewed those two houses together than pulled out the stitching to put them back." Crawford muttered with lifeless eyes.

"Hey, get your shit together!" Rika shouted from the hatch. "You can think about the absurdity of what just happened later. For now, we've got zombies to kill."

"Ma'am!" The three knights shouted in reply as they snapped back to their senses.

Meanwhile, Elicia was soaring through the air as she approached the horde.

'I wonder if I can fix the damage I just crossed with your powers, Scylla.' Elicia said internally.

["yeah, it would work."] Scylla replied.

'Good.' Elicia replied with a nod. 'I thought it might mess up the spacing between the buildings if I did that.'

["As long as you treat it like when you're mending clothing, you should be able to handle it."] Scylla replied.

'Yeah, I guess you're right.' Elicia said. 'Anyway, I'll think about that after we're done with these zombies.'

"Thread Magic: Loosening Spool]." Elicia chanted as she approached the horde from behind.

In the next instant, Elicia plunged into the horde with her threads lashing around her.

Around two hours later, with the moon illuminating the town, Rika put a bullet in the head of the last zombie, bringing the battle to an end.

"Damn, there sure were a lot of them." Rika said as she lowered her rifle.

"Yeah, it's a good thing you can make ammo with your magic, Chief." Tendo said as he climbed into the Humvee. "Otherwise, we would have run out of ammo a long time ago."

"And that's why we're supposed to be just as well trained in the ways of the sword or spear." Crawford said. "Looks like someone needs more training."

"Speak for yourself." Tendo shot back. "I'm just as good with a sword as I am with a magic gun."

"Yeah, sure you are." Sato chimed in.

With that, the knights gave themselves a little time to unwind after such a battle. Meanwhile, Rika lit a cigarette with a smile on her face.

'I'll get to see Shizuka soon.' Rika said to herself while taking a drag from her cigarette. 'And it looks like I'll have some good news for the captain, too. I can see his wife over there with Elicia.'

At the same time, now that there were no more threats in the immediate area, Elicia flung herself into Alfonzo's arms, wrapped her arms and legs around his torso, and buried her head in the side of his neck.

"Fonzie, I'm tired and wanna take a shower." Elicia whined.

"Yeah, me, too, Lici." Alfonzo replied as he reverted Riot and Bedlam to their sealed state, put them in the strap on his lower back, and started combing his fingers through Elicia's hair. "But before you can do that, you need to go fix the mess you made on the street."

"*Sigh* I know." Elicia muttered as she hugged Alfonzo a little tighter.

Then, after a few moments, Elicia let go of Alfonzo and went to stitch the street together. At the same time, Saeko, Kiriko, and Souichiro approached Alfonzo.

"Thank you for saving my wife and daughter, young man." Souichiro said in his usual tone.

"No problem." Alfonzo replied while waving off Souichiro's thanks.

"Anyway, now that the battle is over, we need to do something with Shido." Kiriko said while glaring at Shido.

However, when Kiriko looked in the direction where Alfonzo knocked out Shido, she was surprised to see that he was not there.

"Oh, he's over there." Alfonzo said, pointing in another direction.

Looking in the direction where Alfonzo was pointing, Saeko, Kiriko, and Souichiro saw Shido standing up with the same anti-magic harness wrapped around his arms and torso. On top of that, his legs were completely encased in a block of what appeared to be black steel.

"Yeah, he woke up while we were fighting." Alfonzo said with a shrug. "And when he tried to run away, I realized that I forgot to put cuffs on his legs. So, I did that. I was too distracted to do more delicate work during battle."

Chapter 427: Reunions

After the battle outside the Takagi mansion came to an end, Alfonzo, Elicia, Saeko, and Kiriko decided to make their way back to the primary school to give the others the good news. Saya, on the other hand, chose to stay with her parents for the night. Meanwhile, the knights, led by Rika, decided to follow Alfonzo and Elicia.

There were two reasons behind the knights decision. And neither of them had anything to do with their duties as knights.

The first was the fact that Elicia told Rika that she had been staying with Shizuka for the last few days. So, she knew that if she followed Elicia back to where they were staying, she would, more than likely, be able to see Shizuka, as well.

Second, before leaving the shelter on the other side of the river, Rika told Captain Miyamoto that she would check for information about his wife and daughter. And since she already found his wife, Kiriko, she only needed to see about his daughter, Rei, who should be at the primary school, as well.

Meanwhile, Shido, with his legs still encased in black steel and his torso restrained with an anti-magic harness, was taken to the dungeon under Takagi mansion. And once the anti-communications barrier was disabled, the Magic Council and the kingdom would be notified of his transgressions.

On top of that, Souichiro would have his best interrogator working on getting even more information about the ritual, and any co-conspirators Shido worked with to perform it.

Back at the primary school, while the children and most of the adults had gone to bed, Takashi, Rei, Kohta, and Asami were awake on night watch. Meanwhile, Sayuri decided to stay awake to accompany her son. Shizuka, on the other hand, was also awake, wanting to check anyone who might come back for injuries. Though, she was dozing off at the moment.

"So, how do you think the battle went?" Rei asked curiously.

"They probably won." Asami replied. "I mean, Fairy Tail's Team Steel Threads is their strongest team, you know."

"Steel Threads?" Rei asked. "Is that really what they're called?"

"Yeah, that's the team name they used in the Battle of Fairy Tail tournament last year." Kohta replied with a nod. "Man, I wish I could have been there to see the match between Alfonzo and the Third Master of Fairy Tail's grandson, Laxus Dreyar. From the way it was described in Sorcerer Weekly, it was pretty epic."

"Yeah, I would have loved to be there, too." Asami said with a nod. "They even had a beauty pageant and the Fantasia Parade on the same day."

"Oh, I've heard about the Fantasia Parade before." Rei said excitedly. "My mom said she went a long time ago. She said it was incredible."

"Really?" Takashi asked in an interested tone. Then, he turned to his mother. "Mom, have you seen it before?"

"I have." Sayuri replied with a nod and a smile. "Back when your father was stationed at a town near Magnolia, we went to see it on one of his off days. And Rei's mother was right, it was incredible."

"Damn, now I wanna see it, too." Takashi muttered.

"Yeah, I've never seen it either." Kohta replied. "I wanna see it, too."

"Hmm... A parade?" Shizuka asked while rubbing her eyes. "Where? I love parades."

"Oh, we were talking about the parade Fairy Tail puts on during Magnolia's Harvest Festival." Sayuri replied with a smile.

"Oh!" Shizuka exclaimed, waking up fully in an instant. "Lici told me about that. I'm gonna go see it. Maybe I'll be part of it, too!"

"Huh?" Everyone exclaimed in confusion.

"But that's for members of Fairy Tail." Rei said. "How are you going to participate, Miss Shizuka?"

"Oh, When Fonzie and Lici leave, I'm gonna go with them and join Fairy Tail." Shizuka said happily. "Lici said they could use another nurse. Plus, there will never be a bunch of zombies in Magnolia trying to eat me."

