

Fairy Tail 501

Chapter 501: Tsunade's Surprise

At the moment Natsu released his [Soul Armament], Igneel, Irene, who was casually reading the newspaper and drinking a glass of wine in her hotel suite, snapped her head in the Fairy Tail guild hall's direction. And the reason for that was simple, she felt a very familiar aura from inside.

"What was that?" Irene asked herself as she placed both her glass of wine and the newspaper on the table next to the reclining chair, she had come to enjoy sitting in. "I don't know how it's possible, but that was a pure draconic aura. And even though Fairy Tail houses three Dragon Slayers, that should be impossible."

And Irene's train of thought was correct. Although she knew there were still dragons living in the world, she also knew that they all lived on the continent of Guiltina. Well, other than Acnologia, who lived wherever he felt like living, as he was too powerful for anyone to say otherwise.

"I need to find out what that is." Irene muttered to herself while continuing to look in the guild hall's direction. "This could be a major issue for His Majesty's plans. Unfortunately, I cannot reach my magic power senses into that tower. Otherwise, I would be able to find out in no time."

With that, Irene shook her head. Then, she once again picked up the newspaper and started reading. However, she quickly found herself getting bored.

"*Sigh* I should summon Heine and Juliet to accompany me." Irene muttered to herself while continuing to drink her wine. "At least I could make them do things to keep me entertained."

At that moment, the door to one of the bedrooms opened. Through it, Brandish, wearing a slightly different bikini than usual, stepped into the suite's living room before flopping down on the couch with her latest reading material in hand.

"Your outfit, it's different." Irene said in an interested tone. "Although not by much, this looks a bit more elegant while drawing attention to the good points of your figure. Where did you buy it?"

"Elicia, the wife of our target made it for me." Brandish replied without looking up from her book. "And although it was more expensive than I was expecting, it's worth it. And since there are no annoying parts to tie, it's easy to put on and take off."

"Hmm... Interesting." Irene replied. "She did ask me if I would allow her to make a new outfit for me. But I declined, thinking that it would be annoying to enchant my clothes once again. But perhaps it's not such a bad idea."

'And if she's as good as everyone says she is, then I will definitely be taking her back to Alvarez with me.' Irene thought as a smile stretched across her face. 'Alfonzo would be less likely to try and escape if his wife was with us. On top of that, I bet Heine and Juliet would like some new clothes, too.'

"Anyway, you've usually left to interact with those close to the target by now, Brandish." Irene said in a curious tone. "So, why are you still here?"

"Marin, Erza, and Lucy are all taking quests today." Brandish replied nonchalantly. "So, there is no reason to wait for them. They'll be gone for a while."

"I see." Irene replied. "Then, I guess there won't be any chances to examine that mansion for a while." Irene replied.

In response, Brandish simply rolled her eyes.

'Is there really a reason to pretend at this point?' Brandish thought to herself as she turned a page in her book. 'Since there is no way to investigate when you're over there, we both know the only reason you want to go to their mansion is for the food.'

Fortunately for her, Brandish was smart enough to not say that out loud. She made sure not to let her thoughts show on her face, either. On top of that, she could not fault Irene for her reason to want to visit so often. Alfonzo's cooking was truly that good.

"Hey, Irene, what did that woman from yesterday mean when she said you weren't human?" Brandish asked. "I wanted to ask you yesterday, but it didn't feel like the time was right?"

"And the time still isn't right." Irene said in a stern tone. "So, you should not ask again."

Understanding the quite blatant threat, Brandish dropped the subject and went back to reading her book.

'Yeah, I'll let that go.' Brandish thought to herself. 'Trying to find out isn't worth the trouble.'

Meanwhile, Retsu and Tsunade, who had chosen to stay at another luxurious hotel in the town were just finishing breakfast in the hotel's dining room. And just as they finished, Tsunade took a sip of her mimosa. Then, she looked at Retsu quizzically.

"Master Retsu, what did you mean when you said that woman, Irene, was not human?" Tsunade asked curiously. "I mean, other than being extremely powerful, she seemed no different from any other human wizard."

"To be honest, I'm not sure what she was." Retsu replied after taking a sip from a cup of tea. "But as you know, I have the ability to perceive one's soul. And her soul is different. Although it resembles that of a human, it's been changed in a way that makes it closer to that of a beast than a human."

"But how is that possible?" Tsunade asked. "Was she experimented on?"

"As I said, I'm not sure." Retsu replied. "But I can tell you that it is a natural change. Experimentation of that level often leaves quite glaring marks on the soul."

"I see..." Tsunade replied with a contemplative expression on her face.

"Anyway, let us be on our way." Retsu said as she stood up from the table. "I need to talk to Alfonzo about what I know. She seems intent on getting close to him, after all."

"Right." Tsunade replied as she finished her mimosa before standing up as well. "I need to talk to him about what the old man from the village told me. Plus, I need to know why he wants to commission a quest for the shinobi of the village."

"Very well." Retsu said. "Then, let us be on our way."

Like that, Retsu and Tsunade made their way from their hotel to the guild hall. And since they knew the usual schedule of the Fairy Tail wizards they were acquainted with, they knew they would spend a bit of time waiting for them to finish their training.

Not long later, the ladies of Mermaid Heel arrived at the guild hall. And just as they expected, most of the wizards were nowhere to be seen as they were still training. However, they did see Cana, Team Natsu with Juvia accompanying them, Ultear and Meredy, The Strauss siblings, as well as Marin and Sun.

"Oh, you all aren't training this morning?" Tsunade asked as she approached the quest boards near the bar. "Never thought I'd see any of you slacking off."

"Master Tsunade, good morning." Erza said politely as she turned away from the quest board. "As it happens, we intend to take quests."

"Oh, I guess that makes sense." Tsunade replied. Then, she let her gaze brush over Erza, Mirajane, and Sun before she continued. "But didn't you three just get back from Blue Pegasus with Alfonzo? Why don't you take some time to rest?"

"Because that's all we did while Alfonzo was working." Sun replied with a smile. "Other than training after he finished work each day, we did not do anything to keep ourselves battle ready."

"So, we're taking quests to get back into shape, so to speak." Mirajane said, picking up where Sun left off.

"I see." Retsu replied with a nod. "Then, please be careful. Pushing too hard in such situations can be detrimental."

"We will." Erza replied. "Luckily, due to constant training, our bodies are in shape. It's just we haven't been in any real combat situations for two months."

"And that's why I told you we should take an A-Class quest instead of an S-Class one." Lucy said in an exasperated tone.

"Oh, come on, Lucy." Natsu said with a grin. "Me, you, and the frozen streaker will be there. So, there's no need to worry. If Erza gets in trouble, we'll be there to back her up."

At the same time, after hearing that Team Natsu would be taking an S-Class quest, Mirajane's competitive spirit was ignited. Then, with a stern expression on her face, she spoke to her siblings.

"Elfman, Lisanna, we'll be taking an S-Class quest, too." Mirajane said in a no nonsense tone.

"But Big Sis, we just decided on a quest." Lisanna said while holding a recently ejected quest sheet. "And Master Ur will know it was me who chose it. So, I wouldn't be able to go with you on this quest if you change it now."

Hearing that, Mirajane wore a conflicted expression. However, last night, she promised her brother and sister that they would go on a quest together since she hadn't seen them in two months. So, despite wanting to compete with Erza, she eventually gave in.

"Anyway, you all should be going." Tsunade said casually. "No one wants to start a quest too late in the day, after all."

"Yes." Erza replied in a solemn tone. "Then we shall see you later, Master Tsunade, Master Unohana. Now, let's go."

Hearing that, Natsu, with Happy sitting on his shoulder showed the most excitement.

"Hell yeah, another S-Class quest." Natsu shouted happily. "I'll definitely make S-Class this year with all the experience."

While he spoke, Natsu strode towards the guild halls sliding doors. Meanwhile, Lucy only shook her head. She knew there was no changing her team mates' minds once they decided on something. So, she just followed Gray, Erza, Juvia, Wendy, and Carla out of the guild hall without another word.

At the same time, Cana, who had not chosen a quest yet, hesitated for a moment. Then, she realized that only she, Alfonzo, and Lici would be at home. So, she decided that she would take a quest later, as she still wanted to spend more time with Alfonzo. So, after the others left and Tsunade and Retsu found a place to wait for Alfonzo, she made her way back to the elevator to join the others in training.

A few hours later, all the wizards who had been training made their way down to the first floor of the guild hall. Then, they all moved towards the showers to get cleaned up. And as they all came out of the

showers in groups of two and three, Alfonzo eventually entered the main hall. Shortly afterwards, he noted the current and former guild masters sitting at a table.

"Master Tsunade, Master Unohana, good afternoon." Alfonzo said with a smile as he approached the table where Tsunade and Retsu sat. Then, as he took a seat at the table, he continued. "So, Master Tsunade, will you tell me how to put forth a mission for the Village Hidden in the Leaves?"

"That depends." Tsunade replied as she crossed her arms under her breasts, emphasizing them even more. "What do you need them for? I doubt your request is too much for your guild to handle."

"And you would be right about that." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "But with our numbers, it would be quite time consuming. And judging from the number of training grounds you told me I would be expected to modify, I'm guessing that the village has an abundance of manpower, making the job go much quicker."

'So, Master Retsu was right.' Tsunade thought to herself. 'If that's the case, then it shouldn't be a big deal to tell him.'

"And what do you need the ninjas of the village to do?" Tsunade asked.

"I just need them to set up some magic items in strategic places for a project I plan to unveil to the Magic Council in about two months." Alfonzo replied. "And if I get the green light, I'll make the request when I go to scout the work sites in the Village Hidden in the Leaves."

"I see." Tsunade replied with a nod while wearing a contemplative expression.

'If it is something that will be approved by the Magic Council, then I have nothing to worry about.' Tsunade thought to herself. 'The only issue is that bastard Danzo. I have no doubt that he will try to steal one of those magic items to study it for himself. I guess I'll have to go back and discuss this with the old man. Though, he probably won't do a damn thing about Danzo.'

With her thoughts coming to an end, Tsunade exhaled a sigh. Then, she looked up and made eye contact with Alfonzo.

"I'll have to talk to the Hokage about this." Tsunade replied. "But I don't see an issue telling you about it. I'll let you know in the next few weeks."

"Sure, and you can tell him I'm willing to pay generously for this." Alfonzo added in an attempt to sweeten the deal. "This project will be really important if it gets green lit. And it will change the way people communicate on Ishgar."

Though Alfonzo seemed excited, he was thinking about why Tsunade seemed so hesitant. It was just commissioning the wizards of the village. What was the big deal. At worst, the Hokage could just decline the job.

'She's probably worried about Danzo trying to do something.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'Since that old mummy is willing to do anything "for the betterment of the Hidden Leaf". Still, if he has the balls to steal something I built to study it, he's not gonna like the results. Hehehe.'

Hearing Alfonzo's sinister internal chuckle, Riot and Bedlam almost felt sorry for anyone who tried to hijack his communications equipment. Especially since they both watched Alfonzo as he built in so many safety features, which got more deadly the harder the thief tried to tamper.

"Well, if you two are done, I have a question for you, Alfonzo." Retsu said once there was a lull in the conversation.

"And what can I do for you, Master Unohana?" Alfonzo asked politely.

"Why are you associating with that woman who is clearly not human?" Retsu asked bluntly. "Especially when I'm sure you can tell she does not have good intentions. Neither of those women do, actually."

"*Sigh* I know they have bad intentions, Master Unohana." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head. "But I wanna know if my theory about why they are here is correct. They only showed up after I beat the Eight-Dragon Douche's ass, after all."

"So, you think Serena sent them, huh?" Retsu replied, a glint of understanding shining in her eyes. "And if you can get confirmation, you can have him removed from his seat as a Wizard Saint for his behavior."

"Exactly." Alfonzo replied with a nod and a smile.

'I'm looking to get him branded as a traitor, though.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'But I can't tell Retsu that. I'm not supposed to know he's working for the Alvarez Empire yet.'

Meanwhile, Tsunade was shifting her gaze between Alfonzo and Retsu with her eyes wide open in surprise.

"Wait!" Tsunade exclaimed in surprise. "Did you just say the kid defeated--- Mmph!"

Before Tsunade could finish, Retsu clapped a hand over her mouth. At the same time, Alfonzo and Retsu wore expressions that said: "That's right, she didn't know, did she?"

"Although what you're thinking is correct, please keep quiet about it, Tsuna." Retsu said in a stern tone. "We didn't make it public knowledge for a reason. Especially after Serena disappeared from his hospital room afterwards. As proud as that man is, if his reputation were damage that severely, no one knows what he might do."

Eventually, after processing what Retsu said, Tsunade nodded her head, prompting Retsu to remove her hand. Then, after exchanging a few more words, Tsunade and Retsu excused themselves, as they needed to return to Mermaid Heel HQ.

Not long later, Tsunade and Retsu had checked out of the hotel. Then, as they both sat on Retsu's motorcycle, Tsunade finally came back to her senses and processed that Alfonzo was strong enough to beat God Serena.

'For the sake of the village, I really hope Danzo doesn't do anything to piss off the Kid' Tsunade thought to herself as she wrapped her arms around Retsu's waist. 'Actually, I'm sure it wouldn't be hard to explain to Alfonzo that the old bastard did whatever he's gonna do on his own initiative. Then, Danzo will be taken care of and the old man won't have anything to say about it... Wait, what is this on my head. And what am I sitting on. On top of that, why am I hugging Master Retsu?'

Vroom~~~~!

Before Tsunade could answer her own questions, Retsu started her motorcycle's engine, which answered all of Tsunade's questions.

"Wait, Master Retsu, I think I'll--- Kya~~~~!" Tsunade screamed after trying to ask Retsu to let her take the train.

At the same time, Retsu turned the throttle and pulled away from the front of the hotel at high speed. And thanks to her razor-sharp reflexes, she had no fear of hitting any pedestrians. Though, she did leave quite a few terrified of motorcycles.

Chapter 502: Retsu Vs. Irene; Part 1

While sitting in the living room of her suite, Irene, who was reading a copy of the book Brandish was reading, suddenly raised her head. And when she did, she smiled in a feral manner.

Feeling the change in atmosphere around Irene, Brandish also looked up from her book. However, when she did, she immediately lowered her head in fear. Seeing Irene's terrifying smile was a bit too much for her.

"I'm going to step out for a moment." Irene said calmly as she closed her book. "I might be a while. So, don't be surprised."

"Oh... Okay... Got it." Brandish replied without raising her head.

Then, Irene stood from her recliner, placed the book on the table next to the chair, and walked out of the suite. And despite the fact that she was releasing such a terrifying aura, she smiled brightly the whole way.

Bang!

Eventually, the door was closed behind Irene after she left the room. And with that sound, Brandish finally had the courage to once again raise her head. And after she saw that Irene really was gone, she breathed a sigh of relief.

