

Fairy Tail 471

Chapter 471: Elicia's Fury 3

While Alfonzo followed Goldmine up to his office, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga followed Guy to the table where he was sitting, before he went to open the guild hall's doors. When they arrived, they found a brown-haired man sitting there with a bottle of sake in front of him.

"Genma, allow me to introduce you to our youthful guests from Fairy Tail." Guy said energetically as the group of four reached the table. "They are Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga."

Hearing the name Ikaruga, the brown-haired man, Genma, or Genma Shiranui, a shinobi from the Village Hidden in the Leaves, narrowed his eyes as he gazed at the pink-haired former assassin.

"So, it's you, Ikaruga." Genma said calmly. "I still need to repay you for the last time we met. You almost killed me and Raidō back then."

"Mr. Shiranui, it's nice to see you again." Ikaruga replied while bowing her head politely. "I hope you have been well since the last time we met. And I hope you don't hold what happened against me from when we last met."

"Oh, why would I?" Genma asked, his tone still as calm as before. "You only almost killed Raidō. He still has scars from that time on his face."

"*Sigh* And this is one of the things about trying to reform criminals that makes it so hard." Elicia said as she took a seat at the table. "Their pasts always come back to haunt them."

Hearing that, Genma's calm expression broke as he opened his eyes wide. Then his head snapped in Elicia's direction.

"You would actually try to reform a killer like her?" Genma asked while pointing his finger at Ikaruga.

Meanwhile, Marin and Guy also took seats at the table while Ikaruga remained standing behind Elicia.

"And you would so easily show her your back?" Genma continued. "You know who she is and what she does, right?"

"Of course I do." Elicia replied. "Fonzie and I were the ones who destroyed Death's Head Caucus, after all."

"Then why?" Genma asked in a confused tone.

"There are two reasons, actually." Elicia replied while holding up the index and middle finger of her right hand. "First, she's not strong enough to do anything to me or the people I care about. And second, she would never be able to sneak up on any of us."

"Still, you shouldn't trust someone like her." Genma said.

"That's not really fair, is it?" Marin asked with a slight frown on her face. "I mean, you're a shinobi, right?"

"Yeah, what about it?" Genma asked as his gaze shifted from Elicia to Marin.

"Well, you shinobi do the same thing as she did, right?" Marin asked. "You take assassination quests. The only difference is that you are sanctioned by the kingdom while the dark guild's aren't."

"Exactly, we're sanctioned by the kingdom." Genma replied. "Besides, we only assassinate the enemies of the kingdom. But she killed anyone as long as the price was right."

"Marin, don't bother." Elicia said while shaking her head before Marin could reply. "It's easy to tell that she hurt someone he cares about. A friend or a member of his family. So, he won't want to hear what you have to say."

Then, Elicia made eye contact with Genma.

"But this is something the Magic Council decided." Elicia continued. "Attacking her because of your grudge would be a crime at this point. So, I would suggest you don't do that. I wouldn't want to have to put you in prison. Especially since Fonzie will be going to the Village Hidden in the leaves sometime soon. That would sour relations, you know."

With that, the people at the table fell silent for a few moments. Eventually, Genma lowered his head and released a sigh.

"I get it." Genma muttered. "I won't do anything. But if she does anything to hurt a member of the guild--"

"She'll be put down before she ever gets to that point." Elicia said in a stern tone. "She's my responsibility. So, I'll do what I have to."

As she spoke, Elicia's eyes flashed with resolve. And when Genma saw that, he nodded his head.

"I hope so." Genma said, deciding to leave the topic alone.

"Anyway, let's talk about something more youthful." Guy said, breaking the solemn atmosphere. "Like training hard with youthful passion."

Guy's usual atmosphere caused the others to shake their heads. However, it did lead to Elicia, Marin, Guy, and Genma chatting harmoniously. Meanwhile, Ikaruga took it upon herself to head to the bar to place food and drink orders for everyone.

A few minutes later, the thing Elicia was looking forward to the least happened. Bacchus, with his group of followers, approached the table.

"Elicia!" Bacchus shouted in a drunk slur. "Finally, we can see each other again. And don't worry, in these two months, I'll find a way to free you from that man's clutches. Then, we can be together like the two of us have always wanted."

Immediately, the atmosphere around Elicia changed. While she was chatting with Marin, Guy, and Genma, she was her usual bright and bubbly self. However, as soon as Bacchus began speaking, her aura turned rather gloomy.

"Well, I guess it's better to get this outta the way now, rather than later, huh?" Marin muttered.

Meanwhile, Guy and Genma looked back and forth between Elicia and Bacchus. At the same time, Bacchus' followers cheered loudly for Bacchus' wild spirit.

"I've had enough of this, Bacchus." Elicia said as she stood up from her seat with her head lowered.

Hearing what Elicia said, Bacchus smiled brightly as he opened his arms and stepped forward to embrace Elicia.

"Good." Bacchus said happily. "Then, let us go and find that man who forced you to be with him and---"

Smack!

Bang! *Bang!* *Bang!*

Before Bacchus could finish speaking or wrap his arms around her, Elicia slapped him in the face and sent him flying across the guild hall, crashing into several tables before coming to a stop against the bar.

Instantly, the guild hall fell silent in dumbfounded amazement. No one present had ever seen Bacchus take a hit like that before, after all. A moment later, however, most of the wizards of Quatro Cerberus, who had not heard the conversation, stood up and flared their magic power.

Before they could do anything, though, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga, who appeared behind Elicia, flared their own magic power, putting pressure on everyone in the guild.

"Oh, I definitely have to fight them, now." The bald man with the katana whispered happily.

Because the guild hall was so quiet, though, everyone in the guild hall could hear the bald man's whispers. And Elicia was no exception. So, she glanced in the direction of the whisper. When she did, however, she was surprised. Though, not overly so.

'Well, if anyone from the eleventh squad would join a guild, it would definitely be Quatro Cerberus.' Elicia thought to herself. 'But I really wasn't expecting to see Ikkaku and Yumichika here. Then again, I'm just glad Keni isn't here. Otherwise, Quatro Cerberus might have already turned into a dark guild thanks to his actions alone.'

As Elicia was thinking, the bald man, Ikkaku Madarame, and the narcissistic man, Yumichika Ayasegawa, were people from Bleach, the same franchise as Yoruichi, Ritsui, and Sui-Feng. And they were from a division of Soul Reapers who loved to fight.

'Actually, now that I think about it, they would probably be right at home in Fairy Tail, too.' Elicia thought to herself as she shifted her gaze back to Bacchus, who was slowly picking himself up with a confused expression on his face.

"Elicia, why?" Bacchus asked once he stood to his feet again while covering the glowing red handprint on his left cheek. "Has he even forced you to this point?"

["Wow! I've seen how delusional this guy is from your memories."] Scylla said from Elicia's inner world. ["But seeing it in person is crazy. He really can't see the disgust in your eyes at all."]

'What else would you expect from someone wearing beer goggles a foot thick?' Elicia asked back.

["True."] Scylla replied with a nod. ["I can smell the liquor on his breath from over here."]

'Yeah, I know.' Elicia replied.

"Bacchus, I don't know how many times I've told you this over the years." Elicia said as she began stepping forward. "I do not love you. I never have, and I never will. And for you to think that Fonzie is forcing me to be with him..."

At that point, Elicia stopped speaking and simply shook her head.

"I have loved Fonzie for as long as I can remember." Elicia continued. "And nothing you can say or do will change that. So, you need to let this go. Now."

At first, after hearing what Elicia had to say, Bacchus looked thoroughly confused. However, after making eye contact with Elicia, and seeing the, perceived, pain in her eyes, his expression twisted into one filled with rage.

"So, he's really forcing you to such an extent, huh?" Bacchus said while lowering his head, gritting his teeth, and clenching his fists. "I'll kill him. Then, you won't have to---"

bang!

Once again, before Bacchus could finish, he was interrupted.

As soon as Elicia heard Bacchus say that he would kill Alfonzo, her angry expression turned expressionless in an instant. Then, with a burst of speed, she vanished from where she stood. After that, she appeared in the air in front of Bacchus with her right foot raised high before slamming her heel down on the top of his head. AS a result, Bacchus' head was slammed through the guild hall's wooden floorboards.

"What did you just say?" Eliciaa sked in a menacing tone while pressing her foot on Bacchus head. "Did you just say you would kill my Fonzie?"

"Oh snap!" Marin exclaimed. "This is bad. Lici completely loses it whenever anyone threatens Fonzie."

Before anyone could reply to Marin's exclamation, Bacchus started pushing himself off the floor, pulling his head out of the hole in the floor and raising Elicia's foot at the same time.

"That's right." Bacchus said with a livid expression on his face. "That seems to be the only way to free you from his grasp."

Bang!

As Bacchus was able to raise himself onto his hands and knees, Elicia exerted more force with her right leg, slamming him back into the floor, this time leaving an indent of his entire body in the floorboards.

"Why is it so hard for you to understand, Bacchus?" Elicia asked as threads were ejected from her fingertips.

Bang! *Bang!* *Bang!*

A moment later, Elicia removed her foot from the back of Bacchus' head, causing Bacchus to rejoice, thinking Elicia was finally coming around. However, before he could rejoice for too long, the threads Elicia ejected from her fingertips wrapped around his arms, legs, and torso. Then, Elicia spun on her heels and whipped Bacchus into the nearest wall. Then, she followed up by slamming him into the opposite wall, followed by the ceiling.

Elicia spent the next two minutes slamming Bacchus into every surface in the Quatro Cerberus guild hall, destroying many tables and chairs while she was at it.

"We need to stop her." Genma said in a concerned tone. "If she keeps going like this, Bacchus will end up seriously injured."

"No, we let her keep going." Guy replied with a sigh. "Master Goldmine said as long as she doesn't cripple or kill him, she's free to do as she pleases with Bacchus."

"Seriously?" Genma asked in disbelief while turning his head in Guy's direction.

Instead of responding verbally, Guy only nodded his head with a solemn expression on his face.

At around the same time, Elicia finally stopped swinging Bacchus around, letting him fall to the floor once again. And now that he was not whipping through the air at high speed, everyone in the guild hall could finally see the condition he was in.

Currently, Bacchus' face was covered in blood. He had a cut over his left eyebrow and blood was leaking from his undoubtedly broken nose. There were also cuts on his exposed chest and abdomen, not to mention a number of bruises. On top of that, the armor plates covering his arms were dented and cracked all over.

To everyone's surprise, however, Bacchus was still conscious. In fact, he was trying to pick himself off the ground right now.

"Do you get it yet, Bacchus?" Elicia asked as she slowly stepped over all the debris while approaching Bacchus.

"Yeah... I get it..." Bacchus said as he slowly climbed to his feet.

Hearing that, Elicia breathed a sigh of relief. Although she didn't want to, if Bacchus had continued, she was ready to take much more drastic measures, completely ignoring Goldmine's request to not cripple or kill.

However, when she heard Bacchus' next words, Elicia's expression darkened immediately.

"Alfonzo Marcus needs to die." Bacchus said in a resolute tone. "The way he's hurting you by forcing you to be with him against your will is abhorrent. I can no longer stand to see the pain in your eyes."

At that point, everyone in the guild looked at Bacchus with incredulous expressions on their faces. Even Bacchus' followers, who had always believed Bacchus was right about Elicia's feelings, could tell that she was truly not in love with him.

"I see." Elicia said as she lowered her head, allowing her bangs to cover her eyes. "If that's what you can see, then..."

Before she finished, Elicia, once again, vanished from where she stood in a burst of speed.

"Lici! Stop!" Marin shouted as she threw herself forward.

Ikaruga also dashed forward to stop Elicia from doing something she would never be able to take back.

"... you don't need such a defective pair of eyes." Elicia said coldly as she reappeared in front of Bacchus with her threads spiraling around her right index and middle fingers, that were being thrust towards Bacchus' eyes.

Completely surprised by Elicia's actions, Bacchus could only stare in horror as he was about to lose his eyes.

"That's enough, Lici."

Just before Elicia's fingers could pierce into Bacchus' eye sockets, a large, brown-skinned hand wrapped around Elicia's wrist, completely stopping her forward momentum. At the same time, just as the hand came in contact with her skin, an orichalcum bracer, with anti-magic sigils carved all over its surface, materialized around her arm, as well. As a result, Elicia's threads were dispelled less than an eighth of an inch from Bacchus' cornea.

"Fonzie, let go!" Elicia shouted, completely enraged as she struggled to thrust her hand forward. "He said he was gonna kill you! I won't forgive him for that!"

"And you don't have to." Alfonzo replied as he pulled Elicia towards himself before wrapping his arms around her. "But this mother fucker ain't worth it."

Continuing to struggle for a little longer, Elicia eventually stopped when she realized that she was unable to break away from Alfonzo's grasp with her magic power sealed. So, she simply settled for glaring at Bacchus with hatred as Alfonzo pulled her away.

"Come on, Marin, Ikaruga." Alfonzo said as he picked up Elicia in a princess carry. "We'll call it a night for now. Let's head back to the hotel in Karakura and get some sleep. It's been a long day."

Nodding in response, Marin breathed a sigh of relief that Alfonzo was able to stop Elicia in time. Meanwhile, Ikaruga glared at Bacchus with such vitriol that there were more than a few people who thought she would finish what Elicia just tried to do. Luckily, after only a moment, Ikaruga turned around and followed Alfonzo, Elicia, and Marin out of the guild hall.

Meanwhile, Bacchus, who had completely sobered up after feeling death from so close, because he knew that those spinning, vibrating threads on Elicia's fingers would not have stopped at just destroying his eyes, flopped down on his butt after the guild hall's doors closed.

For the next few minutes, the only thing Bacchus could think of was the pure, unadulterated hatred and disgust in Elicia's eyes as she almost killed him. In the meantime, Goldmine, who had followed Alfonzo out of the guild hall when he took Elicia with him, approached the dazed Bacchus after re-entering the guild hall.

"I told you this would happen one day." Goldmine said as he looked down at Bacchus.

However, Bacchus only continued to sit there in a daze, seemingly without even registering Goldmine's words. Goldmine, on the other hand, only shook his head at Bacchus lack of response. Then, he turned to address the rest of his wizards.

"Anyway, let's get this mess cleaned up." Goldmine said, snapping the rest of the guild out of its stupor. "Go in the back and get the spare tables. Set them up over all the holes in the ground for now. I'll get someone out here to fix the floor tomorrow. And after the tables are set up, you all can call it a night if you want. Or you can stay and do what you always do."

