

Fairy Tail 551

Chapter 551: Ur's Announcement

"Sorry for the wait." Ur, followed by all of Fairy Tail's S-Class wizards, said while walking onto the stage on the guild hall's first floor. "We were discussing some changes to this year's S-Class exam. Unfortunately, it took a bit longer than expected."

While the A-Class and lower wizards of the guild rolled their eyes at the term, "a bit," The S-Class wizards, other than Gildarts, who smiled awkwardly at Ur's choice of words, rolled their eyes at the term, "we." When, in fact, Ur made all the decisions about the changes to the S-Class exams format on her own. Everyone else was just forced to wait until she finished thinking. She had not even informed the S-Classes of the decisions she had made before telling everyone to follow her onto the stage.

"But before I start talking about the changes, I have an announcement to make." Ur said after glancing over everyone's expressions.

That statement caused everyone in the guild hall to look at her curiously. Meanwhile, she could not help but notice that Irene, and the two girls accompanying her, two girls she did not recognize, were glaring at her with discontent.

'Maybe it wasn't the best idea to keep Irene waiting like that.' Ur thought to herself while not letting that thought show on her face. 'I mean, she's definitely the strongest member of the guild. And even though I don't think she'll betray after what Alfonzo did for her, being on her good side might be in my best interest... For my mental health, that is.'

By now, Irene had explained to everyone in the guild... Everyone that she thought mattered enough to know... about her past as the Queen of Dragnof, a long ruined and forgotten country on Ishgar, all the way to the present. Which meant, they all knew she was quite old, extremely strong, and could be as cruel as any dark wizard.

"Irene and Brandish, whose experience and strength make it unnecessary to be tested, will be promoted to S-Class without needing to take the exam." Ur said calmly, deciding not to think of what Irene might do to get her back for being made to wait for so long.

Naturally, that caused everyone who was unaware of just how strong Irene and Brandish were to begin whispering discontentedly. Those who did know, on the other hand, wiped a bead of sweat from their foreheads in relief. Relief that they would not have to face either of the two in the promotion exam. However, because she did not want this announcement of the S-Class candidates to take any longer than it already had, Ur silenced the crowd by letting her magic power pressure wash over the entire first floor of the guild hall.

"As for this year's S-Class candidates, they will be Edward Elric, Alphonse Elric, Masa, Wendy Marvell, Rika Minami, Alzack Connell, Lucy Heartfilia, and Gajeel Redfox." Ur continued once the guild hall fell silent. "And this year, the exam will consist of a single elimination tournament, with the winner gaining the chance to fight one of the S-Class wizards in the guild. And during that fight, the S-Class wizards and I will evaluate the champion of the tournament and decide if they are ready to be in the ranks of the S-Class. But you should keep in mind, the winner of the tournament does not have to win against the S-Class wizard they chose to fight to be promoted. However, that would add points to their final overall score. But instead of victory, you must remember, we are looking for the qualities that would qualify them as an S-Class wizard."

Hearing Ur's explanation, the guild hall once again was covered in the sound of murmuring wizards. Meanwhile, the eight participants exchanged glances, sizing up their possible opponents. However, a few moments later, the atmosphere was broken when someone asked a question.

"Wait a minute!" Lisanna asked in a slightly confused tone. "Does that mean that only one person can become an S-Class wizard this year?"

Lisanna's question caused everyone to turn their heads towards the stage, bringing all the murmuring to an end.

"*Sigh* Unfortunately, that is the case." Ur replied while shaking her head lightly. "At the rate we were going, all most all the wizards in the guild would have ended up at S-Class over the next ten years or so. And although that sounds nice, it would have been too much."

Hearing that, everyone stopped to think for a moment. Then, they nodded their heads in understanding.

"We're still gonna get [Soul Armament Embryos] as candidates for S-Class though, right?" Rika asked expectantly.

"Unfortunately, that practice will have to come to an end, as well." Ur replied solemnly.

"That's not fair." Edward muttered discontentedly. "I've been looking forward to getting one of those ever since I first heard about them."

"Yeah, having one would have been nice." Alphonse added while patting Edward on the shoulder consolingly. "But if those are the new rules, there's nothing we can do about it, Brother."

"But won't that make it unfair for the rest of us?" Rika asked once again. "I mean, Wendy, Lucy, and Gajeel already have [Soul Armaments]. They know their names, too."

"I've taken that into consideration, as well." Ur said with a smile. "Not that getting a [Soul Armament Embryo] would have made a difference if you got one now... But from this year forward, the use of [Soul Armaments] during the promotion exam will be forbidden. Or rather, [Soul Armament Releases] will be forbidden. However, using them in their base forms will be fine. Especially since everyone who has received one, has spent countless hours honing their use of the weapon their [Soul Armament] shifted into."

Although most of the candidates were still discontent, for different reasons, Edward, Alphonse, and Rika discontent at the fact that they would not be getting a [Soul Armament Embryo] before the exam, and Lucy, Gajeel, and Wendy's discontent stemming from the fact that they could not use their [Soul Armament] to its fullest during the exam, they accepted the changes. Mostly because there was nothing they could do about it.

Meanwhile, Massa seemed to be completely unbothered about the new rules from beginning to end, causing Alfonzo and Elicia to have their usual internal reaction to Masa being Masa. Alzack, on the other hand, breathed a sigh of relief. He did not want to have to plan around Lucy, Gajeel, and Wendy's [Soul Armaments] when he was training for the exam. Because despite having trained for as long and as hard as anyone taking the exam, he was under no illusion that he could come out on top against the spike in power a released [Soul Armament] could provide to his competitors.

"Now, you all have one week to train for the exam." Ur said, bringing her announcement to an end. "Then, on the morning of the fifteenth, at 10 a.m., we will set off for Tenrou Island from the port in Hargeon. And if you are late, you will be disqualified immediately. Now, dismissed."

With that, Ur turned around and walked towards the backstage area. And while all her changes to the format of the S-Class exam managed to make most of the guild forget about how late she was for the appointed time, she could still feel Irene glaring a hole into her back.

'Seriously, I don't even know why she's so mad.' Ur thought to herself as she increased the pace of her steps. 'I mean, she was half an hour late to begin with. So, she didn't even have to wait that long. And who are those two girls she brought with her? I know she said that she would be having her

subordinates from Alvarez join her, but they don't even feel human. Just what are they? *Sigh* I guess I'll have to ask her about them later.'

Meanwhile, all the S-Class wizards on the stage, except for Gildarts, who followed Ur into the backstage area, watched the reactions of the other wizards to Ur's announcement. And when they did, they could not help but notice a few of their interactions.

"Come with me, my foolish disciples." Izumi Curtis, Edward and Alphonse's master, said in a commanding tone. "WE need to have you two properly trained for the exam. I won't have you embarrassing me while you're on Tenrou Island."

"Yes, teacher." Edward and Alphonse said in determined tones as they walked towards Izumi, who was making her way towards the elevator at the back of the guild hall.

At the same time, they noticed Gozaburo staring... NO, glaring at Masa.

"So, you finally did it, huh?" Gozaburo asked with his eyes narrowed. "You finally became an S-Class candidate before me."

"No, Boss, that was not my---" Masa said, trying to defend himself.

"Well, since you're a candidate, you'd better win and become an S-Class!" Gozaburo shouted, not letting Masa finish. "The Seto Group's reputation is at stake here, ya see?"

Naturally, Masa, as well as Ren, was taken aback by Gozaburo's declaration. However, that surprise did not last for long.

"Yes, Boss!" Masa replied in a determined tone. "I won't let you or the Seto Group down."

"Good." Gozaburo replied with a nod while crossing his arms in front of his chest.

"*Sigh* This should have happened a long time ago." Ren said in an exasperated tone while smiling at Masa. Then, she turned a sharp glare towards her husband. "And if it weren't for a certain someone's petty jealousy, the Seto Group would have had an S-Class wizard at least a decade ago."

In response, Gozaburo only looked away from Ren's glare. It was clear to see he was uncomfortable with Masa having the chance to surpass him in rank. However, he was not so far gone that he could not tell what this would do for the Seto Group's reputation. Still, he would have preferred it was he who was the candidate.

At this point, the S-Class wizards started getting off stage and walking towards the people they most commonly associated with in the guild.

"Stop thinking like that." Ren said, as if she could read Gozaburo's mind. "Masa's a much better candidate than you are. His skillset is much more varied than yours. And this might be news for you, but not every problem can be solved by just punching it."

"I know that..." Gozaburo grumbled while still not making eye contact with Ren.

"Masa~!" A voice sounded out, drawing the three's attention.

Turning their heads in the direction of the voice, Gozaburo's eyes lit up when he caught sight of its owner.

"Oh, my precious Sun." Gozaburo said with a doting smile on his face. "come give Daddy a hug."

Ignoring her father completely, Sun, the owner of the voice, rushed right past Gozaburo, leaving him frozen with his arms wide open, and stopped in front of Masa with an excited smile on her face.

"Congratulations, Masa!" Sun said excitedly. "I knew you would be S-Class someday. Do your best in the exam, I'm rooting for you."

"Yes, Miss Sun." Masa said while bowing elegantly. "I'll do my best to bring glory to the Seto Group."

Hearing that, Ren and Sun smiled happily. Meanwhile, Gozaburo seemed as if he would crumble into dust at any moment from being ignored by his daughter. However, he kept his temper in check, trying his best to not lash out at Masa for taking his Sun's attention.

Masa, on the other hand, could feel his back being drenched in cold sweat because of the anger he could feel rolling off Gozaburo in waves.

At the same time, Alfonzo, Elicia, Cana, and Laki, who had trained with him for as long as they knew him, gathered around Alzack to congratulate him. Bisca, Kohta, and Rika were nearby, as well. And it did not take long for Shizuka to approach the group happily, too.

"Congratulations, Rika!" Shizuka shouted as she bounced over to Rika, causing her breasts to bounce with every one of her movements.

"I like Pandas." Kohta said with a perverted grin on his face while a trickle of blood leaked from his left nostril as his eyes followed the bouncing of Shizuka's breasts. And that trickle turned into a stream when he saw Shizuka and Rika's breasts change shape under pressure after Shizuka pulled Rika into a hug.

Smack!

"Ow!" Kohta said after being slapped back to his senses.

A moment later, Kohta turned his head to see who had hit him. And when he caught sight of the culprit, Alfonzo, who was smiling at him with the friendliest smile he had ever seen, he could not help but freeze in place.

"Oh, uh... Alfonzo... Hey..." Kohta muttered. "It's really great that Alzack is a candidate for the exam this year, huh?"

"It sure is." Alfonzo replied, his friendly smile widening as he slung an arm over Kohta's shoulder. "He's worked hard for years. So, he deserves it."

In response, Kohta nodded his head furiously. However, he could not help but feel terrified by Alfonzo's smile.

"But... You didn't forget that Shizuka is one of my fiancées, right?" Alfonzo asked while tightening his arm around Kohta's neck and shoulders. "I mean, I know she's gorgeous, but that doesn't mean you should stare at her like that, right?"

In response, Kohta did the best he could to shake his head while his air flow and the blood flow to his brain was slowly being cut off.

"Good." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "I was just making sure. I know you would never do anything like that. I mean, you're a good guy, after all."

As he spoke, Alfonzo loosened his hold on Kohta, who greedily drew in oxygen. Then, Alfonzo turned his head as he noticed the Seto family and Masa approaching.

"Hey, Masa, congratulations on becoming a candidate." Alfonzo said with an S-Class smile.

"Thank you, Master Alfonzo." Masa said, once again bowing his head elegantly. "I'll do my best to pass this exam and become an S-Class wizard."

"I have no doubt about that." Alfonzo replied with a smile while releasing Kohta, who quickly distanced himself from him.

"That's not why we came over here, though." Ren said with a smile. "We have good news for you, actually."

"Really?" Alfonzo asked, having an idea what that news could be.

"That's right." Ren replied with a nod. "Earlier today, we got news that all the signal receivers for the iPhones have been placed throughout Ishgar's territorial waters."

Hearing that, Alfonzo's smile widened once again. However, the friendly smile he was wearing while dealing with Kohta was replaced by a blood thirsty one. Something that no one present missed.

"That's good." Alfonzo replied in a dark tone. "Really good. Now, I'll be able to move on to the next step of my plan."

Naturally, Alfonzo's dark tone surprised everyone. However, there was one person in the group, Elicia, who wore a similar smile to Alfonzo's, that no one noticed. Because she knew that the two of them would be going on a little trip, to finish something that started three years ago, sometime in the near future.

Chapter 552: Predictions

After Ren mentioned to Alfonzo that the Seto Group was finished installing all the signal receivers, the wizards of Fairy Tail continued to chat, with the S-Class Candidates disappearing to train for the exam. Not long after all the S-Class candidates left, the rest of the guild decided to call it a night, as well. Not until a brawl managed to break out, though.

After that, Alfonzo, Elicia, Cana, Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Marin, Sun, and Shizuka returned to the mansion floating on the lake. And while Shizuka decided to go to sleep early because she had a shift in the guild's infirmary the next day, Alfonzo and the other girls decided to have a night of fun.

The next day, Alfonzo spent most of his day in his workshop, where the terminal that connected to the iPhone network was located. On a side note, there were two more terminals like the one in his workshop located at Hibiki Lates' home in Onibus and the Magic Council HQ in Era.

And while all three terminals had the same functions, Alfonzo may have neglected to mention one of them to Hibiki and the Magic Council. And that was the ability to track the magic power signatures of anyone holding an iPhone. He knew everyone would see that as a severe breach of privacy, after all. However, Alfonzo only had the intention of tracking one, or rather two people... for now, anyway.

And those two were Junko Enoshima and Himiko Toga. Unfortunately, that feature of the terminal would only come into use once all the signal receivers were in place. And that day would arrive soon, if Hiruzen's report on the progress of the mission before Alfonzo left the Village Hidden in the Leaves was anything to go by.

And as it would so happen, that day came the day before all the S-Class wizards had to leave for Tenrou Island to set up the exam area.

"So, who do you all see coming out on top in this little tournament Ur sprung on everyone?" Gildarts asked from the shore of Tenrou Island. "I mean, it's not the first time the guild has had a tournament. So, you all should have some ideas, right?"

"it's the first one on one tournament, though." Cana pointed out. "Usually, we're in teams of five... Well, ever since the kingdom stole our idea, anyway."

"That's true, but you should all know the capabilities of the participants, right?" Gildarts asked. "So, who do you think will win the chance to fight one of us?"

"My money is on Gajeel." Laxus said with his arms crossed. "He's experienced and a Dragon Slayer on top of that."

"I agree with Laxus." Fried added in a resolute tone.

"Yeah, so do I." Bickslow added.

"Agree with Laxus! Agree with Laxus!" Bickslow's dolls chorused.

"Of course you two do." Ultear said while rolling her eyes. "As long as Laxus is nearby, you don't have opinions of your own, after all."

Hearing that, Fried and Bickslow glared at Ultear while Laxus simply shrugged his shoulders, unable to disagree with her assessment. However, before they could flare up in anger, someone interrupted.

"Juvia agrees with them." Juvia said in a confident tone. "Gajeel will win."

In the next instant, Juvia looked at Gray with a worried gaze.

"But Juvia still knows that her darling Gray would win if they fought each other." Juvia said, sounding a bit panicked.