"*Sigh* She's scary." Brandish said while shaking her head before focusing on her book again. "Still, I hope she doesn't do anything reckless."

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Open Road.

At the same time, a motorcycle carrying two people was racing through the roads of Fiore. And just after getting several miles away from the Town of Magnolia, the two riders, Tsunade and Retsu, the motorcycle's driver, felt a change in the atmosphere.

"Master Retsu..." Tsunade, holding onto Retsu's waist, said in an attempt to get her former guild master's attention.

"I am aware, Tsuna." Retsu replied while continuing to drive. "But unless she does something, we won't do anything either."

Hearing that, Tsunade was surprised. From the way Retsu acted the day before, she was certain that Retsu would be ready, willing, and able to fight. A moment later, however, she could feel Retsu's blood lust leaking.

'I guess I was thinking too much.' Tsunade thought to herself while smiling wryly. 'Of course, she's gonna provoke her opponent to make the first move. Why would I think otherwise?'

And just as Tsunade thought, by releasing so much blood lust, Retsu was hoping to provoke their pursuer into making the first move.

A moment later, a tall, voluptuous female figure, with scarlet-red hair, appeared in the motorcycle's path. Luckily, Retsu had excellent reflexes. So, she was able to swerve around the figure. And just as they passed each other, Retsu's blue eyes met with Irene's brown ones.

Screech!

A moment later, after passing Irene, Retsu turned her motorcycle while pulling the brake, causing the vehicle to skid to a stop. Then, she dismounted before taking off her helmet.

"Master Retsu, are you really going to fight this woman?" Tsunade asked as she also dismounted from the motorcycle.

"It would seem she does not intend to give me a choice." Retsu said as she turned around. "And to be honest, I am not against it either."

Hearing that, Tsunade was not all that surprised. Despite Retsu's normally gentle demeanor, she knew that her former guild master was incredibly blood thirsty. Though, she had no idea where all that blood thirst came from. Either way, she knew better than to get between Retsu and a fight she wanted.

Meanwhile, Retsu handed the dumbfounded Tsunade the helmet she had been wearing. Then, she pulled the nodachi she usually carried off the rack Alfonzo had built into the side of her motorcycle.

"Tsuna, I want you to carry my motorcycle and return to Magnolia." Retsu said calmly as she held her sheath in her left hand. "Tell Fairy Tail what is going on here. And let them decide how to handle it."

"But... I can help." Tsunade replied with clenched fists after taking off her own helmet.

"No, you're not ready for a battle like this one." Retsu replied as she turned to face Irene, who gave them the chance to converse. "Just do as I say. Return to Fairy Tail."

"*Sigh* Fine." Tsunade replied in a frustrated tone. "But if you die, I'll never forgive you, Retsu."

In the next instant, Tsunade, using her monstrous strength, lifted Retsu's motorcycle and both helmets. Then, like a blur, she dashed off to the side. Her intention clear, Tsunade wanted to widely circle around the battlefield on her way back to Magnolia.

"Do you really think I'll let her go?" Irene asked as she materialized her staff. Then, after tapping its end on the ground, she pointed its other end in Tsunade's direction. "Allowing this information to reach Fairy Tail would be detrimental to my plans. [Enchantment Magic: Disa---]."

Before Irene could cast her spell, however, Retsu appeared in front of her with the use of [Flash Step]. And just as she appeared, Minazuki was already swinging down, aiming to remove Irene's right arm, the one holding her staff.

Irene, on the other hand, moved her staff swiftly, blocking Retsu's overhead slash. However, she was quite surprised by the power behind that swing. Still, she was not forced to take a step back, despite the power she just defended against.

"Hmm... So, my instincts were not wrong." Irene said with a smile. "You really are quite dangerous. And despite your meager amount of magic power, you could threaten my life."

"Fufufu! I appreciate your assessment." Retsu replied with a gentle laugh as she covered her mouth using the sleeve of her kimono on her free arm. "But I'm sure your assessment will change once this fight truly begins."

Intrigued by Retsu statement, Irene held eye contact while trying to understand the raven-haired woman's meaning. However, after a moment, she decided to simply wait until the "fight truly began" to get an answer.

In the next instant, Irene exerted more force on her staff, forcing Retsu backwards. Then she thrust her staff forward viciously, intending to crush Retsu's throat.

Thanks to her own experience and weapon mastery, Retsu calmly moved her Zanpakuto in a semi-circular motion, deflecting and redirecting the tip of Irene's staff towards the ground. Then, once she completed her defensive maneuver, she adjusted the grip on her hilt before swinging her sword up towards Irene's chin.

Reacting quickly, Irene tilted her head away from the upward slash. Then, just as she intended to whip her staff up towards Retsu's unprotected right shoulder, she was forced to defend with her right hand.

Smack!

A moment later, Irene caught Retsu's free, left fist in her own right palm. On impact, a small shockwave was created, causing the grass on either side of the road to sway.

"Your physical strength is quite impressive." Irene said, still maintaining her smile. "But I know you've got more in reserve. Otherwise, I wouldn't be having this feeling of danger. Now, show me everything. Otherwise, you'll die."

With that, Irene pulled Retsu closer before raising her foot and kicking her in the chest. However, just before the heel of her boot could land, Retsu raised her Zanpakuto to defend. Unfortunately, she was only able to block the heel of Irene's boot, allowing the rest of the boot to land between her breasts.

Crack!

In the next instant, with the sound of bones cracking, Retsu was blasted away by Irene's kick. However, with little difficulty, Retsu righted her posture midair. Then, before her feet touched the ground, she used the [Flash Step] once again, disappearing from her spot in a burst of speed.

Clang!

"Interesting." Irene muttered to herself as she moved her staff to block an incoming slash. "Using your magic power, you forced the ethernano in the air to move beneath you to create a foothold. Then, you used that strange movement spell before it dissipated."

Clang!

"You're quite observant." Retsu replied, the blood thirsty smile she had been wearing since Irene appeared widening with every one of her slashes that was defended against. "And it would seem you have quite the proficiency with your chosen weapon."

Clang!

Once again, using the flash step, Retsu vanished from where she stood. Then, she reappeared on Irene's opposite side, swinging her Zanpakuto once again. And like last time, Irene moved her staff to guard.

Instead of catching the sharp edge of the blade, however, Irene was surprised when she noticed that she had caught the flat of Retsu's Zanpakuto. Then, her eyes widened when Retsu began sliding her blade towards her fingers.

Forced to release her staff with her right hand, in order to avoid losing her fingers, Irene was once again surprised when Retsu stopped her blade before she violently forced her Zanpakuto downwards. As a result, Irene was forced to release her staff when her left wrist was twisted.

Now disarmed, Irene raised her now free hands to defend against Retsu, who quickly drew her sword back into a thrusting posture before piercing forward at lightning speed.

Clap!

In the next instant, Irene clapped her hands around Retsu's blade, stopping it less than an inch away from the spot between her eyebrows.

"You truly are dangerous." Irene said, not losing her smile. "Still, this is not enough.

As she spoke, Irene twisted her hands, intending to disarm Retsu as well. To her surprise, however, Retsu allowed her entire body to be pulled along with the movement of her Zanpakuto. Then, using the momentum, Retsu leaned into a kick that landed on Irene's side.

As a result, Irene, who did not take much damage from the kick, was sent flying after she released Minazuki. Then, before she could regain her balance in the air, she saw Retsu, with her left palm pointed at her, gathering crimson-red energy in front of her palm.

"[Hado Number 31: Shakkahō]." Retsu chanted.

In the next instant, the crimson-red energy, now in the form of a blazing red fireball, was fired towards Irene at high speed. In response, Irene raised her right hand toward the incoming fiery projectile.

"[Enchantment Magic: Disappear Enchantment]." Irene chanted.

Boom! *Boom!* *Boom!* *Boom!* *Boom!*

Then, before the crimson-red fireball could reach Irene, a purple spark of magic power appeared in its path. Then, it rapidly expanded, causing an explosion. However, before the explosion could subside, a second, then a third, a fourth, and finally, a fifth explosion was triggered. And with each subsequent explosion, the area of effect expanded.

As a result, Irene, who was closer to the epicenter of the explosions was blown away. Though, she escaped unharmed. Her hat was blown away, though.

Retsu, on the other hand, was seemingly engulfed by the explosions as they increased in range. However, Irene knew that was far from enough to defeat her foe. Especially since she had been tracking Retsu's movements from the time she was in Magnolia.

So, Irene recalled her staff into her hand. Then, she raised it above her head just as Retsu, with her Zanpakuto raised over head with both hands wrapped around the hilt, appeared in front of her and swung her weapon towards her with all the strength she could muster.

"[Concept Enchant: Defense]." Irene chanted.

Clang~~~~~!

In the next instant, as Irene's staff glowed momentarily, Retsu's Zanpakuto sliced down on the staff. As a result, a loud sound, resembling two pieces of metal being slammed into each other with great force, resounded through the area.

With Irene's [Enchantment], the hardness of her wooden staff was increased by a large amount. So, Retsu, having put so much strength into her slash, felt her hands get numb.

Irene, on the other hand, felt that her legs, up to her calves, had been buried into the ground thanks to the force behind Retsu's swing. Still, her knees did not bend in the slightest, thanks to her body that was much stronger than any human's and the magic power she was circulating through her body.

In the next instant, before Retsu could recover from her attack, Irene forced her staff upward, throwing Retsu's arms and Zanpakuto upwards, as well. Then, she pulled her staff back before thrusting it into Retsu's sternum.

"[Enchantment Magic: Disappear Enchantment]." Irene chanted with a killer instinct in her eyes.

Boom! *Boom!* *Boom!* *Boom!* *Boom!*

Then, as soon as the tip of Iren's staff impacted Retsu's chest, a purple spark of magic power lit up on the tip of the staff. Then, it quickly expanded, engulfing Retsu in the explosion before flinging her backwards at high speed.

Like before, there were four subsequent explosions that followed the first. However, instead of being a point in space, the epicenter of each explosion was set on Retsu's sternum. So, with each subsequent explosion, not only was Retsu hit by the full brunt of the explosion, but she was also sent flying backwards with ever increasing speed.

By the time the last explosion subsided, Retsu had flown for more than three thousand feet before slamming into the ground. On top of that, her condition could not be called good by any stretch of the imagination.

Currently, Retsu's Kimono was torn, nearly to shreds, exposing large amounts of her skin, she was covered in blood, cuts, bruises, and burns, and her hair was no longer in the braid that hung in front of her chest, revealing a large scar in the middle of her chest.

Despite all that, Retsu was still conscious. On top of that, using her Zanpakuto, Minazuki, as a crutch, she was climbing to her feet, albeit, quite slowly.

"My, my, aren't you the resilient one?" Irene asked as she walked towards Retsu. "While the fact that you are even conscious is a big enough surprise, the fact that you can still move is truly impressive."

As the last of Irene's words fell, Retsu was finally able to stand. Though, it was clear to anyone watching, she was no longer in any shape to fight. Despite that, her blood thirsty smile had not diminished in the slightest. Instead, it had only grown wider.

"If you think this is a sign of great resilience, then prepare to be amazed." Retsu replied as she gingerly raised her Zanpakuto with her right hand and rested her left palm against the edge of its blade. Then, while slicing the palm of her left hand with her blade, Retsu continued. "[Bankai: Minazuki]."

Chapter 503: Retsu Vs. Irene; Part 2

While Retsu and Irene's battle raged on, Tsunade, with Retsu's motorcycle slung over her shoulder, dashed towards Magnolia. However, before she could even reach the town gates, she looked up and saw a flash of violet light flash past her in the sky.

"I guess they already noticed." Tsunade muttered to herself while continuing to run towards the town. "Still, I have to let Fairy Tail know what's going on. They'll need more than the kid to stop a fight between those two."

With that, Tsunade continued to run, eventually reaching the Fairy Tail guild hall only a few minutes later. Then, once she was outside the building, she placed the motorcycle down before flipping down the kick stand and entering the guild hall.

However, when she entered, she was surprised to see Elicia, Cana, Gildarts, and Ur rushing towards the doors. However, when they saw Tsunade, Gildarts and Ur came to a stop while Elicia and Cana continued forward.

"Oh, you're here?" Ur asked, surprised that Tsunade had returned. "I was certain that you would have stayed to help Master Unohana."

"*Sigh* I wanted to." Tsunade said as she clenched her fists. "But Master Retsu ordered me to come back here and let you all know what was happening."

"I see." Ur said with a nod and a solemn expression on her face. "Well, now that you've arrived, you should come with us."

"Yeah, those kids won't be enough to stop that woman." Gildarts replied with a nod of his own. "You still got the stamina to go back?"

"Of course, I do." Tsunade replied with a scoff. "Just who do you think I am? Or do I need to punch you through another settlement for you to remember?"

Hearing that, Gildarts unconsciously tensed. Meanwhile, Ur looked at him with interest.

"You can tell me that story later." Ur said after shaking off her interest. "For now, we need to get moving."

"Uh... Yeah... Right." Gildarts replied sheepishly before putting on a solemn expression once again. "Let's go."

With that, Gildarts, Ur, and Tsunade rushed out of the guild hall, intending to help Retsu face Irene.

Meanwhile, Brandish, after feeling the wizards of Fairy Tail start moving, left the hotel suite. Then she dashed towards the town gates, intending to cut off Elicia and Cana somewhere outside the town.

Earth land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Open Road.

At the same time, Alfonzo, who had been flying towards the battlefield where Retsu and Irene were fighting, arrived just in time to see Retsu get blown away by Irene's [Disappear Enchantment]. However, instead of interfering immediately, he floated high above the battlefield. And when he saw Retsu start climbing back to her feet, he knew that was the right decision.

'She's gonna use her [Bankai].' Alfonzo thought.

["Of course, she is."] Bedlam replied. ["Hell, she would have used it outside of the house if you hadn't stopped her yesterday."]

'I know.' Alfonzo replied. 'Still, I'm pretty excited to see it.'

["Yeah, this is gonna be fucking bad ass!"] Riot shouted excitedly. ["The anime of the Thousand Year Blood War Arc hadn't come out when you died in your past life. And although the manga was fucking awesome, it's not the same as when you get to see the scene moving."]

["Besides... Oh, it's starting."] Bedlam said, interrupting what he wanted to say.

And just as Bedlam said, Retsu, standing unsteadily, raised her Zanpakuto, Minazuki, resting its blade in her left hand. Then, she pulled it back, slicing open her palm.

"[Bankai: Minazuki]." Retsu chanted.

As soon as Retsu chanted her release command, Minazuki began to liquify. And as it did, it turned into a blood-colored, viscous liquid that fell to the ground. Then, upon contact with the ground, the viscous liquid began spreading much faster than it should have.

On top of that, the liquid increased in volume, a feat that should be physically impossible. Eventually, the area surrounding Retsu and Irene was covered by this viscous liquid.

