

Fairy Tail 661

Chapter 661: Meeting with Yoruichi

"You really think he's here?" Rangiku asked as she walked along the hallway leading to Alfonzo's room with Yoruichi and Sui-Feng for the second time in as many days. "I mean, he could be out visiting Fairy Tail's team to see how they were holding up after the last event."

"No, I think he should be here." Yoruichi said as she stopped in front of the door to Alfonzo's suite. "It's not like the others got all that hurt during the event. They were just unlucky."

"I guess you're right." Rangiku replied with a nod. "Still, I didn't know that Laxus guy was so strong. We fought him four on one and we still almost lost."

"Well, they've been training with those gravity chambers longer than everyone else." Yoruichi said with a shrug. "So, it kinda makes sense."

"I guess..." Rangiku replied with a shrug of her own.

At that point, the trio did not notice the sound of the elevator doors sliding open, as they were too engrossed in their conversation, though Sui-Feng was not participating, so, they were caught off guard when they heard a male voice speak.

"Well, I guess I can't avoid this forever." Alfonzo said while shaking his head, his voice drawing the attention of the three women standing outside of the door to his suite.

Turning their heads in the direction of the voice, Yoruichi, Sui-Feng, and Rangiku saw Alfonzo and Elicia approaching from the elevator. And despite having been relaxing rather leisurely all day, Alfonzo looked tired.

"Hey, Alfonzo, Lici." Yoruichi said with a smile. Though, it was obvious to anyone who knew her that it was a bit forced and she was nervous, which was a rather rare sight for her.

"Hey, Yoruichi." Elicia, who was usually quite cheerful was wearing a forced smile, as well, while stealing glances at Alfonzo from the corner of her eye.

Seeing the two women's nerves, Alfonzo could only smile awkwardly. And to calm his first wife down, he started combing his fingers through her hair.

Meanwhile, Sui-Feng and Rangiku were both staring at Alfonzo. Though, their stares held completely different emotions.

While Sui-Feng levelled a glare filled with, though not hatred, a similar negative emotion... Dislike, maybe? Rangiku looked at him with intrigue.

"Hmm... Well, he's more handsome than he is in his pictures." Rangiku thought to herself while examining Alfonzo. 'And considering the fact that he has a harem with from what I could tell, little in the way of jealousy or infighting, his personality shouldn't be all that bad either. Still, I'm dying to know, just what happened between them for Yoruichi to be punished so severely by her clan.'

"Yoruichi, it's a pleasure." Alfonzo said, though it was clear that he was only being cordial. "I would say the same for you, Sui-Feng, but that glare your shooting at me makes it hard to say that."

While Sui-Feng's glare grew in intensity, Alfonzo turned his gaze to Rangiku and gave her a friendly smile

"And you're Rangiku Matsumoto." Alfonzo said as he extended his right hand for a handshake. "I saw your Zanpakuto's Shikai, and it looks a lot like a spell one of my wives uses. She even somehow used to use the same spell name as your release command."

"Really?" Rangiku asked in a surprised tone while accepting Alfonzo's handshake. "What a coincidence."

"I know, right?" Alfonzo said while nodding his head in an exaggerated manner.

Meanwhile, Elicia could only roll her eyes at her husband's shamelessness.

'A coincidence, yeah right.' Elicia thought to herself. 'You were the one that gave her the idea that that spell. You helped her pick the name, too. And the only reason she changed it is because you realized that there were a whole lot more Bleach Characters in this world than you originally thought. So, you told her that "Growl" really didn't sound cute enough for her.'

"Anyway, if you have a minute, can we talk?" Yoruichi asked, sounding a bit uneasy.

"*Sigh* Sure." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "But I'm sure the other girls won't be happy to see you."

"Yeah... I already know that." Yoruichi replied while rubbing the back of her neck. "But I just have to tell you something. After that, I'll leave right away if you want me to."

'If I want her to...' Alfonzo repeated Yoruichi's words to himself. 'Well, that kinda makes it sound like she hasn't gotten over me.'

["But can you blame her?"] Bedlam cut in. ["I mean, look at who's soul I was created from."]

Hearing that, Alfonzo had to stop himself from laughing. At the same time, Bedlam's words managed to loosen the tension he was feeling after seeing Yoruichi for the first time in a little over four years.

"Well, let's head inside." Alfonzo said after shaking his head.

With that, Alfonzo, holding Elicia's hand, walked past Yoruichi, Sui-Feng, and Rangiku before opening the door and leading the four women into the room.