In response, Gray shrugged his shoulders, not bothered in the slightest by Juvia's support for Gajeel, who she had known for a long time, ever since they were still members of Phantom Lord. Meanwhile, everyone else ignored Juvia's panic, and Bickslow finally replied to Ultear's comment.

"Then who do you think will win?" Bickslow asked in a defiant tone.

"I think it will be Alzack." Ultear replied with a shrug. "I mean, he's been training with us the longest."

"You don't have faith in Lucy to come out on top?" Mirajane asked with her usual, pleasant smile on her face. "She might cry if she heard that."

"I have all the faith in the world that Lucy will be an S-Class wizard... Someday." Ultear replied. "Unfortunately, she has much less experience than just about everyone else taking the exam."

"Yes, that is true." Erza said with a nod. "But you forget, her Celestial Spirits all have a wealth of experience. And that may be able to bridge the gap with her competitors."

"Plus, Lucy's been working, like, uber hard for this,, you know." Marin said with a smile.

"Yeah." Sun added with an energetic nod of her head. "Lucy's been trying really hard to catch up. But I'm rooting for Masa, too."

"I'm not saying that she hasn't." Ultear said, defending her point. "but she's only been training seriously for like two and a half years. But Alzack has been training with Alfonzo and Elicia for over fifteen years."

No one could argue with that logic.

"I agree with Ultear." Laki said with a smile. "Alzack is strong."

"I don't know, I think the Elrics have a pretty good chance." Gray said. "I mean, have you seen the training their master, Izumi puts them through? It's insane. And something tells me if she were in this tournament, she would probably win... Easily"

"Don't forget about Wendy, guys." Natsu said, throwing his opinion into the conversation, as well. "She's gotten really strong, too. She's only a little older than Alfonzo was when he became S-Class, too."

"Rika is strong, too." Levy added. "And she was a knight for years. A member of the special forces, too. So, she's got as much, if not more experience than everyone else taking the exam."

"I agree with the short stack." Evergreen said with a nod.

"Yeah! Rika fights like a real man!" Elfman shouted.

In response to Elfman's outcry, everyone sighed simultaneously. Then, Gildarts, after looking around, nodded at everyone's opinions on the matter. However, he quickly turned his head toward the only two who had yet to speak.

"And what do you think, Alfonzo? Lici?" Gildarts asked in a curious tone.

Hearing Gildarts question, everyone, other than Alfonzo and Elicia, for obvious reasons, turned their attention to the two. Meanwhile, Elicia looked at Alfonzo with a smile.

"So, what do you think, Fonzie?" Elicia asked.

"My money is on Masa." Alfonzo replied calmly with a smile of his own.

"Yeah, me, too." Elicia said while nodding, as well.

At that moment, everyone seemed to remember that Masa was a candidate this year, as well. And then, they remembered that Masa had fought Laxus to a standstill during the first Battle of Fairy Tail tournament.

"I happen to agree with the two of you." Gildarts said with a smile.

"Hey, I said Masa, too, ya see?" Sun said in protest after her prediction had been ignored.

"Masa might be the most skilled fighter I've ever seen." Gildarts said, ignoring Sun's protest since she mentioned two competitors in her chance to state her prediction. "Even if he's not the strongest of all the candidates when it comes to magic power reserves. But with his physical strength and battle awareness, not to mention his skill with many weapons and hand-to-hand combat, he's got a pretty damn good chance of winning this little tournament."

Hearing Gildarts analysis, no one had the words to refute them. However, they were all confident in their own predictions. At the same time, the group started moving towards the place where they would set up the arena for the tournament.

After arriving at a clearing suitable for the ring, Alfonzo, Fried, Laki, and Levy began creating the ring with their magic. Meanwhile, everyone else began setting up the camp around the battle arena.

By the time the sun set, the entire camp had been set up. The arena, on the other hand, would probably take another day to complete. However, everyone decided to call it a day for now. As a result, they were all sitting around a camp fire while Alfonzo used it to roast some meat for dinner.

"So, we all have our predictions of who will win the tournament." Laxus said after chewing and swallowing a piece of meat. "but who do you think they will challenge if they win?"

That question caused everyone to stop eating and look at Laxus with pondering gazes. Everyone except for Natsu, that is.

"I hope they pick me!" Natsu said with a smile as he was covered in flames created by his magic power.
"I wanna fight all of them. Oh man, I'm all fired up just thinking about it!"

Natsu's outburst immediately made everyone drop the subject. It was hot enough as it was on Tenrou Island. And if Natsu got even more excited by thinking about who he would possibly get to fight, they would have to relocate... Or knock him out... probably knowck him out.

"Anyway, we all had a long day of work." Alfonzo said while shaking his head. "We should probably get some rest. Well, Me, Fried, Laki, and Levy should, anyway. We still have work to do. The rest of you can stay up and do whatever you want. I mean, it's not like you're gonna be working tomorrow, right?"

With that, Alfonzo grabbed a plate of food for himself. Then, he made his way to the tent set up for him and his lovers. At the same time, Elicia, Cana, Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Marin, and Sun also stood up, with their plates, and alcohol in Cana's case, in hand before following him. Meanwhile, the others only looked on for a moment before returning to whatever it is they were doing beforehand.

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The next day, the entire group, other than Elicia, woke up early to either finish the arena or get some training in. Elicia, on the other hand, continued to sleep until Alfonzo stopped working on the arena to cook breakfast.

"*Sigh* This feels like old times, doesn't it?" Levy asked as she smiled with a plate of breakfast in her hands. "When's the last time we got to have Alfonzo's cooking for breakfast, anyway?"

"It hasn't happened since Natsu, Happy, Gray, and Lucy broke the guild rules and went on that S-Class quest like idiots." Laxus replied. "Since then, Alfonzo hasn't taken a single breakfast shift because of that damn point system."

"Yeah, I miss having Alfonzo's cooking first thing in the morning." Natsu said while eating happily.

"Did he just tune out the fact that it's partly his fault that we don't get to have this anymore?" Evergreen asked in a disdainful tone.

"The point system isn't that bad, though." Erza said while cutting her breakfast. "It keeps the collateral damage down."

"You don't have the right to say that, like, at all, Erza." Marin said with a giggle. "You still cause just as much collateral damage as when the point system was put in place, don't you?"

"Besides, the point system doesn't matter to you or Cana, who can't control yourselves, since you live with Alfonzo." Fried added. "*Sigh* Nepotism is a horrible thing."

Smack!

"Hey, don't blame us for having the goods that he can't resist." Cana said with a smile as she ran her hand, the hand not holding a bottle of liquor, from her shoulder, down her breasts and abdomen, to her thigh, before slapping it. "You're just not what he's looking for to look past the guild rules for you."

"And the fact that you wake him up with a special service whenever he's thinking about limiting your access to his cooking because you start taking things too far on your quests has nothing to do with it, right?" Ultear asked with a grin.

"Oh, it most definitely does." Cana replied after licking her lips seductively.

Meanwhile, Gildarts felt as though he would cough up a mouthful of blood because of the conversation. However, he managed to hold it in. All the while, he glared at Alfonzo for tainting his baby girl.

Ignoring Gildarts' glare... Well, ignoring would be inaccurate... Not responding to Gildarts' glare while wearing a triumphant grin on his face, Alfonzo was thinking about his raid on the place where Junko and Himiko were hiding.

'According to the scans, those two are on an island off the north Coast of Fiore.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'From here, it would take about a day by sea if I pushed the Sixth sense's engine to its limit. But I could get there in a few hours if I flew. So, after the arena is set up, it looks like Lici and I will be taking a trip to tie up some loose ends.'

With that thought, Alfonzo's grin turned blood thirsty for a moment. He could not help but remember Elicia's retelling of her encounter with Junko three years ago. Junko had wanted to make Elicia suffer and fall into despair. And Alfonzo was not okay with that. Even though the way Junko wanted to make Elicia suffer was by torturing him in front of her, which he was not happy about, either. The fact that she had such intentions towards someone he cared about was enough to see her dead.

Chapter 553: Revealing Secrets... But not all of Them

Sitting in her office, Ur was making the final preparations for her trip to Tenrou Island. Though, there was admittedly not much to prepare, she still wanted to make sure that everything was in order before she left.

Before she could finish going over everything there was to go over before her trip, however, she raised her head from the paperwork on her desk when she heard the elevator rising to the top floor. A moment later, the doors slid open revealing four women.

"Irene, Brandish, to what do I owe the pleasure?" Ur asked while putting down the document in her hand. "Please don't tell me you intend to get rid of me now that all the other S-Class wizards are gone."

As she spoke, Ur smiled at the four women entering her office. However, when she saw the smile on Irene's face, a smile that made it seem as if her little joke might be a glimpse into the future, her smile froze.

Seeing the change in expression on Ur's face, Irene's smile, which was filled with malice morphed into one filled with glee. Sadistic glee, but glee nonetheless. Then, she threw her head back, gripped the brim of her hat with her right hand, and started laughing uproariously.

"Oh, you should have seen the look on your face." Irene said after getting her laughter under control and taking a seat on one of the couches in the office. "It was priceless."

While both Heine and Juliet, who were the other two women that arrived in Ur's office with Irene, smirked at Ur as they positioned themselves behind the couch Irene sat on. Meanwhile, Brandish only shook her head at Irene's dark sense of humor as she took a seat on the opposite couch. At the same time, Ur stared at Irene with a gob smacked expression

"*Sigh* Irene, I beg you, please don't joke like that anymore." Ur said after exhaling the uneasy feeling she was feeling. "I'm not young any more. My heart can't take the strain."

"Hmph! Not young, don't make me laugh." Irene said in a derisive tone. "You're at most, what? Forty-five? Come talk to me about being old when you've reached triple digits."

"It's forty-three..." Ur muttered. "but I get your point. So, I ask you once again, to what do I owe the pleasure?"

Smiling at Ur once again, Irene gestured towards Heine and Juliet, who were standing behind her.

"There are actually two... No, three reasons I came to see you, Ur." Irene said with a smile. "The first is to formally introduce you to these two, Heine Lunasea and Juliet Sun, and ask that you accept them into the guild."

Hearing that, Ur turned her gaze from Irene to Heine and Juliet, inspecting them with her [Magic Power Detection] in detail. And just like her senses first told her, she could tell they weren't human.

"Well, they seem pretty strong." Ur said with a nod. "On that basis alone, there's no problem accepting them into the guild. From what I can tell, they're at least, A-Class in strength."

After getting that far, Ur turned her attention back to Irene.

"But they aren't human." Ur said in a solemn tone. "Not that I have anything against non-humans, mind you. I mean, we have several of them in the guild already, after all. But I need to know what I'm working with."

"Ah, you must be talking about those cats and the merfolk." Irene replied with a nod.

In response, not only Ur looked at Irene with a gaze filled with disbelief, but even Brandish, Heine, and Juliet looked at her with the same level of disbelief. While Brandish, Heine, and Juliet were dumbfounded to find out that a species as mythical as merfolk were members of Fairy Tail, Ur was astonished that Irene knew there were merfolk in the guild.

"How...?" Ur muttered in disbelief.

"Oh, sweetie, I've been alive for a long time." Irene replied with a grin. "And I've seen a lot in my long life. So, spotting merfolk among a group of humans is quite simple for me. What I'm sure that you didn't know, however, is the fact that you have one more person of a totally different species among your wizards, as well."

That last statement dumbfounded Ur even more. Meanwhile, Brandish, Heine, and Juliet were quite curious to know who the merfolk were, as well as the other mysterious individual Irene was talking about.

"Who are they, Irene?" Juliet asked energetically after she snapped back from her shocked state. "I've never seen a merfolk. But I thought they had fish tails and stuff. But everyone in the guild has two legs. Can they transform, or something? Do they use [Transformation Magic]? And what about the person that's of another race? What race are they? Who is it?"

"That's enough, Juliet." Heine barked. "If Lady Irene wished for us to know, she would tell us. For now, just be silent."

"But Black Angel, aren't you curious, too?" Juliet asked in a whiny tone.

"I told you not to call me that!" Heine shouted back. "And we have no right to question Lady Irene like that. So, just be silent."

"but Black Angel~~~~..." Juliet continued to whine.

Like that, the two sentient swords continued to bicker. Meanwhile, Brandish decided to tune them out while Ur looked on in amusement. Irene, on the other hand, smiled at her two subordinates fondly. Though, neither of them seemed to notice. And Irene intended to keep it that way.

'*Sigh* If I had been able to be human again much earlier, perhaps Erza, Heine, and Juliet might have been like sisters by now.' Irene thought to herself while watching her swords argue. '*Sigh* I really need to find a time to talk about the past with her. But I'm almost afraid of how she'll react when she finds out. Then again, she probably already knows and is just waiting for me to say something.'

"I'm actually curious to know who this other non-human member of the guild is, as well." Ur said, snapping Irene out of her internal musings.

"Sorry, that's not my secret to tell." Irene replied, putting her thoughts of Erza to the back of her mind, for now. "but I'm sure there are, at least, two members who know what I'm talking about. And before you ask, I have no idea how they could possibly know. And no, I'm not telling you who they are."

Hearing that, images of Alfonzo and Elicia popped into Ur's mind. Then, she remembered the incident where Acnologia attacked Tenrou Island. And she came to the conclusion that those two seemed to always know more than they were supposed to. Still, she would not press them. She almost destroyed her relationship with Alfonzo after she let suspicion guide her actions three years ago.

'If the one Irene was talking about was a danger to the guild or anyone they cared about, Alfonzo and Elicia would either tell me about it on their own or do something about it.' Ur thought to herself. 'So, there's no need to worry if it's the two of them who know. I trust them implicitly. And I know they love the guild as much as any other member, present or past.'

"Very well, I won't ask." Ur replied calmly, surprising both Irene and Brandish. "So, will you tell me what those two are since they aren't human?"

"Ah, yes." Irene replied with a nod, snapping out of her surprised state. "They are swords I [Enchanted] to have human forms and personalities."

That seemed to intrigue Ur. However, she only nodded her head in response.

"I see." Ur said with a nod. "Well, I don't see any reason why they can't be members of the guild. AS long as they don't plan to do anything to harm it, that is."

"Trust me, they won't." Irene replied confidently. "The only reason they would do something like that is if I ordered them to do so. And I owe Alfonzo too much to ever do that."

"That's good to hear." Ur replied. "so, what's your second question?"

"Well, the second thing I wanted to talk about isn't a question, per se." Irene said, taking a more serious tone as she replied to Ur's question. "Since you've shown that you trust me enough to promote me to S-Class, I'll give you the same trust. I know what the Alvarez Empire wanted when they attacked Ishgar five years ago. I also know the identity of the emperor."

Hearing that, Ur's eyes opened wide in surprise. Meanwhile, Brandish, who had remained silent until now, looked at Irene with a gaze that asked: "Are you sure about this?" In response, after feeling Brandish's gaze, Irene turned to her before nodding in confirmation.

"Really?" Ur asked in dumbfounded amazement. "And what did they want?"

"The Lumen Histoire, or Fairy Heart." Irene replied in a solemn tone.

Immediately, Ur's entire body froze. She had heard about the Fairy Heart when Makarov handed over the seat of guild master to her. And she knew it was a source of great magical power. It could even be called unlimited. And that caused her to wonder what the Alvarez Empire could want it for. World Domination? Destruction of everything?