Meanwhile, Irene, having never seen a magical phenomenon like this, watched everything in interest. Something she would come to regret in the coming moments. Retsu, on the other hand, waited until the [Bankai Release] of her Zanpakuto was complete.

And that moment was marked by Minazuki's blade being reformed by some of the viscous liquid. However, its shape had changed slightly. Instead of taking the form of a nodachi, a single-edged blade that was slightly longer than an average katana, it took the form of an average katana.

"Now, the battle has truly begun." Retsu, with her hair simply hanging down, said with that same blood thirsty smile.

"I'll admit this is impressive." Irene said while continuing to look around the state of the battlefield. Then, she continued as she returned her gaze to her battered opponent. "And I can see that your magic power was increased by somewhere between forty and forty-five times. Still, what can you do with your body in that shape?"

"Oh, there's no need to worry about my body." Retsu said with a smile as all the damage she had taken began to heal at a visible rate.

As Irene said, Retsu's magic power had increased by forty-five times with her Zanpakuto released to its [Bankai] state. Something that greatly surprised Irene, as now Retsu had more magic power than she did in her human form. About a third more, to be exact.

However, it did answer the question she had about Alfonzo's spike in power against God Serena. But the thing that surprised her the most was the fact that Retsu was healing from such heavy injuries at such a high speed.

"So, that boy, Alfonzo's tonfa that he carries around everywhere he goes, has a similar effect to your sword, huh?" Irene asked in an interested tone. Though, it was mostly to hide her astonishment at Retsu's rate of healing. "I wonder if his increase is as absurd as yours? Because from what I could tell, he's even stronger than you before you cast that spell."

"I'm afraid that is something you won't live to find out." Retsu replied as she slashed her sword at Irene from a distance.

In the next instant, the blood-like liquid on the ground surged upwards, forming a large blade that rushed toward Irene along the line of Retsu's slash.

Unbothered, Irene held her staff in front of her, intending to swing it horizontally to deflect the incoming slash. However, before she could do so, her eyes widened as she picked up Retsu standing directly behind her with [Magic Power Detection].

In the next instant, Irene made a half turn. So, instead of facing the incoming slash, she avoided both the slash made from blood-like liquid, as well as the slash from Retsu, who appeared behind her. As a result, Retsu cut down her own attack, which was easily destroyed before splashing back into the rest of the blood-like liquid.

Still, Retsu did not even slow down as her sneak attack was seen through. Instead, she stepped forward, swinging her Zanpakuto horizontally. In response, Irene raised her staff vertically to defend.

Bang!

Unlike the last time the two clashed weapons, however, Irene was sent flying by the power behind Retsu's attack.

'I see, so it's not just a boost in magic power.' Irene thought to herself as she flew through the air.
'Rather, it's an overall boost. This is more dangerous than I thought.'

As she thought to herself, Irene righted herself in the air. Then, before dropping down to the ground, Irene stopped before slightly moving to her left. An instant later, a blade made of the blood-like liquid rose from the spot where she would have landed. At the same time, Irene noticed Retsu performing an upward slash from the distance.

'I was only able to dodge that because of my centuries of experience.' Irene thought to herself. 'With all this liquid having the same feel as that woman herself, I can't tell when an attack using it will be activated. If things continue like this, I'll be defeated because of a lapse in concentration.'

"Enchantment Magic: Repulse Enchantment]." Irene chanted as she slammed the butt of her staff into the viscous liquid.

As a result of Irene's [Enchantment], all the viscous liquid in a seven foot diameter was forcefully blown away, allowing Irene to stand on the real ground. However, she noticed that it was rushing back to fill the gap rather quickly.

In less than a blink of an eye, however, Retsu once again appeared in front of Irene, ready to thrust her sword into Irene's throat.

In response, Irene spun her staff to deflect the sword. Unfortunately, thanks to Retsu's increase in power, Irene's staff was stopped when it came in contact with the Zanpakuto. No, stopped was inaccurate. Instead, she was forced to stop it, as when the staff came in contact with the edge of the blade, it was being cut through.

If Irene was not fast enough, her entire staff would have been cut through. But since she was able to react so quickly, she was able to change her method. So, instead of moving her staff horizontally, she used the fact that part of the blade was buried in her staff. Then, she changed the direction of the force she applied, forcing the tip of Retsu's sword over the top of her head.

Unfortunately, with both her arms extended upwards, Irene had no way to defend against Retsu's next attack.

Bang!

In the next instant, Irene's head was snapped back when Retsu landed an uppercut on her chin. On top of that, Irene was shot up into the air from the force of the punch. Then, Retsu, before recovering her fist, vanished from her spot in a burst of speed.

Then, before Irene could recover, Retsu appeared above her, swinging her sword downward. And thanks to Irene's vulnerable position, she received a slash across her back with a large amount of blood splattering from the wound. On top of that, the wind pressure from Retsu's slash forced her back down to the ground at high speed, as well.

"Argh!" Irene groaned in pain as she was sent towards the ground at high speed.

Not one to miss the chance to take advantage of an opening, Retsu, from her spot in the air, performed a return slash, despite the fact that she was too far away to connect with Irene. Instead, that slash was used to send a blade of the viscous liquid upwards.

'When was the last time I felt pain like this?' Irene asked herself as she watched the blade of blood-like liquid rush towards her. "It was at least four hundred years ago, during the Dragon King Festival. As for emotional pain, it was when that foolish man betrayed me after my [Dragon Seed] started the [Dragonization] process. Or maybe it was when my people actually believed his lies that I had been a dragon all along?'

Deciding she could ponder that later, Irene did something she never thought she would have to while on this mission to learn about Alfonzo... She transformed into her true form of a dragon with scarlet red scales and a flesh colored under belly, feathery wings, and three pairs of protrusions jutting out from her lower jaw.

Then, with one powerful swipe of her right front claw, Irene destroyed the incoming blade of blood-like liquid. On top of that, for the first time since coming to Magnolia, Irene was able to feel Alfonzo's [Magic Power Detection] now that she had taken her true form.

"I see." Irene said, her voice sounding much more bestial as she looked up to where Alfonzo was watching the battle from. "Your magic power control truly is incredible, Alfonzo. Unfortunately, you've seen more than you should have."

"Well, damn." Alfonzo replied as he stopped bending the visible light around him. "Can't we just pretend that I wasn't here? I can go back and help Lici and Cana with Brandish, after all."

"I'm afraid not." Irene said, though her tone indicated she was smiling. "Instead, I'll be bringing you back with me. After I kill this woman, that is."

"*Sigh* And where is it you'll be bringing me back to?" Alfonzo asked as he lowered himself next to Retsu. Though, he had no intention of landing in that blood-like liquid produced by her [Bankai].

"That's something I can't tell you." Irene replied as she flapped her wings to keep herself afloat. "But if it makes you feel any better, I'll be bringing all your little girlfriends and your wife along with us. That way you won't be lonely."

"Wow!" Alfonzo exclaimed in the dryest tone he could before continuing in the same tone. "You're so considerate."

"Now is not the time, Alfonzo." Retsu said as she took her stance once again. "There is no place for talk on the battlefield."

"While I would like to disagree, I'd rather not piss you off right now." Alfonzo replied as he glanced at Retsu out of the corner of his eye. "Anyway, I guess you'll have to come back to the mansion after we're done here. Can't let you go back to Mermaid Heel with your clothes like that, after all."

"We can talk about Elicia making new clothing for me later." Retsu said, her tone indicating that she was getting annoyed. "Prepare yourself for battle, otherwise, I'll simply let her take you."

Hearing that, Alfonzo pulled Riot and Bedlam from the straps on his back before dropping into his fighting stance with his arms spread.

"[Run Wild with Destruction on your Fingertips. Usher in Pandemonium with Creation in Your Hands. Riot, Bedlam]." Alfonzo chanted as Riot and Bedlam liquified before climbing up his hands and forearms. "I guess I'll get serious, then. I have something I wanna try out, anyway. Never had a dragon to test it out on, though."

Chapter 504: Brandish's Wrong Move

By the time Retsu released her [Bankai], Elicia and Cana had left the town on foot. Before they could reach the battlefield, however, they were stopped by a green-haired woman on the way.

"Brandish... So, you're finally showing your true colors, huh?" Cana asked as she stopped in front of Brandish.

"Unfortunately, that seems to be the case." Brandish said, looking like she'd rather not be there.

"So, why have you been trying to befriend us?" Elicia asked curiously.

Despite her question, Elicia had a pretty good idea of what was going on. Thanks to her meta knowledge, she knew Brandish was a member of the Spriggan 12 of the Alvarez Empire, after all.

"Sorry, that's not something I can tell you, for now." Brandish replied with a shrug. "But why don't you make this easy for all of us? Just come along with me. I don't wanna hurt any of you."

In spite of her mission, the months Brandish spent in Magnolia caused her to form some genuine friendships with the people living in Alfonzo's mansion. So, she would rather not harm any of her new friends if possible.

"The feeling is mutual, Brandish." Cana said as she reached into the card pouch that was her [Soul Armament], Hoyle. "Unfortunately..."

"We have no intension of going anywhere." Elicia said, finishing Cana's sentence. "And the fact that you wanna take us away from our home makes it even less likely to happen."

"*Sigh* I kinda expected that." Brandish replied, sounding even more reluctant to fight with her friends. A moment later, however, she put on a resolute expression. "Unfortunately, that's not an option. But you should be happy. Alfonzo will be coming along with you, as well."

Hearing that, both Elicia and Cana narrowed their eyes dangerously.

"Are you saying your true target is Fonzie?" Elicia asked as she lowered her head, causing her bangs to cover her eyes.

"*Sigh* That was a bad move, Brandish?" Cana said as she stepped back, not wanting to get caught in the crossfire.

Brandish, on the other hand, was thoroughly confused by the change in Elicia's atmosphere. On top of that, she was confused by Cana's words. Even more confusing was the fact that she was feeling a sense of danger from Elicia.

'What's going on?' Brandish asked herself in confusion. 'Back when I fought her the first time, I didn't feel anything like this.'

"[Mend the Seams of Reality, Scylla]." Elicia chanted quietly as she held up her left wrist.

In the next instant, Brandish's eyes opened wide when she felt Elicia's magic power spike to a level that surpassed her own. Additionally, she did not know what to make of the glow that surrounded Elicia's wrist band before engulfing her hands.

Finally, she had no idea what to make of the golden scales that covered Elicia's previously glowing hands, once the glow faded.

"What is that?" Brandish asked in a dumbfounded tone. "And why have you grown so strong all of a sudden?"

"Maybe I'll tell you later." Elicia said in a cold tone. Then, she raised her head, making eye contact with Brandish, who stepped back after seeing the emotionless gaze Elicia was giving her. "But let me work off some of this negativity first, 'kay? I don't really like it when people target my Fonzie, you know?"

"Geez, Lici." Cana said while fighting the impulse to pull a bottle of booze from her [Storage Card]. "You know he's not just yours. We're all going to marry him eventually."

Smiling wryly, Elicia glanced at Cana. Then, she shook her head and returned her focus back to Brandish.

"You know that's not what I meant, Cana." Elicia said without changing her tone.

In response, Cana stuck out her tongue with a smile. Still, she had no intention of butting into Elicia's fight. So, the only other thing she could do was shoot a look filled with pity towards Brandish.

Brandish, on the other hand, frowned at the fact that she seemed to be underestimated. Despite the fact that Elicia was now a little more powerful than she was thanks to the boost in strength, she had no doubt that a temporary boost was incapable of defeating her, who had worked hard to increase her magic power over the years.

Bending down to pick up a stone on the side of the road, Brandish tossed it up and down a few times to get a feel for its weight. Then, without warning, she threw it at Elicia and Cana with all her might. And because of her strength, the stone was moving at close to the speed of sound.

"[Command T: Expansion]." Brandish chanted shortly after the stone left her hand.

In the next instant, the stone, which was no bigger than Brandish's fist, rapidly increased in size as it approached the ladies of Fairy Tail. By the time it finished growing, the stone was the size of Alfonzo and Elicia's first mansion.

"Yeah, that seems like cheating." Cana muttered as she reached into Hoyle and pulled out a handful of cards.

Instead of responding, Elicia had already ejected a pair of scales, connected to her hands with her [Thread Magic], from each hand. And despite the speed at which the large boulder was moving, or maybe because of its speed, Elicia's scales, which transformed into needles, pierced straight through it. At the same time, Elicia ducked under it, letting it pass over her.

Then, before Cana could cast a spell to destroy the boulder to stop it from damaging Magnolia, she heard Elicia's voice.

"[Buttonhole Stitching]." Elicia chanted as her needles and threads doubled back through the boulder before tying off the threads like a button attached to a piece of clothing, stopping its forward momentum in the process.

"What?" Brandish exclaimed in disbelief.

Then, before Brandish could process what she was seeing, Elicia, now with her back facing brandish, quickly spun on her heels. AS a result, the large boulder was swung in an arch. On top of that, Elicia had lengthened the threads while she was spinning. As a result, it would slam into Brandish's side if it was not stopped.

"[Command T: Reduction]." Brandish chanted as she snapped out of her state of disbelief.

As a result of her spell, the boulder, which was the size of a mansion, shrank to the size of a grain of sand. Then, Brandish drew the dagger that she carried and sliced the threads that did not shrink with the boulder.

"How are these threads still intact after being reduced by my magic?" Brandish asked as she flourished her dagger.

"That's a secret." Elicia said as she appeared to Brandish's right. "Maybe you'll find out one day."

Alarmed at the proximity of Elicia's voice, Brandish instinctively ducked. And that turned out to be the right move, as a foot swept past the spot where her head used to be. Despite the close call, however, Brandish stood up as she threw a punch at Elicia's unprotected back.

Usually, Brandish would have stabbed her dagger towards her opponent. However, as previously mentioned, Brandish did not want to hurt the people she had come to see as friends during her stay in Magnolia.

Despite Brandish's consideration, Elicia was unconcerned. Once her kick missed, she shot her threads into the ground before retracting them. At the same time, she straightened her body before spreading her legs in a split. As a result, she ended up standing on her hands with Brandish's arm shooting past her spread legs.

In the next instant, Elicia closed her legs around Brandish's arm. Then, she pushed off the ground towards Brandish's left. As a result, Brandish left arm was thrown to the outside of her body with Elicia clinging to it.

Then, once Brandish started losing her balance thanks to the unintended swing, Elicia shot her threads towards Brandish's right wrist before pulling it behind her once the threads were securely wrapped around it.

'Damn, she's better than I expected.' Brandish thought to herself as she was in the process of being immobilized. 'Still, that's not enough to take down a member of the Spriggan 12.'

"[Command T: Expansion]." Brandish chanted as her body began to grow.

Before Brandish could grow too much, however, Elicia unwrapped her legs from around Brandish's left arm. Then, using the threads wrapped around her right wrist, Elicia allowed herself to swing around Brandish's body. At the same time, she allowed the threads looped around Brandish's wrist to lengthen, as well. She did not want her threads to either, snap or cut off Brandish's hand, after all.