Hearing that, Takashi, Rei, Kohta, Sayuri, and Asami looked at Shizuka with shocked expression with their eyes and mouths open in dumbfounded amazement. Eventually, Rei was the first to come back to her senses.

"But what about your job at the school?" Rei asked.

"I don't think anyone will mind." Shizuka said while tilting her head cutely. "I mean, my boss got eaten by those yucky zombies. It's good, though. Now he won't look at me like that anymore."

This time, everyone looked at Rei blankly.

"Yeah, I know." Rei said with a slight blush on her face. "Don't look at me like that, I already realize how dumb that question was."

"Besides, Shizuka, that look you're talking about." Sayuri said. "I'm sure you'll get that look from men anywhere you go. Especially with your... assets."

That statement naturally drew everyone's gaze to Shizuka's breasts, hips, and thighs. However, no one spent too much time staring. Though, Kohta did have to look up at the ceiling and pinch his nose.

"Hmph!" Asami snorted as she looked away.

"Fonzie doesn't look at me like that, though." Shizuka said while tilting her head once again.

"But now that you mention it, joining Fairy Tail doesn't sound like a bad idea." Kohta muttered. "I mean, because of my size, it's not like the knights will accept me."

"Yeah, but if you worked really hard, you could still become a knight." Asami said, almost sounding disappointed that Kohta would consider not joining the knights any longer.

As it turns out, Kohta and Asami clicked quite well ever since he, Elicia, and Rei brought her and her group back from the shopping outlet. And they clicked especially well as they both aspired to be knights.

"Yeah, but I'm sure Fairy Tail would accept me right now." Kohta replied while smiling wryly. "And I doubt weight loss will be a requirement to join, either."

"I guess, but..." Asami muttered.

Meanwhile, Takashi, Rei, Sayuri, and Shizuka did not feel it would be right for them to interfere in this conversation.

"Hey, do you think she..." Takashi asked in a whisper.

"I'm pretty sure." Rei replied while whispering as well.

"Rei is right." Sayuri said while shaking her head gently. "But it looks like Hirano can't tell."

Before any of the ongoing conversations could continue, however, the sound of a vehicle stopping outside the primary school's gate could be heard. But when that sound was followed by another, everyone went on guard.

"Someone's here." Kohta said, his eyes narrowing as he spoke. "And we only had one vehicle out. So, there's a chance it's not Alfonzo."

"Then, who do you think it could be?" Sayuri asked in a slightly concerned tone.

"Who knows." Kohta said as he picked up the magic rifle Alfonzo made for him on the first day. "But we need to protect the school."

"Kohta's right." Asami said as she drew her magic pistol. "We can't let anyone hurt the children."

With that, both Kohta and Asami sprinted up to the school's second floor. Unfortunately, they would be unable to see past the wall surrounding the building had they stayed on the first floor.

Eventually, the duo reached the second floor and crept to a windows facing the front gate. Then, with their postures kept low, they looked through the windows.

"It's too dark. I can barely see anything at all." Asami said quietly. "What about you? Can you see anything, Hirano?"

"I can make out that there are two vehicles." Kohta replied. "And there is a total of seven... No, eight people who just climbed out of them."

"No idea who, though, huh?" Asami asked.

"Unfortunately, no." Kohta replied. "Just to be safe, though. Be ready to fire."

"Understood." Asami replied.

Like that, Kohta and Asami waited for the group of nine to draw nearer. However, they did not have to wait long. One of the figures raised his hand, creating a few arcs of electricity between his fingers.

With the light the electricity produced, seeing his face, as well as the faces of the others, became much easier.

"*Sigh* We can stand down, Miss Nakaoka." Kohta said in a relieved tone. "They're back. And it looks like they brought guests."

"Yeah, and some of those guests appear to be knights, too." Asami replied with a smile.

Smiling in return, Kohta stood up. Then, with Asami following behind him and engaging him in small talk, he returned to the first floor.

"So, is it something we need to worry about?" Takashi asked as soon as he saw Kohta and Asami.

"No, nothing to worry about." Kohta replied with a smile. "They're back."

Hearing that, the others smiled as well. Then, Sayuri stood up.

"Well then, let's welcome them back properly." Sayuri said with a smile.

Agreeing with the teacher, the others stood up as well. Then, as a group, they all moved towards the primary school's front entrance.

Arriving at the door, Sayuri opened it with little hesitation. And just as she did, Alfonzo and Elicia were standing in front of it.

"Hey, Mrs. Komuro, we're back." Elicia said with a smile.

"Welcome back." Sayuri replied. "And I see you brought back more people."

"Yeah, and some of them are dying to see some of the people inside." Alfonzo said playfully.

With that, Alfonzo and Elicia both stepped to the side, revealing Kiriko and Rika, who were standing directly behind them, respectively.

"Mom!" Rei shouted as she rushed past Sayuri and jumped at Kiriko.

"It's good to see you, too, Rei." Kiriko said as she opened her arms and caught her daughter. Then, while hugging Rei, Kiriko turned her head towards Takashi and Sayuri as she continued. "It's good to see that the two of you are safe, too, Sayuri and Takashi."

"You, too, Kiriko." Sayuri said with a smile.

Meanwhile, Takashi nodded politely.

While that reunion was going on, another was taking place, as well. As Rei rushed past Sayuri, Rika also stepped forward and entered the primary school after seeing Shizuka.

"Shizuka, I heard you were safe but seeing you un hurt is a real relief." Rika said as she pulled Shizuka into a hug.

"Ow!" Kohta yelped in pain with a bit of blood leaking from his nose.

The reason for Kohta's nosebleed and yelp were actually quite simple. As soon as Rika pulled Shizuka into a hug, Rika's relatively large breasts, that were no longer restrained as she removed her armor after the battle, and Shizuka's enormous breasts were smashed together and deformed in shape. And naturally, Kohta saw it, resulting in his nosebleed and a lecherous smile.

A moment later, after noticing Kohta's expression, Asami pinched and twisted his side. As a result, Kohta could not help but yelp in pain.

However, no one, other than Asami, could blame him for his reaction. Shizuka's and Rika's breasts were more than impressive, after all.

"Yeah, I'm glad you're okay, too, Rika." Shizuka replied with a smile as she returned the hug. "But if it wasn't for Lici and Fonzie, I would have been zombie food a couple of days ago."

Though he was in no way involved in Shizuka and Rika's conversation, Alfonzo froze at Shizuka's term of address. At the same time, Elicia could not help but giggle, gaining aglare from Alfonzo.

"don't look at me like that, Fonzie." Elicia said while trying to stifle her giggles. "I didn't tell her to call you that."

"Yeah, I actually believe that." Alfonzo said while still glaring at Elicia. "But it's still your fault so many people call me that now. First, it was Cana. Then, it was Marin. And now Shizuka. And you know how much I hate that nickname."

"But you let me call you that." Elicia replied, still trying not to laugh.

"No, I couldn't' get you to stop." Alfonzo replied. "There's a difference."