With his orders given, Goldmine turned towards the door leading to the stairs and started walking. Just before reaching the door, however, he stopped.

"Oh, and someone get Bachus to the infirmary." Goldmine ordered. "And make sure he doesn't have any more alcohol tonight. I want to talk to him after he snaps out of it. And I want him to be sober."

Chapter 472: After the Commotion

Less than twenty minutes after leaving Quatro Cerberus' guild hall, Alfonzo, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga returned to Karakura Town. And the first thing they did after arriving in town was book a couple of hotel rooms at the town's most luxurious inn. Coincidentally, it was the same inn where the allied forces met to deal with Mayuri Kurotsuchi and Orochimaru a year and a half ago.

After booking their rooms, the group immediately headed up to the fifth floor, with Marin and Ikaruga carrying the luggage. And the reason for that was because Alfonzo's hands were full with Elicia, who he was carrying like a princess.

"Although I thought she'd end up getting violent with Bacchus, I never thought I'd be stopping her from killing him." Alfonzo said as he sat on the hotel room's couch with the sleeping Elicia in his arms. "I would have bet any amount of money that it would have been the other way around."

"I don't know..." Marin said after putting the luggage in her hands down next to the couch. Then, after sitting down next to Alfonzo, and while looking at Elicia's tear-stained, sleeping face, she continued. "I had a feeling things would end up like this from the very beginning. Especially after she said she wanted to deal with Bacchus herself."

"*Sigh* I guess you're right." Alfonzo said as he swept some of Elicia's hair out of her face.

Meanwhile, Ikaruga, with the bags she had been carrying, began putting away Alfonzo, Elicia, and Marin's clothing in the drawers and closet in the room.

"Ikaruga, it's okay to take a break for a little while, you know?" Alfonzo asked after seeing Ikaruga work.

"I appreciate the sentiment, Master Alfonzo." Ikaruga replied politely. "But this is my duty. I can rest once my work is finished."

While Marin smiled at Ikaruga, Alfonzo only shook his head before returning his attention to his wife.

"Anyway, I think it would probably be for the best to keep Lici from meeting Bacchus for the rest of the trip." Alfonzo said. "And for his own sake, I hope he stays away from me, too."

"Yeah, but how are we supposed to do that?" Marin asked curiously. "I mean, unless Master Goldmine sends him away for some reason, he'll definitely be in Quatro Cerberus' guild hall, right?"

"*Sigh* I know..." Alfonzo muttered while combing his fingers through Elicia's hair. "Either way, after all that, I wanna get some rest. So, I'll take Lici and get some sleep."

"*Sigh* I'll come to bed with you, too." Marin said as she reached into the luggage next to the couch. "I'll just read my book until I get sleepy, though."

Nodding in response, Alfonzo, with Elicia in his arms, stood from the couch and headed for the king-sized bed in the room. Then, after taking off Elicia's clothes, leaving her in her bra and panties, Alfonzo took off his own clothes and tucked the two of them into the bed. Meanwhile, Marin also stripped down to her own underwear, put on a night gown she took out of her luggage, and climbed into the bed on the other side of Alfonzo before starting to read her book.

While Alfonzo and Marin got ready for bed, Ikaruga continued to put away Alfonzo, Elicia, and Marin's luggage. Then, once she was done, she bid Marin, the only one still awake, good night before leaving the room and headed next door to her own room.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Quatro Cerberus Headquarters.

Around the time Alfonzo fell asleep, Goldmine, who was sitting in his office, nursing a glass of scotch, had a huge headache over what happened earlier in the evening.

In all honesty, Alfonzo and Goldmine had seen most of the conflict between Elicia and Bacchus, as they had returned to the main hall shortly after Elicia slapped Bacchus. However, since she had not gone too far at that point, they were content to watch.

In fact, Goldmine thought the conflict would end for the time being when Elicia smashed Bacchus head into the floor. However, after hearing Bacchus threaten to kill Alfonzo, he, like Marin, knew that things would get bad, and rather quickly.

Luckily, before Goldmine had to make a move to save his ace, Alfonzo moved to stop Elicia before she could kill him. However, although he was not happy about how far Elicia was willing to take things in her rage, Goldmine could completely understand why she was angered so.

"*Sigh* What am I gonna do with Bacchus?" goldmine muttered while swirling his glass of scotch. "Over the years, he has offended quite a few people while drunk, but it never caused any serious issues. But now, he might cause a long term alliance to be broken if I don't do something about him. *Sigh*"

With his second sigh, Goldmine brought his glass to his lips, tipped his head back, and finished its contents in one go.

Knock! *Knock!* *Knock!*

"Master, it's Bacchus." Bacchus said from the outside of the door.

"Come in." Goldmine said in a somewhat irritated tone.

Shortly afterwards, the door to Goldmine's office was opened slowly. And when it was open, Goldmine saw Bacchus' slightly pale face.

"So, you actually came without drinking something, first, huh?" Goldmine asked with narrowed eyes.
"Even though I said I wanted to see you sober, I didn't think you'd actually listen."

Instead of replying casually or in a joking tone like he usually would, Bacchus only lowered his head as he closed the office door behind him. Then, without a word, he walked in front of Goldmine's desk.

"*Sigh* Have a seat." Goldmine said.

Following Goldmine's instructions, Bacchus took a seat.

"So, have you finally figured out that you were wrong?" Goldmine asked.

"Yeah, I get it." Bacchus replied quietly. "I was wrong about how she felt. Seeing all that hatred in her eyes and feeling her killing intent told me more than I needed to know."

"Good." Goldmine replied with a nod.

"But how could I be so wrong?" Bacchus asked while clenching his fists. "I clearly remember her telling me that she was in love with me and that she just couldn't leave that bastard."

Hearing that, Goldmine raised an eyebrow. Then, he leaned forward, placed his elbows on his desk, and supported his chin with his intertwined fingers.

"Really?" Can you tell me when that happened?" Goldmine asked skeptically. "Or where it happened?"

Immediately, Bacchus looked contemplative. Then, after nearly two minutes of silence, he began to shudder.

"I... can't." Bacchus replied. "I can't remember when she told me that. How she told me... Or where we were when she said it. But why? Why can't I remember?"

As Bacchus spoke, his voice grew in volume. And by the end, he was shouting at the top of his lungs in frustration.

"*Sigh* It's because it never happened." Goldmine said after Bacchus calmed down slightly. "When you've had too much to drink, which is the majority of your waking hours, you seem to think that any woman who is polite to you is in love with you."

Hearing that, Bacchus' head snapped up to look into Goldmine's face.

"It happened with Karin Lilica of Blue Pegasus, that one... knight from the capital... and Elicia of Fairy Tail, to name a few."

Now that he was sober, Bacchus could finally recall the expressions that Elicia and Karen usually wore when they looked at him. However, when he thought about the knight Goldmine was referring to, and

the way she started talking about, Bacchus selling her off for more alcohol money with a fierce blush and panting breaths, he shuddered in disgust.

"But that's not the important thing right now." Goldmine said, snapping Bacchus out of his recollections. "For the first time, your excessive drinking has caused a serious issue for the guild. An issue I wouldn't be strong enough to save it from."

"What are you talking about, Master?" Bacchus asked with a smile. "You make it sound like our guild would have been in danger or something."

"*Sigh* I told you about this after my last trip to Magnolia, Bacchus." Goldmine said while shaking his head lightly. "But Alfonzo is capable of fighting on par with Gildarts."

"You were serious about that?" Bacchus asked in a skeptical tone. "But he's even younger than I am. How can he be so strong?"

"Talent and hard work." Goldmine replied.

If it had been reported in the news that Alfonzo had defeated God Serena, with little effort, Goldmine would have done everything he could to keep Bacchus from meeting Elicia at all costs. Even if Elicia said she wanted to settle things with him. Because he had envisioned something like what happened before.

"Anyway, you'll have to stop drinking so much." Goldmine said. "Now that your actions have brought trouble to the guild, I can't let it continue."

"But alcohol is necessary for my fighting style." Bacchus replied.

"Yes, I am aware." Goldmine said. "But your excessive drinking is not. So, unless you can cut back by a large amount, I can't allow you to drink anymore."

"Then what the hell am I supposed to do?" Bacchus asked in an irritated tone.

"Find another martial art to incorporate with your [Palms Magic]." Goldmine replied bluntly. "It's not like there are no other palm based martial arts you could learn. And with your solid foundation, I doubt it will take too long."

Hearing that, Bacchus lowered his head while clenching his fists in frustration.

"I know this seems harsh to you, Bacchus." Goldmine said solemnly. "But this is necessary. And I think you should leave to find your new martial art inspiration immediately. I'd rather not have either Alfonzo or Elicia lose it if they see you first thing in the morning."

Hearing that, Bacchus began shivering in anger. However, when he remembered the way Elicia looked at him when she almost killed him, he sighed heavily. Then, he looked up at Goldmine once again.

"Fine, I'll go." Bacchus said in a somewhat lifeless tone. "Can you at least apologize to Elicia for me after I leave? I never wanted to do anything to make her so angry."

"I can do that." Goldmine replied with a nod. "I have no idea how she'll respond, though."

"*Sigh* I understand." Bacchus replied. "As for Alfonzo, I won't thank him for saving me. But tell him I'm gonna kick his ass the next time I meet him."

"*Sigh* Though I seriously doubt that, I'll pass on the message." Goldmine said.

In the next instant, Bacchus stood up from his chair. Then, without a word, he left Goldmine's office and would not be seen by anyone from Quatro Cerberus for the next two years.

April 1, x786.

The next morning, Alfonzo, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga returned to the Quatro Cerberus guild hall. And to no one's surprise, they were greeted with both anger and suspicion. Elicia did come to their guild hall, injure their ace, and destroy quite a few of their tables the night before, after all.

Luckily, during the short discussion Alfonzo had with Goldmine before the quartet went back to Karakura, Alfonzo agreed to pay for the damage Elicia caused.

Before the atmosphere could get too awkward, a pair of swordsmen, Ikkaku and Yumichika approached the four visitors from Magnolia.

"Hey, one of you, any of you, fight me!" Ikkaku exclaimed once he was standing in front of Alfonzo and the other three.

"Well, the three of you can decide what you wanna do with that challenge." Alfonzo said while waving his right hand and walking past Ikkaku and Yumichika. "I've got work to do. So, I'll see you later."

Then, without looking back, Alfonzo walked towards the back of the Quatro Cerberus guild hall to get started installing the training chambers.

On a side note, had anyone been outside the building, they would see the building materials floating up from the cart hitched to the back of the Escalade, and over the guild hall.

Back in the Quatro Cerberus guild hall, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga watched Alfonzo leave without giving them a hand with the situation.

"I really wanna fight you, though." Ikkaku said while pointing at Elicia. "Seeing the way you beat up Bacchus really got my blood boiling. It even made me so happy that I did my happy dance."

"Uh... Sure." Elicia said while smiling wryly. "I guess we can do that."

Hearing that, Ikkaku smiled happily as he once again began dancing. Meanwhile, Yumichika was scrutinizing Marin and Ikaruga, unable to decide who he'd rather fight based on their appearances.

Chapter 473: Elicia Vs. Ikkaku

"Hmm... Lici, Marin, Ikaruga, Ikkaku, and Yumichika are head out of the guild hall together." Alfonzo muttered to himself while molding materials into the proper shapes with his [Metal Magic]. "They're probably gonna spar. But I wonder who will be facing whom."

["I bet Ikkaku challenged Lici."] Bedlam replied. ["You know, since she's the strongest of the three."]

["Hmph! That bald moron is gonna get his ass kicked."] Riot said disdainfully.

"Probably." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "If he doesn't use his [Bankai], Lici won't even have to open Scylla's first seal. Then again, I don't even know if he can use his [Bankai] yet. I mean, I have no idea where they are in the time line, after all.

["Then there's the fact that he's really reluctant to use his [Bankai], too."] bedlam added. ["I mean, in the canon, he only used it when there was no one around to see it, right?"]

"Yeah, something about not wanting to become a captain." Alfonzo replied. "But there's no one else from Soul Society here. So, he might be willing to use it if he's pushed far enough."

["Actually, now that I think about it, he should be stronger than Bacchus if he uses his [Shikai], right?"] Bedlam asked. ["So, why isn't he S-Class yet?"]

"In terms of magic power, he should." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "Despite myself, I know that Bacchus knows what he's doing in a fight. So, he might still be able to beat him."

["I guess."] Bedlam replied with a shrug.

["Quit yapping, they're about to start."] Riot said snappily. ["And he really did challenge Lici. Hey, Alfonzo, you can make up for the lost time by working a little later, right? Let's go watch."]

Meanwhile, on the Quatro Cerberus training grounds, Marin, Ikaruga, Yumichika, and quite a few members of Quatro Cerberus were surrounding the sparring ring while Elicia and Ikkaku stood opposite each other at its center.

"This is gonna be great." Ikkaku said excitedly. "Now I can fight someone strong who won't be wiggling around like a jelly fish."

"I guess you don't like fighting Bacchus, huh?" Elicia asked with a smile.

"Of course not." Ikkaku said with a scowl. "I'll admit he's strong, but he's too slippery."

"Well then, you probably won't like fighting me, either." Elicia replied.

Hearing that, Ikkaku could not help but frown.

"You don't seem like a total drunkard, though." Ikkaku said.

"I'm not." Elicia replied while gently shaking her head. "But my fighting style is a little elusive."

"Well, as long as you aren't like that guy, I don't care." Ikkaku said as he unsheathed his katana. "Now, let's get started."

"Sure." Elicia replied as she took her own fighting stance. "By the way, what's your name? You haven't introduced yourself. Oh, and I'm Elicia Marcus Taylor, an S-Class wizard from Fairy Tail. But you can just call me Elicia."

"Oh, you can call me Ikkaku." Ikkaku replied. "Ikkaku Madarame."

"Cool." Elicia said with a smile. "Then, should we get started, Ikkaku?"

"Of course." Ikkaku replied as he [Flash Stepped] in front of Elicia.

In the next instant, Ikkaku swung an overhead slash down at Elicia, who avoided by making a quarter turn to her left. Then, using her left foot as leverage, she threw a right kick at Ikkaku's abdomen.