But more important than that, the Fairy Heart was a guild secret. One of the highest magnitude. So, how could anyone from the Alvarez Empire know about it? Or rather, who was this Emperor Spriggan who knew about it?

"And... Who is this Emperor Spriggan?" Ur asked in a shaky voice. A moment later, she remembered about a member of the guild who was excommunicated because he wanted to obtain Fairy Heart for himself. "Is it Ivan Dreyar? Did he go to Alakitasia to gather forces to take it from Fairy Tail?"

Hearing that, Irene froze for a moment and Brandish looked at Ur in dumbfounded amazement. Even Heine and Juliet finally stopped their argument to look at Ur incredulously. Meanwhile, Ur stared at the quartet with a tense expression on her face.

Like that, Ur's office fell into silence. A silence that quickly grew awkward. And that awkward silence made Ur think that she might have asked a stupid question. And Irene's following action cemented that feeling.

"Hahahahahahahahaha!" Irene burst into hardy, raucous laughter. In fact, she laughed so hard that she doubled over, causing her hat to fall off. Then, after struggling with her laughter for a while, she finally got it under control enough to reply. "Oh, heavens no! Hahaha! That fool, Ivan Dreyar? The Emperor of the Alvarez Empire? Haha! He's just a weakling lusting over something he doesn't have the power to possess."

Irene's unbridled laughter made Ur feel even more awkward. And when she heard the explanation about why Irene was laughing, she felt a little stupid, as well. And that led to her becoming irritated.

"Then, who is it?" Ur asked in a clearly irritated tone.

After a few more seconds of chuckling at Ur's assertion, Irene finally stopped laughing completely. And when she did, she put on an unprecedently solemn expression.

"The emperor of the Alvarez Empire is..." Irene said, pausing for a moment to build tension. "The Black Wizard, Zeref. And despite having been stopped by the Etherion five years ago, he has not given up on the Fairy Heart. He will try again. And next time, the Etherion won't be enough to even slow him down."

That caused Ur to freeze completely, an expression of disbelief on her face. Meanwhile, Irene maintained her solemn expression while thinking something totally different.

'I probably shouldn't say his surname.' Irene thought to herself. 'Otherwise, she might start to suspect that Fire Dragon Slayer kid. And that would just be an unnecessary worry.'

"Im-Impossible..." Ur muttered after staying silent for a few seconds. "He's supposed to be dead. I mean... He lived over four hundred years ago, right? That's why all the dark wizards and Zeref cultists are trying to resurrect him, right?"

"Unfortunately, that couldn't be further from the truth." A young sounding female voice said, echoing through the office.

A moment later, the transparent figure of a seemingly young girl with long, pastel yellow hair and brilliant green eyes rose from the floor just to the right of Ur's chair wearing an unprecedented serious expression on her face.

"First Master..." Ur muttered as she glanced to her right.

While Ur was surprised to see the first master of Fairy Tail, Mavis Vermillion, appearing in her office, Irene, Brandish, Heine, and Juliet looked at her in interest.

"Unfortunately, there is no point in discussing Zeref for now." Mavis continued while shaking her head. "No one in the guild is strong enough to contend with him for now. On top of that, because of the curse he is plagued with, he is exceedingly dangerous to anyone under a certain level."

"She's right, Ur." Irene replied in a solemn tone. "I only wanted you to know what you were up against in the future. That way, you and the rest of the guild could train and hopefully prepare for the inevitable."

Hearing that, Ur slumped back into her seat. However, the light of resolve was burning fiercely in her eyes. And from what the others in the room could tell, she was not willing to give up. She would do anything to protect the family she had come to love over the years.

"I understand." Ur said in a resolute tone. "I'll start pushing everyone to train harder. Whenever this attack comes, Fairy Tail will be ready. And we will win."

Seeing Ur bounce back so quickly, Mavis and Irene both smiled. Even Brandish came to admire Ur's spirit, as well. Meanwhile, Heine and Juliet were thinking that everything would be fine as long as Irene was there. So, they were not worried at all.

"Good." Mavis said with a satisfied nod. "Fairy Tail wizards never give up, no matter the challenge ahead of them. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm gonna head over to Tenrou Island. I wanna watch this year's S-Class Promotion Exam."

With that, while smiling happily, Mavis flew through the wall in the direction of Tenrou Island.

"*Sigh* So, what's the last thing you wanted to talk about?" Ur asked after sighing out all her negative emotions for the moment.

"It has something to do with the last thing the First Master mentioned." Irene said with a smile. A smile that made Ur start sweating again. "Why wasn't I allowed to be one of the judges for the S-Class Promotion Exam like the others? I mean, even if you didn't say it specifically, that's the reason I wasn't brought along to set up the area, wasn't it? Even if I know there's no way any of the candidates would challenge me if they won your little tournament, I'm still S-Class, right?"

Not only Irene, but brandish also looked at Ur with a questioning gaze. Meanwhile, Ur's cold sweat started running down her back like a river.

'Telling them that, like me and Elicia, they couldn't be part of the exam after being promoted without an exam for their first S-Class Promotion probably won't fly.' Ur said to herself while the wheels in her head spun at high speed. 'Damn it, I should have known this question was coming. Why didn't I think up something beforehand.'

Chapter 554: Preventative Measures

After a day spent finishing the arena where the tournament for the S-Class Promotion Exam would be held, Alfonzo and the other S-Class wizards were once again seated around the camp fire and having a dinner cooked by Alfonzo.

"Alright, guys." Alfonzo said as he stood up from his seat at the fire. "I've got some shit to do. So, I'll see you guys in the morning, the day after tomorrow."

"Huh? Where are you going?" Natsu asked curiously, in a muffled tone with his mouth full.

"I've got some business to take care of outside of guild work." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "Oh, and I'll be bringing Lici with me for this. We're gonna stop at home to see Amar'e, too."

"Yeah, I miss my baby!" Elicia said in a sugary sweet tone. "Ooh! It's been torture not being able to hug him every day. I wonder if he forgot about his mommy since I've been gone."

While about half of the wizards present looked at Alfonzo with curiosity, Alfonzo's wives and fiancées looked at him with displeasure. And Gildarts had picked up on their looks, especially Cana's, who was always at least partially in his field of perception.

However, since Cana did not voice a complaint, Gildarts decided he would keep his thoughts to himself... for now.

Meanwhile, the other wizards, who knew Alfonzo and Elicia were always working on something for their other jobs, did not have much to say. So, they just nodded at the two and went back to eating.

As for Alfonzo's other wives and fiancées, they were discontent because they knew exactly what Alfonzo and Elicia were going to do. And the fact that they were being left out upset them quite a bit. However, they also knew that being stealthy would be much harder if all of them went. So, they begrudgingly agreed to let Alfonzo and Elicia handle Junko alone. Even if they knew that the two of them would be more than enough to do so.

"I'm gonna go pack a few supplies before I head out." Alfonzo said as he turned towards the tent he shared with his ladies. "I'll be back in a minute. Then, I'm gonna head out with Lici."

With that, Alfonzo walked away from the camp fire. A moment later, Gildarts stood up and followed him. Meanwhile, Elicia, having seen Gildarts, only continued to chat with the others until Alfonzo came back.

A few moments later, Gildarts pulled open the flap of Alfonzo's tent to see him packing a couple of bags, just as he said he would. However, Gildarts did not speak immediately upon entry.

"*Sigh* It's kinda creepy if you just watch me like that, Gildarts." Alfonzo said as he continued to pack what he needed. "Don't tell me you've turned into some kinda creepy uncle since you started dating Ur. I won't keep my mouth shut if you really did."

"Shut it, Kid." Gildarts said in a stern tone. "You're not really going to take care of any business or see Amar'e, are you? You're planning on doing something dangerous, right?"

"Oh, we're definitely going to see Amar'e." Alfonzo replied with a big, wide, fond smile on his face. "I'm sure you can understand how much I miss my Little Man, right?"

At that, Gildarts smiled at his old friend's son, despite himself. However, that smile faded away as quickly as it had appeared in the next moment.

"But you didn't deny going to do something dangerous." Gildarts said, once again speaking in a stern tone.

"No, we're not going to do anything dangerous." Alfonzo replied as he finished packing. Then, he slung the bags he was packing a moment ago over his shoulder as he stood up and continued in a solemn tone. "I promise. I couldn't bear leaving Amar'e alone if something happened."

"Then, why are you being so secretive about it." Gildarts asked. "I mean, if it's not dangerous, what's the point."

"Because it's not exactly something Legal Guild wizards should be proud of." Alfonzo said, finally turning towards Gildarts for the first time since he entered the tent. "We're gonna take out someone who promised to do some unthinkable things to us to make Lici suffer. And if they know about Amar'e, which I'm certain they do, then they'll eventually try to use him against us. And we're gonna make sure that shit doesn't happen... Ever."

Hearing that, Gildarts could only sigh in response. Then, he looked at Alfonzo with understanding in his gaze, as he was capable of just about anything to keep Cana safe, as well.

"Well, I won't try to talk you out of whatever you're gonna do." Gildarts said in a solemn tone. "But Kid, be careful. Even if you don't think it's dangerous, being cautious never hurt anyone. Just make sure you both come back safe and sound. Because I don't wanna imagine what Cana and the other girls would do if anything happened to you two."

"Don't worry, Gildarts." Alfonzo said in a resolute tone. "We know that our lives aren't just ours alone anymore. We have too much to live for to go in recklessly. And I refuse to let Amar'e grow up as an orphan like we did."

Nodding in response, Gildarts turned around to leave the tent when Alfonzo started walking towards the exit, as well. Then, when they returned to the campfire, they acted as if they never had such a heavy conversation, keeping the others from knowing anything was amiss.

"Lici, the bags are packed." Alfonzo said with a smile. "You ready to go?"

In response, Elicia hopped to her feet with a smile on her face. Then, she clung to Alfonzo happily.

"Yup, I miss Mar'e!" Elicia said energetically. "Let's go! Let's go!"

Smiling warmly at Elicia, Alfonzo made his way around to everyone else to say a quick goodbye. Then, with Elicia in his arms, he shot up into the sky before flying towards the rest of Fiore.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Skies of Fiore.

"So, where is she?" Elicia asked, her tone much darker than the one she used on Tenrou Island.

As of now, Alfonzo and Elicia have been flying for about an hour, and they had already crossed the sea and were flying above the peninsula. And if you take into account that they were moving at almost four times the speed of sound, Alfonzo thought they would make it to their destination by midnight.

"She's here." Alfonzo said as an [Archive Magic Screen] appeared in front of him. Then, he pointed at an island off the west coast of Fiore. "but to be honest, I'm not sure if that island is under Fiore's or Caelum's jurisdiction. Then again, her location was picked up by the receiver network, so I guess it's Fiore's."

"But why did it take so long to find her?" Elicia asked curiously. "I mean, you were able to find her because of the iPhones, right? So, why didn't that hot word thing you were talking about alert anyone to her, then?"

"Junko might be crazy, but she's not stupid." Alfonzo said in a serious tone. "I wouldn't put it past her to know that I was the one who created the iPhones. And if she did, she probably thought there was a way to track it, or something. She probably has spies on the new Magic Council, too. So, she probably knew about the chance of being pinged for saying something she shouldn't while on a phone call."

"I see." Elicia replied with a nod. "But why didn't you just add something like Batman used in the Dark Knight. You know, to access the microphones and cameras without anyone's consent?"

"*Sigh* That's because of an issue from our past life." Alfonzo said while smiling wryly. "I mean, you remember how some oddly specific adds would pop up on your phone browser while you were surfing the net on your phone back then? I mean, something you never searched for. But something you might have only talked about for a second?"

"Yeah, I always thought that was weird." Elicia replied. "Wait! You think it's because the phone was listening?"

"Yeah." Alfonzo replied. "And because I intend to bring something like the internet to this world, eventually, I don't want shit like that popping up on my phone. It's a stupid reason, I know. But that's how it is."

In response, Elicia only looked at Alfonzo blankly for a moment. Then, she smiled at him before pecking him on the cheek.

"Fonzie, you're so cute sometimes." Elicia said happily.

Though he did not like being called cute, Alfonzo smiled at Elicia as the two continued to fly forward at high speed.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Unnamed Island.

December 14, x787.

"Hmm... What should I do with them?" Junko, with Monokuma in her arms and standing in front of a window in the principal's office overlooking the rest of the school she had built, asked herself while smiling happily. "I mean, the school is almost finished and I did promise them I would let them go if they built the school for me."

At the end of Junko's line of sight, the group she enslaved to build the school she named Hope's Peak Academy were returning to the shelter they used when they were finished working for the day. Though, calling it a shelter was a bit of a stretch.

In reality, the thing she called a shelter for the enslaved people was nothing more than a pig sty. There were even mud puddles for them to cool off in. On top of that, she forced all of them to be naked for the entirety of their stay on the island. Treating them like livestock, because livestock did not need clothing.

"They look so happy." Junko said while smiling at the group of forced labor returning to their pig sty. "The hope in their eyes, hope that they'll be able to go home soon, is shining so brightly."

And just as Junko said, the group of people she was watching all looked hopeful that they would be able to go home soon. The school was almost complete, after all. And they were promised that they would be returned to their normal lives, unharmed, if they finished it.

And even though they were exhausted, having worked from sunrise to just after midnight every day since they were kidnapped, now that it was almost over, they could put up with it for a bit longer. And Junko watched all of this with a smile.

In the next instant, however, Junko's expression changed, her happy smile from having her school disappearing completely.

"Disgusting." Junko said in a tone filled with loathing. "It's so disgusting. No one in this world deserves hope. It needs to be bathed in despair. And this is the perfect opportunity to give those people just that."

"Does that mean we're not gonna send them home?" Monokuma asked with a creepy smile on his little teddy bear face.

Once again, Junko's expression changed. Now, replacing her disgusted expression was a cheerful smile.

"We're definitely not." Junko replied cheerfully. "The question is, what should we do with them? Should I just kill them?"

With that, both Junko and Monokuma fell into a contemplative silence.

"Ooh! I think I got it!" Monokuma said in an excited tone.

Hearing that, Junko came out of her contemplative state and looked down at the black and white teddy bear in her arms.

"Why don't we force them to be the custodial staff for the school?" Monokuma asked. "We'll need someone to clean up during the killing game, right? I mean, you know how hard it is to get blood stains out of the carpets and drapes."

In response, Junko wore an expression of enlightenment. Then, she hugged Monokuma tightly and began to dance around the principal's office.

"Monokuma! You're a genius." Junko said in glee. "That's a brilliant idea."

"Well, I guess I have my moments." Monokuma replied in a humble tone.

At that moment, the door to the principal's office was opened. Through it, a young woman with a face nearly identical to Junko's, chin-length black hair, and greyish-blue eyes wearing an outfit similar to a green army uniform with a skirt instead of pants, two magic rifles on her back, a military knife strapped to each of her thighs, and carrying a third magic rifle entered the office.

"So, how are the island's surroundings, Mokuro?" Junko asked with a smile after turning around to see who entered the office.

"There are no issues." The black-haired young woman, Mokuro Ikusaba, Junko's older twin sister, replied with a smile of her own. "Soon, we will be able to set everything in motion."

"Yes." Junko replied in a sensual tone. "We'll be able to bring despair to people all over the world. Mmm~! We really need to thank that Alfonzo for making a way for us to reach so many people with our little game. The question is how? I mean, he's done so much for our plans."