["Now that he mentions it..."] Scylla muttered from Elicia's inner world. ["He's right about that. He's never liked that nickname, but you wouldn't stop, and he couldn't stop you. But he stopped everyone else in your past life."]

'Huh?' Elicia exclaimed internally. 'But I thought he let me say it because I was special.'

["Nope, he never liked it."] Scylla said. ["He just got used to it."]

'Then, why didn't he stop Cana and Marin?' Elicia asked.

["Because, like you, they wouldn't have stopped even if he tried."] Scylla replied.

'Yeah, that's probably true.' Elicia said with an internal nod. Then, she had to stifle another fit of giggles when she saw Alfonzo's annoyed face. 'Still, it's cute. So, it stays.'

["Agreed."] Scylla replied with a nod of her own.

At the same time, Rika noticed the annoyed expression on Alfonzo's face after Shizuka called him by his nickname, as well. And when she did, a mischievous smile appeared on her face. Before she could say anything, however, Shizuka's next words made her snap her head back in her best friend's direction.

"Oh, and Lici invited me to join Fairy Tail." Shizuka said excitedly. "She said they could always use more healers. And I accepted her offer. So, when all the zombies are gone, I'm gonna move to Magnolia."

"What?" Rika exclaimed in surprise. Then, she swung her head in Alfonzo and Elicia's direction fast enough that her ponytail slapped Shizuka in the face.

"Ow!" Shizuka yelped, more in surprise than pain.

"Is that true?" Rika asked in a serious tone.

"Uh... I guess?" Alfonzo replied in an unsure tone while glancing at Elicia.

"Yup, I invited her." Elicia replied with a nod. "But this is the first time I've heard that she accepted."

"I see..." Rika said as she unwrapped her arms from around Shizuka. "Well, if she wants to go, it's not like I can stop her. But..."

At that point, Rika started walking back towards the primary school's entrance while muttering to herself in deep contemplation.

"Rika, are you okay?" Shizuka asked while tilting her head cutely.

"Yeah, I'm fine." Rika replied while waving back at Shizuka. "Well, now that I got to see that you're safe, it's time for us to go back."

"Aww~~~! Do you have to go already?" Shizuka whined.

"Unfortunately, I do." Rika said, turning back with a smile. "When this is all over, make sure to bring my Humvee back, okay? That way I'll be able to see you before you move to Magnolia."

"Okay~~~~." Shizuka said with a visible pout on her face. "I'll come see you before we go."

"Good." Rika said with a nod. "Then, she nodded at Alfonzo and Elicia. "Seriously, thanks for saving her. She's my best friend and the closest thing to family I have left. So, if I had found out she was dead, I probably would have broken down completely."

"You really don't have to thank us, Rika." Elicia said with a smile.

"Yeah, don't worry about it." Alfonzo added.

Smiling back, Rika eventually turned around and ordered her squad to load up. Then, after a few more moments, the knights' Humvee drove off towards the shelter on the other side of the bridge.

Back in the school, after the knights left, Alfonzo and Elicia exchanged glances.

"A hundred thousand jewels say she's gonna quit the knights and follow us back to Magnolia." Alfonzo said.

"I'm not into losing money, Fonzie." Elicia said with a wry smile. "So, I won't be taking that bet."

Shizuka, on the other hand, was too busy pouting about Rika leaving to notice Alfonzo and Elicia's speculations.

Chapter 428: Preparing For Departure

A few days after the battle outside the Takagi mansion, Alfonzo and Elicia, along with the knights had finally taken care of all the zombies in the town. Unfortunately, because of the ritual, nearly ninety-two percent of the population of Takanosu Town had died. And once word of what happened spread around the kingdom, it would be a long time before the town was repopulated.

Currently, Alfonzo and Elicia were sitting in the meeting room of the Takagi mansion with Souichiro and Captain Tadashi Miyamoto discussing the aftermath of the incident.

"*Sigh* Cleaning up after this mess is going to take a lot of time." Tadashi said in a tone mixed with annoyance and sadness. "And there were so many lives lost. Why would that Koichi Shido do something like this?"

"For the same reason all the random villains of the week do shit like this." Alfonzo replied disdainfully. "For power... And to sate his lust. I mean, apparently, he had been using his position as a marquis's son to have his way with the young women at the school for years. And when this all started, he was using [Charm Magic] to enslave almost every woman he came across, too."

"For a man like him, that doesn't surprise me." Souichiro said while shaking his head. "He and his father are the same kind of people. They both want power and see women as nothing more than objects to be used and discarded."

"I kinda wish I had run into him first before you, Fonzie." Elicia said with a dark gleam in her eyes. "Although it would have been disgusting, I would have wrapped my threads around that little thing between his legs and minced it in to a pile of fleshy bits if he had even tried to use that [Charm Magic] on me."

Hearing that, Alfonzo, Souichiro, and Tadashi all close their legs involuntarily. A reaction Elicia did not seem to notice as she was too busy thinking of the ways she would torture Shido. Alfonzo had told her about what he said when they first met, after all.

"*Cough* Anyway, were you able to find out if Shido was working with anyone else?" Tadashi asked, trying to change the subject.

"Yes, we did." Souichiro replied with a grateful nod. "Unfortunately, we were unable to get as much information as we would have liked."

"What do you mean?" Tadashi asked as his expression turned solemn.

"We found out that other than the Shido father and son, there was one more person involved in this incident." Souichiro said. "A woman. However, that was all we could get out of him. He was too afraid of the woman's retaliation to tell us more. Claiming that if she ever found out he had betrayed her, he would suffer a fate worse than death."

In response, Tadashi could only frown in contemplation. Meanwhile, Alfonzo and Elicia, who had finally snapped out of her thoughts of torturing Shido, exchanged glances. Then, after a few moments, they nodded at each other and looked back at the marquis and knight captain.

"We probably know who he was working with." Alfonzo said with a shrug.

"Yeah, while we were on our way into the town, we saw her standing on top of the clock tower." Elicia continued. "But before we could capture her, she [Teleported] away."

"And who do you think it was?" Souichiro asked with a frown.

"The other traitor of the Magic Council, Junko Enoshima." Alfonzo replied.

"That's impossible." Tadashi said while shaking his head. "She was crushed under rubble when the old Council Building collapsed. It's in all the reports."

"*Sigh* I'm really glad the Council was remade." Alfonzo said in an exasperated tone. "It was definitely in our report when we faced Grimoire Heart last year. But Junko was part of the Dark Guild. Hell, Lici even fought and defeated her."

"Yeah, but that whack job got away then, too." Elicia said with a pout. "But I'll catch her one day. No one threatens my Fonzie..."

Once again, Elicia's aura started turning dark. However, before it could become overwhelming, Alfonzo started combing his fingers through her hair. The gentle brush of his fingers against her scalp calming her down immediately.

"Yeah, we'll definitely get her next time." Alfonzo said with a loving smile. Then, he looked back at Souichiro and Tadashi as he continued. "What about the communications block? Did Shido spill anything about that?"