Reacting quickly, Ikkaku raised the hilt of his sword to block Elicia's kick. Then he thrust the tip of his blade at Elicia's right shoulder.

In response, Elicia quickly bent her left leg, causing her body to drop down below Ikkaku's thrust. Then, she spun on her pivot foot with her right leg still extended, sweeping it towards Ikkaku's legs.

Hopping lightly, Ikkaku thrust his katana down at Elicia as he fell back to the ground. However, Elicia quickly rolled towards Ikkaku, rolling past his landing point. Then, she placed her hands on the ground and flung her legs up at Ikkaku's back.

Surprised by Elicia's fighting style, when Ikkaku landed on the ground, he quickly stepped forward, just barely avoiding Elicia's upward kick. Then, he spun on his heels and slashed at Elicia horizontally.

Ikkaku's slash did not connect, however, as Elicia used the momentum from swinging her legs up to flip over and return to an upright position. Then, once Ikkaku's sword passed, she lashed a back heel kick at Ikkaku's temple.

Bang!

However, before Elicia's kick could land, Ikkaku quickly pulled his sheath off his waist to block the kick.

Pushing off of Ikkaku's sheath, Elicia used the force to put some distance between herself and her opponent.

"Not bad for someone so young." Ikkaku said with a smile while patting his sheath against his left shoulder.

"Well, I've had a lot of experience." Elicia said as she took her stance once again. "The real question is, are you as good with a weapon in both hands as you are with both hands holding the same weapon?"

"I guess we'll have to find out." Ikkaku said as he [Flash Stepped] once again.

When Ikkaku reappeared, he thrust the sheath in his left hand at Elicia's chest, which she avoided by stepping back. Then, Ikkaku followed up with a thrust from the sword in his right hand.

This time, however, instead of stepping back, Elicia deflected Ikkaku's thrust with the sealed Scylla on her left wrist. Then, after moving Ikkaku's sword to the outside of her body, she threw a sharp jab that landed on Ikkaku's chin, rocking his head back on impact.

After that, Elicia raised her left leg before stomping it down on Ikkaku's front foot and followed up by leaping to slam her right knee into his chin.

Reacting quickly, Ikkaku thrust his sheath into Elicia's abdomen, pushing her back before her knee could make contact.

A moment later, Elicia landed gracefully. Ikkaku, on the other hand, looked even more excited than he did at the beginning of the spar.

"Great, you're even better than I thought you were after seeing you beat up Bacchus last night." Ikkaku said excitedly. "So, why don't we get serious? I think we've both had enough time to warm up, after all."

With that, Ikkaku flared his magic power. Then, he slammed the pommel of his sword into the mouth of his sheath.

"[Extend, Hōzukimaru]!" Ikkaku shouted excitedly.

In the next instant, Ikkaku's sword, or rather, Zanpakuto, flashed with light. A moment later, when the light reseeded, Ikkaku held a Yari, a spear with a traditional Japanese blade as its spearhead, with a wax wooden shaft and a red, horsetail tassel hanging from the pommel.

"Hmm... This should get more interesting from now on." Alfonzo muttered to himself from the Quatro Cerberus guild hall's roof.

["Still, unless he uses his [Bankai], he has no chance of winning against Lici."] Bedlam replied.

["Of course!"] Riot shouted excitedly. ["Lici is the best, after all!"]

Shaking his head at Riot's overenthusiastic exclamation, Alfonzo refocused his attention to the ongoing spar.

Meanwhile, as soon as Ikkaku's release was complete, he rushed forward, thrusting his Yari as he did so.

Reacting quickly, Elicia once again used Scylla to deflect the thrust. Then, she punched forward with her right fist. However, with the overall enhancement from releasing his [Shikai], Ikkaku was able to tilt his head out of harm's way.

With that, an exchange of punches, kicks, thrusts and sweeps unfolded between Elicia and Ikkaku. Both fighters showing mastery over their preferred fighting style. Meanwhile, the onlookers from Quatro Cerberus watched in amazement.

The only exception being Yumichika. With his years of experience, he could tell that Elicia was a skilled combatant. So, seeing her keeping up with Ikkaku was not so surprising. In fact, like Alfonzo, he also knew that unless Ikkaku used his [Bankai], he would have only a slim chance of coming out victorious in this spar.

Then, Yumichika looked over at Marin and Ikaruga, who were wearing expressions that said: "As expected."

'They don't look surprised to see Ikkaku's weapon change.' Yumichika thought to himself as he cupped his chin with his left hand. 'I guess they've seen other Zanpakuto in action. Actually, now that I think about it, that woman, Elicia's wrist band gives off a similar feeling to or Zanpakuto. But how is it possible that a Zanpakuto can take a form other than a katana when in its sealed state? Hmm... I guess I should report this back to Soul Society.'

Clang!

The sound of Ikkaku's blade once again colliding with Scylla pulled Yumichika out of his thoughts. Then, he watched as Ikkaku swept the butt end of Hozukimaru at the side of Elicia's head.

Taking a step back to avoid the swing, Elicia was prepared to rush forward once it passed her. However, before she could do so, Ikkaku grinned.

"[Split Apart]." Ikkaku commanded just as Elicia left the range of his sweep.

In the next instant, the spear in Ikkaku's hand split about a third of the way up the shaft. Then, the butt end of the spear, connected by a chain, continued towards Elicia's face.

Having expected something like that, Elicia raised her left hand, catching Ikkaku's weapon before it could hit her.

Undeterred, Ikkaku, still holding the rest of his spear, swung the bladed end at Elicia's arm. And just like what happened with the butt end, the bladed end detached from the rest of the spear, as well. And thanks to the chain connecting it to the rest of the shaft, it quickly swung towards Elicia's forearm.

In this situation, Elicia found it a good time to use her magic, as she wrapped her arm with Vibranium threads.

Then, to Ikkaku's surprise, when Hozukimaru's blade made contact with Elicia's arm, the blade bounced back harmlessly.

"What?" Ikkaku exclaimed in surprise. "How?"

Immediately, Elicia could tell that Ikkaku was familiar with the threads she used to defend. And that did not surprise her in the least. Since Ikkaku was a Soul Reaper, she had no doubt that he was familiar with the silk threads Yoruichi's clan sold.

Still, that did not stop Elicia from taking advantage of Ikkaku's surprise. So, in the next instant, with the butt of Ikkaku's spear still in her hand, she dropped down and swept Ikkaku's legs out from under him.

Unbothered by his back hitting the ground, Ikkaku pulled the bladed end of his Yari back. Then, he thrust up at Elicia, trying to gain some time and distance.

Unfortunately, before Hōzukimaru could get halfway to its destination, Elicia flicked her wrist, causing the threads she ejected from the fingertips of her right hand to loop around his wrist.

Then, once the threads tightened, Elicia flung her right arm outward, forcing Ikkaku's thrust in the same direction. Then, she kicked Ikkaku's other hand, causing his arms to be spread before she released the butt end of Ikkaku's weapon, used her threads to pull a needle from Scylla into her hand, and thrust it at Ikkaku's throat.

In response, Ikkaku closed his eyes and released a satisfied sigh. At the same time, Elicia stopped the needle less than an inch away from Ikkaku's throat. In silence, the two remained in that position for a few seconds. However, the silence was eventually broken by Ikkaku.

"That was a good fight." Ikkaku said happily. "We'll definitely have to do that again. I bet Captain Zarak will be so jealous when he hears that I got to fight someone like you."

Hearing that, Elicia, as well as Alfonzo on the roof, could only smile wryly. They both knew about the Captain Zarak Ikkaku was talking about thanks to their meta knowledge. And for the same reason that Alfonzo did not want to fight Ritsu, neither of them wanted to fight this, Captain Zarak. Though, the chances of the fight devolving into a death match was much lower in Captain Zarak's case, as he enjoyed a good fight way too much to just kill off his sparring partner.

"I guess that means you accept your defeat?" Elicia asked with a smile. She did not remove her needle, though.

"Only if you promise to fight me again." Ikkaku replied with a wide smile.

Hearing that, Elicia smiled as she shook her head. Then, she pulled her needle back, dispelled her threads, and put the needle back on her wrist band. After that, she stepped back and offered Ikkaku her hand.

Maintaining his smile, Ikkaku accepted Elicia's hand then pulled himself up to his feet. Then, once on his feet, he looked in Yunichika's direction.

"So, did you decide who you were gonna fight, Yumichika?" Ikkaku asked excitedly.

Chapter 474: Putting Fairy Tail on Alert

Nearly six weeks have passed since Alfonzo began his work at the Quatro Cerberus guild hall. During that time, not much of note took place. While Ikkaku challenged Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga to daily spars, Yumichika did not seem all that interested.

Naturally, Guy was not to be left out of the sparring. He even managed to drag Genma into it on several occasions as well. Though, none of them got the chance to spar with Alfonzo, who claimed he was too tired after finishing his work on the training chambers each day.

Though Yumichika did not spend much time sparring with the visitors from Fairy Tail, he did spend quite a bit of time talking to them. Well, to Elicia and Marin, to be precise. Because he was so interested in beautiful things, he found the two of them quite fascinating. Not to say that Yumichika did not see Ikaruga as beautiful. However, Elicia's way with fashion and Marin's [Transformation Magic] that allowed her to take on any appearance she chose, really piqued his interest.

As for how Alfonzo, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga spent their free time, Alfonzo read up on [Archive Magic]. Though, he was unable to use it at this point. Elicia spent her time sketching new clothes. She even started drawing up something she could make with the Lightning Mink pelt Erza gave her for her birthday last year. Marin, on the other hand, spent her time working on her [Dagger Magic]. She still had not given up on creating wind pressure slashes like she had seen from Sun at the first Battle of Fairy Tail tournament. And Ikaruga only focused on her duties as a maid. Though, Alfonzo was certain that she spent quite a bit of time training when she thought he and the girls were asleep.

Meanwhile, back in Magnolia, a pair of newcomers had just entered the town on foot.

"I hope we don't have to go back after we've finished collecting information on this Alfonzo guy." A green-haired woman said as she approached Magnolia's southern gate. "It took us almost two months to get here. It would be way too much work to go back."

"Well, I wouldn't count on us being allowed to stay here." A tall, extremely voluptuous, scarlet red-haired woman replied with a smile on her face. "But who knows. Collecting information may take longer than we expected."

In response, the green-haired woman, Brandish, wore a hopeful expression. However, her expression darkened after her scarlet-haired companion, Irene's next words.

"But we'll more than likely be asked to return to report on what we found out." Irene added, her smile widening as Brandish expression fell.

"*Sigh* Why did I have to be the only one not on a mission when the order came out?" Brandish asked in a distraught tone.

Irene simply smiled at Brandish's lamentation.

Eventually, the duo reached the town gate. And when they did, Irene stopped and looked up at the gates with interest.

"What's wrong, Irene?" Brandish asked.

"Someone set up quite the sensing barrier around the town." Irene said in an intrigued tone. "It's really quite ingenious... If not a bit simple. But I guess there's no need to make things complicated if simple gets the job done."

"A sensing barrier?" Brandish asked in a curious tone. "Does that mean we won't be able to enter the town?"

"No, not at all." Irene replied while shaking her head. "It just means that no one over a certain threshold of magic power can enter undetected. Luckily, I can do something about that."

As she spoke, the tip of Irene's staff lit up with magic power. Then, she began drawing sigils in the air. A moment later, after drawing the sigils she wanted, she tapped the created sigils with the tip of her staff. As a result, the sigils moved forward before fusing into the wall surrounding the town.

"There." Irene said with a smile. "That should do it. Now, let's go inside and get familiar with the town's layout. We can start getting close to the target after that."

Nodding in response, Brandish walked alongside Irene as they entered the town.

At the same time in the Fairy Tail guild hall, Ur, who was filling out a compensation report while occasionally glaring at Gildarts, suddenly stopped her pen and put on a solemn expression when the control tablet on her desk started flashing in a certain pattern.

"Ur, what's wrong?" Gildarts asked after seeing Ur's change in expression.

"Someone just tampered with the barrier Alfonzo set up around the town." Ur said in a serious tone as she put down her pen. A moment later, she reached for the tablet on her desk and looked over the data. "Apparently, they raised the magic power threshold before the alarm was triggered."

"Why would they even need to do that?" Gildarts asked in a puzzled tone. "Didn't the kid set me as the bar for that barrier?"

"It means that whoever came into the town has---" Ur began to explain as she spread her [Magic Power Detection].

As Ur's [Magic Power Detection] picked up Irene and Brandish, who were not far from the south gate, her words stopped, her face paled, and her eyes began to shake.

"Ur, what's wrong?" Gildarts, now with a solemn expression on his face, asked after seeing another change in expression on Ur's face.

Unfortunately, due to her shock, Ur was unable to speak for a moment, making Gildarts even more worried. Luckily, due to her experience, Ur snapped out of her stupor soon enough.

"They're both... They're both stronger than me." Ur said after taking a deep breath. Then, she looked deeply into Gildarts eyes as she continued. "And one of them has more magic power than even you."

Finally understanding the gravity of the situation, Gildarts expression turned extremely solemn.

"What do you think we should do about it?" Gildarts asked, his expression showing that he was ready to fight if necessary, to protect the guild, the town, Ur, and most importantly, Cana.

Shaking her head, Ur could only do her best to calm herself down. Then, when she felt she was completely in control of her emotions again, she spoke.

"For now, we do nothing." Ur replied. "We need to figure out who they are before we do anything. As far as we know, they're just wizards who had been living in obscurity and decided to get a change of scenery."

Though she said that, Ur did not believe her own words for even a second. She had a bad feeling about the new visitors in the town. And she has always trusted her instincts in those cases.

"Although I seriously doubt that..." Gildarts said while shaking his head. "You're the guild master. So, I'll listen to you. But how are we gonna figure out why they're here? I mean Lici, the person best suited for that isn't here. And neither is the second best option, Marin."

Hearing that, Ur lowered her head while gritting her teeth.

"I know that." Ur replied. "The only thing we can do without giving ourselves away is to wait.... Wait until those three get back."

"*Sigh* I guess you're right." Gildarts replied.

A moment later, however, Ur raised her head with the light of resolve flashing in her eyes.

"Still, that doesn't mean we can't be ready for the worst." Ur said in a resolute tone. "I'll gather all the S-Classes in the town and let them know about this. If they're here to cause trouble, we'll make sure they know it's not a good idea to mess with Fairy Tail."