As she spoke, Junko removed one of her arms from around Monokuma. Then, she began fondling herself in ecstasy.

"Oh, I know!" Junko said with her eyes lighting up. "Why don't we go and kidnap his son. Then---" Junko started to say before she was interrupted when Mokuro rushed forward and tackled her to the floor.

Unbeknownst to Junko, whose back was to the window, the pig sty where her forced labor was staying had been covered in a cocoon of threads. Mokuro, on the other hand, who could see out the window from her position opposite Junko, knew that something was wrong immediately. So, she tackled Junko to the ground to keep her sister out of harm's way.

A moment later, something crashed through the ceiling at high speed, just above where Junko stood before she was tackled out of the way, before crashing through the floor, and every floor below, as well.

Boom~~~~~!

Chapter 555: Worst Mistake

About an hour before the explosion that ripped through the principal's office of the school Junko was having built, Alfonzo and Elicia floated high above the unnamed island.

"Is she making Hope's Peak Academy in this world." Elicia asked while looking down at the island.

"That's what it looks like." Alfonzo replied. Then, he pointed at a certain part of the island not far away from the school. "And look there. That's some fucked up shit."

While clinging to Alfonzo's back, Elicia followed the direction of Alfonzo's pointing finger. Then, to see clearly from so high up, she channeled her magic power into her eyes. And what she saw was a group of naked men and women being herded to what looked like a pig sty. On top of that, she recognized the person forcing the group in that direction.

"Is that Himiko Toga?" Elicia asked with a frown on her face. "And are they treating those people like pigs?"

"Yeah, that's what it looks like." Alfonzo said while nodding his head with a grim expression on his face. "And I'd bet the proceeds from the iPhone that those are the people who are building this school."

"*Sigh* I still don't like killing people..." Elicia said, her expression growing darker with every word. "But people like them don't deserve to live."

"Yeah." Alfonzo agreed. "And it looks like Junko is inside the school with the creepy little teddy bear. Plus, there's another person moving towards her. And they're at S-Class... I've never felt this magic power signature, though."

"Hmm..." Elicia hummed while focusing on the school with her [Magic Power Detection]. "Do you think it could be Mokuro Ikusaba?"

"Mokuro, huh?" Alfonzo replied in a thoughtful tone. "The Ultimate Soldier... She shouldn't be a problem. She's got so much metal on her body that she's basically asking me to incapacitate her immediately."

"Yeah, I guess she would." Elicia replied with a nod. "I mean, she's probably got guns and knives all over her body, right?"

"That's what it feels like." Alfonzo said, nodding once again. "Still, we'll be careful with her. Her talent as a soldier makes her dangerous."

Nodding in response, Elicia once again turned her attention away from the island and made eye contact with Alfonzo.

"So, how are we gonna do this?" Elicia asked in a solemn tone. "We know that at least one of them can teleport. I mean, you told me that Toga had Mest's blood. So, they could just run away if things get dangerous for them."

Hearing that, Alfonzo smiled as he reached for one of the bags slung over his shoulder.

"Well, that's why I packed a couple of bags for us before we left." Alfonzo said with a smile. Then, he reached into the bag before pulling out a small device. "When I first got the ping about Junko's location, I stayed up all night and built these before we left for Tenrou Island."

In Alfonzo's hand was a metal spike with a small ball on its blunt end. And on this ball were an absurd number of tiny sigils.

"Their purpose is to disrupt [Spatial Magic]." Alfonzo continued once Elicia's eyes were focused on the device in his hand. A moment later, she took the device from him and started to inspect it while Alfonzo continued his explanation. "All we have to do is plant these on the ground around the island. Burying them in the sand would do. Then, before the attack starts, one of us just needs to inject our magic power into one of them, and that will connect them and start all the devices simultaneously."

"But won't that take a lot of magic power?" Elicia asked, looking away from the device. "I mean, we still need to fight them after cutting them off from their [Space Magic], right?"

"Yeah, but if we unseal our [Soul Armaments], the strain should be manageable." Alfonzo replied. "The only question is, which of us should do it?"

"I guess I'll do it." Elicia replied after a moment of thought. "With my [Camouflage Magic], I can hide the spike in magic power. So, we won't be noticed during the unsealing. Plus, now that I can use [Shadow Clones], I can get them set up pretty fast."

"Alright." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "But don't make too many. You're not Naruto, after all."

"I know." Elicia said with a smile before pecking Alfonzo on the cheek. "Then, I'll get going. I'll give you a signal when I'm ready to start."

"Don't worry about a signal." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head. "Don't forget, I have [Telepathy] thanks to [Archive Magic]. So, I'll set up a [Telepathic Link]. Then, you can just tell me when you're ready through that."

"Oh, that's right." Elicia said in an enlightened tone before kissing Alfonzo on the cheek again. "Well then, I'll get going. See you in a little bit."

In the next instant, Elicia took the bag with the [Space Magic] disruptors and wrapped a bundle of her threads around Alfonzo's waist. Then, she started lowering herself to the island below. Meanwhile, due to her [Hiding in Plain Sight] spell, Elicia faded from view on her way down.

Not long later, Elicia dispelled the threads she was using to lower herself to the ground as she touched down just outside of the pig sty where all the forced laborers were being led to. And while the thought of taking out Himiko, who was their shepherd, crossed her mind. She knew that would only alert Junko. So, instead, she raised her hands in front of her chest while kneading her magic power in a specific way.

"I've always wanted to do this." Elicia said with a happy smile on her face as she extended the index and middle fingers on both hands. Then, after raising her right hand vertically and making a cross with her extended fingers by placing her left hand horizontally behind the right one, she continued quietly. "[Shadow Clone Jutsu]."

Poof! x 3

In the next instant, in three clouds of smoke, three exact copies of Elicia, each holding an empty bag identical to the one that was slung over her shoulder were created. However, they each only had a quarter of Elicia's total magic power. The original was also dropped to a quarter of her total, as well.

"Alright, Ladies." Elicia said as she raised the bag she took from Alfonzo. "Take some of these and spread out. We wanna get these things planted as quickly as possible."

"Don't worry, we'll take care of it." One of the Elicia's said with the same smile as the original.

"Then, we'll pop ourselves before we use up all our magic power." The second Elicia said while smiling, too.

"And that should return a lot of the magic power you used on us." The last Elicia said, smiling brightly as well.

With that, the four Elicas split all the [Space Magic] disruptors between them. Then, they all took off in different directions, each in charge of setting up a quarter of the island. And with their magic power control, by the time they were finished, Elicia would more than likely have around seventy-five percent of her total magic back.

Meanwhile, Alfonzo continued to track the movements of everything on the island from high up in the air. And when he felt Elicia's magic power signature split into four, he could not help but smile.

"She got to live out one of her fantasies on this little mission." Alfonzo muttered happily. "Maybe I should start using [Shadow Clones], too. They would help a lot when building things. But I've been too focused on learning the [Sealing Arts] so that I can teach Naruto."

Smack!

As soon as Alfonzo's thoughts reached that point, he slapped himself on the forehead.

"Damn, I'm dumb as a mother fucker." Alfonzo said in a disappointed tone. "If I had been using the [Shadow Clones] while learning the [Sealing Arts], it wouldn't have nearly taken so long... Fuck..."

Like that, time passed. And while Alfonzo was thinking about how much faster he could learn things with [Shadow Clones], Elicia finally finished setting up all the [Space Magic] disruptors. However, Alfonzo was pulled out of his thoughts when he received a [Telepathic] message from Elicia.

{"Okay, Fonzie, they're all set up."} Elicia said over the [Telepathic Link]. {"I'm gonna activate them. What's the next move after that?"}

{"When the field is up, head back to the forced laborers and put up a [Vibranium Thread Cocoon] around them."} Alfonzo replied as his expression turned serious. {"I'm gonna bring down that whole fucking school from up here. And if I'm lucky, I'll be able to take out Junko and Mokuro, if that's her, too."}

{"Got it."} Elicia replied. {"Just gimme a couple minutes."}

In the next instant, Alfonzo could feel three of the Elicia's disappear, returning their remaining magic power to the original as they did so. Then, he felt the remaining Elicia's magic power spike.

Meanwhile, back on the ground...

"[Mend the Seams of Reality, Scylla]." Elicia said as her magic power reached its peak.

In the next instant, Elicia's hands were covered in golden dragon scales while her magic power spiked even higher. Then, once her magic power stabilized, she wrapped her threads around the closest [Space Magic] disruptor before channeling her magic power into it.

Immediately afterward, Elicia could feel all the [Space Magic] disruptors start to resonate as an invisible barrier that would stop [Teleportation Magic] was erected over the island. And thanks to Alfonzo's breakthrough in absorbing ambient ethernano and converting it into magic power back in Edolas, the devices would be able to sustain themselves for a little while. Hopefully, long enough for them to deal with Junko and her cohorts.

A moment later, Elicia unwrapped her threads from around the device. Then, she darted back towards the pig sty as fast as she could without dropping her [Hiding in Plain Sight] spell.

At the same time, Alfonzo was still high above the island. However, he was no longer idly thinking about random things. Instead, he was gathering arcs of purple electricity on his right arm, that was pointed down at Junko's position in the school, and waiting for Elicia to get into position.

Then, once he felt Elicia raising the defenses around the pig sty, Alfonzo created a chunk of metal that would fall onto the tip of his extended right index finger.

"[Electromagnetism Magic: Railgun]." Alfonzo chanted just as the chunk of metal came in contact with his finger.

Boom~~~~~!

In the next instant, the chunk of metal was fired downwards at eight times the speed of sound. At the same time, Alfonzo clicked his tongue in annoyance. An instant later, the sounds of explosion and the sound barrier breaking blended into a cacophony of destruction as the metal projectile slammed into the ground and the resulting shockwave from the impact tore apart the school. On top of that, the entire island shook from the impact.

"Damn, they dodged." Alfonzo muttered in an irritated tone as he slowly lowered himself towards the ground. "I guess she's not called the Ultimate Soldier for nothing. Her instincts are crazy. Looks like Toga got blown away by the shockwave, though. Better not forget to go round her up before we leave."

A few moments later, Alfonzo landed next to Elicia's [Vibranium Thread Cocoon]. At the same time, Elicia, who was standing inside the Cocoon with the forced laborers dissipated her cocoon, as well.

"Fonzie, they're all wearing slavery collars." Elicia said in a solemn tone. "and they told me that they're all equipped with explosives, too."

"*Sigh* That bitch is too fuckin' much." Alfonzo said while shaking his head.

In the next instant, all the slavery collars, which had metallic locking mechanisms, were taken off the forced laborers' necks. Then, Alfonzo, using his [metal Magic] sent them flying into the ocean.

"Alright, we don't need to worry about those anymore." Alfonzo said as he turned his attention back to the rubble that used to be the school.

Meanwhile, all the forced laborers had not yet even noticed that they were free from the slavery collars. Instead, they were too stunned at the sight of the school, that they had painstakingly built by hand, that was now just a pile of rubble and debris. And on some level, they were upset that all their hard work was turned into that. But at the same time, they were happy to see it gone. That school was the symbol of their fear and trauma, after all.

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

Before any of the forced laborers could regain their senses, however, a volley of bullets was fired from the rubble. And none of them were aimed at the two wizards who were responsible for destroying the school. Instead, they were aimed at all the forced laborers.

Clang! *Clang!* *Clang!* *Clang!* *Clang!*

Before any of the forced laborers could be hit, however, a metal dome materialized around them, blocking all the bullets.

"*Sigh* That was predictable." Alfonzo said nonchalantly. "You're gonna have to try harder than that. Not that you're gonna live through this regardless."

"Yeah, so why don't you come out, Junko." Elicia said with a dark smile on her face. "We've got a score to settle, after all.'

"*Boom!*

A moment later, a pile of rubble exploded upwards revealing a giant, two-toned teddy bear with beastly features and two young women covered in cuts, blood, and torn clothing.

"It's you again!" Junko shouted hysterically. "You always get in my way! First with Zeref on Tenrou Island! Then, it was the zombies in Takanosu! And now you've destroyed my magnum opus! I'll Kill you! I'll make you suffer! I'll show you despair! And just wait until I get a hold of that son of---"

Bang!

Bang!

Before Junko could finish, however, she was kicked in the side of the head and sent flying into another pile of rubble. And standing in her place was Elicia, with her right leg still extended after delivering a powerful kick.

"You just made the biggest mistake of your life, Bitch." Elicia said in a low, menacing tone while staring at the rubble Junko was sent flying into. "One you won't live to regret."

In the next instant, seemingly without Elicia's notice, Mokuro unsheathed one of the knives strapped to her thighs and lunged at her, the knife aiming to slash Elica's throat. At the same time, Monokuma, who currently stood at 9' tall, slammed one of its claws down at Elica's head.

"Why don't you two play with me instead." Alfonzo said as he appeared to Elicia's side with his arms extended outwards.

In the next instant, Alfonzo caught both Mokuro's knife and Monokuma's paw in his hands, stopping both of their momentums with little issue. Then, in one motion, he threw both Mokuro and Monokuma in the direction opposite Junko.

A moment later, Alfonzo and Elicia exchanged glances before they both dashed towards their opponents.

Chapter 556: The Final Moments of Despair

Dashing forward, Elicia arrived in front of the rubble she knocked Junko into just as the Ultimate Despair pulled herself out of it. And when she did, she immediately threw another kick at the young woman with bleached blonde hair.

"Damn you! You fucking---" Junko shouted as soon as she pulled half of her body out of the rubble.

Bang!

However, before Junko could finish cursing Elicia, Elicia's foot slammed into the side of her head, sending her flying once again before slamming into the ground and rolling into the adamantite dome Alfonzo created to protect the forced laborers.

"Last time I made the mistake of fighting you with magic." Elicia said as she slowly approached Junko. "But I realized that you're pathetic when it comes to close quarters combat. On top of that, your [Arc of Time Magic] doesn't work on living things."

As she reached the end of her sentence, Elicia was standing in front of Junko, who was looking at her with an enraged expression on her face.

"I'll kill you." Junko muttered as she stood to her feet. "I'll make you suffer in the worst way imaginable. Just you wait."

In the next instant, Junko cocked her fist back and threw a right hook aimed at Elicia's jaw.

"I don't think so." Elicia replied as she swayed to her right to avoid Junko's incoming fist that was powered with as much magic power as her body could handle.

Bang!

Then, in the same motion, Elicia stepped forward and raised her left knee into Junko's abdomen.

"Gah!" Junko groaned as the wind was knocked out of her.

A moment later, as Junko doubled over her knee, Elicia raised both her hands, locked her fingers together, and brought her dragon scale-covered hands down on the middle of Junko's back.

Bang!

"Ahh!" Junko shouted in pain as she was slammed into the ground.

"You don't have what it takes to carry out your threats." Elicia said coldly. "On top of that, like I said before, you made the worst mistake of your life by threatening my Mar'e."

As soon as her words fell, Elicia leapt into the air and performed a summersault. Meanwhile, Junko was pushing herself off the ground with the flames of rage burning in her eyes.

Bang!

Crack!

Before Junko could stand up, however, the soles of Elicia's feet slammed into her back, once again slamming her into the ground once again. And due to the force behind the blow, a small crater was created underneath them. ON top of that, the sound of several of Junko's vertebrae breaking could be heard, as well.