Once again surprised by Elicia's unorthodox fighting style, Brandish was not in time to react to the vibrating threads that wrapped around her dagger before cutting it apart. Nor was she ready for Elicia, who swung around to the front of her body before kicking her in the face.

Bang!

"Sorry about that." Elicia said as she used Brandish's face as a springboard to create distance between the two.

Brandish, on the other hand, had grown quite a bit by the time Elicia's kick landed. So, instead of being sent flying, she stumbled back a few steps. Before she could regain her bearings, however, Elicia landed on the ground.

In the next instant, Elicia, with her threads still wrapped around Brandish's right wrist, made a quick spin before whipping her arms over her head. As a result, Brandish was pulled off her feet before being slammed into the ground.

Boom!

"Gah!" Brandish groaned as the air escaped her lungs.

Now lying on her back after being thrown onto the ground violently, Brandish raised her head, intending to stand up. However, before she could do so, she caught sight of Elicia, who was standing on her left shoulder.

Bang!

"Argh~~~~~!" Brandish screamed in pain.

Before Brandish could react, Elicia, with a long golden needle extending from the knuckle of her middle finger, threw a punch into a nerve cluster, causing Brandish to lose feeling in her left arm. As a result, Brandish's left arm went limp. Then, Elicia appeared on her right shoulder and repeated the process.

At that moment, Gildarts, Ur, and Tsunade finally left the town. And when they did, they were surprised to see Cana standing to the side with her arms crossed and shaking her head. At the same time, they noticed Elicia flashing all over Brandish's body and throwing punches at the immobilized, green-haired wizard, who was screaming due to excruciating pain.

Exchanging glances, the three experienced wizards approached Cana with confusion in their eyes.

"Cana, Sweetheart, what's going on here?" Gildarts asked once he was close to Cana.

"Oh, Dad." Cana said after recognizing the voice and looking back over her shoulder. She then continued after turning her attention back to Elicia and Brandish. "It's you. Well, as you can see, Lici is just finishing up."

"Yeah, but why is she being so vicious?" Tsunade asked curiously. "I mean, the places where she is hitting and poking that girl with that big needle are meant to immobilize, and I get that. But if she hit her in a slightly different spot, she wouldn't be screaming like that."

Glancing at Tsunade for a moment, Cana once again shook her head before returning her attention to Elicia and Brandish.

"Because she said her, and Irene's target was Fonzie." Cana said nonchalantly.

While Tsunade was confused, Gildarts and Ur wore expressions of enlightenment.

"Well, I guess she brought this on herself." Ur replied with a shrug. "Anyway, Cana, we'll leave things here to you and Lici. Just don't let her go overboard. We still need to pump this girl for information."

"Got it." Cana replied with a shrug. "Besides, I don't think Lici will leave any permanent damage... I think. I mean, she likes Brandish."

Nodding in response, Ur started running towards the large magic power signatures she could feel in the distance. A moment later, Gildarts followed her after hugging his daughter briefly. Meanwhile, Tsunade only looked on in disbelief. Disbelief at seeing the sweet and cheerful Elicia torturing her enemy.

"Don't think about it too much, Master Tsunade." Cana said after noticing Tsunade's expression. "Lici has always been really protective of Alfonzo. And that got even worse after what she and Yoruichi did last year."

Turning her head in Cana's direction, Tsunade was once again surprised. From what she could remember, Cana was the one who hated Yoruichi the most after that incident. However, all she could see was nonchalance in Cana's expression.

Eventually, Tsunade shook her head, deciding that it was none of her business. Then, she once again looked at Elicia, who was standing over Brandish, who was unconscious and back to her normal size before running to catch up with Gildarts and Ur.

"Well... I heard that Cana would be the next to get married." Tsunade muttered to herself as she ran. "I guess a lot of her insecurities disappeared because of that."

With that, Gildarts, Ur, and Tsunade disappeared into the distance while Elicia and Cana secured the prisoner before returning to the guild hall.

Chapter 505: Performing a Test on a Dragon

With Riot and Bedlam released, Alfonzo, alongside Retsu, stood opposite Irene, who had taken the form of a western dragon with dark red scales and white feathery wings. Then, after a short standoff, Alfonzo was the first to move.

"[Electromagnetism Magic: Lightning enhancement]." Alfonzo chanted quietly.

In the next moment, Alfonzo vanished in a burst of speed with the use of his version of [Shave]. In the next instant, Alfonzo reappeared underneath Irene with his right hand reeled back.

"[Metal Magic: Circular Cutter]." Alfonzo chanted as he swung his arm, with a spinning circular saw attached to his forearm, towards Irene's underbelly.

Screech~~~~~!

Unfortunately, Alfonzo's attempt to cut through Irene's scales was unsuccessful. Despite the fact that he aimed for the softer scales on Irene's stomach.

"Surely you didn't think you were strong enough to harm a dragon." Irene said as she swept her tail at Alfonzo.

Instead of trying to defend himself, Alfonzo flashed away from his position before reappearing next to Retsu once again.

"Is that all?" Retsu asked with an eyebrow raised. "You made it seem as if you had a way to damage her."

"Nah." Alfonzo replied casually. "I just wanted to see how hard they were. And I gotta say, those scales are pretty damn hard. That saw blade was made of adamantite."

"You're just wasting your time, Boy." Irene said in a superior tone. "You're wasting mine, as well. And for that, I think you need to be punished."

In the next instant, Irene flapped her wings before vanishing from her spot in the sky. Not even a moment later, she reappeared above Alfonzo and Retsu. At the same time, she swiped her front claws at the duo.

In response, Retsu distanced herself from Irene using the [Flash Step]. Alfonzo, on the other hand, flashed upwards before reappearing between Irene's wings. Then, once both Alfonzo and Retsu were no longer in harm's way, Retsu slashed her sword upwards towards Irene's left wing.

"That won't work." Irene said as she once again swept her left claw. "[Enchantment Magic: Sharpness]."

With her chant, Irene's claws began to glow. Then, with little effort, they cut right through Retsu's blade of blood-like liquid. At the same time, she noticed Alfonzo aiming for her left wing as well. However, she ignored him, knowing he did not have the power to damage her.

["Metal Magic: Dragon Slaying Blades]. " Alfonzo chanted as he neared Irene's left wing.

Slice!

Roar!

In the next instant Alfonzo once again appeared alongside Retsu. At the same time, Irene roared in pain while blood splattered from a pair of gashes on her wing.

"How did you do that?" Retsu asked curiously, hoping that Alfonzo had found a way to boost his power momentarily so that she could fight him in bursts.

"I've been studying Gajeel's Dragon Slaying Iron for a long time." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "And we can talk about this later."

With that, Alfonzo once again flashed away from Retsu. Retsu, on the other hand, after seeing Irene's next attack, started slashing her Zanpakuto rapidly at the space between herself and Irene.

"[Sage Dragon's Roar]." Irene chanted as she gathered magic power in her mouth.

A moment later, Irene released a blast of condensed white magic power from her mouth at the ground where Retsu was standing. Meanwhile, Alfonzo, who was expecting Retsu to move away using the [Flash Step] was left with his mouth and eyes wide open after seeing her engulfed by Irene's dragon breath.

"God damn it!" Alfonzo shouted in an agitated tone. Then, he rushed towards the spot where Retsu stood. "What kinda bat-shit insane shit is this? Why the fuck did you just take that shit to the face?"

Before Alfonzo could arrive, however, the area around Retsu exploded. The shockwave was so strong, in fact, that Alfonzo was forced to stop and cover himself with an adamantite barrier.

A few moments later, when the shockwave passed, there was only a dissipating mushroom cloud left in the explosions place.

"Fucking crazy bitch!" Alfonzo shouted in a tone filled with lament.

"Just who are you calling a crazy bitch?" Retsu's voice said from inside the cloud.

Hearing that, Alfonzo was stupefied.

Usually, thanks to his [Magic Power Detection], Alfonzo would not have been so worried about Retsu. He would have been able to feel her presence, after all. However, thanks to Irene's dragon breath, the area was so saturated with Irene's magic power that he could no longer sense Retsu's magic power. And because of his worry, he did not notice when Retsu's magic power was no longer covered by Irene's

Irene, on the other hand, was also surprised by Retsu's voice. She had no doubt that Retsu would have lived through her dragon breath. However, she did not expect her to sound so... healthy... after doing so.

And just as Irene thought, Retsu was fine. Though, her clothing was a little more damaged than before. However, there were no new wounds. On top of that, her magic power did not even dip too drastically in her attempt to defend herself.

Swoosh!

A moment later, with a swing of her Zanpakuto, Retsu blew away the cloud. On top of that, she was leveling quite the intense glare at Alfonzo.

"You're lucky you were so concerned with my well-being, Alfonzo." Retsu said with the most menacing, yet gentle, smile Alfonzo had ever seen. "Otherwise, I would have cut you down where you stand for such disrespectful words."

Hearing Retsu's words and seeing her smile, Alfonzo, for the first time since he sensed Acnologia approaching Tenrou Island, felt a bone deep fear. Because he knew, simply getting cut down would be a merciful punishment from Yachiru.

"Hahaha... Sorry about that, Master Unohana..." Alfonzo said while taking a step back in fear. "I was just worried..."

"I am aware." Retsu replied. "Otherwise, you would be on the ground right now. And I can't make any promises about how many pieces you would be in. But don't worry, I would have put you back together again."

'Yeah, just so you could cut me up again.' Alfonzo thought to himself while forcing a smile.

"But we've spoken enough." Retsu said as she turned her attention back to Irene. "I believe we need to deal with this overgrown flying lizard."

Glad that Retsu decided to change the subject, Alfonzo quickly nodded his head as he, too, turned his attention back to Irene.

Meanwhile Irene had been trying to understand what Retsu did to defend herself. Unfortunately, due to the same reason as Alfonzo's inability to sense Retsu, she did not know what happened in the explosion, either.

"No, I can think about that later." Irene muttered as she shook her head. "Killing this woman will be next to impossible. For now, I should just focus on taking the boy and his women with me. I'm sure Brandish will be able to fend for her---"

"[Metal Magic: Dragon Slaying Wires]." Alfonzo chanted as a number of orichalcum wires with the Dragon Slayer trait extended from Alfonzo's hands before wrapping themselves around Irene's limbs.

On top of wrapping around Irene's limbs, Alfonzo also caused the wires to vibrate at high speed, a trick he picked up from his wife.

"*Roar* Damn you!" Irene shouted as the wires cut through her scales and came in contact with the flesh underneath.

"Something like this was able to bring Acnologia down to the ground." Alfonzo muttered as he flared his magic power to the limit. "So, this is probably gonna hurt like a bitch."

In the next instant, Alfonzo, using half of his remaining magic power as fuel, flowed violet-colored electricity through the wires connecting himself and Irene.

Roar~~~~~!

In response to the high voltage current flowing through her body, Irene involuntarily roared in pain. In fact, her roar was so loud that it could be heard from both Magnolia and Hargeon. On top of that, thanks to the electricity, her muscles ceased up. As a result, she began to fall from the sky.

"Well, it definitely works." Alfonzo said while nodding happily at his success. "And it's gonna be a really fun night after I make a dragon slaying armor for Erza."

"You can think about the debauchery you are going to have with your harem later." Retsu said as she readied her Zanpakuto for an upward slash. "For now, focus on the matter at hand."

Then, before Irene cold hit the ground, however, Retsu slashed her Zanpakuto upwards several times. Following the lines of her slashes, the blood-like liquid formed into flying slashes that cut into Irene's scales.

Roar!

Once again, Irene roared in pain. Then, her eyes turned towards Retsu with hatred brimming in their depths.

"It would seem you'd like to have your eyes removed next." Retsu said with a slightly sadistic, blood thirsty smile on her face.

"No, we're not maiming her." Alfonzo replied sternly. "I've got a lot of questions for her."

"Tch!" Retsu clicked her tongue audibly.

Naturally, Alfonzo was surprised to hear that. However, he continued to glare at Retsu until she finally relented.

"Fine." Retsu said as she rolled her eyes. "But you owe me for this."

"Yeah, I know." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "I'll make a full course meal for you in any style you like."

Hearing that, Retsu's eyes lit up. Then, she put on an unprecedently serious face.

"Well then, we should end this as quickly as possible." Retsu said in a solemn tone.

Boom!

Snap!

A moment later, Irene finally fell to the ground. Shortly afterwards, as she stood to her feet, she snapped the wires wrapped around her limbs. On top of that, while glaring at Alfonzo, the look in her eyes made it quite apparent that she was greatly angered.

"I wanted to bring you back unharmed, Alfonzo." Irene said in a tone of barely restrained anger. "But I think you need to be taught a lesson. After killing this woman, that is."

As she spoke her last sentence, Irene shifted her gaze towards Retsu. When she did, however, she saw a gigantic blade made from the viscous liquid slashing towards her.

In fact, as soon as Retsu finished what she had to say about ending the fight, she began forming the gigantic blade on Minazuki's blade. Then, by the time Irene finished speaking her threat, Retsu had already swung it towards her.

"Argh~~~~~!" Irene screamed as she was slashed by the blade of blood-like liquid.

At the same time, Retsu vanished from her spot next to Alfonzo in a burst of speed while taking the gigantic blade with her. Then, the sound of a blade slashing against scales could be heard repeatedly as Irene flailed her wings and claws to defend herself. Unfortunately, the [Flash Step] made Retsu, the attacker, too fast for Irene to catch.

After a few more minutes, Irene was visibly wobbling on her feet. And from what Alfonzo could tell, it was due to blood loss, which was not surprising. The number of slashed and broken scales all over her body was enough to tell that she was on her last legs.

"It's over." Retsu, who was falling from above Irene's head, said calmly as she drew her fist back.

Bang!

Boom!

In the next instant, Retsu landed on Irene's head as she slammed her fist down. As a result, Irene lost consciousness before being slammed into the ground.

Meanwhile, Gildarts, Ur, and Tsunade were rushing towards the battlefield. And when they arrived, they were just in time to see Retsu land the finishing blow on the top of Irene's head. However, they were thoroughly taken aback when they saw the dragon, expecting to see a buxom redhead instead.

"Hey, Kid, what's going on here?" Ur asked after snapping out of her stupor. "And why is that... dragon... in such bad shape?"

Hearing Ur's question, Alfonzo turned back to glance at the new arrivals. Then, he turned his attention back to Irene, who lay unconscious amidst a pool of blood-like liquid.

"You guys are just like the knights, showing up when everything is over." Alfonzo replied casually. Then, he pointed towards the dragon form Irene as he continued. "And as you can see, Master Unohana defeated Irene."

"Master Retsu was forced to release her [Bankai]..." Tsunade muttered in disbelief.

"I kinda regret that I missed it." Gildarts muttered as he watched Retsu hop down from Irene's head.