Hearing that, Gildarts smiled at his girlfriend while she operated the control tablet to project her voice throughout the guild hall.

Meanwhile, at the same time Ur spread her [Magic Power Detection] Irene and Brandish had barely walked a block after entering the town.

"Oh, what is this?" Irene asked with an eyebrow raised and an intrigued smile on her lips.

"What do you mean?" Brandish asked curiously.

"Well, I'm not surprised that you didn't feel it, Brandish." Irene replied. "But a very, and when I say very, I mean very, very thin magic power just washed over us, and if I'm not mistaken, it covered the entire town.

Hearing that, Brandish looked at Irene with confusion on her face.

"Why would anyone do that?" Brandish asked. "I mean, what can you do by spreading out magic power that thinly."

"That... Is a great question." Irene said as she smiled widely. "And I think I'll find out."

With that, Irene stopped walking, causing Brandish to stop as well. Then, she closed her eyes to concentrate. A moment later, just like she felt a moment ago, Irene spread her magic power. However, hers was spread even more thinly than Ur's. As a result, none of the wizards in the town could feel it.

"I see." Irene said, sounding happy to have gained new knowledge. "With my magic power spread like this, I can feel everything with magic power within the range of my magic power."

That was enough to make Brandish open her eyes wide in surprise. Meanwhile, Irene continued to examine all the magic power signatures she could sense. And there were three that really stood out among the rest.

First was a large tower-shaped magic power she could feel in the north of the town. Second was a dome shaped magic power on the shore of the lake she and Brandish noticed while heading to the town. And third was a large structure in the center of the lake.

'We'll definitely have to check out those three places while we're here.' Irene thought to herself. 'I'm quite interested in them. Not only are they large, but I can't feel anything inside of them, either.'

Just as Irene thought, because of the security Alfonzo set up on the guild hall, his old mansion, and the new mansion, Irene was completely incapable of penetrating any of the three structures she felt. And the reason for that was simple, if an individual was not registered with the security system at the guild, or either of the two mansions Alfonzo designed, their magic power would not be able to see what was inside.

Of course, there was an exception to that set up. As Alfonzo's security system would not be able to stop anyone strong enough to completely overpower the security system. However, if they were to do that, it would alert the inhabitants.

"I think the empire would benefit greatly with a skill like that." Brandish said once her shock wore off. "Emperor Spriggan will be pleased."

"Indeed." Irene replied with a nod as she opened her eyes. "I've lived for a long time. Yet, I've never considered using my magic power in such a way. I doubt His Majesty has ever considered it either. Most wizards only look to increase the potency of their magic, after all."

Brandish nodded in agreement with Irene's assessment. Although she had not lived for nearly as long as Irene, in all the time she spent training, the only thing she ever did in training was trying to increase the control and output of her own magic, [Command T].

"Either way, if I ever get the chance, I think I'd like to meet the wizard who came up with such a magic power utilization method. *Sigh* That makes two wizards I would like to meet before returning home, now."

Like that, Irene and Brandish continued to explore the town while discussing the things they saw along the way. Meanwhile, Ur had gathered Laxus, Fried, Ultear, Mirajane, and Sun in her office to explain what she found. Unfortunately, those five were the only ones in Magnolia at present, as Alfonzo, Elicia, Cana, and Erza were out of town on other business.

As soon as Ur finished explaining the situation to her S-Class wizards, the five spread out their own [Magic Power Detection], causing Irene to raise an eyebrow, once again, at the number of wizards capable of such fine magic power control.

Chapter 475: Another Letter from Home

Currently, Alfonzo was sitting in his room at the hotel in Karakura. With his work for the day finished, he was sitting quietly while reading up on [Archive Magic]. In the room with him was Ikaruga, who served tea whenever he asked.

Meanwhile, Elicia was at the Quatro Cerberus guild hall delivering an outfit Yumichika commissioned. Then, she would have a spar with Ikkaku, who had sparred with her every day since the first time they sparred. And lost all of them.

Marin, on the other hand, was waiting in line at a book store. Apparently, the author of one of her favorite books was doing a book signing event. And she was excited to get hers and Erza's copies signed. And as it turned out, instead of wanting to spend time with Alfonzo, that was the real reason she volunteered to come on this trip. Spending time with Alfonzo was just an added bonus.

Like that, the next hour passed in silence. However, the tranquility in the room was eventually broken.

Bang!

"Fonzie, I'm back!" Marin shouted excitedly as she burst through the door. "An O.M.G. I got it signed. I really got it signed! She even signed Erza's, too!"

Looking up from his magic book, Alfonzo could not help but smile after seeing Marin's excited expression. Meanwhile, Ikaruga prepared a cup of tea for Marin.

"So, what book was it?" Alfonzo asked curiously.

"It was, like, my favorite book of all time!" Marin shouted as she reached into her bag. Then, she bounced over to Alfonzo while pulling out the book she got signed as she continued. "Slippery Girls 2!"

And just as he expected, Alfonzo saw a copy of the same book Marin showed Elicia on the day they met, Saint Slippery's Academy for Girls 2. On top of that, as Marin flopped down in his lap, he caught sight of her hair turning black with a purple tint as well as her eyes turning purple intermittently.

"You're doing it again." Alfonzo said with a smile as he pulled a lock of Marin's hair in front of her face.

Glancing to the side, Marin's smile widened. Then, she held the book to her chest excitedly.

"I can't help it." Marin said in a dreamy tone. "You have no idea how much I love being Shizuku-tan."

Shrugging his shoulders, Alfonzo smiled as he leaned forward and kissed Marin on her cheek.

"And you have no idea how much I love it when you're being you." Alfonzo said.

Blushing slightly at Alfonzo's words, Marin, instead of replying verbally, wrapped her arms around Alfonzo's neck and pulled him into a deep kiss, pushing her tongue into his mouth as she did so.

As the kiss deepened, the couple gradually forgot the presence of Ikaruga, who only smiled at their passionate interaction. Meanwhile, Marin began raising Alfonzo's shirt, intending to slip it over his head. At the same time, Alfonzo's wrapped around Marin's arms back before his hands slid down.

However, just before Alfonzo's hands could reach Marin's butt, the room's door was pushed open.

"*Whistle* Is it just me, or is it hot in here?" Elicia, the one who just opened the door, asked in a playful tone after seeing the position Alfonzo and Marin were in.

Naturally, Elicia's voice drew both Alfonzo and Marin's attention. So, they broke their kiss and looked towards the door. And when they did, they were just in time to see Elicia close the door behind her.

"Oh, don't mind me." Elicia said with a smile. "Continue, I don't mind watching."

"Yeah, we all know that." Marin said while rolling her eyes.

Alfonzo, on the other hand, did not reply to Elicia's teasing. Instead, his gaze was focused on what she held in her hand.

"Where'd the letter come from, Lici?" Alfonzo asked with a grin. "Did you get a love letter from one of the single Quatro Cerberus guys?"

This time it was Elicia's turn to roll her eyes. However, she did not lose her smile.

"Nope." Elicia said as she approached the couch. Then, after flopping down next to Alfonzo and Marin, she began waving the letter in Alfonzo's face as she continued. "This one's for you, Fonzie. I didn't know you had a pen pal."

Meanwhile, Alfonzo's eyes narrowed as he continued to watch the waving letter in Elicia's hand.

'The last time I received a letter like this was when I visited Lamia Scale.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'And only a few minutes later, Lahar and Mest showed up. But there's no way the Magic Council will show up again, right?'

In the next instant, Alfonzo shivered.

'Damn it, I just raised a flag for myself, didn't I?' Alfonzo asked himself.

["In the name of everything sacred, I hope not."] Bedlam replied. ["Dealing with the Magic Council is nothing short of annoying."]

["I swear if the Magic Council pops up, I'm gonna drag your ass into your mind scape and beat the shit outta you!"] Riot shouted angrily.

"So, who's it from?" Alfonzo asked with his eyes still narrowed.

"It's from Ur." Elicia replied.

Raising an eyebrow at the unexpected response, Alfonzo picked up Marin from his lap. Then, he sat er on the couch next to him, opposite Elicia. A moment later, he reached out for the letter in Elicia's hand.

Not playing any tricks, Elicia handed Alfonzo the letter, as she was interested to know what was so important that Ur could not wait two more weeks for Alfonzo to return. Like Elicia, Ikaruga was also curious. Though, as a maid, she did not show her curiosity in her expression.

Marin, on the other hand, crossed her arms while pouting. She and Alfonzo were just getting to the good part. However, they were interrupted.

As soon as the letter was in Alfonzo's hand, he created a small metal blade on the tip of his right index finger. Then, he used it to cut open the seal on the envelope. After that, he pulled the folded letter out of the envelope, unfolded it, and began reading.

By this point, the room was in total silence. On top of that, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga were all focused on Alfonzo. Because of that, they all watched as his expression changed from curious to solemn while reading the letter.

"Fonzie, what's wrong?" Elicia asked, her expression changing along with Alfonzo's

"Did something happen to the guild?" Marin asked anxiously.

Meanwhile, although Ikaruga did not say anything, everyone knew exactly what she was thinking as they noticed her beginning to pack the trio's luggage.

"*Sigh* The guild is fine." Alfonzo said while shaking his head. "However, Ikaruga is right. It would probably be best if I hurried along with my work. There's a situation back in Magnolia."

"What do you mean?" Marin asked. "Did someone attack the guild again?"

"No, it's nothing like that." Alfonzo replied. "But someone did manage to bypass my barrier around the town without setting off any of the alarms."

Hearing that, Elicia's eyes narrowed. Meanwhile, Marin wore a confused expression.

"If someone managed to bypass the barrier, then how did Master Ur find out?" Marin asked in a confused tone.

"It's because I hid a string of sigils in the barrier that would report to Ur if someone tampered with the barrier." Alfonzo replied. "So, even though the alarm didn't go off, it let Ur know."

"Oh~~~~! I get it." Marin replied while nodding her head in understanding.

"Was there any information about the one who did it?" Elicia asked in a solemn tone.

"See for yourself." Alfonzo replied while handing the letter to Elicia.

Receiving the letter, Elicia began to read quickly. However, as she did so, her eyebrows rose higher and higher. Eventually, she looked at Alfonzo with a questioning gaze. To which, Alfonzo could only shrug his shoulders.

"Lici, is it that bad?" Marin asked in an apprehensive tone.

"Not really, I guess." Elicia replied while shrugging. "Well, if exclude the fact that one of the intruders has more magic power than Gildarts, anyway."

"What!?" Marin asked as she opened her eyes wide. "How does anyone have that much magic power?"

"Don't be so surprised, Marin." Alfonzo said as he started combing his fingers through Marin's hair. "The world is big. And I refuse to believe that Gildarts is its strongest wizard."

"I guess..." Marin said as she started calming down. "So, that means the people who showed up aren't from Ishgar? I mean, Gildarts is probably the strongest wizard on the continent, right?"

"Who knows, just because he's the strongest known wizard, doesn't mean he's the strongest among those who live in solitude."

"I guess that's true." Marin replied as she began to snuggle into Alfonzo's side.

Naturally, the fact that someone with more magic power than Gildarts had shown up in Magnolia was not what surprised Elicia and caused her to raise her eye brows or look at Alfonzo questioningly. Instead, it was the descriptions of the two who entered Magnolia.

'A bombastic figure... Braided scarlet red hair... revealing witch-like clothing... Green hair... Black and Gold bikini... long over coat...' Elicia continued to think while staring at Alfonzo.

["That's definitely Irene and Brandish, right?"] Scylla asked. Though, her question was more of a statement than a question.

'Yeah, that's what I was thinking, too.' Elicia replied after Alfonzo shrugged off her inquisitive stare.

"So, how soon will we be leaving?" Marin asked curiously.

"Probably the day after tomorrow." Alfonzo replied.

Nodding in response, Marin then crawled back into Alfonzo's lap and wrapped her arms around his neck.

"Good." Marin said with a seductive smile. "Then, we can pick up where we left off."

With that, Marin pulled Alfonzo into another deep kiss.

That was enough to pull Elicia out of her thoughts. Seeing Marin's passion, eventually, she decided that she could think about what would happen later. Instead, she began taking off her clothes, intending to join in on the fun.

'Since they're probably planning something on Zeref's orders, they probably won't leave before we get back.' Elicia thought to herself as she slipped her shirt over her head. 'And that something they're planning probably has something to do with Fonzie, too. Especially after he beat up that traitor two months ago.'

Eventually, before things in the hotel room got too hot, Alfonzo broke his kiss with Marin and looked in Ikaruga's direction.

"Ikaruga, you can call it a night." Alfonzo said as he raised his arms over his head so that Elicia and Marin could remove his shirt. "There will be plenty of time for you to pack our stuff tomorrow."

As soon as he finished speaking, Elicia sealed Alfonzo's mouth with her own. Meanwhile, Ikaruga bowed politely. Then, after moving the luggage out of the way, she left the room. Before she did, however, she looked at Elicia and Marin with a hint of jealousy.

'I am definitely not romantically interested in him.' Ikaruga thought to herself as she opened the door. 'But I'm a woman, too. And I have needs. Seeing them like that almost every night for the last six, or so, weeks is like torture. Especially since I'm not getting any. Maybe I should ask Mistress Elicia if she would let me join them. As a maid, it would be proper to help serve the master and mistress, right?'

Smiling wryly at her thoughts, Ikaruga shook her head to get rid of them. Then, she left the room and closed the door behind her.

Fortunately for Ikaruga, she never actually put those thoughts into fruition. Because if she had, Elicia might have had a bout of PTSD from the incident with Yoruichi and done something both women would regret.

The next day, upon arriving at the Quatro Cerberus guild hall, Alfonzo explained to Goldmine that he would be hurrying to complete the training chambers. Luckily, he did not have much left to complete. And while Goldmine was a bit confused, he did not argue. In the end, the only thing that mattered was that the training chambers were completed.

Goldmine also mentioned that if Fairy Tail needed help with anything, they could always count on Quatro Cerberus.

'Well, I'm not surprised he could tell something was wrong.' Alfonzo thought to himself as he got to work.

["Yeah, experience will do that."] Bedlam replied with a shrug.

["Whatever, just hurry up."] Riot ordered. ["If anything has happened to the others when we get back, we're gonna kick those broads asses... regardless of how hot they are."]