"Ahh~~~~~!" Junko screamed once again as she lost feeling from the waist down.

"You know, for even thinking about doing something to my Mar'e, I wanna torture you and make you feel the despair you're so fond of." Elicia said as she stepped off of Junko's back. Then, she bent forward and pulled Junko up by her hair as she continued. "But I don't wanna give you the satisfaction. I'm pretty sure you'd get off by being subjected to despair, right?"

In response, Junko did not speak. However, when Elicia raised her to eye level, she had a smile plastered all over her face... An unhinged smile that would send the chills down the spines of weaker minded people. Elicia, on the other hand, looked at her with utter indifference.

"And if you thought your little pet would be enough to get you out of this, you were sorely mistaken." Elicia said as she twitched the fingers of her free hand.

In the next instant, a number of threads shot up from the ground before they wrapped themselves around a knife aimed at Elicia's heart from the back. Then the threads began to vibrate at high frequency, cutting the knife's blade into several pieces.

"Although I sent you to prison last time, Toga..." Elicia said as she turned her head to look back over her shoulder. "But I let you live. And instead of being grateful for that, you try to kill me a second time."

"What can I say?" Himiko asked with a radiant smile. "I just think you'd look even prettier covered in your own blood. And I'm really looking forward to seeing that."

"[Arc of Time Magic: Flash Forward]." Junko chanted quietly.

Despite the fact that Junko had chanted quietly, Elicia, who was standing right in front of her was still able to hear it. So, she could only shake her head in response before leaning to the side to avoid a swipe from Monokuma's claw.

"[Electromagnetism Magic: Spark Cannon]." Alfonzo's chant could be heard from the distance.

Bang!

A moment later, Mokuro, whose body was sparking with violet electricity, slammed into Monokuma, causing them both to fly away for a distance.

"Sorry about that, Lici." Alfonzo said as he appeared next to Elicia in a flash of violet light. "I may be fast, but I'm not faster than compressed time. Not yet, at least."

"It's okay, Fonzie." Elicia said calmly as she stared into Junko's eyes. "That didn't work when I fought her three years ago. So, there's no way it would work now. Especially since it doesn't seem like the attack came any faster than it did last time.'

"Well, although she's got a lot of magic power, her control is the sloppiest I've ever seen." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "So, it's no wonder she hasn't improved."

As soon as he finished speaking, Alfonzo's left hand shot out, with his hand coated in Techno Organic Metal, and caught the blade of a knife just before it could stab into his side.

"Oh, this one's smarter than I gave her credit for." Alfonzo said as he looked down at the knife in Himiko's hand as she continued trying to push it forward. "She's using a ceramic knife against me. Not a bad plan. A much better plan than the one over there."

As he reached that point, Alfonzo's right hand started sparking with violet electricity.

"But you're just not strong enough for it to make a difference." Alfonzo said as he flung the back of his right hand at the side of Himiko's head.

Reacting quickly, Himiko released the knife's hilt. Then, she performed a backhand spring, narrowly avoiding Alfonzo's back hand. However, before she could retort, she felt a hand clamp onto the back of her head. A second later, the Alfonzo in front of her faded away.

"Not fast enough, either." Alfonzo said in a cold tone.

Bang!

In the next instant, Alfonzo slammed Himiko, face first, into the ground, shattering her nose, eye sockets, and most of her teeth, as well as fracturing her skull on impact. On top of that, the impact was so strong it created a crater two feet deep. And when Alfonzo removed his hand from Himiko's head, she was completely unmoving while blood was splattered all over the bottom of the crater.

"*Sigh* She's still alive." Alfonzo muttered as he looked down at Himiko's motionless body. "Well, I guess you're lucky. You get to go peacefully, unaware of your coming death."

With that, Alfonzo materialized a sliver of Techno Organic Metal in his left hand. Then he let it fall into the crater, just to the left of Himiko's head. And it did not take long for the living metal to detect Himiko's injuries before quickly slithering into them.

"I give it about a minute before her brain dies." Alfonzo said as he shook his head.

Meanwhile, Junko looked on in shock. Never did she imagine that Himiko would be taken out so easily. In fact, she was so surprised that she did not even cast [Restore] on Monokuma, who had been impaled by several pipes sticking out of a pile of rubble when he was blasted away by Mokuro.

Luckily, Mokuro was saved from a similar fate thanks to slamming into Monokuma. So, although her body felt weak and slightly out of her control, she carefully climbed up to her feet while staring at Alfonzo and Elicia with copious amounts of killing intent.

"Let go of my sister." Mokuro said in a threatening tone. "You'll regret it if you don't."

However, both Alfonzo and Elicia ignored Mokuro's threat. As a result, Mokuro gritted her teeth. Then, she reached under her skirt and pulled out a green, egg-shaped object with a pin sticking out of the top.

"Then, we can all die together." Mokuro said as she reached for the pin on the top of the object in her hand. "This is an ethernano grenade. Something our scientists have been developing ever since the first time the magic council used the Etherion. And although it's not as powerful as the real thing, it's enough to take out everything in a hundred foot radius."

Mokuro's explanation was enough to make Alfonzo look in her direction. Elicia, on the other hand, continued to watch Junko's changing expression. And she fully enjoyed the perturbed look on her face. Seeing Junko realize that everything she had worked to accomplish was going to come crashing down... And that there was nothing she could do about it delighted her immensely.

"There are actually three problems with that threat of yours." Alfonzo said as she stepped forward towards Mokuro. "First, we all know that you would never detonate that thing with Junko so close. It's obvious that you care about her too much to risk her life."

Reaching that point, Alfonzo took another step forward. At the same time, Mokuro gripped the grenade's pin tightly.

"Second, I'm fast enough to get us out of here before it explodes." Alfonzo continued as he took another step forward.

In the next instant, a fingernail sized piece of metal appeared in front of Alfonzo's right index finger, which was quickly coated in arcs of violent lightning before he flicked it against the piece of metal.

Boom!

After another instant, a doorknocker sized hole was in the middle of Mokuro's chest, allowing the onlookers to see the scenery behind her, right where her heart used to be. Then, the sound of the sound barrier breaking once again rang out over the site where the school once stood.

"And lastly, I can attack much faster than you could ever hope to pull the pin from that grenade."

Alfonzo said, ending his explanation.

Meanwhile, Mokuro had not yet reacted to the fact that her chest had been pierced by a piece of metal traveling at four times the speed of sound. However, she did notice that she was unable to muster the strength to pull the pin from the ethernano grenade. Then, when she finally looked down, she saw that her left arm, from the elbow to the wrist, was just bone, the flesh having been burned away by the superheated air as the projectile passed by. On top of that, she could see the cauterized hole in her chest, which was bare and covered in burned skin from the heat, as well.

After realizing what state she was in, Mokuro turned her eyes to her sister, who looked as if she would orgasm from the despair she could see in her eyes. Then, she slumped to the ground lifelessly without the ability to say a word, the ethernano grenade falling out of her hands as she did so.

Before the grenade could fall to the ground, however, Alfonzo flashed next to Mokuro and carefully caught it. And once the grenade was in his hand, he used his magic power to inspect it, not even giving Mokuro a glance as he did so.

Meanwhile, Elicia frowned at Junko's reaction to her sister's death with disgust.

"And this is why you don't deserve to take breath in this world." Elicia said coldly. "That was your sister, your family, that just died and you look orgasmic."

"Actually, I'm jealous." Junko said while continuing to look at the frozen expression of despair on Mokuro's face. "She got to experience such despair. Mmm~! It was wonderful."

Hearing that, Elicia's frown deepened. Then, she shook her head.

"Well, you can join her in the afterlife." Elicia said as she let go of Junko's hair. "I'm sure she'll tell you all about it. But I've had enough of your presence. And Now I'm gonna make sure that you can never hurt my Mar'e."

A moment later, Junko fell to the ground. However, instead of begging for her life or showing fear, she smiled at Elicia. And when Elicia raised her hand with her fingertips pointed at her, Junko's smile widened.

However, when Junko saw threads extending from Elicia's golden dragon scale covered fingertips, her smile dimmed. A hint of disappointment flashing past her eyes.

"*Sigh* I thought you were gonna kill me." Junko said, sounding like a valley girl as she spoke. "but this is, like, so not gonna work. Did you forget, I can [Flash Forward] the time of your threads. They're, like, totally useless against me."

Instead of responding, Elicia only continued extending her threads towards Juno's neck. And when she saw that she was unable to get a reaction from Elicia, Junko frowned.

"[Arc of Time Magic: Flash Forward]." Junko chanted in a bored tone.

In the next instant, however, Junko's eyes widened in shock. And the reason was quite simple, Elicia's threads were not turning to dust due to the passage of time.

In fact, Elicia was using something she learned from the magic power training scrolls Alfonzo got from Danzo's records room. And that was [Magic Power Threads]. So, because Elicia's threads were not physical threads, but magic power shaped into threads, Junko's magic had no effect on them.

"Do you really think I wouldn't learn anything to counter your magic after three years?" Elicia asked coldly while her threads looped around Junko's neck. "If you did, then you weren't nearly half the threat I thought you were."

As she spoke her last sentence, Elicia tightened the [Magic Power Threads] around Junko's neck, slowly cutting off her air flow. And when Junko realized she would die slowly, in despair, she smiled brightly, despite the fact that she was unable to breathe.

Seeing Junko's reaction, Elicia's disgust for the young woman rose to new heights. So, instead of suffocating her like she had planned, she flicked her fingers.

Crack!

As a result, the threads around Junko's neck jerked, breaking it in the process. However, the euphoric smile on Junko's face was frozen on it, disgusting Elicia even more as she looked into Junko's lifeless eyes.

A moment later, after looking away from Junko's corpse, Elicia dispelled her [Magic Power Threads] and the release state of her [Soul Armament]. Then, she slowly walked over to Alfonzo before wrapping her arms around his waist and burying her face in his chest.

"Fonzie, I wanna go home." Elicia said quietly. "I miss Mar'e."

In response, Alfonzo raised his free hand, the one not holding the ethernano grenade, and gently combed his fingers through Elicia's hair while dispelling the adamantite dome.

"Me, too, Lici. Me, too." Alfonzo replied. "Let's call the Magic Council. And when they get here and take these people off the island, we'll head straight to Magnolia. But before we go, you should make something for them to wear."

Chapter 557: A Quick Trip Back Home

After hugging for a little while longer, Alfonzo eventually used his iPhone to contact the Magic Council reporting their encounter with Junko Enoshima and his current location . Then, after only an hour, a large airship approached the island from the horizon. And after only a few more minutes, the airship landed near the destroyed school and Lahar, leading a squad of Rune Knights, disembarked.

"Seriously, for such a big organization like the Magic Council, why does it seem that we only ever deal with Lahar and/or Doranbolt when we're out in the field?" Elicia asked as she finished the last set of simple clothing for the forced laborers she and Alfonzo had rescued.

"Please, may we know exactly what happened here?" Lahar asked respectfully.

Although Alfonzo was the reason for most of the former Magic Council ending up in prison, Lahar respected him for what he did. Especially after hearing about all of Org and Crawford Seam's crimes in the past. On top of that, since then, the Magic Council has been working much more transparently. So, the chances of spies sabotaging its operations had fallen significantly.

"Well, it all started when I got a tip from an informant..." Alfonzo said before explaining the chain of events that led to the death of the Magic Council Traitor, Junko Enoshima, and the escaped criminal and former member of two guilds comprising the Balam Alliance, Himiko Toga.

Though, Alfonzo did keep it secret that the terminal's that monitored activity on the iPhone network had the ability to track magic power signatures.

"I see." Lahar replied while adjusting his glasses. "The Council has been searching for her for quite some time. And now that she's been dealt with, we can all breathe a sigh of relief."

"Yeah, that's good and all, but we're still expecting the reward for her bounty." Alfonzo said dismissively.

"And you shall receive it." Lahar replied with a twitching eyebrow. "After we've seen to it that all these people are taken care of."

"Okay." Elicia said with a smile. "Then, we'll leave them to you."

With that said, Elicia jumped onto Alfonzo's back before continuing.

"Now, let's go, Fonzie!" Elicia said energetically. "I miss Mar'e!"

Smiling in response, Alfonzo nodded to Lahar. Then, he and Elicia were covered in arcs of violet electricity before they shot up into the air, leaving the Fourth Custody Enforcement Unit to deal with the aftermath.

Meanwhile, Lahar watched the two Fairy Tail wizards until they could no longer be seen on the horizon. Then, he turned back to his squad of Rune Knights and began giving orders to secure the victims, the corpses, and any evidence of what Junko could have been planning by searching the rubble.

Earth land, Ishgar, Bosco, Undisclosed Location.

"Lord Orochimaru, we've just received a report from that Junko Enoshima's contact that the Kazekage has been killed." Kabuto said after entering Orochimaru's laboratory in one of his hideouts located in Bosco.

"Cucucu." Orochimaru, who was noting down the results of an experiment, chuckled creepily at Kabuto's message. "They work much faster than I expected. Well then, it seems I have no time for experimenting. It's time for me to become the Kazekage. Cucucu."

"Do you think we should request Enoshima's help when attacking the Leaf, Lord Orochimaru?" Kabuto enquired while adjusting his glasses.

"I'm sure she would jump at the opportunity." Orochimaru replied after finishing with the results of his experiment. "She does enjoy the feeling of despair. However, I am not sure that is necessary. I should

see the state of the sand before making my decision. It won't be too late to request her aid should their forces be lacking, after all. Cucucu."

"Understood." Kabuto replied with a bow.

"Hmm..." Orochimaru hummed thoughtfully. "But since we plan to act during the Chunin Exams in June, we'll need a team of Genin, won't we? Kabuto, I leave the selection and training of the three candidates to you. Also, we'll need to contact the Leaf to express interest in our Genin participating in the exam"

"I understand." Kabuto replied while once again bowing respectfully. Then, he raised his head before asking a question. "But Lord Orochimaru, if we want to have our people participate, we'll need to tell them what village we're from."

"I've already thought of that." Orochimaru said while waving dismissively while beginning the preparations for his trip to the Village Hidden in the Sand. "We shall be known as the Village Hidden in the Sound."

"Understood." Kabuto replied, bowing respectfully for a third time before turning to carry out his orders. "Then, I'll make sure everything is taken care of."

With that, Kabuto left Orochimaru's laboratory. He was planning to gather all the Genin level test subjects and prisoners they had collected since their escape from Prison. Then, he would have them all fight for their lives. And the three survivors would become the team they would send to the Village Hidden in the Leaves to participate in the Chunin Exam.

"Cucucu." Orochimaru chuckled in his uniquely creepy way once Kabuto was gone. "I heard that the Fourth Kazekage's son is a monster of some kind, most likely the One-Tail's Jinchuriki. I wonder what Sensei will think when it's unleashed in the center of the village. Cucucu. Maybe Kabuto was right. Perhaps requesting Junko Enoshima's aid would not be such a bad idea. She might even put in some extra effort if she hears about the despair an attack on that level will cause the people of the Leaf. Cucucu."

Little did Orochimaru know, Junko had died less than two hours ago. Meaning, Raza's death would be the last time he and Junko worked together on anything. Though, he would not find that out for another two months, at least.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

Around sunrise, Alfonzo and Elicia landed outside of the mansion on the lake's front door. Then, about thirty seconds later, the door opened without either of them taking the initiative to open it.