At the same time, all the viscous, blood-like liquid on the ground was sucked towards Minazuki. And as it made contact with the blade, it was compressed. Eventually, by the time all the blood-like liquid was sucked into Minazuki's blade, it was back to the size of Retsu's original nodachi.

"Wait... that wasn't just a liquid that looked like blood, was it?" Alfonzo asked Retsu with an eyebrow raised.

"And what makes you ask that?" Retsu asked as she sheathed Minazuki.

"Because Irene should have shed gallons of blood from the ass kicking she just caught." Alfonzo replied.
"However, all of it was sucked into your Zanpakuto. And I'm sure that included Irene's blood, too."

"You're quite observant." Retsu said, her gentle smile making its way back to her face as she grabbed her hair and started braiding it quickly. "Indeed. Minazuki grows stronger by drinking the blood of my foes. And as you can see, it has drank quite a bit over the years."

'It's terrifying how she can say that with such a gentle smile.' Alfonzo thought to himself.

"Anyway, I'll secure the prisoner." Alfonzo said as he began creating an anti-magic harness around Irene's limbs, torso, and wings. "Then, we can head back to Magnolia."

"And where do you expect to keep a 'prisoner' that big?" Ur asked while rolling her eyes.

"In the airship hanger under my house." Alfonzo replied casually as he continued working.

'Of course he has an airship hanger.' Gildarts, Ur, and Tsunade thought simultaneously. 'Wait! Does that mean he has an airship?'

While Gildarts and Ur knew about the Grimoire Heart airship, Tsunade did not. But Gildarts and Ur also knew that the airship in question was safely secured in a bunker in the forest east of Magnolia. So, they had no idea whether Alfonzo had his own personal airship, as well.

Chapter 506: Bringing Irene and Brandish Back to the Mansion

"It looks like Fonzie and Master Unohana are done, too." Elicia said with a smile as she waited with Cana and a restrained, unconscious Brandish at Magnolia's south gate.

"Yeah..." Cana said while looking in the direction Alfonzo, Gildarts, Ur, Tsunade, and Retsu were approaching the town from. "But what the hell is that giant blob of magic power their bringing with them? I mean, it feels like Irene's magic power signature. But there's no way in hell she's that big, right?"

"Who knows..." Elicia replied with a shrug. "But I bet Fonzie will need to work off some energy after a fight with something like that."

As she spoke that last part, Elicia licked her lips seductively. Cana, on the other hand, could only smile at her best friend's antics.

"I swear, Lici, the only things you ever think about are clothes and having Fonzie in side of you." Cana said with a giggle.

"Nuh uh!" Elicia shot back strongly. Then, she smiled proudly as she continued. "I think about Fonzie's cooking, too."

In response, Cana could only shake her head.

"Is that all I am to you, Lici?" Alfonzo, who overheard Elicia and Cana's conversation from a distance, said in a tone of mock disappointment.

Before Alfonzo could finish, however, Elicia's expression fell. Then, she empowered her body with as much magic power as it could handle before vanishing from where she stood in front of the gate. In the next moment, she hugged Alfonzo like a koala while rubbing her cheek on Alfonzo's.

"So, how was the fight, Hubby?" Elicia asked in a loving tone.

"Not bad." Alfonzo replied with a smile and a shrug. "I actually didn't do much. Master Unohana took care of all the heavy lifting. But I did get to test the dragon slaying metal I had been working on ever since Gajeel destroyed the old guild hall."

"Really?" Elicia asked in a tone filled with anticipation. "And how did it work out?"

"It was a success." Alfonzo replied with a proud smile. A moment later, however, his expression turned into one filled with disappointment. "Unfortunately, I was too weak to do any real damage."

Seeing Alfonzo's disappointed expression, Elicia found it absolutely adorable. So, she rained kisses all over his face.

"Don't worry, we'll keep training until that's not an issue anymore, right?" Elicia asked after her rain of kisses came to an end.

Hearing that, Alfonzo smiled back.

"That's right." Alfonzo said happily as he reached up and started combing his fingers through Elicia's hair. "And your encouragement has made me feel a lot better, Lici. At first, the stress from fighting a dragon had made me so tired that I thought I would have to go straight to bed... alone... after getting everything settled with our little guests."

Hearing that, Elicia started dripping cold sweat down her back.

"But all your love has rejuvenated me, Lici." Alfonzo said with a loving smile. Though, Elicia did not miss the glint of mischief hidden in the depths of his eyes.

"Anyway, you two can have your lovey dovey moment later." Tsunade said in an irritated tone. "For now, can we just put these prisoners somewhere where they won't break out and cause a ruckus?"

'Seriously, do these two have to flirt like that?' Tsunade grumbled to herself. 'They do know I'm single and lost my fiancé a long time ago, right? And the only other person who shows interest in me is a raging pervert. God damn it, why can't he stop peaking on women in the bath and be romantic like Alfonzo? Then, maybe I would give him a chance. Fucking Jiraiya!"

At the same time, somewhere in Fiore, a tall, middle-aged man with a mane of spiky white hair sneezed, accidentally dispelling his stealth Jutsu in the process and alerting the women he was peeking on. Then, he quickly ran away as his position had been compromised.

"*Sigh* I can feel it, a beautiful woman was just thinking about me." The white-haired, middle-aged man, Jiraiya, said to himself as he ran away. "You're such a sinful man, Jiraiya. So many women have been smitten by you. Unfortunately, the only thing I can truly dedicate myself to is my research."

Meanwhile, back on the road just outside of Magnolia, Alfonzo and Elicia nodded at Tsunade's words. Then, Elicia hopped off Alfonzo before she wrapped her arms around his left arm as the group started walking towards the south gate.

Eventually, after the group reached the gate, they met up with Cana, who immediately hugged Alfonzo's other arm. At the same time, Elicia controlled the threads wrapped around Brandish and levitated her behind the group. Meanwhile, Alfonzo, while bending the light around her, levitated Irene much higher above the town. The last thing they wanted was to cause a panic after a dragon appeared in the town, after all.

"Well, if you'll excuse me, I'll meet you all at Alfonzo's mansion." Retsu said while smiling gently.

A moment later, with the use of the [Flash Step], Retsu vanished. However, everyone, other than Tsunade, knew she was heading towards the guild hall.

"I guess she wants to get her bike, huh?" Cana muttered. "I bet she was really pissed that her ride got interrupted, huh?"

"Most definitely." Tsunade replied with a nod. "I'm just glad that woman did not damage her new favorite toy. Otherwise, things could have gotten much worse... for the surroundings."

Gildarts, and Ur, who had seen the aftermath of the battle could not help but pale rapidly after hearing what Tsunade had to say. The aftermath of the battle left a few craters and several deep gashes in Magnolia's countryside. Yet, Tsunade had said that it could have been a lot worse.

Alfonzo, on the other hand, shuddered at the thought. Being the only one to have actually seen Retsu's fight with Irene, he was scared. Scared to see what kind of damage Retsu might have done if she were even angrier. And even more scared of possibly getting caught up in such mayhem.

'Retsu had basically taken Irene apart with surgical precision. Despite that, so much damage was done to the countryside.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'If she had been anymore pissed off, I would have turned right the fuck around and waited for the news of the fight.'

["Yeah, but if you weren't there, she probably would have killed Irene."] Bedlam pointed out.

["Then again, she might have killed him, too. Especially if he tried to talk her out of killing Irene."] Riot replied. ["And I'm not sure if it would have been an accident, or not. I mean, did you see the look she gave you when you brought Irene down from the sky?"]

'Please, don't make me think about that.' Alfonzo said while shuddering internally. 'I'm really not looking forward to fighting her in a death match.'

Despite knowing that his [Linear Cannon] was fast and strong enough to kill Retsu in one attack, he doubted he would get the second it would take to amass the necessary amount of magic power to cast it. At the same time, all his other spells are strong enough to damage her, even in her [Bankai] state. But none of them are strong enough to kill her before her regeneration could put her back together again.

"Anyway, let's get back home." Alfonzo said while shaking his head to rid himself of any thoughts that involved fighting Retsu to the death. "I wanna get these two into captivity before they wake up."

Nodding in agreement, the group of six hurried through the streets of Magnolia, eventually reaching the mansion on the Lake. And just as they expected, Retsu was waiting outside the front door with her motorcycle. What they did not expect, however, was Shizuka waiting with her.

"Shizuka, what are you doing here?" Ur asked in a curious yet authoritative tone. "Aren't you supposed to be on shift in the infirmary?"

"Oh, Ren took over for me." Shizuka said while tilting her head cutely as she placed her right index finger on her chin. "Master Unohana said that my [Healing Magic] would be needed. So, I came here with her."

"I heard that she was able to heal scars." Retsu replied with a gentle smile that hid her killing intent. "And although I think killing her would be the best course of action, I wanna see what the young man has planned. And I thought removing her scars would be a good place to start."

Nodding in understanding, Alfonzo shot Retsu a grateful gaze. Then, he led the group around to the back of the mansion. A few moments later, after reaching the shore of the artificial island, where he and the guys go fishing to relax, Alfonzo tapped his heel on the ground.

A moment later, part of the backyard raised in opposite directions, without disturbing the lawn, revealing a path leading to a large, underground. space

"Wow!" Shizuka exclaimed in wonder. "It's so big."

"That's what she said." Alfonzo replied with a grin.

In response, Shizuka turned her head in Alfonzo's direction with confusion written all over her face.

"Yeah, I did say that." Shizuka said, her confusion becoming even more evident with the tilting of her head.

While everyone else laughed at the interaction, Alfonzo could only hang his head in defeat.

"You should be used to this by now, Fonzie." Cana said as she patted Alfonzo on the cheek. "Shizuka is just too innocent to understand what you mean."

"*Sigh* I know." Alfonzo replied. "AT the same time, I have to do it. If I don't, my stomach will cramp up in knots."

"I still don't get how someone could have such a weird medical condition." Ur said with furrowed eyebrows. "I don't know why, but for some reason I blame your mother for this."

"That's just unreasonable, Ur." Elicia said with a smile. "But Auntie Bianca did have some weird traits of her own, though."

"You're still calling her Auntie?" Alfonzo asked as he playfully booped Elicia on her nose. "Shouldn't it be Mom by now?"

Smiling in response, Elicia hugged Alfonzo's arm tightly as the group descended into the underground space. Eventually, when they reached the space that would be the hangar for Alfonzo's airship, the floor shook as Alfonzo placed Irene's unconscious body on the ground.

Feeling the room shake, Elicia, Cana, and Shizuka put on surprised expressions. Though, Elicia, who knew Irene's true form, wore a faked expression of surprise.

"Just what the hell is that?" Cana asked in an astonished tone. "I mean, you went to help Master Unohana against Irene, right? Then why is this big blob of magic power with Irene's magic power signature so big and heavy?"

Before anyone could answer Cana's question, Gildarts arrived at her side before wrapping an arm around her shoulders while smiling wryly.

"Sweetheart, I guarantee that what you're about to see is gonna blow your mind." Gildarts said, disbelief clear in his tone. "I mean, I saw what the Kid is hiding, and I still can't believe my own eyes."

Hearing that, Cana looked at her father with confusion. Elicia, on the other hand, looked at Alfonzo with anticipation, unable to wait much longer. Meanwhile, Shizuka wore a confused expression, not sure what was going on since she couldn't see anything that would make the ground shake.

On a side note, all the most recent members of Fairy Tail, namely members who joined from Takanosu Town, had all learned how to use [Magic Power Detection]. Naturally, that included Shizuka. However, due to her personality, she almost never used it. Even when she was unsure of what was going on. So, until someone reminded her to do so, she would remain in the dark.

"*Sigh* Shizuka's so cute that I can't even find it in myself to get annoyed." Alfonzo said with a smile.

Hearing Alfonzo's compliment, Shizuka's confusion turned into a bright smile. Then, when Alfonzo approached and started combing his fingers through her hair, she completely forgot why she was under his mansion as she melted under the pleasure of his fingertips brushing against her scalp.

"Shizuka, you should activate your [Magic Power Detection]." Alfonzo said while continuing to comb his fingers through Shizuka's hair.

"Okay~~~~!" Shizuka said, basically purring her reply as she followed Alfonzo's instructions.

A moment later, Shizuka's eyes widened as she noticed the giant blob of magic power. However, she did not move her head away from Alfonzo's hand.

"That's Irene." Alfonzo replied as he let the visible light reflect off her again.

"A dragon?" Cana shouted once Irene's form was visible. "No fucking way! She can turn into a dragon?"

"Actually, considering that she's unconscious, I think..." Elicia said while wearing a contemplative expression.

Immediately, Cana, Gildarts, Ur, and Shizuka turned their attention towards Elicia. Meanwhile, Alfonzo, Unohana, and Tsunade, who already knew Irene was not human, looked on in amusement.

"... She's actually a dragon who can turn into a human." Elicia said, finishing her sentence.

Immediately, Cana, Gildarts, and Ur's mouths fell open in disbelief. Shizuka, on the other hand, was too engrossed in Alfonzo's touch to react too strongly.

Chapter 507: Alfonzo's Plan

With most of those present in Alfonzo's airship hanger gob smacked by Irene's true form, the hanger fell into silence for nearly a minute. However, as experienced wizards, everyone came back to their senses quickly enough. The only exception being Shizuka, who had stopped paying attention shortly after the reveal thanks to Alfonzo combing his fingers through her hair.

"So, what are you going to do with them?" Ur asked after getting her surprise under control while gesturing towards Irene and Brandish, who was lying next to Irene's front right claw.

In response to Ur's question, Alfonzo finally stopped combing his fingers through Shizuka's hair, which earned him a pout and a dissatisfied whine.

"Well, the first thing I'm gonna do is turn this mother fucker into an anti-magic zone." Alfonzo said as he tapped his heel on the hangar's floor.

In the next instant, the floor, ceiling, and walls were covered in anti-magic sigils. The only exception being the area around Irene.

"Why did you leave them able to use magic?" Gildarts asked with a furrowed eyebrow. "If they wake up, they could do a lot of damage while we can't use our own magic."

In response, Alfonzo glared at Gildarts with a look that screamed: "What kind of amateur do you take mee for?"

Smack!

Before Alfonzo could start berating Gildarts, however, the orange-haired wizard was slapped upside the head by an exasperated Ur.

"Is your brain in your head just to make your head heavier so you can deal more damage with head butts?" Ur asked while shaking her head.

"What is that supposed to mean?" Gildarts asked in an agitated tone.

Though Gildarts was annoyed at being slapped by Ur, it was only because it happened in front of Cana. Over the time he had been dating Ur, he had realized that he was not the sharpest tool in the shed. So, he knew that he had just asked a stupid question. However, he wanted to uphold the image of a reliable father in front of his little girl.

"Seriously, Dad..." Cana said in an exasperated tone. "Weren't you even paying attention? Both Irene and Brandish are restrained with anti-magic restraints."