Nodding in response, Alfonzo continued to work. All the while, he wondered if he could resolve the issues between Erza, Irene, Lucy, and Brandish before the Alvarez Empire invaded. And if he was lucky, he might even be able to get them to change sides.

Chapter 476: Irene's Observations

Three days have passed since Alfonzo, Elicia, and Marin found out about the intruders who entered Magnolia. And currently, Team Natsu had just returned to the town, having just disembarked from the most recent train to pull into the station.

"Ugh... I'm never riding that thing again." Natsu said, looking nauseated as the group of seven left the train station.

"But Wendy cast her [Troia] spell on you, didn't she?" Lucy asked curiously. "So, why do you still look like that?"

"It's because the spell loses effectiveness if it's used on the same person too many times." Wendy said in an apologetic tone. "If I was stronger, it wouldn't matter, though."

"Don't worry about it Wendy." Erza said in a consoling tone. "We've all seen how hard you've been working to improve. So, it's not your fault."

"She's right, Wendy." Carla added. "Just because this fool can't be helped, doesn't make it your fault."

"Yeah, we all know the fiery mouth-breather is only good for destroying stuff." Gray said casually. "So, don't worry about this idiot."

"Urgh! What did you say, Gray?" Natsu asked angrily. Though, he was feeling too sick to start a fight.

"It's okay, Natsu." Happy, who was sitting on Natsu's shoulder said with a smile. "We're almost home. You can have something to eat and get some rest when we get there."

"He didn't deny that Natsu was an idiot, though." Lucy muttered.

"*Sigh* It's too bad Alfonzo isn't back yet, though." Erza said wistfully. "I wouldn't mind having a strawberry shortcake that he baked."

"Yeah, we all miss his cooking." Gray added. "And I have a lot of points I can spend on it, too."

As a result of Alfonzo's two trips to other guilds, not to mention his trip to the Magic Council, many of Fairy Tail's wizards have amassed quite a few points. And when Alfonzo returns from his job at Quatro Cerberus, many of them intend to splurge those points.

"I just hope he doesn't get called away by the Magic Council again." Wendy said. "I really want him to make some spaghetti and meatballs for me."

"Hmph! His cooking isn't that good." Carla said with a snort.

"Really?" Gray asked with a smile. "Then, how about giving your points to me, Carla?"

Immediately, Carla turned her head and glared at Gray for even suggesting such a thing. Then, she snorted once again before turning away and picking up the pace at which she walked.

"Carla... *Sigh*" Wendy muttered at the actions of her best friend.

"Anyway, I'm ready to go home." Lucy said. "I wanna take a dip in the hot tub. I really need to wash away all this fatigue from that quest."

"Indeed, driving away an entire colony of badger moles was quite tiring." Erza added.

With that, Erza, Lucy, Wendy, and Carla wore dreamy expressions as they thought about taking a dip in the hot tub at the lake mansion or Ur's house.

Eventually, the group reached the guild hall. However, because none of them had their [Magic Power Detection] spread, as it was common for the wizards of Fairy Tail to let their guard down in Magnolia, they did not notice the two large magic power signatures in the most luxurious hotel in the town.

"So, another group has returned." Irene, who was sitting in the most luxurious suite in the aforementioned hotel, said after taking a sip from a glass of wine. "That's another four wizards with S-Class strength. Plus, there was an A-Class with them, as well."

On a side note, Irene completely ignored Happy and Carla, who she deemed inconsequential.

"Still, none of them are strong enough to be a threat." Brandish, who was lying lazily on the couch in the suite, replied in a bored tone. "They might be trouble for the rest of the army, though. I don't think His Majesty would like to see his armies destroyed."

"He won't care about that." Irene said casually while waving off Brandish's concerns. "All that cannon fodder is expendable. In fact, most of them will die as collateral damage when the twelve of us attack."

Shrugging her shoulders, Brandish could not be bothered to care about something so troublesome as keeping normal rank and file soldiers alive.

At the same time, Irene finished her wine. Then, she stood from her chair after placing her wine glass on the table.

"Although I'm certain that our target was not among the group of new arrivals, I want to see who they are." Irene said as she strode towards the door to the suite. "So, I'm gonna go and do a bit of investigation."

"If that's what you want." Brandish said while shrugging uncaringly before rolling over. "I'll be here when you get back."

Shaking her head at her companions unwillingness to do anything she considered troublesome, Irene made her way out of the hotel room before eventually leaving the hotel. After that, she made her way toward the Fairy Tail guild hall while trying not to draw too much attention to herself.

Unfortunately, with her explosive figure that was even more curvaceous than Tsuande or Shizuka's combined with her revealing witch dress that showed off a large portion of her breasts, abdomen, and upper thighs, Irene ended up drawing a lot of attention to herself from the men in town.

Naturally, Irene had no illusion that her movements were not being tracked. Although she was capable of hiding her magic power signature with one of her [Enchantments], it would be quite suspicious if her magic power signature just disappeared.

"*Sigh* I should have brought Heine and Juliet with me on this mission." Irene muttered to herself as she playfully winked at an unsuspecting shop owner who hoped to get her to take a look at his establishment. "It would have been much more entertaining if they were here. I could have had them have a duel to the death whenever I got too bored."

Meanwhile, back at Irene's residence in Vistarion, a black-haired young woman with a slim figure and an orange-haired young woman with a childish figure began to shudder. Though they had no idea why.

After a while, Irene arrived at an area where she could view the guild hall's entrance, yet would not make her appear hostile. Though, she was sure that part of that was the fact that everyone in the guild could tell just how strong she was.

Seeing other wizards, ones she had already been able to identify by their magic power signatures, enter and exit the guild through the sliding doors, Irene could not help but be curious.

"How I would like to get a look at that building from the inside." Irene muttered to herself as she marveled at the Fairy Tail guild hall, which she had surmised was a giant magic item. "It's just one of the many things in this town that has caught my interest since I arrived."

Like that, Irene spent the next few hours simply wondering about all the functions of the three structures in the town that she could not see through with her [Magic Power Detection], the kind of person who could come up with this useful magic utilization method, and the ones who designed the security systems she was unable to see through.

Little did she know, Alfonzo, the target of her mission, was the one who created all the things she was interested in. If she had known, however, she would have more than likely decided to ignore Zeref's orders, kidnap the young man, and force him to tell her everything she wanted to know about the things she was interested in. Then, when she was satisfied, she would drop him in front of the emperor.

Luckily for Alfonzo, she had no idea. And no one in Fairy Tail was dumb enough to spill the beans. Well... Other than Natsu. However, there was a pretty good chance that Natsu was too dumb to tell her anything worthy of her notice.

"Oh, they finally came out." Irene said after watching the guild hall for a few hours.

By now, the sun had set over the horizon. And under the darkness, Team Natsu, minus Natsu and Happy, left the guild hall. However, they were not alone. Accompanying them were a few wizards Irene had identified over the last few days. Namely, Ultear Milkovich, Mirajane Strauss, and Sun Seto, and Juvia Lockser.

Eventually, after saying goodbye to the others, Gray and Juvia separated from the rest of the group, heading towards their homes in Magnolia. Meanwhile, the rest of the group began walking towards the two mansion that Irene could not see through with her [Magic Power Detection].

However, when Irene saw Erza, a woman with similar scarlet red hair and brown eyes to herself, she could not help but raise an eyebrow. However, she did not react in any other meaningful way, her thoughts a mystery.

Although she did not move, Irene continued to follow the group of seven as they left the guild hall.

"Hmm... So, the little girl and the cat live in the same mansion as the guild master, Ur Milkovich." Irene muttered to herself as she sensed Wendy and Carla's magic power signatures disappear behind the barrier surrounding the lakeside mansion. "And the rest are heading towards the mansion on the lake. Do they all live together? Well, that is my target's mansion. Hmm, maybe they are all his women?"

As her thoughts reached that point, Irene smiled. She had already gathered that Alfonzo was married during her investigation. And she knew he had a few more fiancées and girlfriends. However, she had only seen Ultear, Mirajane, and Sun living in the mansion. So, she thought that was it. But now, she could add two more to the list of residents. She was just unsure if they were all in a relationship with Alfonzo, or not. However, she found the entire situation interesting, nonetheless.

Meanwhile, Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Sun, and Lucy were talking about what they were sensing through [Magic Power Detection] while on their way back to the mansion on the lake.

"How can one person have that much magic power?" Lucy asked in an apprehensive tone, letting her anxiety show now that Wendy was no longer around.

"Indeed." Erza replied. "She has more magic power than even Alfonzo when he releases Riot and Bedlam. Almost one and a half times, in fact."

"Yeah, and we still have no idea if she's an enemy or not." Mirajane said, her usual pleasant smile nowhere to be seen. "But if she's an enemy, there isn't much we can do about her."

"And then there's the other one." Ultear added. "She's got almost as much magic power as Gildarts. Why would two people that powerful come here? I'm really worried about what will happen."

"Well, if Alfonzo and Elicia got Ur's letter, they'll probably be back within the next few days, right?" Sun asked in an optimistic tone. "I'm sure Alfonzo will think of something. He made something that could stop Acnologia, after all."

"Yeah, and that dragon was a whole lot stronger than that woman." Mirajane added.

"Speaking of that woman." Erza said in a solemn tone. "Have any of you seen her yet? I've only been able to feel her magic power signature."

"Actually, now that you mention it..." Ultear said with an odd expression on her face.

"Is something the matter?" Erza asked while frowning slightly after seeing Ultear's expression.

Not only Ultear, but Mirajane and Sun also wore strange expressions. Expressions that Neither Erza nor Lucy missed.

"The thing is..." Sun said, not knowing how to explain.

"There's no need to worry, Sun." Mirajane said while smiling at Sun. "It's only a coincidence, I'm sure."

With that said, Mirajane turned her attention back to Erza.

"What Sun was trying to say is that she looks a lot like you, Erza." Mirajane continued. "She has scarlet hair and brown eyes. On top of that, her facial features look a lot like yours."

Hearing that, Erza and Lucy widened their eyes in surprise. Then, Lucy looked towards Erza quizzically.

"Erza, do you think she could be related to you?" Lucy asked in an unsure tone. "Maybe she's a relative that came searching for you."

"Unlikely." Erza replied. "I was abandoned in Rosemary Village before I could even remember." Erza said.

"Yeah, and if she were, she would have had many opportunities to do so after Erza made a name for herself in Ishgar." Ultear added, agreeing with Erza.

"I guess you're right." Lucy replied with a nod. "Still, it's weird that someone that looks so much like Erza has come to the town and has been watching the guild hall like that."

"Yeah, I think so, too." Sun added.

"Either way, we can think about that later." Mirajane said while smiling pleasantly. "For now, why don't we go inside. I'm sure Erza and Lucy are tired."

"Yeah, I really wanna take a dip in the hot tub." Lucy said, her mood brightening at the thought of the hot tub. "Besides, there's nothing we can do about someone that strong anyway. So, there's no point in worrying, right?"

"Indeed." Erza added with a nod. "But if she does anything to harm Fairy Tail , we'll stop her, no matter what."

In response, the other girls all nodded their heads in agreement.

By now, the group had crossed the bridge connecting the artificial island to the shore of Lake Sciliora. However, before they could get too close to the mansion, they all stopped and turned around with big smiles on their faces.

"Alfonzo, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga are back." Ultear said happily.

"Yeah, but that's faster than I thought." Mirajane said. "I thought it would be a few more days at the very least."

"That doesn't matter." Erza said as she started walking back towards the guild hall. "We should go and welcome them."

"You only want him to make you a strawberry shortcake as soon as possible, don't you?" Ultear asked teasingly. "Still, I wanna go see him as soon as possible, too."

"Oh, are you going to let him pleasure you because he came back early?" Lucy asked in a teasing tone of her own.

"Shut up!" Ultear shouted, her face reddening in embarrassment. "You're not gonna start acting like Cana, too, are you Lucy?"

With that, the group began to laugh happily as they hurried back to the guild hall.

Meanwhile, Irene, from near the guild hall, and Brandish, from the suite in the hotel, also noticed the four S-Class magic power signatures that just entered the town while riding in what they assumed to be a magic vehicle. And they both had a hunch that their target had arrived.

Chapter 477: Some not so Good News

In the Escalade, Alfonzo was behind the wheel while Elicia sat in the passenger seat with Marin and Ikaruga riding in the back seat. Currently, the four were just passing through Magnolia's southern gate.

And while they did, Alfonzo, Elicia, and Marin had their [Magic Power Detection] extended to cover the entire town.

As soon as the Escalade entered the town, both Alfonzo and Elicia each raised an eyebrow, as they could feel that they had passed through a thin, unfamiliar, dome of magic power.

Quickly exchanging glances, Alfonzo and Elicia both confirmed that the other had also felt the dome of [Magic Power Detection]. Then, after making eye contact for a moment, they decided to talk about it when they reached Ur's office.

"*Whistle* That's a huge magic power." Alfonzo said in an impressed tone. "The other one's not bad either. At least on par with that cock sucker from the Ten Wizard Saints."

"Why do you sound so impressed?" Marin asked in an incredulous tone. "We have no idea what those people want with Magnolia. For all we know, they could be enemies."

"Calm down, Marin." Elicia said as she looked back towards Marin. "Fonzie knows that. But there's really nothing we can do about it."

"On top of that, it's been a few days since they showed up." Alfonzo added. "And from what I can tell, they haven't done anything to hurt the guild or the town."

Naturally, Alfonzo and Elicia were both aware that Irene and Brandish were enemies. However, they were both hoping that they could be swayed to change sides. Although they did not have an idea how to change Irene's allegiance, they had a pretty good idea of how to make Brandish switch sides.

"I know, but..." Marin said, the anxiety evident in her tone.

"They are right, Miss Marin." Ikaruga said with a smile. "Being anxious over what could happen won't help anyone. Instead, you should simply continue to grow stronger. That way, if it ever comes to a conflict, you can protect that which you wish to protect."

"Considering your background, that was really sweet, Ikaruga." Elicia said with a smile.

["Yeah, and I'm sure she said it while fully intending to say what she said, unlike a certain someone."] Scylla said from Elicia's inner world.

'Scylla~...' Elicia whined internally.

"Anyway, as long as they don't do anything, we won't do anything either." Alfonzo said, bringing the conversation back to the original topic. "But that doesn't mean we won't prepare for what could happen."

'Unfortunately, with Irene's vast amount of magical knowledge, I'm not sure how much any preparations will help.' Alfonzo thought without changing his expression.