"Good morning, Master Alfonzo, Madam Elicia." Grayfia, the one who opened the door, said while bowing politely. "I was not expecting you for a few more days. Has anything come up that I should be concerned about?"

"No, don't worry about it, Grayfia." Elicia said with a smile as she hopped off Alfonzo's back. "We just missed Mar'e and wanted to see him. Is he awake yet?"

"Unfortunately, he is not." Grayfia replied while shaking her head gently. "But if his pattern holds, he should be awake within the hour."

"Good!" Elicia exclaimed excitedly. "I love watching my baby sleep! He's so~ cute!"

With that, Elicia rushed forward, just barely giving Grayfia the time to move out of the doorway. Meanwhile, Alfonzo could only smile wryly as he watched his first wife run away. Grayfia, on the other hand, stepped forward after Elicia left to take the bags slung over Alfonzo's shoulder.

"So, how are things in Magnolia with everyone gone?" Alfonzo asked after handing Grayfia his bags and stepping into the house?"

"There has been nothing out of the ordinary." Grayfia replied after following Alfonzo inside and shutting the door. "Though, Miss Shizuka seems to be rather down."

"Hmm... Shizuka? Down?" Alfonzo asked, having an idea of what could be bothering the bubbly nurse.

"That's right." Grayfia replied as she followed Alfonzo from a respectful distance. "If I had to guess, it's because she was left behind by everyone in the mansion, who are either examiners or participating in the S-Class Promotion Exam. Also, Miss Minami is gone for the same reason, leaving her feeling rather lonely."

"*Sigh* That's what I thought you would say." Alfonzo replied. "Is she here right now?"

"Yes, she is." Grayfia replied. "She is sleeping in your bedroom at the moment."

"Alright, I'll go see her after I check on Amar'e." Alfonzo said with a smile.

With that, Alfonzo separated from Grayfia. Along the way to Elicia's room, where Amar'e's crib was located, he came across Mey-Rin, who was watering a plant in the hallway. And when she noticed him, she dropped the watering can, spilling water all over the floor.

"Oh, no!" Mey-Rin exclaimed in panic. "Grayfia's gonna punish me again."

"Calm down, Mey-Rin." Alfonzo said as he continued to walk with a smile on his face. "You just have to learn how to keep calm. And stuff like this won't keep happening."

"I know, but I have to try so hard not to make a mess in normal times..." Mey-Rin said as she started pulling on her hair in panic. "So, when I get surprised, I make mistakes."

"Well, just clean up the mess." Alfonzo said as he walked past the frazzled maid. "I'm sure it won't be that bad."

Like that, Alfonzo continued to walk towards Elicia's room, which was only a couple of doors down. Meanwhile, he began thinking about making contact lenses or something similar to help Mey-Rin with her near-sightedness. Something that she could control for when she needed her superb long distance vision when necessary.

Eventually, Alfonzo arrived at Elicia's bedroom while using [Archive Magic] to start designing the magic item for Mey-Rin. However, since it was not far from where he met her, he did not make much progress. Still, he stepped into Elicia's room with a smile on his face.

When Alfonzo entered the room, he found Elicia holding Amar'e, who was already awake and smiling happily, as well as Ikaruga and Ai, who came to check on Amar'e and make sure he was sleeping well.

At the same time, as soon as Alfonzo entered the room, Amar'e began to squirm in Elicia's arms, as he had quickly noticed Alfonzo's entrance. That caused Elicia, whose back was facing the door, to turn around. And when she did, she smiled brightly, as well.

"Looks like Mar'e is happy to see Daddy." Elicia said as she started bouncing Amar'e in her arms.

Smiling brightly, as well, Alfonzo stepped towards the group of women and an infant. Then, once he was close enough, he took Amar'e from Elicia's arms and held him up to eye level.

"Hey, Little Man." Alfonzo said with a big smile spread across his face. "How'd you sleep?"

In response, Amar'e happily reached for Alfonzo's hair with his little hands. Then, when he got a hold of it, he began playing happily.

"I thought Grayfia said he would probably be sleep for another hour." Alfonzo said as he shook his head, letting his hair swing lightly and making Amar'e laugh as he tried to grab the swinging dreadlocks.

"You know there's never any way to tell." Elicia said as she smiled at her son. "He probably felt that we were home and woke up."

"Yes, Young Master Amar'e is quite perceptive." Ikaruga said.

"Yeah, he always knows when one of you comes home." Ai added. "This is the first time I've ever seen him wake up because of it, though."

"Well, he is our son." Alfonzo said with a proud, fatherly smile on his face. Then, Alfonzo's expression turned curious as he continued while continuing to move his head and hair around. "by the way, is Maria okay? I mean, isn't she usually the one that looks after Amar-e in the morning? She's not sick, is she?"

"No, sir." Ai replied. "Today is Maria's day off."

"Ah, so she's sleeping in, huh?" Alfonzo asked while nodding in understanding. "Well, she really works hard. So, she deserves it."

Hearing that, both Ikaruga and Ai exchanged awkward glances. Meanwhile, after seeing Ikaruga and Ai's reactions, Alfonzo and Elicia also exchanged glances.

"I guess she's not sleeping in, then." Elicia said with a smile. "In that case, what's she doing?"

"Well... She's probably in the converted storage room." Ai replied.

Immediately, Alfonzo and Elicia knew exactly what Maria was doing.

"Well, then, let's go and see her." Alfonzo said with a smile.

With that, Alfonzo, with Amar'e in his arms, Elicia, Ikaruga, and Ai left Elicia's bedroom. And they were just in time to see Mey-Rin cleaning up the mess she made, when she dropped the watering can, and Grayfia scolding her about being more careful.

Deciding to leave them to it, the group of four walked past the two maids. Then, they all entered the elevator and road down to the underground floor where the storage rooms were located. Then, they entered the storage room that Alfonzo had worked on with Ai not long ago.

When the quintet eventually entered the recently renovated room, they saw a room that had been divided in two by a clear glass wall. On top of that, there was a magic item placed against the glass dividing wall. And the person they were looking for, Maria, was standing on the other side of the glass wall.

In front of Maria hung a magic item resembling a microphone. On top of that, her mouth was moving, looking as if she were speaking or singing into the magic item. Curiously enough, however, despite the fact that the glass wall was not very thick, no one could hear her.

Even more surprising was the fact that Miyuki was sitting in front of the magic item placed against the glass wall while operating a panel with the knobs, switches, and sliders while wearing what appeared to be headphones. But when Alfonzo and Elicia stopped to think about it, they realized that Miyuki, Alfonzo's personal maid, had little to do with Alfonzo supposed to be somewhere else. So, taking the time to help Maria was not too strange.

"Well, at least the recording studio is being used by someone." Alfonzo said with a smile.

Despite the fact that she was wearing the headphones, Miyuki heard Alfonzo's voice. And when she did, she immediately took off the headphones, stood up, turned towards the room's entrance, and bowed politely.

"Welcome home, Master Alfonzo, Madam Elicia." Miyuki said, almost sounding panicked. "Please excuse me for not greeting you earlier."

"Don't worry about it, Miyuki." Elicia replied with a smile. "Technically, we're not even supposed to be here. But we missed Mar'e. So, we made a quick trip home to see him. We'll be heading back to Tenrou Island before the sun goes down."

"I understand." Miyuki replied as she raised her head. "Is there anything you would like my assistance with while you're here?"

"Nah, don't worry about it." Alfonzo replied while waving dismissively and still holding Amar'e with one arm. Then, he pointed at Maria, who seemed to be having the time of her life and asked a question. "By the way, what song is she recording?"

"If I'm not mistaken, the song is called, 'You'." Miyuki replied. "It's the song you sang for Madam Elicia during your first dance as husband and wife."

"I see." Alfonzo replied with a smile.

Like that, the group continued to chat. And while they did, Alfonzo walked over to the panel that Miyuki had been operating. Then, he pulled the cord connected to the headphones out of the panel.

As soon as the cord was pulled out, the sound of an instrumental ensemble and Maria's singing voice could be heard echoing around the room. And when it was, Amar'e immediately began laughing happily.

As it turned out, whenever Alfonzo or Elicia were away, when it was time for Amar'e to sleep, Maria would sing to him, so he came to enjoy the sound of her singing voice.

Eventually, the song came to an end. And when it did, Maria turned towards Miyuki to ask how she did. However, when she saw all the extra people in the studio, she froze completely. Then, she lowered her head in embarrassment as her cheeks turned red.

Seeing Maria's reaction, the adults in the room found her cute. Amar'e on the other hand, reached for her, as if he wanted her to hold him. A moment later, after Maria exited the recording booth, Alfonzo handed Amar'e to her with a smile.

"Well, you all have fun." Alfonzo said as he turned around. "I'm gonna see how Shizuka's doing. I'll see you later."

Like that, Alfonzo left the studio before taking the elevator up to the floor with his bedroom.

Chapter 558: Shizuka Being Shizuka

Upon reaching his bedroom, Alfonzo could only smile at the sight before him. Lying in his bed, Shizuka, wearing a purple tank top and matching panties, had kicked nearly all the blankets off the bed. As a result, the only part of her body covered by the blankets was her right foot.

On top of that, Alfonzo could tell that Shizuka was hugging the pillow that he usually slept on to her chest while smiling sweetly, probably having a good dream.

Not wanting to disturb such a peaceful scene, Alfonzo quietly approached the bed. Then, when he arrived at the bedside, he carefully climbed into the bed and lay down next to Shizuka while watching her sleep. Then, when she smiled particularly brightly, he could not help himself, leaning forward to kiss her on the forehead.

Smack!

Unfortunately, Shizuka's reaction in her sleep was to brush away whatever tickled her forehead. As a result, Alfonzo was lightly slapped in the face.

"Yeah, I guess that's what I get for disturbing such a peaceful scene." Alfonzo muttered to himself while shaking his head.

"Hmm..." Shizuka, having noticed that she just slapped something, hummed as her eyelashes began to flutter. "Did I get bit by a bug, or something?"

"Damn, did my kiss on the forehead just get compared to a bug bite?" Alfonzo grumbled.

"Hmm?" Shizuka, having heard Alfonzo's grumbling, slowly opened her eyes. And when they were open, the first thing she saw in her hazy state was Alfonzo.

"Good morning, Shizuka." Alfonzo said with a smile.

Although she immediately recognized Alfonzo's voice, despite the fact that she was still half asleep, Shizuka also knew that he should be on Tenrou Island because of the S-Class Promotion Exam, so she immediately closed her eyes again, threw away Alfonzo's pillow, and reached out before pulling his face into her bosom.

"I like this dream." Shizuka said with a smile of contentment spread across her face. "Dreaming about Fonzie always leads to a good day."

In response, Alfonzo tried to shake his head. However, with Shizuka's arms and breasts wrapped around his head, he could barely move.

"It's not a dream, Shizuka." Alfonzo said, his voice muffled by Shizuka's breasts. "Lici and I made a short trip back to see Amar'e."

"Ooh!" Shizuka yelped from the sensation of Alfonzo's lips and breath brushing against her chest. Then, she opened her eyes again as she looked down at Alfonzo. "Not... a dream?"

"That's right, I'm really here, Shizuka." Alfonzo said, still unable to lift his face from Shizuka's cleavage, not that he was trying all that hard, though.

In response, a bit of clarity shown in Shizuka's eyes. Then, she pulled Alfonzo away from her chest. A moment later, she started running her hands all over Alfonzo's face. And as time passed, she woke up more and more.

"Fonzie, it's really you..." Shizuka said in a dazed tone. Then, after everything clicked, she squealed excitedly. "Fonzie!"

In the next instant, Shizuka pressed her lips against Alfonzo's passionately. However, the kiss did not last very long, as Shizuka pulled away quickly.

"Oh, no! I didn't brush my teeth yet!" Shizuka said as she sat up in the bed. "Hold on, I'll be right--- Kya!"

As Shizuka spoke the last sentence, she tried to climb out of bed, straddling Alfonzo as she tried to climb over him and rush into his bathroom. However, before she could climb over him completely, Alfonzo wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her down on top of him, gaining a yelp for his efforts.

Then, before Shizuka could react, Alfonzo restarted the kiss, pressing his lips against Shizuka's passionately. He even managed to snake his tongue into her mouth. As a result, Shizuka completely forgot about brushing her teeth as she melted into the kiss.

As the kiss deepened, both Alfonzo's and Shizuka's hands began to roam. While Shizuka's hands explored Alfonzo's chest, Alfonzo's wandered up and down Shizuka's back. However, they eventually slipped down onto her butt. But when he tried to sneak them between her legs, Shizuka broke the kiss immediately.

"Fonzie, not 'til we're married." Shizuka said as she sat up on Alfonzo's abdomen and pulled his hands away from her butt and crotch.

"*Sigh* I know." Alfonzo replied while smiling wryly. "Sorry, Shizuka. I got carried away."

"Just be patient, okay." Shizuka said with a smile before leaning down to peck Alfonzo on the lips one more time. "I promise you won't regret it. Remember, I'm a trained healer. So, I am very well informed about the human body. So, trust me. It will definitely be worth the wait."

Hearing that, Alfonzo could only stare at Shizuka blankly while blinking his eyes in confusion. Although he did not think that Shizuka was completely ignorant about sex, he never expected her to say something like that. She never seemed to get it when the other ladies were talking about things of a sexual nature, after all.

Meanwhile, while Alfonzo was lost in his confusion, Shizuka sat up straight. Then, she placed her right index finger on her lips as she tilted her head left and right in contemplation. At the same time, she subconsciously shifted her butt side to side, giving Alfonzo a nice feeling while he watched her breasts sway from side to side from her movements.

"Hmm... How long did I sleep?" Shizuka asked herself curiously. "Is it already the seventeenth? You weren't supposed to get back until the sixteenth, right?"

After reaching that point, Shizuka's normally sleepy looking eyes opened wide in disbelief. Then, she jumped off of Alfonzo, landing at the bedside. After that, she turned towards the bathroom and started sprinting towards it in panic.

"Oh, no!" Shizuka shouted as she ran. "I slept for three days. I missed my shifts at the guild. I hope no one got hurt! And I missed if Rika became S-Class or not! OH, no!"

Meanwhile, Alfonzo could only look on helplessly as Shizuka disappeared into his bathroom.

Bang!

Then, once the bathroom door was slammed shut, Alfonzo sat up and swung his feet over the side of the bed.

"*Sigh* If she had stopped to listen, or even looked at the clock hanging over my workshop, she would have known that today was the fourteenth." Alfonzo muttered to himself. "Oh well, I'll just tell her when she gets out of the bathroom."

At that moment, Elicia, with Amar'e in his arms, walked through the still open door of Alfonzo's bedroom.

"Hmm?" Elicia hummed in confusion. "I thought Shizuka would be here. Did she go to her room to get ready for work?"

As she spoke, Elicia approached Alfonzo's bed. Then, when she arrived, she took a seat next to him while Amar'e struggled to get Alfonzo's attention.

"Well, she is getting ready for work..." Alfonzo muttered as he picked up Amar'e and sat him on his lap.
"But she's under a bit of a misunderstanding at the moment."

"What do you mean?" Elicia asked while tilting her head cutely. "What happened?"

In response, Alfonzo told Elicia what happened after Shizuka completely registered that he was home.
And in response...

"Hahahahaha!" Elicia laughed uproariously. "Oh man, that's Shizuka for you. She does everything at her own pace."