"Yeah, Apparently, there's some kind of device in his mansion in the town." Souichiro said with a nod.
"I'll be sending a squad of my men to check it out after this meeting ends."

"I'll be sending Chief Minami to accompany them, as well."

Hearing that, Alfonzo and Elicia once again exchanged glances before nodding at each other.

"I guess I'll go with them, too." Alfonzo said with a shrug. "I know a little about magic items... So, that might come in handy in shutting the thing down. Plus, there might be all kinds of traps set up, too."

'He knows a bit about magic items, he says.' Souichiro and Tadashi thought simultaneously while smiling on the inside.

Meanwhile, in another room of the Takagi mansion, Saya and Yuriko were enjoying a cup of tea together.

"Are you sure about this, Saya?" Yuriko asked as she placed her teacup on the saucer.

"I am." Saya replied with a nod. "I've always wanted to learn magic. But I never thought I had the talent to do so. But now that I know I have it, I would like to learn. Perhaps I would be able to help people, too."

"*Sigh* I see." Yuriko said with a sad smile. "Well, you're an adult now. So, I won't try to talk you out of it. Just be careful. Even when you're not looking for it, a wizard seems to find trouble a lot more than a normal person."

"Yes, Mother." Saya replied with a nod. "I'll be careful. Besides, if I join a guild, I'll have people to watch my back."

"Yes, that's true." Yuriko said as a maid refilled her teacup. Then, after taking a sip from the refilled cup, she continued with the cup still in her hands. "On top of that, a guild would have quite the selection of magic to learn. So, you definitely be able to find the magic that fits you the best."

Nodding in agreement as she had come to the same conclusion, Saya picked up her own teacup and took a sip.

"So, you'll be joining Fairy Tail, correct?" Yuriko asked in a playful tone. "I mean, you want to be with the man you have a crush on, right?"

"Spurt!*

"*Cough!* *Cough!* Mom!" Saya exclaimed after spewing a mouthful of tea. Then, with her face red up to her ears, she continued in an angry, yet embarrassed, tone. "What are you talking about!? Who has a crush on Alfonzo!? Like I'd ever be interested in someone who wasn't smarter than me!"

"Oh my?" Yuriko replied while gracefully covering her smile with her right hand. "But Saya, Sweetie, I never mentioned anything about Alfonzo. Besides, didn't Elicia say that both Miss Busujima and Mr. Hirano would be going back to Magnolia with them to join Fairy Tail, as well? So, why did you immediately assume I was talking about Alfonzo?"

This time, Saya did not give in to her mother's provocation. Instead, she simply rolled her eyes while watching the made clean up the mess she made.

"Yeah, like I would ever have a crush on Hirano." Saya said, not realizing that she had just told on herself.

Instead of teasing Saya any further, Yuriko just gave her a knowing glance before taking another sip of her tea.

"Anyway, you never did say which guild you wished to join." Yuriko said with a smile.

"*Sigh* You were correct, Mother." Saya said in an exasperated tone. "I would like to join Fairy Tail. Though, it has nothing to do with having a crush on anyone. But Alfonzo and Elicia told me about a particular type of magic that would suit me. On top of that, they have a friend who could help me learn it."

"Oh, and what magic is that?" Yuriko asked in an interested tone.

"[Solid Script Magic]." Saya replied.

At the same time, Saeko had returned to the Busujima residence, a large eastern style mansion, and was packing her belongings.

"*Sigh* It's too bad father is not here." Saeko muttered to herself as she packed some of the more important things in her bedroom into a bag. "I know he would not have stopped me. Instead, he would have been elated that I had the potential to use magic and surpass him as a swordsman. Though, he did often admit that he was not the strongest swordsman on the continent. Something about a woman much older than he was who perpetually looked young."

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

Sneeze!

"*Pant* Are you okay, *Pant* Master Ritsu?" Tsunade, who was lying flat on her back and covered in sweat in the Mermaid Heel guild master's private training chamber, asked between ragged breaths. "Did you catch a cold, *Pant* or something?"

"I'm fine, Tsuna." Ritsu said as she took a handkerchief from the interior of her kimono to wipe her nose. "It would seem someone was talking about me. And I must say, I don't like the topic."

Hearing that, Tsunade began to shiver as Ritsu's angry aura filled the training chamber.

'She's not gonna take this out on me, is she?' Tsunade thought to herself in terror. 'Just the other day, with Shizune's help, I found out that I have in fact died during my training with her. And I really don't wanna experience that again. Especially since I lived through this session... A session that's already over.'

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Takanosu.

At the same time, Saeko shivered involuntarily, feeling that her life would be in danger if she continued her line of thinking.

Looking around warily, Saeko was unable to find the source of that feeling. So, once the feeling disappeared, she went back to packing her bags.

"I'm really looking forward to fighting Titania and that girl, Sun Seto, Alfonzo and Elicia talked about." Saeko said with a happy smile on her face. "Having talented swordswomen around my age to train with would be good for me."

At that point, Saeko stopped what she was doing as she shivered.

"And I'll be able to take bandit subjugation quests, too." Saeko said with a sadistic smile on her face. A moment later, however, she calmed down and wore an apprehensive expression. "*Sigh* I wonder how the members of Fairy Tail will react to that side of me?"

With that thought, Saeko shook her head before she returned to packing her belongings, taking a lot less clothing than expected. She would be in the same guild as the Magic Seamstress, after all. Thinking now would be a good time to upgrade her wardrobe.

Like Saeko, Kohta was in another part of the town packing to leave Takanosu with Alfonzo and Elicia. However, he did not have much to pack. Although he had magic guns from his time training to become a knight, none of them could compare to the one Alfonzo made for him. So, he decided he would leave them behind.

"I'll just have to make money by completing quests." Kohta thought to himself as he looked over his magic gun collection. "*Sigh* I'm really gonna miss you guys. But it's time for me to move on."

As he spoke the last part, Kohta ran his hand over the magic rifle that was his favorite part of his collection with a gentle gaze.

"Anyway, I guess I should leave Mom and Dad a note." Kohta said as he tore his gaze away from his magic gun collection. "I'm sure they would be proud of me. They never wanted me to join the knights, anyway, not liking the fact that I'd lose the freedom to do what I like once I did. They actually told me to join Fairy Tail. Especially my mom after she saw Elicia's clothing. *Sigh* In the end, I'm doing what she wanted me to."

Like Elicia, Kohta's mother was also a fashion designer. And although she was successful, that was only within the borders of Fiore. However, she was never jealous of the up-and-coming designer, Elicia. Instead, she had always wanted to work with her.

Knowing that, Kohta decided that after he got settled in Magnolia, he would run the idea past Elicia. And who knows, maybe his mother would be able to expand her business as well.

Meanwhile, the only other person who would be leaving Takanosu with Alfonzo and Elicia, Shizuka, was happily playing with the kids in the primary school and waiting for Alfonzo and Elicia to come back to get her.

'I can't wait to see the parade.' Shizuka thought to herself happily. 'I bet all the floats will be really pretty. I wonder if I can ride one.'