["Indeed."] Bedlam replied with a nod. ["She's a lot more than just raw power like Acnologia."]

["Yeah, but she's got a fuck ton of that, too."] Riot chimed in. ["Either way, we'll kick her ass, too, if she gets outta pocket."]

["*Sigh* You're such a brute, Riot."] Bedlam said in a disappointed tone. ["To think of putting your hands on such a beautiful woman like that. It's hard to believe we were created from the same person."]

["Fuck off!"] Riot shouted back.

With that, Riot and Bedlam began another one of their many arguments. And like always, Alfonzo ignored it. Instead, he focused on driving to the guild hall to do something that he would rather not... Give the guild their cut of the profits.

Eventually, the Escalade pulled up to the guild hall. And to no one's surprise, Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Sun, and Lucy were waiting outside with smiles on their faces. And as soon as Alfonzo parked the Escalade, the five women all made their way over to the driver's side door.

"It looks like you guys only missed Fonzie." Marin said as she opened the rear driver's side door. "I think I'm gonna cry."

While Ultear, Mirajane, and Lucy rolled their eyes at Marin's little joke, Sun looked apologetic. Meanwhile, Erza took a step towards the open door and reached into the Escalade's back seat before pulling Marin into a hug.

Clang!

"Ow!" Marin yelped in pain.

"I'm happy to see you, Marin." Erza said in a sincere tone. "Separating from family for so long truly makes me feel lonely."

"I really didn't think this through before making that joke." Marin said as her head throbbed.

The reason for Ultear, Mirajane, and Lucy rolling their eyes, as well as Marin's yelp of pain was simple. As soon as Marin suggested that the others did not miss her, Erza was destined to give her a hug to prove the opposite.

And Erza did exactly that. Unfortunately for Marin, Erza was wearing her [Heart Kreuz Armor] when she did. As a result, Marin was smashed face first into Erza's chest plate before she could even step out of the Escalade.

"Still, I'll never turn down a hug from my best friend." Marin said as she smiled through the pain and wrapped her arms around Erza's waist. "I even brought a surprise for you, Erza. But it's in my luggage. So, I'll have to show you when we get home."

Nodding in understanding, Erza eventually released Marin from her hug. Then, she turned towards Alfonzo, who had already exchanged hugs and kisses with Ultear, Mirajane, Sun, and Lucy.

"Alfonzo, I missed you." Erza said with a smile as she approached Alfonzo to give him a hug.

Having seen what just happened to Marin, Alfonzo took the initiative to hug Erza, making sure she could not smash his head into her chest plate as well. AS a result, Erza's body was pressed up against Alfonzo's while his arms were wrapped around her waist.

"I missed you, too, Erza." Alfonzo replied before stealing a kiss. "Anyway, let's head inside. I gotta give the guild its cut from my job."

When Alfonzo mentioned giving the guild its cut, everyone could tell that Alfonzo was gritting his teeth, which caused them to giggle.

A few moments later, after Elicia got hugs from all the other girls as well, the group, with Ikaruga following from a respectful distance, entered the guild hall. Then, after greeting all their friends, the group of eight made their way up to Ur's office.

When they arrived on the guild hall's top floor, Gildarts was sitting with Ur while she filled out paperwork.

"The kids are back." Gildarts said with a smile after taking a swig from a bottle of liquor.

"Welcome back, Alfonzo, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga." Ur said without raising her head. "I trust your trip went well."

"It was going great until we got your letter." Marin replied. "And after feeling those two magic power signatures, I can see why you called us back."

With that, Ur finally raised her head. And when she did, she let her eyes wander over the four new arrivals. They eventually focused on Elicia, who was smiling brightly.

"*Sigh* I don't know what to say about you, Lici." Ur said while shaking her head. "Honestly, I thought Bacchus would almost die on your trip to Quatro Cerberus, but I never thought it would be you who almost killed him.'

Instead of responding, Elicia's smile widened. Meanwhile, Gildarts, Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Sun, and Lucy opened their eyes wide in disbelief. Then, they shifted their gazes back and forth between Alfonzo and Elicia. Because like Ur, the one they expected to take things too far was Alfonzo, not Elicia.

"*Sigh* This time you shouldn't get too mad at Lici, Ur." Alfonzo said while smiling wryly. "Honestly, everything would have ended with that guy just getting his ass kicked. But he said something he shouldn't have."

"Yeah, Lici would have been fine with just beating him up if he didn't say something about killing Fonzie." Marin added, her expression hardening as she spoke.

Immediately, the atmosphere in the office changed as Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Sun, and Lucy began leaking bloodlust.

"Calm down, girls." Elicia said in a soothing tone. "After I beat him up, Bacchus left Quatro Cerberus to train a martial art that would work well with his [Palm Magic] and didn't need alcohol to be effective. So, I don't think we'll need to worry about him."

Although the five girls stopped leaking blood lust, they were still unhappy that Bacchus had threatened to kill Alfonzo.

"Besides, Fonzie is exaggerating." Elicia said while maintaining her smile. "I wasn't going to kill Bacchus. I was just going to blind him since his eyes clearly didn't work. I mean, he was always saying stuff about 'seeing' how much I wanted to be with him."

In response to Elicia's explanation, Gildarts, Ur, Ultear, Mirajane, Sun, and Lucy began dripping cold sweat. Erza, on the other hand, nodded in agreement, believing that no one needed such a defective pair of eyes.

"That's right." Erza said as she nodded. "We would have only needed to bring that Bacchus to see Miss Porlyusica. Then, she could have created a new pair of eyes for him. Just like she did for me back then."

Immediately, those who dripped cold sweat all turned incredulous gazes towards Erza.

Meanwhile, Alfonzo and Marin rolled their eyes at Elicia's explanation while Ikaruga smiled and gracefully covered her smile with the sleeve of her kimono.

"Lici, are you seriously saying that?" Marin asked, shooting her own incredulous glare at Elicia. "You were really only going to blind him?"

"That's right." Elicia replied in a confused tone. "I was only going to poke him in the eyes with my fingers."

For added emphasis, Elicia raised the index and middle fingers on her right hand.

"Yeah, but did you forget the threads vibrating and spinning like a drill around those fingers?" Alfonzo asked with his own incredulous glare. "Sure, you would have destroyed his eyes, but you would have probably ground his brain into mush, too."

Hearing that, everyone who did not travel to Quatro Cerberus guild hall opened their eyes wide as they stared at Elicia with disbelief. Even Erza, who originally thought blinding Bacchus was not so bad, could not help but think Elicia was going too far.

Elicia, on the other hand, tilted her head in confusion.

"Did I really do that?" Elicia asked in genuine confusion. "I was really mad back then. So, some of the details are kinda blurry."

Immediately, everyone, other than Alfonzo, made a mental note to never piss off Elicia. Because they could all tell that she was being completely truthful about not remembering exactly what she tried to do to Bacchus.

"Anyway, here's the guild's cut from the job." Alfonzo said as he reached into his pocket and pulled out a wad of Jewels.

A moment later, and without hesitation, Alfonzo tossed it towards Ur, who reached out to catch it. However, when she caught the money, Ur, along with her chair, slid back until she bumped into the wall behind her.

"Oops." Alfonzo muttered.

Luckily, Ur was not injured by Alfonzo. In fact, Alfonzo felt bad for what just happened. Because he did not want to deal with handing the money to Ur, he tossed it. And because of his unwillingness to give up the money, he tried to toss it quickly. Unfortunately, that led to him putting way too much force behind the toss, causing Ur to be sent sliding backwards.

Naturally, this caused everyone in the office to widen their eyes in surprise. Then, they all looked at Alfonzo quizzically.

"*Sigh* If I didn't know how unwilling you were to part with your hard earned money, I would have thought you were trying to sneak attack me just now." Ur said as she stood up and pulled her chair back to her desk. "But I know if you really wanted to get back at me or play a prank, you have other means of doing so."

"Yeah, I really am sorry about that, Ur." Alfonzo said in a sincere tone. "I didn't mean to put so much force behind that throw. And you're right. If I wanted to prank you, I naturally have other ways to do so. Especially since I have full control over the entire guild hall and your house."

Hearing that, cold sweat began to slide down Ur's back. Although she was fully aware that Alfonzo had control over all the sigils in the guild hall, as she was present when Alfonzo activated the recording lacrima during that one meeting with Iahar and Doranbolt, she had completely forgotten that the same was true for her house.

'Maybe I should stop using the guild as an intermediary for Alfonzo's construction jobs.' Ur thought to herself. 'I can only imagine what he'll do if he ever gets completely fed up.'

"Anyway, I've got something to report about that problem you mentioned in your letter." Alfonzo said, his expression turning solemn in an instant.

Hearing that, Ur's expression changed as well. And when she looked at the group standing in front of her desk, she noticed that Elicia was also wearing an extremely solemn expression, as well.

"What's the matter, Kid?" Ur asked as she took a seat.

Exchanging glances with Elicia before he spoke, Alfonzo took a deep breath after receiving a nod from her.

"Our two visitors can both use [Magic Power Detection]." Alfonzo said, causing everyone other than Elicia to gasp in surprise.

Chapter 478: Tomorrow, the Plan Begins

After Alfonzo dropped the bomb about the visitors being able to use [Magic Power Detection, Ur's office fell into silence. However, that silence was broken quickly enough.

Bang!

"How is that possible?" Ur asked as she slammed her palms onto her desk. "This is an exclusive spell of our guild. Does that mean someone betrayed us?"

Hearing Ur's assumptions, Gildarts, Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Sun, and Lucy narrowed their eyes dangerously. Like any other member of any other guild, the one thing they could not tolerate were traitors.

"Okay now, let's calm down, everyone." Elicia said while speaking in the most soothing tone she could muster. "Let's not jump to conclusions."

"What are you talking about, Lici?" Ultear, sounding just as fiery as her mother, asked in a reprimanding tone. "This is a big deal. We need to find out who is leaking guild secrets!"

"Seriously, Tear, calm down... please." Elicia said as she pulled Ultear into a hug and began combing her fingers through her friend's hair.

However, Ultear struggled fiercely against Elicia's embrace, wanting to find who betrayed them immediately. And Alfonzo and Elicia had a pretty good idea why the mother and daughter flew off the handle so quickly.

Ur and Ultear were separated for years because someone, brain of the Oración Seis, betrayed their trust when Ultear was a young child. And because of that, they are both very sensitive to betrayal.

Luckily, the other wizards in the room, though suspicious against treachery, were much calmer. So, while Elicia tried to calm Ultear, Gildarts did the same to Ur. Though, Ur's resistance was much fiercer, resulting in Gildarts being punched in the stomach and chest several times.

"Lici's right, you know." Alfonzo said in a casual tone. "You two are jumping to conclusions."

"How can you say that." Ur growled. "Someone gave out guild secrets. Do you know how important that skill has been for the guild's development."

"Yeah, I think I know better than you, Ur." Alfonzo said while glaring at Fairy Tail's fourth guild master. "Or did you forget? I was the one who invented that technique."

Immediately, Ur and Ultear froze. As a matter of fact, they had both forgotten that fact. They had also forgotten that Alfonzo had personally taught both of them how to use it, too.

"Well, it's true that Alfonzo doesn't seem to be worried about traitors." Mirajane said while examining Alfonzo's facial expression. "But why is that?"

"It's simple, actually." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "It's because [Magic Power Detection] isn't a difficult technique to learn."

Hearing that, almost everyone looked at Alfonzo with confused expressions, Gildarts' expression being the most confused.

The reason for Gildart's' expression was simple, however. And that was because of the property of his magic power. Thanks to his [Crash Magic], Gildarts' magic power destroys just about everything it comes in contact with. Even the small amount he releases passively. So, if he actively spread it, it would more than likely cause a disaster.

The exceptions to the confusion were Elicia, Marin, and Lucy. However, all their reasons were different. Elicia did not find the technique difficult because she had seen similar techniques in anime, manga, light novels, and web novels in her previous life. Marin, on the other hand, had extremely fine magic power control thanks to her innate [Transformation Magic]. Then there was Lucy, who had no issue learning how to use [Magic Power Detection]. Rather, she had power increasing her magic power control to make the technique more effective.

In fact, just like Lucy, all the others, minus Gildarts, had the same experience at the beginning. However, they've all been using it for at least three years by now. So, they only focus on the difficulty of increasing their magic power control, no longer thinking about how easy it was to get the basics of the technique down.

And Alfonzo explained exactly that.

"I get what you're saying, Kid." Ur said as she calmed down by a significant margin. "Still, how can you say there are no traitors? All of us had to have the technique explained to us before we could even begin using it at an elementary level."

"That's not exactly true, Ur." Alfonzo said while wagging a finger in front of Ur. "There's one of us who never had to have anyone explain it to them, right?"

Hearing that, not only Ur, but just about everyone looked at Alfonzo in confusion. The only exception, Elicia, pointed a finger at Alfonzo, dispelling the confusion from the others.

"Lici's right, it's me." Alfonzo said with a smile. "Though, I'm pretty sure Lici was on the verge of figuring it out, too."

In response, Elicia smiled sweetly at her husband.

"And if their magic power control is strong enough, they would have no problem improving their usage of the technique, either."

"That still does not explain how they learned it." Erza pointed out.

"I was getting to that." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "And with strong enough control and magic power sensitivity, they would be able to feel the thinly spread out magic power of someone using [Magic Power Detection], provided the user's control isn't better than theirs."

At that moment, everyone's eyes flashed with understanding. A moment later, however, Ur's mouth fell open in shock.

"Does that mean... It's because of... me?" Ur asked in a shaky tone.

Naturally, Ur was referring to the time when she first felt Irene's magic power. Thinking that no one would detect her magic power because of how thinly she had spread it, she never considered that someone could be that sensitive to external magic power.

"Probably." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "Not that it's a big deal. I mean, I expected it to get out sooner or later, anyway."

'It probably doesn't help that Irene is a dragon.' Elicia thought to herself while feeling sorry for Ur after seeing her forlorn expression. 'I mean, dragons are basically masters of magic power. So, it's not surprising at all. In fact, despite the fact that Brandish is stronger than Ur, I would bet she didn't even notice it.'

"Anyway, there's nothing to worry about." Alfonzo continued casually. "But if you are still worried, you should start working on your magic power control. That way, nothing like this will happen again."