Cana was right. Although it could not be seen, under the threads Elicia used to wrap up Brandish, Alfonzo had also placed anti-magic cuffs around Brandish's wrists and ankles. On top of that, Gildarts was present when Alfonzo restrained Ireen. So, he should have already known the answer to his question.

"Oh, that's right." Gildarts said while smiling sheepishly. "Sorry, Kid. I was just caught off guard by the revelation and forgot."

Meanwhile, Tsunade and Retsu, who had never seen Alfonzo create sigils on such a large scale, were checking their own magic power.

"Quite impressive." Retsu said as she partially drew her Zanpakuto, Minazuki. "I couldn't release my [Bankai] even if I wanted to in this space."

"Yeah, and I can't gather my magic power for my [Magic Empowered Strength] technique, either." Tsunade added. A moment later, however, she leveled a glare at Gildarts. "Still, you shouldn't get any bright ideas about trying to do what you tried last time. I can still beat you to within an inch of your life without my magic power."

Immediately, Gildarts began to shudder as he remembered the punch he had received from Tsunade years ago.

"I'm still curious to know what happened that has Gildarts so scared." Ur said with a mischievous, yet interested, smile.

"I don't think we need to go into stories about the past, right?" Gildarts replied with cold sweat streaming down his back. "I mean, the kid hasn't told us exactly what he's planning yet, right?"

Hearing that, Ur decided to drop the subject. Meanwhile, Tsunade had no intention of telling the story in the first place. And seeing the two's reactions, Gildarts exhaled a sigh of relief. Unfortunately, his relief did not last for very long.

"Oh, I know that story." Cana, with a bottle of tequila she pulled out of her [Storage Card] in hand, said with a mischievous grin. "Don't worry, Ur, I'll tell you about it later."

Hearing that, Ur wore a similar grin to Cana. Meanwhile, Gildarts face paled in horror.

"Serves you right, you filthy man-whore." Tsunade said disdainfully.

"Anyway, I believe we've gotten off topic." Retsu said with a gentle smile. Then, she turned towards Alfonzo before continuing. "I am quite curious what you plan to do now that you have them in this situation."

Although Retsu was smiling gently, everyone could see that she was not simply asking to hear Alfonzo's plan. He had stopped her from killing the woman who tried to kill her, after all. So, he had better have a good reason for doing so.

Ignoring Retsu's pressure, Alfonzo glanced at everyone in the hanger, briefly making eye contact with each of them. His eye contact with Shizuka being the briefest. She had been looking at him with watery eyes ever since he stopped combing his fingers through her hair, after all.

"First, I'm gonna have Shizuka heal Irene." Alfonzo said, patting Shizuka's head as he spoke.

Immediately, everyone, other than Elicia, who knew what Alfonzo was planning, and Shizuka, who was enjoying the head pats, glared at Alfonzo. Before they could start complaining, however, Alfonzo held up a hand to stop them from condemning him.

"Before you lose your shit, let me finish." Alfonzo said while shaking his head.

Lucky for Alfonzo, that was enough to make everyone hear him out. Though, it was clear that they weren't happy about it. Still, Alfonzo explained his plan while mentioning what he had noticed as he observed Irene with his [Magic Power Detection].

Naturally, when the group heard Alfonzo's plan along with his findings, Cana, Gildarts, Ur, Tsunade, and Retsu were dumbfounded. However, after Cana and Ur scanned Irene with their own [Magic Power Detection], they noticed that Alfonzo was right. So, they relented.

And with Cana and Ur's confirmation, Gildarts, Tsunade, and Retsu also understood what Alfonzo was saying was true. However, Tsunade, and especially Retsu were still skeptical.

"Even if I believe what you're saying to be true, this is still reckless." Retsu said, her gentle smile replaced with the furrowing of her eyebrows. "What if it's not enough to make her change sides?"

"Oh, you don't have to worry about that." Ur said confidently. "With a guild as strong as ours, there's bound to be a spy, or two. And Alfonzo was aware of that."

"Yeah, so Fonzie planted a backdoor." Elicia added excitedly. "So, he can either destroy or render it useless whenever he wants."

Hearing that, Retsu opened her eyes wide. She knew the object in question, the [Soul Armament] was created based on the Soul Reapers' Zanpakutos. However, even the greatest minds of the Soul Continent, where Soul Society was located, were unable to do something like that with the Zanpakutos they gave to each Soul Reaper. If they could, it would make the threat of traitors much lower.

"How is that possible?" Retsu asked in astonishment.

"Sorry, Master Unohana." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "But that's a secret. Something that shouldn't get out. Although everyone who has a [Soul Armament] knows that I can deactivate or destroy it in case they betray Fairy Tail, not even they know how. In fact, even my girls don't know."

"Yeah, and I don't like the fact that you're keeping secrets from us." Cana said with a pout. "Even if I understand the reason behind it."

"Stop it, Cana." Elicia said as she pulled Cana into a hug. "You know Fonzie only keeps secrets from us for our own good. I mean, look at our new house. That was a good reason to keep a secret, right?"

"*Sigh* I know." Cana replied while smiling weakly. "It's just, our wedding is coming up. And my emotions are going out of control."

"Yeah, I get it." Elicia replied while hugging Cana even tighter. "Just know that he's doing it for our own good."

Alfonzo even kept the secret from Elicia, despite the fact that he usually told her everything like this. And there were two reasons for that. The first was the incident with Yoruichi, which caused him to lose his blind trust in her. And the second was the fact that he didn't want someone with the ability to read minds to scan her thoughts.

Elicia was aware of Alfonzo's reasons, as well. And although the first reason saddened her, the second was a good enough reason for her to let it go.

Eventually, Elicia was able to calm Cana. Meanwhile, Gildarts was trying his best to ignore the conversation. Luckily, there was someone to change the subject before it became unbearable for him.

"So, you want me to heal the dragon?" Shizuka asked with her eyes glinting excitedly. Then, she hugged Alfonzo's left arm while pressing it between her breasts as she continued. "That's Irene, right? Do you think she'll take me for a ride through the sky when she's healed again?"

"I'm not sure." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "Maybe if you ask her nicely. But if she won't, I'll take you flying, okay?"

Hearing that, Shizuka's eyes lit up even brighter as she nodded her head vigorously.

Meanwhile, Retsu continued to frown. She didn't think it was a good idea to heal Irene. However, there was nothing she could do about it.

Well, that was not true. She could simply approach Irene while she was immobilized, step into the only part of the hanger that was not covered in anti-magic sigils and kill her with her [Bankai]. However, she knew that would destroy the alliance between her guild and Fairy Tail.

"*Sigh* Do whatever you want." Retsu said, deciding she would stay out of Fairy Tail's guild business. "But if things don't go the way you expect them to, I'm going to kill her. And there's no way around it."

Hearing that, the mood in the hanger fell immediately. As a result, everyone looked towards Retsu with solemn expressions. A moment later, since it was Alfonzo's plan, he was the one to respond.

"Don't worry, you won't have to." Alfonzo replied in a steely tone. "If she decides to refuse my offer or betray me after getting what she wants, I'll kill her myself."

Hearing the cold resolve in Alfonzo's tone, Retsu's switch was almost flipped for the second time today. However, she managed to reel in her blood lust before it got out of control.

Because of Alfonzo's declaration, the hanger fell into silence once again. Though, the silence did not last long. Instead, Alfonzo ushered Shizuka towards Irene and stood guard as she healed the dragoness. Because despite the fact that Irene's magic being sealed, and her front claws and wings being restrained,

Irene's tail was still a dangerous weapon. So, just in case she decided to retaliate, Alfonzo was fast enough to get Shizuka out of danger.

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It would take a while for Shizuka to completely heal Irene. During that time, she was unable to take any shifts in the guild's infirmary. So, Ren covered for her, something she had no issue doing for the bubbly healer.

Retsu also decided to stay in Magnolia just in case Irene betrayed Alfonzo's good will. And to be honest, she was hoping the dragon woman would do just that. Then, she could justifiably kill her for ruining her motorcycle ride.

On top of that, during the time Shizuka was healing Irene, all of the residents of the mansion and the teams they formed to take on their quests returned to Magnolia. And after finding out what happened while they were gone, they were not surprised. Natsu, Gajeel, and Wendy were upset that they missed the chance to fight a dragon now that they're power had increased thanks to their [Soul Armaments].

Laxus and the Thunder God Tribe had also returned. And just like the other Dragon Slayers, Laxus was also upset that he missed the chance to fight Irene. However, even more than Laxus, Elexion, Laxus' [Armament Spirit], was disappointed that he was unable to make his debut against another dragon.

On another note, Brandish woke up shortly after Shizuka started healing Irene. However, because she did not have access to her magic, she could only bide her time. On the upside, though, Alfonzo did cook all of her meals during her captivity, so things were not all bad.

Irene regained consciousness several days later. However, after realizing that she had been restrained with especially strong anti-magic equipment, like Brandish, she decided to bide her time... So, she simply waited to hear why she had not been killed while enjoying the dragon sized portions of food Alfonzo delivered to her.

Eventually, not long before Irene would be fully healed, Alfonzo approached Irene and Brandish with a solemn expression on his face.

"Okay, ladies, I think it's about time we stopped with the games." Alfonzo said as he created a chair with his [Metal Magic], despite the fact that the room was covered in anti-magic sigils. "I know you came here because I kicked that Eight-Dragon Douche's ass. The question is, why would the two of you, who are at least as strong as him, help him get revenge on me?"

As he finished speaking, Alfonzo pulled a device out of his pants pocket.

"And I would appreciate it if you didn't lie to me." Alfonzo said while holding up the magic item towards Irene and Brandish. "This is a lie detector. And it will beep when any of us tell a lie."

With that, Alfonzo activated the magic item.

"The sky is green>"

Beep!

"I like wearing women's clothing."

Beep!

"I have one wife and seven fiancées."

This time the magic item did not react.

"I hope that's proof enough." Alfonzo said, maintaining his solemn expression. "Now, I hope we can have a friendly talk."

Chapter 508: The Negotiations Begin

"Now, I hope we can have a friendly talk." Alfonzo said while wearing a solemn expression.

Despite the fact that Alfonzo had not given either Irene or Brandish the opportunity to respond to anything he said, neither of them seemed to be bothered. Instead, they were too busy staring at the magic item in Alfonzo's hands.

Although there were plenty of magic spells that could supposedly tell if someone was lying, none of them were fool proof. And they believed Alfonzo's to be no different. However, something inside of them was telling the two ladies that was not the case.

In fact, Alfonzo's item could not tell if someone was telling the truth or not in the slightest. Instead, He would only be using his meta knowledge mixed with the fact that his magic power could cause the item

to beep. And because Irene and Brandish were both shackled with the strongest anti-magic restraints he could muster, neither of them would be able to feel the slight flaring of his magic power.

"So, how did the Eight-Dragon Douche convince the two of you to come here?" Alfonzo asked.

"By the 'Eight-Dragon Douche,' as you so elegantly put it, are you referring to God Serena?" Irene asked in response.

"Yes." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "But please do not refer to him as God anything in my presence. He's just a lucky little shit that happened to get his hands on eight Dragon Slaying Lacrima."

Though they did not show it, both Irene and Brandish agreed with what Alfonzo had to say about God Serena. Because of the Dragon Slaying Lacrima, he had to put in very little effort to reach his level of strength.

"No, he had nothing to do with us coming here." Irene replied.

Beep!

Immediately, the hanger fell into silence.

Sigh I really would rather that you not lie to me, Irene." Alfonzo said in a disappointed tone.
"Especially since I have a deal for you that could reverse your biggest problem."

As he spoke, Alfonzo let his eyes wander all over Irene's body.

"You may not believe it, but I've spoken to Igneel, the Fire Dragon King, Metalicana, the Iron Dragon, and Grandeeney, the Sky Dragon, about you, Irene Belserion, former Queen of the ruined Kingdom of Dragnof, and the world's first [Dragon Slayer Wizard]."

Hearing that, both Irene and Brandish opened their eyes wide. A moment later, Brandish turned her attention to Irene, her gaze asking the question: "Is what he's saying true?"

Irene, on the other hand, was shocked into inaction. So, she did not even notice Brandish's gaze. Instead, the only thing she could see was Alfonzo.

"That's impossible..." Irene said in a tone filled with disbelief. "Those dragons disappeared nearly four hundred years ago. There's no way they could have told you. So, how could you possibly know that? I even made sure that all records of my existence on Ishgar had been erased over the centuries."

Hearing that, Brandish's eyes opened even wider. She was sure that most of, if not all, the Spriggan 12 had no idea of Irene's true identity.

Alfonzo, on the other hand, only shrugged his shoulders. Though it was true he asked Igneel, Metalicana, and Grandeeney about Irene, he already knew the information thanks to his meta knowledge.

On a side note, during Retsu's stay, Alfonzo had asked her if there was a way to communicate with the [Armament Spirits] or Zanpakuto Spirits of others. And to his surprise, Retsu said there was.

Though she could not tell him in detail, as she was not a scientist, Retsu did mention that someone she knew had come up with a way to obtain their [Bankai] without the years of training it usually took by manifesting their Zanpakuto Spirit in the real world for three days. She also mentioned that failure would make it impossible for the Soul Reaper to ever reach [Bankai] in their lifetime, though.

Hearing that tidbit of information jogged Alfonzo's memory about Kisuke Uehara's invention and how it helped him and Ichigo achieve [Bankai] in the Bleach series.

So, he made it his goal to create a much simpler version of Keisuke's device. As a result, the [Armament Spirits] of those who entered Alfonzo's mansion could manifest themselves if they chose to. And naturally, the [Spirits] of all his lovers did so as much as they could. As beings created from aspects of their hosts' souls, they wanted to interact with Alfonzo as much as possible.

Bedlam also enjoyed spending time with the ladies' [Armament Spirits]. Riot, on the other hand, was too shy to show himself in front of either Elicia or Scylla, as he was created from Alfonzo's love for Elicia, then cranked that emotion up to eleven. AS a result, he was like a shy school boy who was unable to talk to his crush.

"Whether you believe me or not is up to you." Alfonzo replied casually. "But the magic item did not go off. So, it should show you that I'm telling the truth."

Hearing that, Irene and Brandish looked at Alfonzo disdainfully. As previously mentioned, they knew that lie detection was not fool proof.

"Anyway, if you work with me, there might be a chance for you to turn back into a human, Irene." Alfonzo continued, despite the fact that Irene had not responded.

Hearing that, Irene's eyes were immediately filled with fury.

"You dare mock me?" Irene growled angrily.

"Take it easy, lady." Alfonzo replied. "I only said there was a chance. I don't have enough information to say anything for sure. But those three Dragon Slayers in our guild have had their dragon seeds removed completely with my method."

Once again, Irene stared at Alfonzo in total disbelief. Meanwhile, Brandish looked on in confusion, not knowing what a dragon seed was in the first place. However, she could tell that the gears in Irene's head were turning. So, she also kept silent.