Chapter 429: Goodbye, Takanosu

"Alright, is everyone ready?" Alfonzo asked while climbing into the driver's seat of Rika's Humvee.

Receiving nods of agreement from Elicia, Saeko, Saya, Shizuka, and Kohta, Alfonzo nodded back before sitting down and closing the door. At the same time, Elicia, Saeko, Saya, Shizuka, and Kohta also got themselves comfortable in the Escalade. Then, after waving through the windows at everyone who gathered to send them off at the primary school, they drove away, heading for Rika's apartment.

"*Sigh* They're all really leaving, huh?" Takashi asked as he looked down the road at the retreating magic vehicles.

"Yeah. Even though they weren't here for long, I'm gonna miss them." Rei said with a nod.

"I guess it's easy to get attached when you live through life and death with someone, huh?" Takashi asked. "*Sigh* Maybe joining Fairy Tail wouldn't have been so bad."

"Stop moping." Kiriko said. "It's not like you can't join them later. Besides, we'll all be going on a trip to see the Fantasia Parade in a few days anyway, remember?"

"Yeah, I know." Takashi muttered.

"Takashi, it's not the end of the world." Sayuri said as she patted her son's shoulder. "It's not like you don't know where to find them. You can go and visit anytime you want."

With that, she whispered into her son's ear.

"Besides, you have a chance to finally get Rei's heart now that everything is over." Sayuri said sternly at a volume only Takashi could hear. "Just stop being a coward and confess to her. Or do you want another Hisashi to show up and take her."

Hearing that, Takashi shuddered, both in sadness and unwillingness. Hisashi, or Hisashi Igou was Takashi's friend. He, Takashi, Saya, and Rei grew up together. And like Takashi, Hisashi had developed feelings for Rei as they entered puberty. On top of that, Rei had developed feelings for Takashi.

Unfortunately, Takashi was too afraid to tell Rei how he felt about her. Afraid that his feelings were unrequited. Adding to that, Rei had gotten tired of waiting for Takashi to make the first move. And finally, Hisashi had struck up the courage to confess his feelings. As a result, Rei and Hisashi became a couple.

However, their relationship did not last long. Nor was it particularly harmonious. Hisashi knew that Rei had feelings for Takashi, and she was just settling for him. But he did not want to lose her. So, he did anything and everything to make her happy. And Rei truly appreciated it. But her feelings for Takashi never waned and she ended up getting more and more frustrated as time went by.

Meanwhile, Takashi fell into depression over Rei and Hisashi's relationship. However, Hisashi, when everything went to hell in the town, was turned into a zombie while they were first trying to escape the school. And in the end, Takashi was the one who put him down.

"*Sigh* I know, Mom." Takashi said as he glanced at Rei. "I'll tell her."

"Good." Sayuri said as she pulled Takashi into a hug. "Besides, even if you weren't sure about Fairy Tail, Alfonzo and Elicia gave you and Rei a list of guilds you could join if you were still interested."

"Yeah, I know." Takashi said after shaking his head to get rid of his thoughts about Hisashi. "And honestly, that's one of the reasons I feel bad about not accepting their offer. I mean, they did save not only me, but everyone else, too."

"Oh, so you wanted to go to another guild, then?" Sayuri asked in a surprised tone.

"Yeah, I wanna join Lamia Scale." Takashi replied with a nod. "I mean, the way Jura Neekis uses [Earth Magic] is pretty bad ass. I wonder if he would teach me if I joined."

"Well, there's only one way to find out." Sayuri replied with a nod. Then, she gestured towards Rei with her chin. "And you don't have to go alone, you know."

Smiling wryly at his mother, Takashi also turned towards Rei with a resolute expression.

"Well, there's no time like the present." Takashi muttered as he started walking towards his childhood friend. Then, he took a deep breath before continuing. "Hey, Rei, can I talk to you for a minute?"

"That's right, even if it doesn't work, it's better than seeing you all depressed because you never tried." Sayuri muttered as she watched Takashi and Rei step away to talk in private.

"I hope it works out." Kiriko said as she approached Sayuri after Takashi and Rei stepped away. "I never like that Igou kid, anyway. He was too soft, too accepting, too perfect... Made me think there was something going on that we didn't know about."

"*Sigh* Yuuji used to say the same thing before he passed away." Sayuri said. "But there's no point talking about it now, he's dead. And he died in a tragic way."

"*Sigh* You're right." Kiriko replied while shaking her head. "Still, I hope it works out between them. I mean, Rei had been waiting for Takashi to make a move for a long time."

Meanwhile, the Escalade and the Humvee drove through the town with nothing to hinder their return to Rika's apartment. And while the Escalade was full of passengers, Alfonzo sat alone in the Humvee.

"Man, I really hope Lici and I were right about what Rika was going to do." Alfonzo muttered as he drove. "'Cause if we were wrong, it's gonna be a really tight ride back to Magnolia."

["yeah."] Bedlam replied from Alfonzo's inner world. ["I mean, usually with four women, you would just have to put Kohta up front and let the girls squeeze a little bit in the back seat."]

["But with Lici's thick hips, Shizuka's thick.... Well, everything that matters, and the other two, who are, let's be real, pretty thick, too, it would be way too tight."] Riot said, adding to Bedlam's explanation.

"Oh, I'm well aware of how thick they are." Alfonzo replied. "And honestly, I really hope they are receptive to the harem life."

["Oh, you usually like to wait longer to get to know someone."] Bedlam said with feigned surprise in his tone. ["What happened? I mean, even though you knew Lucy from the anime in your past life, you still wanted to take the time to get to know her."]

"*Sigh* I know." Alfonzo replied. "But in situations like what we just pulled them out of, no one hides their true selves. No one other than people like that greasy son of a bitch, Shido, anyway."

["True."] Bedlam said, his tone telling Alfonzo to continue.

"And I think I got a good chance to see exactly what all of them were about." Alfonzo said, continuing his explanation. "Shizuka is... well... Shizuka. She's ditzy, cheerful, and really good at what she does. On top of that, she has a kind heart, wanting to keep everyone safe and healthy. In fact, that's why she probably awoke [Healing Magic] without needing to be taught."

[“Yeah, and since any kind of [Healing Magic] is so rare, it makes it even more impressive.”] Riot said, a rare hint of appreciation in his tone.

“Yeah, Alfonzo replied with a nod. “Then, there’s Saeko. She’s extremely loyal, dedicated to getting stronger, and willing to help those who need it. I mean, she should have been able to get out of that school on her own with little effort. Yet, she stayed to help the others, rescuing as many of them as she could.”

In response, Riot and Bedlam both nodded their heads.

“But she’s also got a dark side.” Alfonzo added. “I mean, it was easy to see how much joy she was taking from the act of cutting down those zombies. Even the ones who were made from children. I’m surprised she didn’t freeze up like that one time in the anime, though.”

[“Remember, this isn’t the same world.”] Bedlam said. [“This world is a lot crueler than the world of HOTD before the zombie apocalypse, her father had probably instilled the thought of putting down a threat without mercy when she was a child.”]