As soon as they stepped into the room, a gaze filled with anger locked onto Yoruichi. Naturally, that gaze belonged to Cana, who was standing in front of a table and holding a bottle of vodka in one hand and a cup in the other. There was also a bottle of cranberry juice on the table in front of her, as well.

"Why is she here?" Cana asked in an angry tone as her glare at Yoruichi intensified with every word.

"She says she needs to talk to me about something." Alfonzo replied casually as he let go of Elicia's hand and made his way over to Cana.

Then, when he arrived next to her, Alfonzo took the glass and the bottle of vodka out of Cana's hands and mixed a vodka cranberry for her before handing the glass back to her.

"And I have no issue listening to what she has to say." Alfonzo said, wrapping an arm around Cana as he did so. "But I knew having her around makes you uneasy. So, why don't you come and listen to her with me?"

Hearing that, not only Cana, but the others who were present when the incident between Alfonzo, Elicia, and Yoruichi looked at Alfonzo to see if he was serious. And when they saw that he had no intention of joking about this, they all nodded their heads.

"Fine." Cana said before taking a sip of the drink Alfonzo just mixed for her. She then turned her glare back to Yoruichi and continued. "But if you try anything funny, don't expect to leave this room with all your limbs."

In response, Yoruichi simply nodded her head.

'Though, I could probably leave any time I wanted.' Yoruichi thought to herself. 'But I understand where she's coming from.'

Sui-Feng, on the other hand, shifted the glare she showed as shooting at Marin to Cana after hearing her threat. And thanks to her anger, her magic power started to leak. Despite that, everyone only spared her a glance before turning their attention back to Alfonzo. Although they all would admit that Sui-Feng had grown stronger in the last four years, she was still the fourth weakest wizard in the room at the moment. If you don't count Shizuka, who was not a fighter, that is.

A moment later, leading Cana by the hand, Alfonzo sat on the couch in the suite's living room, pulling Cana onto her lap. Then, he gestured for Yoruichi to sit on the couch opposite him.

And Yoruichi did so with Rangiku taking the seat next to her with a curious expression on her face while Sui-Feng stood behind her.

Meanwhile, all of Alfonzo's wives and girlfriends took seats on the couch next to him or stood around the couch, most of them curious to hear what Yoruichi had to say.

"So, what do you have to say?" Alfonzo asked in a calm tone.

"*Sigh* Although I've done this before, the first thing I want to say is that I'm sorry." Yoruichi said while bowing her head. "I won't make any excuses for my actions. But I do understand how wrong they were and how badly they hurt you and your family."

By now, Grayfia had led the maids to leave the room, as their employers' private matters were not for them to hear. On their way out, they had also taken Amar'e and Bianca with them. Then, when they were all in the next room, Grayfia set up a sound proof barrier to make sure they did not overhear anything they were not supposed to.

Sending an appreciative nod in the direction of the room where the maids were, Alfonzo quickly turned his attention back to Yoruichi before gesturing for her to continue.

"Next, I wanted to say that, if it's what you want, I won't contact you ever again." Yoruichi continued at Alfonzo's prompt.

"Good." Cana said with a snort.

Smack!

In response to Cana's interruption, Alfonzo lightly slapped her on the butt, which gained a glare from her. But when she saw he was not taking sides, rather he just wanted to hear all of what Yoruichi had to say, she calmed down and took another sip of her drink.

"Sorry about that." Alfonzo said. "go on."

"I was punished severely by my clan after I returned to the Soul Continent and confessed what I did." Yoruichi said. "And although I won't go into the details... Let's just say... The last few years have been some of the hardest of my life. But that wasn't even the worst of it."

Hearing that, everyone, even Cana looked at Yoruichi with curiosity in their gazes.

"*Sigh* I was basically exiled from my home." Yoruichi continued. "And I feel even worse, because two of my friends from childhood were exiled along with me for standing up to the powers that be on the Soul Continent after they accepted my clan's judgement."

While Saeko, Shizuka, Rika, and Irene wore expressions that said they thought that was a little much. Those who knew what Yoruichi did, namely, Cana, Ultear, Erza, Mirajane, Marin, Sun, and Lucy, wore expressions that said that it was too much. Because that meant that Yoruichi would continue to live on Ishgar. Meanwhile, Alfonzo and Elicia wore contemplative expressions while thinking nearly the same thing.