"I need proof of what you say." Irene finally said after a few minutes of contemplative silence.

Hearing that, Alfonzo smiled. The first step of getting Irene to change sides was a success. So, he stood from his seat and walked towards the elevator leading to the higher floors.

"Fine, you two wait right here." Alfonzo said while waving over his shoulder. "I'll be back with one of the Dragon Slayers."

After the elevator doors closed, Brandish once again looked towards Irene. This time, the uncertainty in her gaze was palpable.

"Irene are you really thinking of betraying the---" Brandish began to ask.

"Silence." Irene ordered sternly. "There's no way he's not listening to this room."

Hearing that, Brandish immediately snapped her mouth shut.

"Still, if he's truly able to do what he says, then I have a lot to think about." Irene muttered.

Hearing Irene's muttering, Brandish could not help but open her eyes wide in surprise. As the second strongest of the Spriggan 12, Brandish would have never considered Irene's betrayal as a viable option.

Irene, on the other hand, was considering the ramifications of turning back into a human. Most importantly, about making up for lost time with the daughter she had to give up twenty-one years ago.

'*Sigh* I've never been so unsure about something in my life.' Irene thought to herself. 'I went to war with the dragons back during the Dragon King Festival without hesitation. I married that traitorous piece of scum to stop a border conflict, yet again without hesitation. And I destroyed my kingdom full of sheep without hesitation either. But with only a few words, for the second time in my life, I've become indecisive.'

As she thought about what could be, Irene laid her large, draconic head atop her front paws. Then, she closed her eyes to consider what she should do. And after seeing Irene take this position, Brandish remained silent, as she also did not know what to do.

For almost ten years, Brandish had lived in the Alvarez Empire. And for almost as long, she had lived with hatred towards Layla Heartfilia. However, when she heard the truth of her mother's passing, all that hatred vanished. Still, she was loyal to Alvarez.

At the same time, however, Brandish had grown weary of all the fighting and conquest on behalf of the empire. Yet, because the emperor gave her such support during her toughest times, she did not want to betray him. And that's why, despite not wanting to, she acted as one of the emperor's shields.

Eventually, after an undetermined amount of time, the doors to the elevator opened once again. Naturally, this drew the attention of the two prisoners. When they both opened their eyes and looked in the elevator's direction, they saw Alfonzo and Wendy stepping into the hanger.

While Alfonzo casually made his way towards the chair where he previously sat, Wendy followed him timidly while holding the hem of his shirt.

"Don't be so nervous, Wendy." Alfonzo said as he reached back and pulled Wendy forward so that she was walking beside him. "Neither of them can hurt you. Especially not with me here."

"Y-yeah... B-b-b-but why did you choose me?" Wendy asked in a nervous tone. "I-I mean, Natsu and Gajeel wanted to come, t-t-too."

"*Sigh* Because you're the least likely to say or do something stupid." Alfonzo replied in exasperation as he remembered his trip upstairs to get a Dragon Slayer to help with his negotiations.

As soon as Alfonzo arrived in the living room, where everyone was waiting to know how the negotiations went, Alfonzo explained how far things got. Then, when he asked a Dragon Slayer to help him, Natsu and Gajeel immediately jumped up to offer their assistance.

Had that been all, then there would have been no problem. However, they both wanted to fight with Irene. And they each spoke of how they would show her the true power of a dragon slayer, despite the fact that Irene was restrained and had been turned into a dragon thanks to her Dragon Seed].

And Alfonzo knew had they acted like that, Irene's pride would have been triggered. Then, she would have refused to speak any further.

Wendy, on the other hand, seemed sympathetic to Irene's situation. And after talking to Grandeeney, she knew that the same fate would have awaited her if Grandeeney had not sacrificed herself to prevent it.

After seeing Wendy's reaction to his report, Alfonzo immediately chose her. Then, after Natsu and Gajeel got a little too rowdy about not being chosen, he casually knocked them out before handing them to Lisanna and Levy, respectively, to take care of them.

On a side note, Jet and Droy, who were also present, did everything they could to stop Levy from taking care of Gajeel. And after remembering the perturbed expression on Levy's face, he knew it would not be much longer before Levy lost her patience and told them about themselves, as well as her true feelings.

"Damn, I hope I'm around when that happens." Alfonzo muttered to himself with a smile on his face. "Those two's jealousy is way too much. I can't even talk to Levy about magical theory without those two interrupting our conversation. Hell, I probably would have made a move on Levy a long time ago if it weren't for those two. But I just don't wanna deal with their bullshit."

"Huh? What did you say, Alfonzo?" Wendy asked curiously while looking up at Alfonzo.

"Nothing, just thinking about something." Alfonzo said with a smile while patting Wendy's head. "But I know I shouldn't be distracted right now. This is important, after all. Sorry about that."

In combination with his head patting, Alfonzo's apology and genuine smile made Wendy blush as she lowered her head. And had Carla been present, she would have been doing everything she could to keep Wendy away from Alfonzo's clutches.

A moment later, Alfonzo and Wendy reached his chair. Then, before Alfonzo sat down, he conjured another chair with his [Metal Magic] for Wendy to sit in. Then, once they were both seated, Alfonzo focused on his two prisoners.

"Alright, this is the child of Grandeeney, the Sky Dragon." Alfonzo said when he noticed Irene and Brandish's eyes settled on him. "Allow me to reintroduce the Sky Dragon Slayer, Wendy Marvell."

Immediately after Alfonzo's introduction, Irene and Brandish shifted their attention to Wendy, causing her nervousness to increase exponentially.

"H-He-Hel-Hello." Wendy said quietly with a stutter. "It's ni-ni-ni-nice to meet you."

In her nervousness, Wendy completely forgot that she had already been acquainted with Irene and Brandish. However, no one seemed to mind. After a few minutes, Wendy calmed down enough to speak properly.

And when she did, she told Irene and Brandish everything about her experience with a [Soul Armament]. From circulating her magic power through it while it was an [Embryo], to the first shift, to nurturing it until it gained a [Spirit], to releasing its first seal and talking with Grandeeney about why she disappeared four hundred years ago.

Then, as soon as Wendy finished her story, she passed out from the stress. Before she could hit the floor, however, Alfonzo caught her and swept her up in a princess carry. After that, he started walking towards the elevator again.

Chapter 509: Irene and Brandish's Decision

The day Irene woke up and spoke with Alfonzo about why she and Brandish came to Magnolia, A group of Rune Knights, led by Lahar and Doranbolt, were surveying the damage from the battle between Alfonzo, Retsu, and Irene.

"*Sigh* We're going to have to report this to the council." Lahar said while adjusting his glasses. "We've already talk to Fairy Tail, but we were not able to get much information, unfortunately."

"Do you think they were holding back information from us?" Doranbolt, or rather Mest Gryder till disguised as Doranbolt, asked with a frown. "I mean, they still aren't particularly fond of the Magic Council, despite the fact that their former master is a member."

"No, I don't." Lahar replied. "Although they don't like us, they are not outright hostile towards us. Besides, everything they said matches with the interviews we had with the civilians. And these traces prove it."

The day after the battle, the Rune Knights and the Fourth Magic Custody Unit arrived to investigate the reports some civilians made after hearing Irene's roars and seeing the flashes and explosions from the battle.

Since then, the Magic Council have been interviewing anyone they could about what happened. And that included the wizards of Fairy Tail. And to their surprise, they were very forthcoming about what happened.

Or at least, that's what Fairy Tail wanted them to believe.

The story Fairy Tail and Retsu told the Magic Council was that Retsu, while on her way back to Mermaid Heel, was attacked by an old enemy. And during the fight, Alfonzo, Gildarts, and Ur were alerted to what was going on. So, the three strongest members of Fairy Tail rushed to their ally's aid. And when they arrived, the assailant ran away while leaving some threatening words.

Unfortunately, the attacker wore a mask and a hood. So, Retsu was unable to identify her attacker. And as unfortunate as that was, Retsu mentioned that she had made far too many enemies over the years to remember who it was that had attacked her, a story the Custody Enforcement Unit believed.

"Either way, all we can do is find as many clues as possible." Lahar said while watching his subordinates work. "We can't allow someone willing to attack a member of the Magic Council to roam freely."

Nodding in response, Mest was just about to respond. However, before he could, he began to shudder in terror. Then, like a rusty machine, he slowly turned his head towards the sky. And when he did, he saw the silhouette of a large black dragon with white, feathery wings approaching from the sky.

"Acnologia..." Mest muttered in sheer terror, remembering the last time he saw the Dragon King of the Apocalypse. However, this time it was much more terrifying as he was seeing him at a much closer distance.

Naturally, Acnologia's presence scared more than just Mest. Everyone looking over the battlefield was just as scared. And when they saw Acnologia's indifferent gaze, the only thing they could do was pray to whatever god they believed in, hoping that Acnologia was not in the mood to kill at the moment.

Eventually, after several minutes of tense silence, the Rune Knights and the Custody Enforcement Unit lost hope when they saw Acnologia open his mouth and take a deep breath.

"It's over..." Lahar muttered in a resigned tone.

Once Acnologia finished taking his deep breath, however, he only snorted. Then, while looking down at the humans below with disdain and mockery, he flapped his wings before flying away.

As soon as Acnologia's presence could no longer be felt, everyone surveying the battlefield, without exception, collapsed to the ground while breathing heavily.

"I don't know why he left, but I think I just became a believer." Mest said while wiping the cold sweat from his brow. "I've never prayed for anything in my life. But this time, it worked."

Nodding his head in agreement, Lahar could not find the words to say. However, after a few moments, he stood to his feet and barked an order.

"Hurry up and finish investigating!" Lahar shouted. "If that thing comes back for some reason, we do not want to still be here!"

Hearing that, all the Custody Enforcement Officers and Rune Knights snapped out of their stunned states. Then, while moving as quickly as they could, they finished surveying the battlefield before they all made their way back to Era to report.

The reason for Acnologia's appearance was actually quite simple. Though, the people from the Magic Council had no way of knowing. Acnologia had shown up because he felt Irene's draconic power.

However, because he was so far away, it took him a while to arrive on Ishgar. And because Alfonzo used anti-magic restraints that completely stopped Irene's magic power from exiting her body, Acnologia was only attracted to the remnant traces left behind from the battle. And he had no way of tracking it to Magnolia thanks to the time since the battle ended.

Since that day, a little more than a week has passed. In that time, Shizuka finished her treatment of Irene, leaving her with a perfect bill of health. In the meantime, Irene and Brandish have been discussing their options while in captivity.

"So, what are we gonna do?" Brandish asked. "Are we going to betray?"

Instead of responding immediately, Irene turned her head in Brandish's direction. Naturally, Irene's silent stare while in her dragon form made Brandish uneasy. Because despite the fact that both of their magic power had been sealed, Irene could still kill Brandish with her overwhelming physical strength as a dragon. Luckily, Irene's mobility was greatly hampered by Alfonzo's restraints. So, she was certain she could get away had Irene lost her temper at some point.

After a few seconds of tense silence, Irene turned away before laying her head on top of her paws.

"*Sigh* Honestly, I'm leaning towards that." Irene said in a tired tone. "Just like he said last time, I am Earth land's first Dragon Slayer. And because of incomplete information, I turned into what you see now after over using my [Dragon slayer Magic]. And because of that, I lost many things. Things I did not realize I cherished until they were gone."

Knowing that Brandish was talking about the ability to taste food and sleep, as well as several human emotions, Brandish could only lower her head in sympathy. And had she known about the fate of Irene's daughter, she would completely understand why Irene made that decision.

"Unfortunately, if I tell Fairy Tail everything, you will be implicated as well." Irene continued. "And unless you are willing to capitulate, I don't see you having a good outcome."

Brandish immediately widened her eyes upon hearing Irene's words.

"But couldn't we just tell something made up?" Brandish asked. "Then, once the opportunity presents itself, we make a break for it?"

"In most cases, that would be true." Irene said while shaking her large, draconic head. "But then, there's a pretty good chance I'll lose the one thing that I've truly desired for centuries."

To that, Brandish fell into contemplation. It's not like she truly wanted to be one of the emperor's twelve shields. IN fact, she only accepted the position because she felt that she owed the Alvarez Empire for raising her after her mother passed away. Still, as someone who would rather not be involved in conflict, the thought of leaving sounded rather appealing to her. Especially after the months of relaxation she had after accepting the mission to investigate Alfonzo.

"*Sigh* It looks like I don't have a choice." Brandish said in a wispy tone. "I'd rather not spend my days in captivity after you tell them everything. And being put to death as a spy sounds even less appealing."

Hearing that, Irene turned towards Brandish with a wry smile on her dragon face. Though, to Brandish, it only looked as if Irene was bearing her sharp teeth at her.

"That's probably the best decision you could make." Irene said. "Because I'm sure death is a much more likely outcome than life imprisonment. Of course, it would come after a healthy dose of torture to get as much information out of you as possible."

At the thought of being tortured for information, Brandish could not help but shiver. However, before she could scare herself too much, the doors to the elevator slid open, drawing Irene and Brandish's attention.

"So, I think I've given you ladies enough time to ponder my offer." Alfonzo said with a smile as he stepped out of the elevator.

"Hmph! You say that as if you had not been eavesdropping on every word we muttered since you brought us here." Irene said disdainfully.

Smiling sheepishly in return, Alfonzo understood why Irene and Brandish, who was also glaring at him disdainfully, would think that way. However, Alfonzo had no monitoring devices set up in the hanger. Other than the standard measures that would let him know if they were trying to escape. However, with their magic power sealed, Irene and Brandish had no way of knowing that.

"Anyway, that doesn't matter." Irene said after calming down. "I'm sure you already know that we've decided to accept your offer. Defecting to your side can grant both of us something that we want. And we already know that you must have a fail-safe in the case that we betray you."

"Good." Alfonzo replied, not trying to dispel the misunderstanding. Since he planned to remove their restraints, they would find out that there were no listening or viewing magic items in the hanger once they had access to their magic power again. "Well then, let's get rid of those restraints, then."

Snap!

With a snap of his fingers, Alfonzo dispelled the restraints on both Irene and Brandish. Then, he used his [Metal Magic] to remove all the anti-magic sigils.

"Oh ho, you're quite trusting, aren't you?" Irene asked with an eyebrow raised. "Who's to say we won't just attack and take you hostage now that our restraints are gone?"

"Although I probably won't be able to get the restraints on you before you can attack, I can have this room completely covered in sigils way before your attacks can reach me." Alfonzo replied with a shrug.

"Then, that would leave me in a two-on-one situation with a dragon and a stronger than average young woman who can't use magic."

"And you think you could take on the both of us without your magic?" Brandish asked in a strong tone.

In response, Alfonzo looked at Brandish with the same gaze that he looked at Gildarts with when he brought the two to the hanger.

"Why do you think I would leave myself unable to use magic, too?" Alfonzo asked curiously.

"*Sigh* He's used magic in front of us while standing atop the anti-magic sigils before, Brandish."