“Probably.” Alfonzo replied with a nod. “And because of that conditioning, she probably pushed through it because they were zombies. I just hope she’s not willing to kill living kids like that, too.”

[“You can play shrink later.”] Riot said, cutting off the topic. [“Keep going onto the others.”]

“Huh?” Alfonzo exclaimed in confusion. “Am I shielding my thoughts again? Why are you so interested in what I’m going to say?”

["No, we know what you're thinking."] Bedlam said, answering Alfonzo's first question. ["But hearing the way you word your thoughts is the interesting part."]

"I see." Alfonzo replied with a slight smile. "Anyway, next is Saya, huh? Well... From what I can tell, the only thing she wants is recognition. I mean, the way her eyes lit up when I called her a genius was crazy. It's almost like she didn't receive compliments or praise very often, if at all."

["Yeah, I can see that."] Bedlam said. ["Her father didn't seem like the type. And her mother seemed to spend more time teasing her and teaching her the proper etiquette for a marquis's daughter than anything else. Though, it was clear that both of them really love her."]

"Yeah, I noticed that, too." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "So, going somewhere where people will praise her for her accomplishments and justifiably argue with her when she says or does something wrong, or insensitive, will be good for her. And eventually, she'll see the whole guild as a family. Even if she won't act like it outwardly. Damn tsunderes."

At that exact moment, Saya sneezed in the Escalade.

"Miss Takagi, are you okay?" Shizuka asked in a concerned tone. "Did you catch a cold? Do you want me to cast a [Cure] spell on you?"

"No, I'm fine." Saya replied, looking away from Shizuka's concerned gaze as she did so. "It was only a sneeze. But for some reason, I wanna punch Alfonzo, right now. Hmph!"

Hearing that, Elicia could not help but smile.

'Fonzie is probably calling her a tsundere.' Elicia thought to herself.

["Wouldn't doubt it in the slightest."] Scylla replied in an amused tone.

Back in the Humvee.

["And what about Kohta?"] Riot asked.

"Well, there's really nothing to worry about there." Alfonzo said. "Like Saeko, he seems really loyal. He doesn't talk much, though. So, I don't know how well he'll mesh with most of the guild. But after seeing Alzack and Bisca's guns, he'll at least get along with them just fine. Alzack might beat him up for staring at Bisca too much, though."

As he said the last part, Alfonzo couldn't help but smile. After the wedding, Alzack finally admitted to him that he liked Bisca, something that everyone already knew. And he asked Alfonzo for advice on asking her out. Unfortunately, after telling Alzack how he asked Lucy out, he doubted that his advice would matter in the long run.

"However, when Alzack does something to stop Kohta's lecherous gazes, Alzack will probably slip and blurt out his feelings for Bisca in an emotional outburst." Alfonzo said with a shrug. "So, something good will probably come from Kohta being there."

["Yeah, and considering how short the skirts she usually wears are, mixed with the low-cut tops she wears from time to time, it will probably happen sooner rather than later."] Bedlam added with a chuckle.

Nodding in agreement, Alfonzo continued to drive while chatting idly with his [Armament Spirits].

"We're here." Alfonzo said as he pulled up in front of Rika's apartment building.

A moment later, Alfonzo stopped the Humvee in front of the garage, shortly followed by Elicia and the Escalade. Then, all six travelers climbed out of the magic vehicles and made their way over to the front door.

"Okay, let's go in and say goodbye to Rika." Shizuka said in a mix of excitement and sadness as she pulled the key to Rika's apartment out of her purse.

'I was almost certain she was gonna pull that key from between her breasts.' Alfonzo thought to himself as he watched Shizuka retrieve the key like a normal person. 'I mean, hell, it seems like that's every woman's favorite place in the world to keep their belongings. Shit, if I hadn't seen so many, I'd wonder if they actually had a pocket built between those things.'

While Alfonzo's thoughts drifted off in a weird direction, Shizuka unlocked the apartment building's door. Then, she, followed by the others, entered the house with little in the way of hesitation. A few moments later, they had all climbed the stairs. And when they reached the main living area, they were surprised at what they saw.

Sitting on the couch in the living room, Rika, with bags of all sorts and sizes was waiting for them while smoking a cigarette.

"Good, you're all here." Rika said before taking a last drag from her cigarette. Then, after exhaling the smoke and putting the cigarette out in the ash tray on the end table next to her, she stood up as she continued. "You all wanna make it to Magnolia before night fall, right? Then we should get going. We're wasting day light."

In response, Saeko, Saya, Shizuka, and Kohta only looked at Rika blankly. Meanwhile, Alfonzo and Elicia shook their heads with wry smiles on their faces.

"I guess that means you're coming with us, right, Rika?" Elicia asked, snapping everyone else out of their stupor.

"That's right." Rika replied with a nod and a smile.

"You're finally taking a vacation, Rika?" Shizuka asked, excitement filling her expression. "You've been saying you should do that forever. So, after visiting Magnolia, where are you gonna go next? Ooh! Are you gonna stay in Magnolia long enough to see the Fantasia Parade? Where are you gonna go after that? How about Akane Beach? If you go there, can I come with you? I've never been there before! Wait! How much vacation do you have? I mean, you almost never use it, right?"

As Shizuka bombarded Rika with questions, she trotted over to her best friend before wrapping her in a tight hug, once again pressing their sizable breasts into each other.

"Hehe... Panda hug." Kohta muttered stupidly

"Pervert." Saya said while glaring at Kohta disdainfully.

"Calm down, Shizuka." Rika said with a smile while patting Shizuka on her back. "But to answer your first question, no I didn't take any vacation time."

Hearing that, Shizuka deflated visibly.

["Damn, another one whose breasts shrank in real time."] Bedlam said in an amazed tone. ["Do the size of these women's breasts indicate their moods, like a mood ring or something? But instead of colors, they use cup sizes? "]

Hearing what Bedlam had to say, Alfonzo and Riot started to seriously consider his hypothesis. At the same time, Rika continued before Shizuka could get too depressed.

"I retired from the knights." Rika said with a smile. "And I've decided to join Fairy Tail. I can't let you go alone, after all. I mean, someone's gotta keep those boob obsessed men from getting too handsy, right?"

At the same time back in Magnolia, Macao, Wakaba, and Gildarts sneezed simultaneously, spilling their drinks all over themselves in the process. As a result, everyone in the guild hall laughed at their misfortune, which led to a guild-wide brawl.

Meanwhile, in Rika's apartment, Shizuka perked up immediately at Rika's clarification.

'Did her boobs just get bigger?' Elicia asked herself with a critical eye. 'I'm gonna have to redesign those clothes she commissioned from me. And how in the world did her bra not burst from that. She just jumped up to a K-cup. Does she have some kind of magical bra? No, that's impossible. I can't sense any magic power coming from it.'