In fact, Alfonzo was somewhat glad that this happened, and Ur realized that it was her magic power that was most likely detected. Because, he had noticed that Ur had been much laxer in her training ever since she became guild master. And although that was normal, with all the extra responsibilities she now had, that did not mean it was okay. He did not want Ur to lose the drive to improve, after all.

And just as Alfonzo hoped, he saw the flames of determination start blazing in Ur's eyes only a moment after his words fell.

Anyway, I'm tired." Alfonzo said as he stretched his body with a smile stretching across his face. "So, I'll leave it to you to tell Laxus and Freed about this information, Ur."

Hearing that, light flashed in the eyes of all the girls. Then, they all bid Ur and Gildarts goodbye as they filed into the elevator.

A few moments later, Alfonzo, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga left the guild with Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Sun, and Lucy following them. And to their annoyance, Saeko, Saya, Shizuka, and Rika also followed them back to the mansion, wanting to take a dip in the hot tub and talk to Alfonzo after a month and a half. Now, with the four extras, they could not carry out their plan to have some fun with Alfonzo in the hot tub.

Meanwhile, Irene, having followed Alfonzo and the others until they disappeared behind the barrier covering the mansion wither [Magic Power Detection] finally decided to call it a night.

Around twenty minutes later, Ireen had returned to the hotel suite she was sharing with Brandish. And when she arrived, she found Brandish still lounging on the couch. However, instead of just lying there, Brandish was reading a novel.

"Saint Slippery's Academy for Girls." Irene said curiously while reading the title of Brandish's book out loud. "I don't believe I've ever heard of that book. What is it about?"

So engrossed in her book, Brandish did not notice the sound of the door opening. However, when she heard Irene's voice, she panicked. Then, at a speed rivaling her top speed, she quickly snapped the book shut before shrinking it to the size of a dust mite with her [Command T Magic].

Brandish's magic, [Command T], allows her to manipulate the mass of an object. Whether it be reducing an object's mass, which makes the things she uses her magic on to shrink, or increasing its mass, which causes the object to expand. [Command T] is even effective on the magic of others, allowing Brandish to shrink a spell until it is no longer a threat before catching it and throwing it back at her opponent. Then, restoring it to its original size or even expanding it to make the spell more destructive.

"Irene, you're back." Brandish said, her eyes darting around the room without making eye contact with Irene as she spoke. "So, did you find out who those new arrivals were? I even noticed another four strong magic power signatures entered the town not too long ago. Were any of them our target?"

While Brandish continued to bombard Irene with questions, Irene only stared at her with a smile. She was curious about the book that Brandish hid, after all. And Brandish knew it, too. However, she also knew that if Irene was determined to get the book there was nothing she could do about it. So, she tried to draw Irene's attention away from the book.

Shaking her head at Brandish's antics, Irene smiled, deciding she would see what kind of book Brandish felt the need to hide, later. Instead, she answered Brandish's previous questions.

"No, I was not able to identify any of the magic power signatures that arrived in the afternoon." Irene replied as she walked towards the chair she sat in before she left the suite. "But I do believe our target has returned to Magnolia."

"*Sigh* That means we'll have to work, doesn't it." Brandish muttered in an annoyed tone.

"More specifically, you'll have to work, Brandish." Irene said with a smile, enjoying the suffering of her companion. "But don't worry, I'll always be nearby in case you need help."

"Well, considering I didn't feel anyone who had more magic power than me, I don't think I need to worry." Brandish said uncaringly.

"Don't be negligent, Brandish." Irene said, softly reprimanding her comrade. "Remember, that boy beat Serena. So, he's stronger than you."

"Either that or Serena is an idiot." Brandish replied in a proud tone. "Losing to someone with that much less power than himself is pathetic."

"Did you forget?" Irene asked as she poured herself a glass of wine. "That report said that he could raise his magic power in the midst of battle. Unfortunately, Serena was too incompetent to include the specifics in his report. So, we have no idea by how much he will be strengthened if he uses that ability."

'On top of that, we're not sure he's the only one with that strange power, either.' Irene continued in her thoughts as she sipped from her wine glass. 'And if there are more that can do the same, this may be a much more dangerous mission than even His Majesty expected.'

Though she had that thought, Irene decided to keep it to herself. Getting Brandish to take the mission she was assigned seriously was hard enough. However, if she made it known that the mission could be much more difficult, Irene was unsure if threats and torture would be able to change Brandish's mindset.

"Anyway, you'll start tomorrow." Irene ordered. "Although they are probably wary of us due to our level of power, they have no idea why we're here. So, this shouldn't be too difficult."

"*Sigh* I hope so." Brandish replied as she sank into the couch's backrest. "I really don't wanna work too hard for this."

"Well, I saw that the target was surrounded by beautiful women." Irene said as the smile she had been wearing for the beginning widened. "So, he's probably quite the lover of beauty. So, if you use your feminine wiles, I'm sure you could end this mission quite quickly."

In response, Brandish glared at Irene as her cheeks flushed deeply, causing Irene to chuckle in amusement. And if you add the fact that Brandish had just been reading *Slippery Girls*, a few, rather explicit, images appeared in her head, causing her blush to deepen more fiercely and Irene's chuckle to turn into full blown laughter.

Unable to stand the embarrassment any further, Brandish stood up from the couch before rushing into her bedroom, the sound of the door slamming behind her signifying that she did not want to talk about it anymore.

Meanwhile, Irene spent the next few moments laughing uproariously. Then, once her laughter calmed, she wiped a tear from her eye as she got her breathing under control.

"Well, that was fun." Irene said as she swirled her wine. "Still, I wonder what that book was about."

Shrugging in response to her own question, Irene took another sip from her wine glass.

"I'll just take the book from her later." Irene said after swallowing her wine. "I'm sure the expression on her face when she sees me reading it one day after she comes back from investigating will be priceless."

Chapter 479: Brandish's Hatred

The day after Alfonzo, Elicia, Marin, and Ikaruga returned from their visit to Quatro Cerberus, Alfonzo opted to not train with everyone at the guild hall. Although he did not intend to skip training all

together, he did intend to increase the intensity of his work out. Meaning, he wanted to increase the gravity he trained under.

Unfortunately, that meant he would need to train alone, as the wizard with the strongest body in the guild, and quite possibly on the continent, no one would be able to handle the gravity when he reached his limit.

So, Elicia, leading Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Marin, Sun, and Lucy, headed to the guild hall with their guests from last night, Saeko, Saya, Shizuka, and Rika, to the guild early in the morning. Meanwhile, Ikaruga also stayed at the mansion to clean up after being away for six weeks.

"I thought he forgot." Rika said while walking with a weapon case in her right hand. "But to think, he made it for me before he even came back from Era. I can't wait to put this pretty little girl through her paces in training this morning."

As previously mentioned, Alfonzo agreed to create a Mechashift weapon for Rika, if she could get to A-Class and complete a few quests, all without causing collateral damage. And Rika, who was intrigued by the thought of a weapon like that, jumped at the opportunity. As a result, she became only the fourth wizard in the guild to have a career without causing excessive damage to her surroundings on quests. The other three being Alfonzo, Elicia, and Levy.

And last night, after reaching the mansion with the others, Alfonzo finally gave her the promised reward. And although she was expecting a sniper rifle that could change into a spear or a scythe or something like that, she liked what she received, nonetheless.

In the case was a pair of pistols. However, these pistols were special in the way that they both had a bayonet attached to their barrels. On top of that, their barrels were a bit longer than normal. To be honest, when Rika saw the weapons, she was more than a little disappointed. However, when Alfonzo

showed her the gimmick behind them, Rika's eyes sparkled like a child who just received the toy of their dreams.

By inserting the blade of one of the bayonets into a slot on the back of the grip of the other pistol, it would activate a mechanism. As a result, the two pistols would be fused into one weapon, a rifle. On top of that, there was an accompanying scope that could be attached, as well. Although Rika was not interested to understand the mechanics of such a weapon, Alfonzo explained that it had something to do with his [Metal Magic] and a whole lot of sigils.

Regardless of how her new weapon/weapons worked, Rika loved them. And to show her appreciation, she wrapped her arms around Alfonzo's neck and kissed him passionately, surprising the other ladies greatly. On top of that, Rika noticed the pouts from both Saya and Shizuka, who were clearly jealous that she kissed Alfonzo.

"Yes, they're great weapons." Saya said with a huff. "But why did you kiss him. I mean, it's clear he's not a better shot than you. So, that means you can't possibly have feelings for him, right?"

"Oh, is little Saya jealous?" Rika asked in a teasing tone. "You must really like him a lot to be so upset."

"What are you talking about? Saya asked with an embarrassed blush on her face. A blush she tried to hide by adjusting her glasses. "I don't like him. I was just curious. I mean, you made it quite clear that you would only be with a man that could shoot better than you, or was I mistaken?"

"No, you're absolutely right." Rika replied with a smile. "Unfortunately, I think I might have set the bar too high."

As she reached that point, Rika flicked the bangs on her left side out of her face before continuing in a tone that suggested she was carrying the weight of the entire world.

"*Sigh* Being such a talented magic gunner can be a curse at times like these." Rika said theatrically. "And that means that unless I lower my standards, I'll end up dying alone. However, instead of lowering my standards, I decided to change the criteria."

Reaching that point, Rika's expression changed again. Now, she was wearing a very cheeky smile.

"So, instead of finding someone that can outshoot me, I decided that a man who can make weapons that complement my brilliance are just as good." Rika said while winking at Saya.

Hearing that, Saya gritted her teeth as she glared at Rika. Although part of her thought Rika was just messing with her and that kiss happened just because her emotions spiked at receiving the perfect weapon for her skill set, the other part thought that Rika was hiding genuine interest behind eh playful demeanor.

Unfortunately, not even Rika was sure at this point. While she enjoyed Alfonzo's company and loved his sense of humor, she has not been able to spend any significant amount of time with him since they left Takanosu. And she understood why that was.

As soon as they got to Magnolia, they had to prepare for the Harvest Festival. After that, Alfonzo made the promise with Rika to make her weapon. So, she spent almost all her time completing quests to gain the reward she was promised. However, before she could finish that, Alfonzo left for Lamia Scale. Then, he left for Quatro Cerberus while she was on a quest with Alzack, Bisca, and Kohta.

"Rika's so lucky..." Shizuka muttered while Rika teased Saya about having a crush on Alfonzo. "I wanna try kissing Fonzie, too. Everyone looks so happy when they do it."

Shizuka's muttering caused Rika to look at her with a wry smile on her face. In fact, Shizuka's interest in Alfonzo is one of the reasons for her own interest. Especially since the two of them have shared just about everything since they were children. And seeing that Alfonzo had a harem, it made the thought of sharing a man with her best friend sound quite appealing.

"But if you do that, Rika, what will you do if you find a better shot than you after getting together with Fonzie?" Marin asked, deciding that adding to the chaos would be fun.

Once again, Rika swept her bangs out of her face, this time from the right side. And once again, she put on that expression as if she were carrying the weight of the world.

"*Sigh* That would just be the other man's bad luck." Rika said in a forlorn tone. "I guess it would be my bad luck, as well. *Sigh* Missing out on something after searching for it for so long would truly be a pity."

While the other girls laughed at Rika's act, Saya continued to grit her teeth and Shizuka continued to daydream about kissing Alfonzo. Meanwhile, Elicia, without even needing her [Magic Power Detection], had located Brandish, who was wearing a black bikini with gold accents, a black overcoat, and black, high heeled sandals.

'Man, these chicks are really bold.' Elicia thought to herself while glancing at Brandish from the corner of her eye. 'They just sit out in the open and watch the guild. What would they do if we found them suspicious?'

["You know, I don't really think they care."] Scylla replied. ["I mean, without releasing my seal, you're weaker than she is. And I doubt they know that you can power up like Fonzie did against the dragon traitor. So, they think they can run wild in our town."]

'*Sigh* You're probably right.' Elicia replied while pulling her gaze away from Brandish. 'Still, even if they aren't up to something... And let's be honest, we all know they are... The whole guild would be on alert because of the way they act.'

["I know."] Scylla replied. ["But you know how arrogant the strong can be. And considering the fact that she's on par with the dragon traitor, it's no wonder she doesn't put anyone in her eyes."]

'Yeah, and with magic like [Command T], she's got pretty good reason to be arrogant, I guess.' Elicia muttered internally. 'I just can't remember if she needs to touch something to manipulate its mass. Because that will make a big difference in the way I deal with her.'

["Right."] Scylla replied with a nod. ["She didn't really show much in the way of hand to hand combat in the canon. I mean, she beat up Lucy that one time. But Lucy wasn't exactly a martial artist. Either way, if she needs to touch you with her hands to use her magic, I think you'll be fine."]

Nodding in agreement with Scylla, Elicia continued to head towards the guild with the others. Meanwhile, Brandish, who had been observing the group of women frowned minutely.

"He's not with them." Brandish muttered while reading a book.

On a side note, the book Brandish was reading was the same one she was reading when Irene returned to the hotel room last night, Saint Slippery's Academy for Girls. And she was almost done with it. So, she also had a copy of Saint Slippery's Academy for girls 2 in the pocket of her overcoat.

However, because she was unwilling to go through the embarrassment from last night a second time, this time the outside of the book was covered with a book cover. And the same was true for the sequel.

"I wonder what that Alfonzo is doing that he did not accompany his wife." Brandish continued to mutter as she turned a page. Then, she glanced at the group of women again. "And why are those two women looking at me like that. They're eyes are sparkling like they found a like-minded individual. But why?"

Naturally, the two women Brandish was talking about were Erza and Marin, who thanks to their instincts knew that Brandish was reading the same kind of book they were into. However, when Brandish glanced at them, she noticed something about Erza.

"That woman looks an awful lot like Irene." Brandish muttered quietly as she returned her attention to the book in her hands. "She's got the same hair and eye colors, and a lot of her facial features are similar, too. Then, there's that explosive figure. Are they related in some way?"

Before she could think about it any further, however, Brandish's head shot up. This time, however, her attention was focused on a different woman. This time, her eyes were locked onto a woman no less voluptuous than herself, perhaps even a little more with blond hair hanging loosely to her shoulders with a side tail on the right side of her head and brown eyes.

"It's her!" Brandish hissed out through gritted teeth. "The daughter of the woman who murdered my mother!"