Amar'e also began laughing happily like his mother. And seeing that, Alfonzo could not help but smile as he started bouncing Amar'e on his knee.

"Yeah, I guess I shouldn't have expected anything else from Shizuka." Alfonzo said with a smile on his face.

"Anyway, what are we gonna do until we go back, Fonzie?" Elicia asked once her laughter was under control.

"I wasn't gonna do anything at all." Alfonzo replied. "Playing with Amar'e is enough for me."

"Actually, that sounds nice." Elicia said with a smile. "I think I'll do that, too. But I should probably work on my custom orders, too. So..."

With that, Elicia made the hand sign for the [Shadow Clone Jutsu]. A moment later, three clones popped into existence from clouds of smoke.

"Alright, girls." Elicia said with a smile. "I hope you don't mind getting to work."

"Of course not." One of Elicia's clones said while shaking her head. "I'd rather be playing with Mar'e, though."

In response, the other two clones nodded in agreement. However, they did not argue. Instead, they all gathered around Alfonzo before giving both Amar'e and Alfonzo kisses on the cheek. Then, they all smiled at the amazed expression on Amar'e's face.

After that, Amar'e squealed in excitement, causing Alfonzo and the four Elicas to smile. Then, the three [Shadow Clones] left the room to get to work. Meanwhile, Amar'e reached for them, though he did not understand why there were more of his mothers present, he wanted them all to play with him.

Eventually, when Amar'e realized the three [Shadow Clones] were not coming back, his expression changed from a happy smile to a frown. Then, he started struggling to get out of Alfonzo's arms. And when he could not, he started to cry... loudly.

"Hmm... Maybe that wasn't such a good idea." Elicia muttered as she took Amar'e from Alfonzo's arms.

"Well, his favorite person in the world just multiplied, gave him a kiss, and then, most of them left." Alfonzo said with a shrug. "What did you expect to happen."

"*Sigh* I guess you're right." Elicia said while trying to calm her son. "I guess I should wait until he's older before I let him see my [Shadow Clones] again, huh?"

"By the way, why are you still using the hand signs?" Alfonzo asked curiously. "I mean, your magic power control should be good enough that you don't need the hand signs to knead your magic power, right?"

In response, Elicia simply rolled her eyes while rocking Amar'e in an attempt to calm him down.

"It's a woman's romance." Elicia said with a smirk. "A man like you would never understand."

This time, it was Alfonzo's turn to roll his eyes. However, he decided not to argue. Like that, the two continued to chat while trying to calm Amar'e down. And when they eventually succeeded, Shizuka opened the door to the bathroom, wearing only a bathrobe.

"I thought I heard Amar'e crying!" Shizuka said in a panic while not bothering to dry her hair. Then, her sight landed on Amar'e in Elicia's arms. "Amar'e, what happened? Come let auntie Shizuka give you a hug!"

With that, Shizuka dashed forward. Then, she took Amar'e from Elicia's arms and held him tenderly against her chest. Meanwhile, once Amar'e was in her arms, he began happily patting on her breasts,

fascinated by how her breasts changed shape before returning to their usual shape after he moved his hand away.

"*Sigh* Is it wrong that I'm kinda jealous of my son right now?" Alfonzo asked with a smile.

"Only if it's wrong that I'm jealous, too." Elicia said with a pout. "I mean, she won't even let me touch them. And we've taken like a hundred bath's together since she got here from Takanosu."

"Not until we're married." Shizuka said sternly while glancing up at the married couple in the room. Then, her expression turned inquisitive as she asked a question. "So, who got promoted? Was it Rika? I hope it was Rika."

Hearing that, Alfonzo and Elicia both smiled helplessly. Then, they explained that they were only here because they missed Amar'e. On top of that, they let Shizuka know that it was still only the fourteenth of December. So, the S-Class Promotion Exam had not even happened yet.

"So that means I didn't miss any shifts." Shizuka said in a relieved tone after hearing that she did not sleep for three days. "Wait! My shift! I'm gonna be late if I don't' hurry.

With that, Shizuka gave Amar'e back to Elicia. Then, she rushed out of the room so that she could get dressed in her own room, leaving Alfonzo and Elicia to watch her run down the hall through the open door.

"Well then, let's get some breakfast." Alfonzo said as he stood up. "After flying across Fiore twice, I'm hungry. Really hungry."

"Yeah, I'm hungry, too." Elicia said as she stood up as well. Then, I'll feed Amar'e and we can have some fun today."

Leaving the room a moment later, Alfonzo, Elicia, and Amar'e eventually reached the dining room where Grayfia, Mey-Rin, Ai, and Miyuki had just finished setting the table. Then, Alfonzo and Elicia took their seats while Elicia handed Amar'e to Grayfia, who would keep him entertained, while she and Alfonzo ate.

Not long later, dressed in casual clothes with a white lab coat over her outfit, Shizuka entered the dining room, as well, before rushing to take a seat and start eating.

Like that, the trio of Alfonzo, Elicia, and Shizuka ate breakfast. Though, Shizuka was eating noticeably faster than Alfonzo and Elicia. Then, Shizuka, after she finished eating, then got up and rushed to leave the house, not before kissing both Alfonzo and Amari on the cheek, though.

About ten minutes later, Alfonzo and Elicia also finished eating. Then, Elicia fed Amar'e before the two parents and Ai spent the next couple of hours playing with Amar'e. However, Amar'e eventually had to be put down for a nap. Then, Alfonzo and Elicia had lunch while waiting for their son to wake up again. And after Amar'e finally woke up, they began playing with him again.

When Amar'e eventually got tired again, Alfonzo and Elicia finally decided it was time to go back to Tenrou Island, Alfonzo would have to take Sixth Sense to pick up the S-Class Candidates and Ur the next morning, after all.

Chapter 559: Junko's Last Act of Despair

"Alfonzo and Lici are back!" Natsu shouted as he pointed to the sky while the group of S-Class wizards sat around a camp fire.

However, Natsu's prompt was completely unnecessary for most of the wizards on the island. Since they could use [Magic Power Detection], and had been doing so ever since they left Magnolia, they already knew that Alfonzo and Elicia were approaching. But it did come in handy for the only other wizard incapable of using [Magic Power Detection], Gildarts.

A few moments later, Alfonzo, with Elicia clinging to his back, landed near the camp fire. Then, just as Elicia hopped off Alfonzo's back, Cana, Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Marin, and Sun surrounded them.

"So, how is Mar'e?" Marin asked excitedly. "Ooh, I wanna hug him right now."

"He's good." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "Lici made him cry, though."

"Fonzie~~!" Elicia shouted in protest.

At the same time, not only the ladies surrounding Alfonzo and Elicia, but every wizard present glared at Elicia. Their glares making it clear that if she did not have a good explanation, she would have to deal with all of them.

Meanwhile, Elicia looked around at all the unfriendly gazes with a dumbfounded expression on her face. In all her years as a member of Fairy Tail, she had never been looked at like this... Not by so many people, at least.

"Why are you all looking at me like that?" Elicia asked in a confused tone.

"Elicia, what did you do to Amar'e?" Evergreen asked in a stern, threatening tone.

"Yeah, what did you do to make my Amar'e cry?" Ultear asked angrily.

In response, Elicia stared blankly at Evergreen. Then, she frowned as she turned her gaze to Ultear.

"First of all, he's my Amar'e." Elicia said, responding to Ultear's question. "And I really didn't do anything."

"Then why did Alfonzo say you made Amar'e cry?" Levy asked with a frown.

"You , too, Levy?" Elicia asked in dumbfounded amazement. Then, she shook her head before glaring at Alfonzo, who was doing all he could to hold back laughter. "Stupid Fonzie!"

As she shouted at Alfonzo, Elicia kicked him in the shin. However...

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" Elicia cried as she hopped away from Alfonzo and grabbed her foot. "That really hurts.

"That's what happens when you kick someone who's been strengthening their body with Techno Organic Metal for the last six years." Alfonzo said with a chuckle.

"Don't try to change the subject, Lici." Cana said sternly. She then continued, punctuating every word. "Tell. us. what. you . did. To. Amar'e. Right. now!"

"*Sigh* I'm not trying to change the subject." Elicia said as she let go of her foot. Though, it was clear to see that she was still in pain.

After that, Elicia told the group about how she made clones so that she could play with Amar'e and get some work done at the same time. And how Amar'e cried because he wanted to play with more than one of his mommy.

In response, everyone was completely dumbfounded by what they heard.

"That kid is just built different." Laxus muttered. "If I saw more than one of my mom when I was a baby, that probably would have made me cry. Not when they went away."

"You make it sound like that kid could be anything other than abnormal." Bickslow replied. "I mean, seriously... Look at his parents. They're both freaks."

At first, everyone started to nod in agreement with Bickslow. However, when they felt the dark auras Alfonzo and Elicia were releasing in response to Bickslow's comment, they chose to simply look away.

"Bickslow, would you mind repeating that?" Alfonzo asked while cracking his knuckles as he stepped towards Bickslow.

"Yeah, I must have heard you wrong." Elicia added while smiling brightly as she, too, stepped towards Bickslow. "Because I know you didn't just insinuate that my baby was a freak, right?"

Hearing Alfonzo and Elicia's tones, feeling the aura they released, and seeing the expressions on their faces, Bickslow subconsciously took a step back. Then, he let his gaze roam over the other S-Class wizards. And every time he made eye contact with one of them, they looked away, unwilling to maintain eye contact.

"come on, guys!" Bickslow shouted in a frightened, yet annoyed, tone. "Are you all really gonna leave me out to dry like this?"

Instead of just looking away, the others completely turned away from Bickslow, giving their answer in a very definite way.

"Come on, Alfonzo, Lici, you know that's not what I meant." Bickslow said as he slowly backed away from Alfonzo and Elicia after he realized he would not receive any help from his other guild mates. "I love Amar'e just as much as everyone else. Besides, being abnormal isn't that bad, right? I mean, normal is boring, you know.'

"That's a real interesting take on things, Bickslow." Alfonzo said as he continued to walk forward, his pace at least three times as fast as Bickslow's. Then, when he finally caught up to the frightened Bickslow, he slung an arm over his shoulder as he continued. "So, why don't we go somewhere nice and quiet to talk about your theory."

With that, Alfonzo dragged Bickslow away from the camp with Elicia following them and smiling brightly. Though, that smile did not reach her eyes.

"*Sigh* Will he ever learn when it's okay to speak?" Fried asked while shaking his head, almost feeling sorry for his friend's fate.

"Don't act like it's that bad." Laxus said as he sat down near the camp fire. "It's not like they'll hurt him too bad."

"Ahh~~~~~! I'm sorry! Please, forgive me~~~~~!"

Almost as soon as Laxus' words finished, Bickslow's scream could be heard from the distance. The scream was so loud that many birds, who had settled down for the evening, flew away in fear.

"You sure about that?" Gildarts asked.

"Not at all." Laxus replied with a shrug. "But I'm sure they won't cripple him at the very least."

Bickslow's screams and pleas for mercy went on for nearly half an hour. Then, about a minute after they stopped, Alfonzo, Elicia, and Bickslow returned to the camp. And while Alfonzo and Elicia wore refreshed expressions, with Elicia skipping happily, Bickslow looked as if his soul had left his body and came back only a few moments ago.

"Anyway, I'm tired from flying to and from Magnolia twice in less than twenty four hours." Alfonzo said with a smile. "So, I'm gonna get some sleep. I'll see you guys in the morning."

"Yeah, I'm gonna go to sleep, too." Elicia added as she hugged Alfonzo's arm. "See you in the morning, everyone."

With that, Alfonzo and Elicia headed to their tent. At the same time, Cana, Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Marin, and Sun exchanged glances. Then, they stood up before following Alfonzo and Elicia into the tent.

Meanwhile, everyone else looked at Bickslow with pity in their gazes.

"Don't look at me like that!" Bickslow shouted in an aggrieved tone. "None of you bastards even came to help me."

"You brought it on yourself." Levy said with a shrug. "I mean, what were you thinking talking about Amar'e like that in front of them?"

"I'm sure he wasn't." Evergreen said nonchalantly. "Why do you think I've had to beat him up so many times over the years."

"Yeah, a real man doesn't talk about people's kids like that." Elfman added.

"*Sigh* Even a broken clock is right two times a day." Gray said while molding a piece of ice in his hands.
"it's always amazing when I don't feel like punching you when you spout that real man crap."

"You're just lucky they did not break your head for what you said." Laki chimed in.

Bickslow did not know what to say in response to all the words lacking sympathy for what he just experienced. So, instead of trying to defend himself, he just sat down to the side and pouted as visibly as possible.

Meanwhile, Alfonzo and Elicia were telling the other girls in the tent about their run in with Junko, Himiko, and Mokuro.

"So, you're telling me that crazy bitch had a twin sister?" Cana asked with a frown on her face. "And when she saw the look on her sister's face after Fonzie fatally injured her, she looked like she was gonna have an orgasm?"

"Yeah, pretty much." Elicia replied with a disgusted expression on her face. "I seriously don't know how anyone could be so obsessed with despair. She even looked orgasmic when I started slowly choking her to death."

"Yeah, that chick was off her rocker." Marin said in a dumbfounded tone.

"I'm glad you didn't bring me with you." Sun said with a queasy look on her face. "Just hearing about how she acted in that situation is making me feel a bit sick."

In response to Sun's words, Alfonzo pulled her close to him. Then, he laid her head on his lap and began combing his fingers through her hair.

"Yeah, dealing with someone like that isn't for everyone." Alfonzo said in a soothing tone. "but you don't need to think about it anymore. She's never gonna bother any of us again."

"Still, I wonder how she ever got to be one of the Seven Kin of Purgatory in Grimoire Heart." Ultear muttered.

"Indeed." Erza added. "For someone so lacking in fighting skills, that title seems... How do I put it?"

"I know what you mean. It's probably because of the high amount of magic power she had." Mirajane surmised. "I mean, she could probably just overpower everyone with raw power. So, she never had to really fight with anyone."

"Mira's probably right." Elicia said with a nod. "I mean, when I fought her three years ago, she was harder to deal with. And that's probably just because we were closer in how much magic power we had. But since then, I doubt she's trained at all, only relying on her natural talent. Meanwhile, like all of you, I've been pushing myself to my limits almost every day. So, I was able to steamroll her this time"

Hearing that, everyone nodded their heads in agreement.

"Anyway, I really am tired" Alfonzo said with a smile while continuing to comb his fingers through Sun's hair. "So, I'm gonna get some sleep. I gotta wake up early to go get Ur and the others, you know."

With that, Alfonzo unleashed a huge yawn, putting an end to the conversation. Then, he and the ladies laid down for bed, sleeping until just before sunrise.

December 15, x787.

When Alfonzo eventually woke up, he carefully climbed out of the tent, making sure not to wake anyone up. Then, he intended to make his way to a nearby stream to wash up. However, when he saw Gildarts sitting by the camp fire and drinking from a bottle of liquor, he made a quick detour.

"Oh, hey, Kid." Gildarts said after noticing Alfonzo. "So, how did everything go the other night?"

"Everything was fine." Alfonzo replied. "And since you'll probably hear about it shortly after we get back to the mainland, I'll tell you what we went to do."

"It's about damn time." Gildarts said with a snort.

"We went to take out Junko Enoshima." Alfonzo continued. "She was a blight on this world. So, we ended her... permanently."