["On top of that, just a minute ago, they dropped by at least two cup sizes when she thought Rika wasn't coming with us."] Scylla added. ["Then, when she got happy again, they got even bigger. What are they... mood rings?"]

Surprisingly, all the [Armament Spirits] present were having the same stupid thoughts. At the same time, their hosts were seriously considering the possibility.

Still, that did not stop the group from gathering up Rika's luggage. Nor did it stop Alfonzo from bringing Rika's entire gun safe and packing them into the Humvee.

Then, after everything was packed, the group of seven split into two groups, boarded the Escalade and the Humvee, with Alfonzo driving the Escalade and Rika driving her Humvee, and made their way back to Magnolia, bringing an end to the zombie apocalypse that hit Takanosu Town.

Chapter 430: R.I.P. Macao and Wakaba

Shortly before nightfall on the day Alfonzo, Elicia, and the others left Takanosu Town, the fairy Tail guild hall was as rowdy as ever.

Bang!

"I can't believe Fonzie and Lici didn't bring any of us along for a zombie apocalypse." Cana said in an annoyed tone after chugging down a mug of ale while slamming the empty mug onto the table where she and her friends sat.

"And how would you have wanted to deal with it if they had brought you along with them?" Levy asked curiously.

"I would have just found the center of the town and cast the biggest [Super Nova] I could manage." Cana said proudly. "That would have destroyed most of the zombies in one shot. Then, taking care of the rest wouldn't have been too hard."

"And Fairy Tail would have been labeled a Dark Guild." Ultear said in an exasperated tone.

["That's a gamble we're willing to take, right, Cana?"] The feminine voice of Cana's [Armament Spirit] asked her from her inner world. ["Without a bit of uncertainty, life ain't worth living, is it?"]

'Hell no!' Cana replied internally. 'You know risking the guild is never an acceptable gamble.'

["Calm down, calm down, I was just kidding."] Cana's [Armament Spirit] replied while holding her arms up disarmingly. ["Besides, if we did that, Fonzie would never cook for us or let us drink alcohol ever again."]

Just the thought of a punishment like that caused Cana to shudder. The thought of never drinking again or never having Alfonzo's food again, while everyone else got to eat it, was worse than death for her.

"Anyway, when do you think Alfonzo and Lici will be back?" Sun asked curiously. "I miss them."

"Don't worry, they should be back soon, Sun." Ur, who just left the elevator, said as she approached the table where Alfonzo and Elicia's group of friends usually sat.

"Really?" Sun asked, her eyes sparkling in anticipation.

"Yeah, I got a message from them this morning." Ur replied with a nod. "Apparently, things were much worse than they originally thought. Junko Enoshima was involved in whatever happened. But I'll have to wait until they return to get all the details."

"Damn, now I really wish they had taken me with them." Cana said while clenching her fists. "Lici told us what that bitch said she would do to Alfonzo to bring Lici despair. And she needs to pay for that."

"Do you really wanna get in the way of that?" Marin asked while smiling wryly. "I mean, she's already been marked by Lici, right?"

"Indeed." Laki added with a nod. "If you wanna get in the way of Lici's hunt, your head is more broken than I thought."

"Wait, did you just call me crazy?" Cana asked as she narrowed her eyes at Laki.

In response, Laki only smiled while adjusting her glasses.

"Anyway, I have a question for the rest of you." Ur said with genuine curiosity in her tone.

Hearing that, everyone at the table looked at her with curiosity.

"Other than Erza, we all call Elicia, Lici, right?" Ur asked.

Receiving nods in response, Ur continued.

"But none of us, other than Cana and Marin, call Alfonzo, Fonzie." Ur said. "But why is that?"

"Because Alfonzo does not like it." Laki replied.

Hearing that, everyone, other than Cana and Marin, nodded their heads. Meanwhile, Ur thought about Laki's response. Cana and Marin, on the other hand, were completely gob smacked.

"Seriously, he doesn't like it?" Cana asked.

"Then why didn't he tell us to stop?" Marin asked at the same time.

"I'm surprised you didn't notice, Cana." Alzack said. "For as long as I can remember, even when Lici says it, his eyebrows twitch. Though, it's gotten less and less noticeable over the years. And considering how much and how hard you used to watch him, I can't believe you never saw that."

Hearing that, Cana looked completely dumbfounded.

"Yeah, but if he doesn't like it, why didn't he tell us to stop?" Marin asked again after letting Alzack's explanation sink in.

"Would you have stopped if he did?" Lisanna asked.

Stopping to think about it, Marin eventually smiled wryly.

"Probably not." Marin replied. "It's such a cute nickname."

"Yeah, me neither." Cana added.

"Yup, and that's why I say you're the most selfish among us." Ultear said with a shrug. "Now, I guess we can add Marin to that list, too."

"What was that?" Cana asked in a threatening tone. "You asking for a fight?"

"Anytime." Ultear replied with a dangerous smile on her face.

"Hey, Master." Gray said with a smile. "Remember when Ultear used to say the guild was rubbing off on us and how it was making us more prone to acts of violence."

"I'll answer that question after you put your clothes on, Gray." Ur replied with a twitching smile.

"Huh? Ah! Damn it." Gray said as he scrambled to gather his clothes.

"But yeah, I remember those days." Ur said with a nostalgic smile. "That was something she always used to say for the first few months after we joined the guild. So much has changed since then."

Crash!

Just as Ur finished speaking, a mug of ale flew from the other side of the guild hall and broke on the back of her head, drenching her back in ale.

A moment later, Ur's magic power exploded out of her, lowering the temperature in the guild hall and causing the newly started brawl to come to a screeching halt.

"But some things never change." Ur said menacingly. Then, she spun around on her heels as she shouted at the brawlers. "Alright, who threw it?"

Immediately, all those participating in the brawl pointed at a pair of men who were pointing at each other.

"So, Macao and Wakaba, huh?" Ur said as she slowly started walking forward while cracking her knuckles. "It seems you miss the days when you were still participating in the S-Class exam, huh? You guys must really miss sparring with me, right?"

"No, Ur... I mean, Master, it's not what you think." Macao said while stepping back in fear.

"Yeah, it was an accident, Master." Wakaba added while stepping back with Macao.

"Oh, it was an accident." Ur said while letting her hands fall to her sides while her face bloomed into a forgiving smile. "If it was just an accident, there's no point in going too far."

Hearing that, Macao and Wakaba exhaled sighs of relief. Meanwhile, everyone else in the guild hall was shivering in terror while looking at the two senior wizards with pity in their gazes.

"Still, I think you should come with me for training." Ur said, her smile widening. "We can't have accidents like that happening, right? I mean, this time it was just a cup. But what if you had an accident

on a quest? You wouldn't get any points, right? Then you wouldn't be able to trade those points in for Alfonzo's cooking, right?"

By now, Macao and Wakaba had finally realized they were relieved way too soon. Unfortunately, because of their fear, when they saw Ur's friendly smile, they let themselves think she had forgiven them to escape reality, if only for a moment.