Hearing that, Brandish remembered the way Alfonzo floated the platters containing Iren's meals while walking across the hanger. Then, she looked away with a slight blush on her face.

"Anyway, Irene, could you [Transform] back into your human form?" Alfonzo asked. "The elevator won't fit your dragon form. And I'd rather not let you out through the hanger doors. Acnologia might come back. And I'd rather not have him nude Magnolia because he senses you."

"Acnologia was here?" Irene asked as she was covered in a bright white light. "Had I known, I would have been able to kill him."

"Yeah, I seriously doubt that." Alfonzo replied while lessening the intensity of the light Irene's [Transformation] spell produced. "I mean, I've fought you both. And he outclasses you by a lot."

In response, Irene remained silent. However, when the light reseeded, she wore a deep frown at the thought of being underestimated. But with the chance to regain her humanity on the line, she squashed her pride. Then, she looked herself over.

"*Sigh* All my clothes are fine." Irene said in a disappointed tone. Then, she touched her head, which was missing her usual fur-brimmed witch hat. "Unfortunately, that hat was the only one I had."

"I'm sure Lici wouldn't mind making you another one." Alfonzo said with a shrug as he approached the two. "Anyway, I need each of you to wear one of these."

As he spoke, Alfonzo reached into a pouch that was fastened to the sash acting as his belt. And when he pulled his hand out of the pouch, he was holding a pair of exquisite orichalcum bracelets inlaid with several colorful lacrima.

Before he reached the two, however, Alfonzo vanished in a burst of speed and purple light. A moment later, he reappeared between Irene and Brandish. ON top of that, the two bracelets were no longer in his hands. Instead, they were hugging the left and right wrist of Brandish and Irene, respectively.

"What is this?" Brandish asked angrily. "You sealed my magic power again?"

"No, this is different." Irene said while letting her magic power spread out. "WE can still circulate our magic power., we can even eject it from our bodies. But we can't condense any of it to cast a spell."

Hearing Irene's explanation, Brandish also tried ejecting her magic power from her body. And the only thing she could do with it was use [Magic Power Detection]. Then, she turned an incredulous expression in Alfonzo's direction. Meanwhile, Alfonzo only shrugged once again.

"Better safe than sorry, you know." Alfonzo replied. "I spent a lot of all-nighters to get those magic items just right, too. You should be praising my ability as a magic item crafter rather than glaring at me like that."

"Yes, this is truly impressive." Irene replied. "And I can understand why you did it. But do you really think you can stop me if I empower myself with magic?"

Smack!

"Yeah, I do." Alfonzo replied while catching Irene's fist that was aimed at his sternum. "Even though you may be a dragon. Without the ability to condense your magic power, you'll never be physically stronger than me."

"I see." Irene replied as she withdrew her fist. "So, the condensation of magic power is not just external... Very interesting."

"Well, if you're done testing the limits of my magic item, let's head to the guild hall." Alfonzo said. "I'm sure Ur would love to hear the real reason why the two of you came to Magnolia."

With that, Alfonzo turned and made his way towards the elevator. Meanwhile, Irene and Brandish exchanged glances.

"He really wasn't watching or listening to us." Brandish said in a shocked tone after sweeping the whole hanger and bathroom with her [Magic Power Detection].

Shaking her head, Irene followed Alfonzo towards the elevator with Brandish following behind her a beat later.

Chapter 510: Another Quest on the Sea

Time passed quickly after Irene and Brandish decided to betray the Alvarez Empire. Not long after Alfonzo took them from beneath his mansion, they were brought to the Fairy Tail guild hall. And as soon as they entered, they were met with many hostile gazes.

However, the two ex-members of the Spriggan 12 were not in the right state of mind to even register the gazes of so many people who were weaker than they were. Instead, they were too busy marveling at the inside of the guild hall. A place they had never been able to glimpse the inside of with the [Magic Power Detection] they picked up during their investigation.

Not long afterwards, they were brought to the top floor of the guild hall to meet with the guild's S-Class wizards. From there, they told Ur and the rest why they were in Magnolia.

Needless to say, when they found out that God Serena was a traitor, the wizards were... not as surprised as anyone would expect. Especially after finding out about how he treated Alfonzo before their duel. However, this information was eventually sent to Makarov so that the magic council could deal with it.

Irene and Brandish then went on to explain their mission. A mission that was not going very well thanks to the guild's suspicion. One thing Irene did not mention during this meeting, however, was the fact that Erza was her daughter. Something Alfonzo and Elicia expected.

In the end, both Irene and Brandish entered Fairy Tail as wizards. Though, they were both on a probationary period. And during that period, Alfonzo made some more changes to the bracelets that they wore. For Irene, her magical power output was capped at Gildarts level.

As for Brandish, because there were more than a few wizards in the guild that could defeat her, despite the fact that she was as strong as God Serena, Alfonzo removed the restriction that stopped her from gathering magic power.

After all that happened, Fairy Tail went back to business as usual. And not long after that, the Harvest Festival came around again. And like always, Fairy Tail put on their three big annual events.

First, the Miss Fairy Tail Pageant. Many of the female wizards participated. In the end, Levy came out as the winner. Despite the fact that she was not as busty or curvy as the other ladies. And to no one's surprise, the first people to congratulate her were Jet and Droy.

However, their sycophantic congratulations ended up annoying her to the point that she stormed off without a word, taking Gajeel with her as she went. Naturally, this left Jet and Droy heartbroken, for the lack of a better word.

After the pageant, the Battle of Fairy Tail tournament was next on the agenda. However, there were some differences between this year's tournament and the previous one. For example, instead of teams of four, the tournament would be between teams of five. Also, the winner of the tournament would be the team representing Fairy Tail in the upcoming Grand Magic Games.

In the end, the Thunder God Tribe was the team that won. However, Laxus was not happy with the victory. And the reason for that was simple, Alfonzo and Elicia did not participate in the tournament.

Since Alfonzo was almost certain that he would be working through that time while he was working for the Village Hidden in the Leaves. On top of that, thanks to the message he received from Tsunade, he knew that Elicia would be coming with him.

Elicia would not be the only one to accompany him, however, as he was told he could bring up to three guests with him. However, other than him, the rest would have to be blindfolded to keep the location of the village hidden, a measure that Alfonzo understood, but he felt was completely unnecessary.

Finally, the Fantasia Parade once again went off without a hitch. All the wizards of Fairy Tail, along with the residents of Magnolia, enjoyed it. After that, things around the town went back to normal.

And today, Alfonzo, Cana, and Sun were taking a quest at Akane Beach. Rather, they quest objective was off the shore of Akane Beach. Meaning, they were currently on Sixth Sense, making their way towards the objective.

"*Sigh* I hate taking quests on the water." Alfonzo muttered as he steered the ship to the quest objective. "Every time I do, something goes horribly wrong."

"Oh, stop it." Cana said with a smile. "You've only ever taken one request on the water."

"Yeah, and I got my left arm ripped off." Alfonzo replied with a deadpan.

"Don't worry, Alfonzo." Sun said in a determined tone. "I'll make sure to protect you."

"Sun, you are so cute." Cana said as she pulled Sun into a hug.

"Uh... Thanks?" Sun replied, not sure what was cute about her declaration.

"Either way..." Alfonzo said as he watched his two fiancée. "... I wouldn't have even taken this quest if it wasn't for what we're supposed to be hunting."

"Yeah, a big crab means big crab legs." Cana said with a smile. "I hope we have enough butter back at home."

"Yeah, the Emperor Guillotine Crab is the biggest crab in all the seas, ya see." Sun replied happily. "And they're really good if you steam them, too."

"Well, I've never had one before." Alfonzo replied. "But stopping it from attacking fishing vessels is the perfect excuse to catch one, isn't it?"

Splash!

Before either Cana or Sun could replied, Alfonzo hurriedly levitated the ship out of the water. Then, not even an instant later, a large, thirty-foot long crab claw broke the surface of the water.

"Damn, this thing is even bigger than I expected!" Cana exclaimed as she reached into the card pouch that is Hoyle. She then continued as she flung a handful of cards at the giant pincer. "[Card Magic: Sun's Strength]."

In the next instant, while on the way towards the crab claw, all the cards Cana threw burst into flames. Unfortunately, not all the flaming cards were able to hit the crab claw, as it was quickly drawn back below the surface. However, there were a few that did make contact. And as they did, they exploded.

Boom! *Boom!* *Boom!*

"Something tells me that didn't do that much damage." Alfonzo said just after the crab claw was completely submerged.

"*Sigh* I shouldn't use fire and lightning to fight it, anyway." Cana said while shaking her head. "It might damage the flavor.

"At least it's not like regular crabs." Sun said as she approached the deck's railing. "WE don't have to catch this one alive before we cook it."

With that, Sun leapt overboard with Kanade in hand.

"Wait, are you serious?" Cana asked in a tone filled with disbelief. "You have to cook regular crabs while they're alive?"

"Yeah, otherwise, they're pretty poisonous to humans." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "Oh, Sun's about to do something."

"[Sing, Kanade]." Sun chanted as she pointed the blade of her shirasaya towards the sea surface. More specifically, towards the Emperor Guillotine Crab.

In the next instant, Kanade transformed into a double bladed katana. At the same time, Sun took a deep breath.

"[Voice Magic: Howling Voice]." Sun shouted towards Kanade. A moment later, Kanade was thrust into the water, with its tips pointed between the Emperor Guillotine Crab's eyes. "[Sound Spear]."

Just as Sun chanted her spell, she was also submerged in the water. Meanwhile, a highly compressed sound wave was shot at the crab. Then, with her sound attack gaining an additional five times its potency in the water, after being hit, the giant crab began to release bubbles from its mouth as it struggled in pain.

A moment later, Sun's legs were wrapped in yellow light. Then, when the light dimmed, her legs were replaced by her pink, scaled fish tail. With that, Sun began to swim at supersonic speed as she slashed the crab's shell over and over.

{"Clear the area, Sun."} Alfonzo said telepathically as Sun continued her onslaught.

At the same time, Sun, having heard Alfonzo's telepathic message, stopped her attack. Then, she quickly swam towards the surface to get out of the blast radius of Alfonzo's incoming attack.

The Emperor Guillotine Crab, on the other hand, was enraged by the small animal that hurt it so badly. So, just like Sun, it also began swimming towards the surface. However, its speed was much slower than the mermaid it was pursuing.

A moment later, Sun burst through the surface. Then, while she was mid-air, her legs returned to their human form before she landed on Sixth Sense's deck. At the same time, as soon as she was out of the water, Alfonzo fired his [Railgun] into the water. An instant later, water shot up into the air.

Once all the water rained back into the sea, Alfonzo lowered Sixth Sense back onto the surface. At the same time, thanks to the Emperor Guillotine Crab being cut in half by the [Railgun], Alfonzo, Cana, and Sun noticed that a stretch of the water had changed color.

"*Sigh* It's a good thing it chased Sun up here." Cana said while looking over the bloody sea water.
"Otherwise, fishing it up to the surface would have been a lot more troublesome."

"Not really." Alfonzo replied as he created a couple of sturdy chains with his [Metal Magic]. "Thanks to the [Railgun], the entire crab was magnetized. So, all I needed to do was give the tow chains an opposite charge. Then, finding the parts would have been simple, theoretically, anyway."

With that, Alfonzo sent the chains into the water. Then, he wrapped them around the electro magnified halves of the crab. After that, he changed the magnetic charge on the chains to one opposite the crab's.

"Alright, that's a wrap." Alfonzo said with a smile. "Now, let's go home. I wanna cook this thing."

In response, both Cana and Sun smiled. Then, they turned to get comfortable. At the same time, despite the fact that Alfonzo was not in the wheel house, the ship began turning back towards the shore. Before the ship could go too far, however, Alfonzo frowned. A moment later, both Cana and Sun frowned, as well.

"*Sigh* And this is why I hate taking quests on the water." Alfonzo said in an exasperated tone. "Even when they seem like they're done, something always goes wrong."

Splash!

In the next instant, a long, cylindrical, metal object shot through the surface of the sea. Then, when it lost its momentum, it flopped against the surface. However, it did not begin to sink. Instead, it floated with its front pointing towards the Sixth Sense.

"What the hell is that thing?" Cana asked.

At the same time, a hatch on the top of the object opened. And as it did, what appeared to be a space suit popped its head out of the hatch just in time to hear the rest of Cana's exclamation.

"It looks like a giant penis!" Cana exclaimed.

Hearing that, the person in the space suit stumbled. However, they quickly regained their balance. Then, when they heard Alfonzo and Sun laughing at Cana's exclamation, they turned their gaze towards the laughter.

"Sun! I've finally found you!" The person in the space suit, which was clearly a young man if based on the sound of the voice, shouted once their eyes landed on Sun. "And now that I've found you, we can be together for the rest of our lives!"

Immediately, the laughter aboard the Sixth Sense stopped. While Cana looked at the person in the space suit with pity, Sun looked on in confusion. Alfonzo, on the other hand, was glaring very unamused.

"Oh, this guy is screwed." Cana said as she reached into her [Storage Card] for a bottle of booze while she enjoyed the show.

And Although Cana was right, Alfonzo was glaring at more than just the person in the space suit. Instead, he was also glaring at the submarine, as well. It had been decades since he saw any anime from his past life. So, he was having trouble putting together who the person that stopped them was.

However, had Alfonzo used his [Archive Magic] to look through his memories, he would have recognized the interloper immediately. Unfortunately, he has not spent enough time using it to do so reflexively.

Meanwhile, the person standing on the submarine was overjoyed. Since the moment he stood atop his submarine, his gaze had never left Sun. And he could see her staring at him intently.

'Ha, it would seem Sun has missed me as much as I've missed her.' The young man in the space suit thought to himself happily. 'I've spent the last five years looking for her to declare my love and ask her to be my wife. And now, it has all paid off.'

"Um... Who are you?" Sun asked in a thoroughly confused tone. "And why would I want to spend the rest of my life with you?"

With Sun's question, the atmosphere froze. Then, the young man in the space suit fainted before falling backwards into the hatch.

Naturally, this caused the atmosphere to become even more awkward than it already was.

"So, what should we do about that?" Cana asked while pointing at the submarine.

"Maybe we should see if he's okay?" Sun asked while tilting her head.

"Nah, don't worry about it." Alfonzo said while waving dismissively. "I can hear people moving around inside that thing. So, I'm sure he'll be fine. Anyway, we need to go and get this thing on ice. We wouldn't want it to go bad, would we."

As Alfonzo spoke the last part, he pointed back at the Emperor Guillotine Crab. Then, he steered the ship around the submarine and made his way back to the shore. All the while, he was thinking about who would talk about Sun like that.

'It's gotta be Kai Mikawa.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'He's the only weirdo from Sun's franchise that would wear something like that. He's... agoraphobic... I think. Anyway, I think he'll show up at the villa sometime soon. So, I can deal with him later.'