Immediately, Brandish's magic power began to leak due to her unstable emotions. Naturally, this drew the attention of the group of women, who all looked at her in surprise. What surprised them even more was the level of hatred swirling in her eyes.

"That's one of the two people who entered the town by tampering with Fonzie's barrier, isn't it?" Marin asked, though her question was more of a statement.

"Yeah, but what's wrong with her?" Sun asked in a slightly concerned tone. "She looks really mad."

"Indeed." Erza replied with a nod while also drawing Astraia from the sheath on her hip.

"But why now?" Ultear asked as she put Kinsi on. "Those two have been so peaceful since they got here."

"It looks like she wants revenge for something." Rika said as she opened the case she was carrying and took out the two pistols. Then, she filled each of the magazines with her [Bullet-Make Magic] as she continued. "I've seen that look too many times in my time as a knight. She's definitely out for blood."

Meanwhile, the other ladies prepared for battle, as well. It had already been explained that this woman's magic power was on par with the first seat of the Ten Wizard saints, God Serena, so they knew this would be a tough fight. And more than likely, more than a few of them would end up injured... Or worse.

'Oh, crap.!' Elicia exclaimed internally. 'She saw Lucy. And I'm sure she wants revenge because Grammi died. Unfortunately, if we don't defeat her, we won't get her to see reason. But Fonzie told us to keep the fact that we can release the first seal on our [soul Armaments] a secret so that we don't give away too much information to the Alvarez Empire. But what should we do? WE can't let her hurt Lucy.'

["Stop panicking."] Scylla said in a harsh tone. ["Fonzie has probably already noticed what's going on here. So, he won't let things get out of hand."]

'That's right.' Elicia replied with an internal nod. 'I didn't think of that.'

["On top of that, we just talked about you being able to beat her without releasing my seal, remember?"] Scylla asked while rolling her eyes. ["I swear, if it's not something Fonzie says, you don't even bother listening."]

'Tee-hee.' Elicia giggled cutely.

["Besides, if they're really up to something, Irene won't let her ruin their plans, either."] Scylla added after rolling her eyes again. ["Oh, and they're both starting to move."]

"Lucy Heartfilia!" Brandish shouted, interrupting the conversation between Elicia and Scylla while simultaneously surprising the other ladies.

"Huh? Me?" Lucy exclaimed in confusion while pointing at herself.

"I'll make you pay for what your mother did to mine!" Brandish said as she flared her magic power to the limit, putting pressure on everything in her surroundings.

"For what Mom did?" Lucy asked, her confusion growing even further. "And who is your mother? And what did my mom due to her?"

"Your mother, Layla Heartfilia killed my mother, and her most loyal servant, Grammi!" Brandish shouted in a tone filled with hatred and sadness. "So, I'll do the same to her daughter!"

"Huh? No, that's impossible." Lucy said while taking a step backwards.

Unfortunately, Brandish had no intension of listening to Lucy, as she had already burst forward. And while Lucy was too surprised to react, the other ladies were ready to fight for their friend/sister/guild mate.

Chapter 480: An Unexpected End to the Battle

After making her declaration to get revenge for her mother, Brandish, wither magic power flooding her body, dashed forward to carry out her revenge. However, with Lucy's guild mates surrounding her, it would not be that easy.

"[Solid Script Magic: Icicles]." Saya chanted as Brandish reached the halfway point to Lucy.

As Saya chanted, she used a light pen to write a word in the air. Then, when the word was formed, with an injection of Magic Power, it turned into a dozen floating icicles that were quickly fired at Brandish.

In response, Brandish simply swung her hand while chanting her own spell.

"[Command T: Magic Power]."

In the next instant, the magic power making up the icicles was compressed into several small spheres. And when those spheres reached Brandish, she caught them effortlessly. A moment later, to the surprise of all the opposing wizards, Brandish threw them back at the ladies of Fairy Tail.

"[Command T: Expansion]." Brandish chanted as she continued to run forward.

With Brandish's chant, Saya's returned magic expanded to nearly triple its original size. However, instead of returning to the shape of icicles, they turned into cyclones of ice.

"Damn... What kind of magic is that?" Rika asked as she dispelled the bullets she had originally created in the magazines of her pistols. Then, she chanted to create new ammo, only filling the pistol's chambers. "[Bullet-Make Magic: Firestorm Bullets]."

As soon as the ammunition was created, Rika did not hesitate to pull the triggers on her pistols. As a result, two large fire cyclones were fired from the muzzles of her guns, causing a steam explosion when the two opposing temperatures collided.

"[Ice-Make: Wall]." Ultear chanted as she slammed her hands onto the ground after making her casting gesture.

As a result of Ultear's quick reaction, the steam was stopped before it could reach the wizards of Fairy Tail. At the same time, Brandish was forced to stop her charge thanks to the steam, as well.

Taking advantage of Brandish's sudden halt, Erza [Requipped] into her [Heaven's Wheel Armor], simultaneously materializing fifty swords. Then, using those swords to circle around the ice wall and the steam cloud, she attacked Brandish from two different directions.

"[Command T: Expansion]." Brandish chanted as she drew a dagger from her overcoat.

With her chant, the blade of the dagger Brandish drew elongated. Now, it looked as if she was holding a sword with a short hilt. And using that sword, she quickly spun to deflect all the incoming swords.

At the same time, Elicia, using her threads to vault herself over the ice wall and the steam cloud, was just in time to see Brandish deflect the last of the swords.

'Was she able to deal with Erza's swords so easily because she's good with a sword?' Elicia asked herself as she cast [False Appearance]. 'Or is it because she has enough magic power to compensate for her lack of skill. I wish I had been up here earlier to see.'

["You can think about that later."] Scylla scolded. ["For now, just worry about subduing her. But remember not to take it too far. The other one is watching."]

'I know.' Elicia replied as she directed her illusion to drop in front of Brandish while she continued to sail past her.

And just as Scylla said, Irene was hiding herself with an illusion made from her [Enchantment Magic]. At first, she wanted to stop Brandish before the battle started. However, after thinking about it for a moment, she decided she would let her fight. She could always stop things before they reached a critical point.

Not that Irene actually cared if Brandish killed a few wizards from Fairy Tail. However, if she did so, they would have to do things the hard way. And although she was sure it would not actually be all that difficult for her to kidnap Alfonzo and kill all the wizards sent to recover him, it would alert the rest of Fiore that they were under attack. Meaning, the future invasion plan would meet more resistance.

On top of that, Irene could feel that she was being watched. By several wizards, in fact. She could feel more than a few people using [Magic Power Detection] to keep track of the battle, after all. However, there was one presence whose magic power she could not feel. And that presence gave her the most dangerous feeling of all.

"Interesting." Irene muttered while cupping her chin with her right hand while watching Elicia engage in close quarters combat with Brandish. "Could this person's magic power control surpass even my own?"

As she spoke the last sentence, Irene glanced at the mansion floating in the middle of the lake. Deducing that the magic power she could not sense belonged to Alfonzo based on the fact that she did not sense him leaving the mansion, combined with the fact that she never felt him activate [Magic Power Detection] the previous night, there was no one else it could be that had a lock on her.

What Irene did not realize, however, was the fact that Elicia's magic power control was even finer than Alfonzo's. And since she had only been focused on her target, combined with the fact that Elicia was so much weaker than she was, she completely ignored the Magic Seamstress.

"Still, that girl is rather skilled." Irene said, focusing back on the battle. "Using that peculiar fighting style, she has not allowed Brandish to touch her even once. Which puts Brandish at a disadvantage when fighting other humans."

As Irene alluded to, Brandish's Magic, [Command T] can be used on living beings. However, it requires direct contact to work. So, the way Elicia was dodging her, she could only fight in a battle of physical skill.

"[Thread Magic: Crucifixion]." Elicia's voice sounded from an empty area.

In the next instant, threads wrapped around Brandish's wrists and ankles. Then, she was suspended a few inches off the ground while her feet were forced together, and her arms were spread apart.

Naturally, this outcome confused both Irene and Brandish, as the person Brandish was fighting seemingly did not cast any magic. Irene was especially surprised as she was paying attention to the whole battlefield, yet she did not sense Elicia using any magic at all.

"What is this?" Brandish asked in an enraged tone. "Who is it? Who's attacking from the shadows like a coward?"

Watching Brandish scream and struggle against her threads, Elicia dispelled her [Camouflage Magic]. Before she did so, however, she made sure to stand in the same place, and with the same posture, as her illusion, hiding the fact that she activated it. And as soon as she did so, she revealed the threads extending from her fingertips.

"She has the ability to hide her magic." Irene muttered in interest.

Though it may seem surprising, Elicia's [Camouflage Magic] was able to trick even Irene. However, with Elicia's magic power control, it should be no surprise at all. She even managed to hide the fact that she could use [Camouflage Magic].

["Wow! You actually thought your actions through!"] Scylla exclaimed in disbelief as Elicia performed this deception consciously. Then she began frantically looking into the sky as she continued. ["Where are they? I know they have to be around here somewhere."]

'What are you talking about, Scylla?' Elicia replied mentally in a confused tone.

["The flying pigs! They have to be around here somewhere!"] Scylla shouted frantically.

Mentally rolling her eyes, Elicia stepped towards Brandish without letting her facial expression change thanks to her [Armament Spirit's] antics.

"Now, can we talk about this?" Elicia asked as she stopped in front of her bound foe. "I'm sure there's got to be some kind of misunderstanding."

Instead of responding, Brandish glared at Lucy, who looked quite uncomfortable.

'I'm not sure if Lucy is acting or not.' Elicia thought to herself. 'If she were to release Zodiac's first seal, she would be a pretty good match for Brandish, despite the fact that she would pale in comparison when it comes to magic power.'

["Yeah, with the abilities of her Celestial Spirits, [Star Dress], and Gemini, it would be a three on one."] Scylla added. ["On top of that, Alfonzo has been teaching her what he could remember from watching videos about Savate in your past life. So, she's got more than just that front kick she always used to use."]

Not receiving a response to her question, Elicia faked a sigh. Then, she approached Brandish, acting as if she would strike her on the back of the neck to knock her out, knowing that Irene would most likely stop her before it came to that. However, before Elicia could get too close, Brandish lowered her head as her magic power flared.

"[command T: Expansion]." Brandish chanted quietly.

In the next instant, Brandish body expanded, growing to approximately 16'6" tall in an instant, causing Elicia to hurriedly jump away.

"If you think that's enough to stop me from taking my revenge, you've truly underestimated me." Brandish growled, her voice echoing through the area due to her increased size. "And if you continue to get in my way, I wouldn't mind killing the rest of you along with that bitch's daughter!"

With that said, Brandish used her, now, giant foot to kick Elicia, who quickly evaded. However, instead of continuing to attack Elicia, Brandish stepped towards Lucy. In response, the other ladies stepped between the two, ready to defend their guild mate.

"No, I'll fight her myself." Lucy said, her tone much sterner than usual. "I won't let her talk about Mom like that."

"Lucy, she's too strong for any of us to fight her alone." Ultear said with a frown.

Although Ultear said that, she knew she would be just as angry if anyone spoke ill of her mother, too. And it would probably be even worse if her mother had died.

Upon having that thought, Ultear gritted her teeth while clenching her fists.

'I'm gonna beat up Gray next time I see him.' Ultear thought to herself. 'Because of his stupidity, I almost lost my mom back then.'

Meanwhile, back at the guild hall, Gray, while following the battle going on outside, shuddered for an inexplicable reason. However, he had the feeling that he needed to avoid Ultear for a while.

On a side note, the reason none of the wizards of Fairy Tail rushed to the battlefield to help was simple, Ur had forbidden it. With Alfonzo and Elicia there, she had no doubt that everything would be fine. On top of that, Gildarts was not too far away, either. So, he would be able to help if things truly got out of hand.

Meanwhile, back on the battlefield, Lucy stepped past the rest of her guild mates, ignoring their protests due to her anger.

"Good, you've decided not to resist." Brandish said in a sinister tone. "At least you have a heart, unlike your mother. And because I can respect the fact that you want to protect your friends, I'll only kill you."

"You're wrong." Lucy said as she reached into her key pouch. Then, as she pulled out a Golden Celestial Key, she continued. "Like I said, I'm going to make you pay for talking about my mom like that. [Open! Gate of the Water Bearer, Aquarius]."

With her chant, Lucy thrust the key in her hand into the empty air in front of her, then she turned it. In the next instant, Aquarius appeared in a flash of golden light.

"You better have a damn good reason for summoning me, Lucy." Aquarius barked angrily. "I have a date with my sexy man, Scorpio, in less than an hour. And if you cause me to be late, you won't like the consequences."

"I get it. I know how annoying it is to be interrupted while you're getting ready for a date." Lucy replied in an annoyed tone. Then, she averted her gaze as she continued at a much lower volume. "Maybe you should stop scheduling your dates on the days that I'm allowed to summon you."

"What was that?" Aquarius asked in a menacing tone.

"I said I need your help to make her pay for talking bad about my mom." Lucy replied, pointing Aquarius' key towards Brandish.

Hearing that someone was saying bad things about Layla, Aquarius eyes narrowed. As previously mentioned, before she was forced to retire as a wizard, due to Magic Deficiency Syndrome, Layla was Aquarius contractor. And Aquarius loved and respected her immensely. So, with wrath burning in her eyes, she slowly turned to face the one who spoke ill of one of her favorite wizards.

Meanwhile, Brandish, as soon as she saw Aquarius, froze in place. And when she finally made eye contact with the Mermaid Spirit, she involuntarily dispelled her magic and returned to her normal height.

Seeing Brandish, Aquarius narrowed her eyes even further. At the same time, Alfonzo appeared next to the rest of the ladies in a flash of violet light. Though, only Elicia noticed his arrival.

"So, you're not going to greet me, Little Brandish?" Aquarius asked in a threatening tone.

"M-m-my apologies, Mistress Aquarius." Brandish said while bowing politely. "It's wonderful to see you again. I have truly missed you over the years."

"Good." Aquarius replied with a nod. "It seems you haven't forgotten your manners."

"Huh?" x 10

Meanwhile, everyone, other than Alfonzo, Elicia, and Shizuka, exclaimed in confusion after seeing the way Aquarius and Brandish interacted. Ireen was included in the group of confused wizards, as well.

As for those who were not confused, Alfonzo and Elicia were expecting this once Lucy summoned Aquarius, thanks to their meta knowledge. Meanwhile, Shizuka was simply in awe from seeing a mermaid.