"Good job, Kid." Gildarts said, raising his bottle in a toast. "From what Ur told me, she was the cause of that zombie outbreak in Takanosu, too. Getting rid of her was the right idea. There's no telling what she would have done next."

'Oh, I can guess what she was going to do next.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'There was probably gonna be a string of kidnappings for her little Killing Game over the next few years. The real question is, what did she do while we couldn't find her?'

"Anyway, I'm gonna get washed up." Alfonzo said as he started moving towards the water source.
"Then, I'll head back to Hargeon to pick up the S-Class candidates and Ur."

"Alright." Gildarts replied while waving his bottle at Alfonzo. "I'll see you later."

After that, Gildarts took a swig from his bottle while Alfonzo disappeared into the forest.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Floating Cube Island.

Sitting in his throne room, Mard Geer Tartaros was lost in his thoughts. However, the sound of footsteps quickly broke him out of whatever it was he was thinking about. So, he looked up towards the entrance to his throne room with an intrigued expression on his face.

"Hmm? Kyôka seems to be in a hurry." Mard Geer muttered to himself with a grin on his face. "I wonder what could have her so excited."

A moment later, Kyôka entered the throne room. Then, after approaching the throne, she stopped at a respectful distance and bowed politely.

"What's the matter, Kyôka?" Mard Geer asked while still grinning.

"I have two pieces of news to report, Lord Mard Geer." Kyôka replied.

"Well then, let me hear it." Mard Geer said as he leaned his right elbow on the armrest of his throne and spected the side of his head with his knuckles.

"Yes. I've received a report from our spy among the Magic Council." Kyôka said. "According to them, Junko Enoshima was killed early this morning."

"Hmm?" Mard Geer hummed in thought while drumming the fingers of his left hand against the armrest. "Junko... That sounds familiar. Oh, it's so hard to remember such inferior creatures as humans. Who was that again?"

Like that, Mard Geer continued to contemplate the name Junko. Then, a few moments later, he slapped his left hand on his arm rest as he wore a smile.

"She's the one who was supposed to tell us how to find Face and activate it, correct?" Mard Geer asked, looking rather proud of himself for remembering such a lowly being.

"that's correct." Kyôka replied.

In the next instant, Mard Geer's aura exploded outward, causing the entire Cube to shake.

"And now without her, we have lost access to that information!" Mard Geer shouted angrily.

"All is not lost, Lord Mard Geer." Kyôka, who was struggling to remain standing under Mard Geer's pressure, said in a shaky tone. "though the human is now dead, we still received the information we seek."

Hearing that, Mard Geer reeled in his pressure. Then, the smile on his face made its reappearance.

"Well, why didn't you say that first?" Mard Geer asked in a feigned tone of friendliness. "I almost ripped you apart because of that, you know? So, where is Face and how do we activate it?""

"Face's location is written here." Kyôka replied while holding a piece of paper with coordinates to Face's main body, Alta Face. "However, all she could find out was that there was a seal put in place with [Organic Link Magic]. So, it can't be activated until we are able to kill the members of the Magic Council it is linked to. Unfortunately, only that fool Crawford Seam knew to whom it was linked."

"And he is dead." Mard Geer said with his smile quickly turning into a frown. "But that means that the new Magic Council does not know who the seal is linked to either, correct."

"That is correct." Kyôka said with a nod. "but from what that Junko gathered, it is linked to three members of the former Magic Council. And since most of them are imprisoned, it should not be an issue killing them."

"Ah... That human... What was her name again?" Mard Geer asked before shrugging his shoulders.
"Never mind, I can't be bothered. But she has done wonderful work."

"Yes, it's a shame she died." Kyôka said in agreement. "I would have loved to torture her before turning her into a demon. Then, we would have had quite the useful slave."

"Indeed." Mard Geer agreed. "Anyway, make sure all the preparations are complete. Then, once they are, kill all those Magic Council meat bags."

"Understood." Kyôka replied. "After we've investigated the coordinates, found the main control for Face, and figured out its mechanisms, I'll send Jackal to kill them. I believe everything will be accomplished by the end of x791 at the latest."

"Very good." Mard Geer said. "Now, you may leave. I have much to think about."

With that, Kyôka turned around and left without another word. Meanwhile, Mard Geer turned back to his own thoughts as he picked up a book from the small table next to his throne titled E.N.D. and started flipping through its pages.

"Just wait, Lord Zeref." Mard Geer said in a solemn tone. "I will revive E.N.D. Then, once our strongest brother his among us once again, your greatest desire will be fulfilled."

Chapter 560: Before the x787 S-Class Promotion Exam

Around 9:45 a.m., Alfonzo, who had docked at the port an hour earlier, stood with Ur as they waited for this year's S-Class candidates to arrive. However, unlike what Alfonzo expected, Ur, when she arrived twenty minutes ago, did not come alone to the port. Instead, she was accompanied by Irene and Brandish.

For the next twenty minutes after Ur, Irene, and Brandish's arrival, the quartet engaged in small talk, which mostly revolved around Alfonzo and Elicia taking out Junko and her group of criminals. However, it was clear that Alfonzo had something on his mind, and Ur knew exactly what it was.

"It's obvious you've got a question for me, Kid." Ur said in an irritated tone. "So, just spit it out already."

"Um... Okay... So, I thought that newly appointed S-Class wizards who were promoted without being tested couldn't be examiners in their first exam." Alfonzo said while looking at Ur in confusion. "I mean, that's how it was for you and Lici, right?"

Having expected Alfonzo's question, Ur's left eyebrow started to twitch. However, she did her best not to lash out at Alfonzo. His question was perfectly reasonable, after all. However, Ur's irritation rose quickly when she noticed Irene staring at her with a smirk. And what she said next did not help, either.

"Oh my, I didn't know that was the rule." Irene said in a mock tone of surprise. "Ur, why didn't you tell me? Now... This is really awkward."

While Brandish looked at Ur in amusement, Alfonzo quickly understood what happened. Meanwhile, Ur's eyebrow started twitching much more fiercely.

"No, don't worry about it, Irene." Ur replied through gritted teeth while waving her hand dismissively. "That was the last master's rule. Now that I'm the guild master, things are different. It's perfectly fine for the two of you to be here."

"Are you sure?" Irene asked, now feigning concern. "I wouldn't want to upset anyone. You don't need to give me or Brandish special treatment."

'Yup, it's just like what I thought.' Alfonzo thought to himself while trying not to laugh. 'Irene was irritated that she got left out. So, she intimidated Ur into bringing her along.'

As if she could sense that Alfonzo was laughing at her on the inside, Ur glared fiercely at her friend's son.

"Anyway, it's almost time to leave." Ur said, forcefully changing the subject. "Those kids sure are taking their time. Even Masa is cutting it close. I really didn't expect that from him."

"*Sigh* Something tells me Masa is only late because of Gozaburo's stupidity." Alfonzo replied in an exasperated tone.

"*Sigh* Unfortunately, you're probably right." Ur said. ""I just hope that man child doesn't cause him to be disqualified."

"Gozaburo? That's Sun's dad, right?" Brandish asked in a slightly interested tone. "Doesn't that make Masa one of his subordinates? So, why would he make him late?"

Not only Brandish, but even Irene looked to Ur with a slightly interested gaze, as well.

"It's because he's jealous that Masa is an S-Class candidate." Ur replied. "According to Ren, for at least a decade, Gozaburo had not allowed Masa to take the Magic Council's S-Class exam. His pride would not allow one of his subordinates to be ranked higher than him."

"Hmph" Irene snorted in disdain. "He's a small-minded fool. The reputation boost an S-Class wizard would have brought to his Seto Group would have been massive."

"Yeah, we're all aware of that, even Gozaburo knows that." Ur said while shaking her head. "But pride is the devil, as they say. And it can lead us to make some pretty bad decisions just to keep it intact."

"Hmph!" Irene snorted once again. "Then, perhaps I should help in lecturing him about pride and its follies."

Upon hearing that, Alfonzo, Ur, and Brandish all made a silent prayer for Gozaburo. Because when Irene was done with him, there was a good chance he would be a completely different person.

Not long after they mentioned Gozaburo, who started feeling a chill around the same time the conversation about him ended, the eight S-Class candidates, Edward, Alphonse, Masa, Wendy, Rika, Alzack, Lucy, and Gajeel, arrived at the dock.

"Good, you're all on time. " Ur said once all the candidates were standing in front of her. "I was scared I might have to disqualify some of you before the exam even started. Now, everyone get on board. We're leaving immediately."

Then, after speaking, Ur turned around immediately before boarding Sixth Sense. She was quickly followed by Irene and Brandish. The S-Class candidates were next to board. And lastly, Alfonzo, after talking to the port personnel, boarded and unfastened the mooring from the pier before steering the ship away from Hargeon.

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

The next two hours would be spent on the open sea. And because they already knew all the rules of this year's exam, everyone relaxed on the ship while Alfonzo steered it towards Tenrou Island. Wendy even cast [Troia] on Gajeel. However, both Wendy and Gajeel were surprised when they saw Irene, who should technically be a Dragon Slayer, acting completely unbothered by the ship ride.

"Um... Excuse me, Miss Irene." Wendy said nervously after she could no longer hold back her curiosity.
"May I ask you a question."

Turning towards the petite Dragon Slayer, Irene smiled at her meek appearance. At the same time, a hint of sadism flashed through her eyes. However, she promptly squashed that feeling, knowing that Wendy would probably not handle her more... "mischievous"... side very well.

"What would you like to know, young one?" Irene asked. "Though, I have a feeling I already know what your question may be."

Surprised that Irene was speaking to her so gently, Wendy flinched. However, she quickly regained her composure and asked her question.

"Um.. You are a Dragon Slayer, right?" Wendy asked.

"That's right." Irene replied with a nod.

"Then, um... Why isn't the boat ride bothering you?" Wendy asked.

Before answering Wendy's question, Irene's smile widened.

"You indeed asked the question I was expecting." Irene said with a nod. "And the answer is simple, like you, I am using a spell that negates the effects of a moving vehicle on a Dragon Slayer's senses. It's just a different branch of magic than you use."

"Really?" Wendy asked curiously. "What kind of magic is it?"

"It's my specialty, [Enchantment Magic]." Irene replied, her smile widening once again as Wendy's eyes opened wide in interest. "Would you like to perhaps learn the art of [Enchantment], young one?"

Immediately, Wendy began nodding her head rapidly, causing Irene's smile to turn into laughter, drawing a few curious glances in her direction.

"Excellent." Irene said after getting her laughter under control. "And from what I can tell, you have quite the talent for [Enchantment], as well."

"Really? But how can you tell?" Wendy asked in a confused tone. "I've never used [Enchantment Magic] before."

"Oh, you are quite mistaken about that." Irene replied. "Those spells you use, [Vernier], [Arms], and [Armor] are minor enchantments afforded to you by your [Dragon Slayer Magic]. And after seeing the ease with which you wield them, I'm certain that you have the talent to learn [Enchantment magic]."

Hearing that, Wendy's excitement rose exponentially. However, she quickly remembered her manners. Then, she bowed respectfully towards Irene.

"I would be honored to learn from you, Miss Irene." Wendy said enthusiastically.

In response, Irene simply patted Wendy on her head. At the same time, Ur, who watched the entire interaction, gritted her teeth in frustration.

'Not only did she bully me into letting her come on this trip, now she's taking one of my students for herself.' Ur muttered internally. 'So what if my magic isn't exactly helpful to Wendy, I've been training her for the last three years. And it's definitely partially my credit that she's as strong as she is now. Even if Tsunade's [Magic Power Strengthening Technique] played a big role as well. She's still spent the most time training under me.'

As those thoughts were running through Ur's head, Irene turned towards her. Then, without uttering a word, she smirked a very triumphant smirk. And with that, everyone on the ship thought they heard the sound of someone gritting their teeth in anger. But then they remembered that no one could possibly grit their teeth that loudly without completely destroying their molars.

"Well, I didn't expect that." Lucy said from next to Alfonzo in the wheel house. "To think that Irene would take on a student. She doesn't seem the type to me."

"That's only because you don't know her well enough." Brandish replied from the other side of Alfonzo. "Irene enjoys imparting knowledge to those who seek it. Whether it be magical or historical in nature, she likes teaching all the same."

"I guess you're right." Lucy replied with a contemplative expression on her face. "I really don't know her that well. Maybe I should try to get to know her better. I mean, we're guild mates, after all."

"Go right ahead." Brandish said in a bored tone. "But I didn't expect that you had such a masochistic streak, Lucy."

In response, Lucy's first reaction was to blush before glancing at Alfonzo, who was grinning at her playfully. A moment later, however, she took control of her emotions. There was no way Brandish knew about any of her sexual tendencies, after all.

'I can't believe that was the first place my mind went when I heard the word "masochistic." I mean, it's not like she knows that I like being pushed to the brink of mental exhaustion by Alfonzo and all the girls when we're all together..' Lucy thought to herself. 'Alfonzo and the girls have really corrupted me. I used to be such a pure and innocent girl.'

Brandish, on the other hand, noticed Lucy's blush and could only wonder what kind of kinky things she, Alfonzo, and the other girls in his harem got up to behind closed doors, her mind immediately moving to some of the more racy scenes from her favorite novels, causing her face to redden, as well.

"Anyway, Brandish, what do you think of my ship, Sixth Sense?" Alfonzo asked, trying to clear the awkward air. "I built the whole thing myself."

"I figured as much." Brandish replied after shaking her naughty thoughts away. "I've sailed on quite a few ships over the years. However, none of them were as advanced as this one. But I've come to expect that since I joined the guild. Everything you create is far ahead of its time. I'd really like to crack your skull open and see how your brain works."

"Haven't heard anyone say that in a while." Alfonzo muttered with a smile. "I think Wakaba was the last one to say it... it was during my first quest, I think."

Hearing that, Lucy's eyes lit up. Alfonzo took his first quest a long time before she joined the guild. And she was curious to hear about it.

"What was your first quest like?" Lucy asked in a curious tone. "Was it like my first quest? The one we took to steal that book from Duke Everlue? Did you and Lici take it together?"

"Hahaha! No, it was nothing like that one." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "It was only a D-Class quest, after all. I mean, I was only nine."

"Oh... I guess that makes sense." Lucy replied with a slightly embarrassed blush on her face.

"And no, Lici and I didn't start taking quests together until we were allowed to take B-Class quests." Alfonzo continued. "We did all our D and C-Class quests solo."

"Hold on, did you say you started taking real quests on your own at nine years old?" Brandish asked, finally internalizing what Alfonzo said. "They use the same classifications for quests and monsters on Alakitasia, too. Even if the wizards on Alakitasia are stronger on average, the difficulty of the quests are still the same. And most young wizards don't get started until they are eleven."

"What can I say?" Alfonzo asked in a borderline conceited tone. "Gramps recognized my greatness early. And I gotta say, he had a pretty good eye."

Hearing that, both Lucy and Brandish looked at Alfonzo blankly. But they eventually decided not to dignify his words with a response. So, they asked about the details of his first quest. And Alfonzo happily told them about it.

Like that, the voyage continued harmoniously until the Sixth Sense docked on Tenrou island. And when it did, all the S-Class candidates' expressions changed. Although they were still comrades, they were no longer allies. Not until the S-Class Promotion Exam ended, anyway.