A moment later, while Ur was still slowly approaching, Macao and Wakaba exchanged glances. Then, without hesitation, they took off running in different directions. And in response to their actions, everyone's gazes of pity were replaced with shaking heads.

"*Sigh* They let their fear and panic cloud their judgement." Gildarts said before picking up his mug from the bar top. Then, he raised his drink high, toasting to Macao and Wakaba's fates as he continued. "Running... Or trying to run will only make this even worse for them."

In response, Gozaburo, Ren, and Maes also raised their drinks before taking a swig in remembrance.

And just as Gildarts said, not even ten steps later, both Macao and Wakaba's feet were frozen to the floor. Then, Ur calmly approached them in turn, grabbed them by their collars, and started walking towards the elevator.

"Now, let's work on getting you in full control of your bodies and magic." Ur said, still using that friendly tone with a friendly smile on her face. "We can't have you two having accidents on your quests, right?"

Hearing that, Macao and Wakaba could only hang their heads while they were dragged along by a smiling, yet clearly pissed off, Ur. However, at that moment, the doors to the guild slid open.

With the doors opening, everyone in the guild turned their heads towards the guild hall's entrance. And when they did, they found a group of seven standing in the doorway.

While Alfonzo and Elicia, the leaders of the group of new arrivals understood almost exactly what was happening after scanning the guild hall, Saeko, Saya, Shizuka, Kohta, and Rika looked around with curiosity.

Deciding that he would break the awkward atmosphere in the guild hall, Alfonzo stepped forward into the main hall, spread his arms, raised his head, and shouted at the top of his lungs without the use of his magic power.

"Fairy Tail! We're back!"

Immediately, the whole guild began to cheer while many drinks were raised in celebration.

"Ha! Not bad." Rika said with a smile. "I think I'll like it here."

"It certainly is lively here." Saeko said as her eyes scanned the room before stopping at the table where Alfonzo, Elicia, and their friends usually sat after feeling the aura of two strong swordsman. "I think joining this guild was a great idea."

"Hmph!" Saya snorted. "There just a bunch of brutes. I bet if you added the I.Q. of everyone in this room, it would barely reach three digits."

"That's kind of rude, isn't it, Miss Takagi?" Kohta said while smiling wryly.

"I already told you, you can call me Saya." Saya said disdainfully. "Since we're gonna be in the same guild, there's no need to be so formal, fat ass."

"Uh... Right..." Kohta replied. "Then, uh... Do you think you could stop calling me fat ass? It's okay to call me Kohta, you know."

"Hmph!" Saya snorted while looking away. "Just think of it as a term of endearment."

"Good to have you back, kids." Ur said with a smile as she released Macao and Wakaba. Then, as she continued, she started walking towards Alfonzo, Elicia, and the rest of the new arrivals. "And it looks like you've brought some new faces. New guild mates, yes?"

Meanwhile, after Ur released them, Macao and Wakaba both exhaled sighs of relief again. Then, they exchanged glances and smiled when they saw the same emotions, being saved brought, in each other's eyes. After that, they both tried to walk back to their table.

Unfortunately, they both realized they had relaxed way too soon again. When they tried to go back to their table, they both realized their feet were once again frozen to the floor. So, they just hung their heads while they waited for the inevitable ass kicking they would receive in the name of training.

"Yeah." Alfonzo replied with a nod and a smile of his own. "They were actually the first people we saved when we got to Takanosu. Well, most of them, anyway."

As he spoke, Alfonzo and Elicia glanced at Rika, who was animatedly talking to Shizuka about the guild hall.

"I wonder how they built this place." Rika said while scanning the main hall with curiosity. "I mean, it looks like almost everything is made of metal. It's got to be heavy as all hell."

"Yeah, and it's so big, too." Shizuka said with childlike wonder in her expression.

"That's what she said." Alfonzo said casually while walking forward to meet up with Ur.

Hearing that, Shizuka looked back with a confused expression on her face. Meanwhile, Rika grinned in amusement.

"I think me and him are gonna get along just fine." Rika said with her grin blooming into a full grown smile.

"Yeah, that is what I said." Shizuka said in a thoroughly confused tone. Then, she turned to look at Rika while tilting her head in confusion. "Do you know what he meant by that, Rika?"

Immediately, Rika burst into loud uproarious laughter while the everyone else who heard the conversation could not help but start laughing as well. Alfonzo, on the other hand, could only smile wryly.

"She's like Sun when she first got here." Alfonzo muttered. "But Sun was only fourteen. Shizuka's already a grown woman and still so innocent. I'm almost afraid of corrupting her."

"But you'd still do it, though." Elicia replied after getting her laughter under control. "And you'll enjoy it."

"Yeah, I will." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "Anyway, let's go give our report."

"Actually, that can wait for a while, Kid." Ur said as she reached the group. "I've got to help Macao and Wakaba train for a bit. It should only take an hour, though."

"Then, why did you come over here first?" Alfonzo asked in a confused tone.

"So I could talk to the newcomers." Ur replied. "If they're suitable, I'll let them join the guild. Meanwhile, you can get a lot of cooking done in an hour, right? That should be enough time to get their welcome party started, shouldn't it?"

"I should have known..." Alfonzo muttered. "Because the fact that I've been fighting Zombies for a few days isn't enough to make you push their welcome party back to tomorrow, is it?"

"Of course not." Ur replied with a smile. "Better to strike the iron while it's hot, after all. Besides, I'll need you to fix all the floats your guild mates broke while you were gone tomorrow. So, I'm sure you wouldn't wanna do it then, either."

Hearing that, Alfonzo raised an eyebrow. Then, he scanned the faces of everyone in the guild hall. Noticing that a few people lowered their heads with guild and fear etched on their faces, Alfonzo decided he would have a few private training sessions with them in the next few days.

At the same time, he also noted that Cana, Erza, and Mirajane also lowered their heads guiltily. Then, he decided their punishments, as well. None of his private alcohol for Cana for a month. After this party, he wouldn't be cooking for Mirajane for twenty-four hours. And Erza wouldn't be having strawberry shortcake for a week. He wanted to make her punishment longer, but any longer and she might go into a strawberry shortcake withdrawal induced rampage.

"Fine, I'll get to it." Alfonzo said in an annoyed tone. A moment later, however, just as Ur had smiled triumphantly, he continued, causing Ur's expression to fall. "You know my usual rates. And since I just got back from a quest... An emergency S-Class one, I'll be charging two and a half times my normal rates."

"Just go!" Ur shouted angrily. "I already know the damn rates. Now let me talk to my new wizards!"

Hearing the frustration in Ur's shouts, Alfonzo smiled widely. Then, with a bit of extra pep in his step, he made his way towards the kitchen, causing the guild to start bubbling in excitement.

Unfortunately for Macao and Wakaba, they ended up being the outlet for Ur's extra frustration. And when they eventually joined the party, both middle-aged men were limping, shivering, and on the verge of crying. Meanwhile, Ur looked completely refreshed. She felt so good, in fact, she decided she could wait until tomorrow to talk to Alfonzo and Elicia about their most recent quest.