'Are those two childhood friends Keisuke Uahara and Tessai Tsukabishi?' Alfonzo and Elicia thought simultaneously while exchanging glances.

"And the only way I would be permitted to return is if I could convince you to forgive me and take me as your wife." Yoruichi continued with a self-deprecating smile on her face. "But we all know that's not gonna happen. So, I've resigned myself to spending the rest of my life on Ishgar. Not that I actually wanted to go back. I never wanted to be the next head of my clan, anyway."

Yoruichi then hung her head and rested her face in her hands.

"But not wanting to go back and not being allowed to are totally different concepts." Yoruichi whispered into her hands.

With that, the room fell silent, with no one knowing what to say. However, there were a few people burning with curiosity. And one of them could not hold their curiosity back any longer.

"Seriously, what the hell happened between you all?" Rangiku asked explosively after the tension in the room rose to a certain point. "Yoruichi has been mopey for years and finding out why has been killing me!"

Rangiku's shout snapped the tension in the room immediately, causing everyone to look at her incredulously. Even Yoruichi, who was about to fall into the pits of depression, looked up and stared at her with a strange expression on her face.

"What? Why are you all looking at me like that?" Rangiku asked defensively. "You can't tell me I'm not the only one that doesn't know the whole story, right? I mean, look at them. They're just as curious as I am."

While speaking her last sentence, Rangiku pointed at the trio from Takanosu as well as Irene, causing the four to exchange glances in silence.

"Well, if you wanna know, I don't mind telling everyone." Alfonzo said with a shrug. "I mean, but stopping Irene from killing Yoruichi might be kinda hard. Because not even I'm strong enough to stop her if she goes all out."

"Is it that bad?" Irene asked.

"That's a matter of perspective." Alfonzo replied.

"*Sigh* Then it's probably better I don't know." Irene said after thinking for a few minutes. "I've left that life behind. And I really rather not find myself going back with out a life or death struggle."

"Fair enough." Alfonzo replied. "But when you think you're in control enough to not do anything you'd regret, just ask."

After receiving a nod from Irene, Alfonzo turned to Saeko, Shizuka, and Rika, who all shook their heads, as they did not want to do anything they might regret, either. Then, he turned his attention back to the couch where Yoruichi and Rangiku sat with Sui-Feng standing behind them.

"Well, if you want to know, you'll have to get Yoruichi to tell you, Rangiku." Alfonzo said. He then turned his attention back to Yoruichi. "As for forgiving you, I think I told you I've done that a long time ago. It was a mistake. And no one was seriously hurt. So, I let it go. But marrying you is something that will probably never happen in this lifetime. And I only say probably because... Well, you know... the old saying never say never, and all that shit."

"*Sigh* I understand." Yoruichi replied with a heavy sigh. Then, she stood up and bowed to everyone present. "Well then, thank you for listening to me."

After that, she turned around and started making her way towards the suite's door with Sui-Feng following behind her and Rangiku, frustrated that she still did not get to hear what the issue was, hurrying to follow her a few seconds later.

"Anyway, I'm really tired all the sudden." Alfonzo said as she stood up with Cana in his arms. "I'm gonna go lay down. And you get to be my body pillow, Cana."

In response, Cana only nodded her head before chugging down the rest of her drink. She then hugged Alfonzo around the neck and let him carry her away, leaving everyone else to exchange glances before a few of the girls followed Alfonzo into the bedroom to comfort him.

Chapter 662: Who's Gonna Be the Fifth Member?

Around three months have passed since Yoruichi met with Alfonzo and his girls in Crocus after the conclusion of the Grand magic Games. And two days after that, they met again at the banquet held by Fiore's Royal Family. However, while Yoruichi found herself not knowing how to proceed, Alfonzo and Elicia made it a point to talk to her. Though, the same could not be said about the rest of Alfonzo's wives and girlfriends.

But at least Alfonzo made it clear that he truly held no grudges over what happened. So, Yoruichi allowed herself to relax a little with that information. Sui-Feng, on the other hand, actually confronted Alfonzo and all but ordered him to take Yoruichi as a wife so that she would be allowed to come and go from her home as she pleased. An order that Alfonzo ignored.

The day after the banquet, everyone returned to their guild halls and got back to wizarding as usual.

A little more than a month later, Amar'e's second birthday came and went. And like they did the previous year, they had a party for the toddler. However, unlike last year, it was a more private affair, with only family and guild mates invited. There were even a few visitors from other worlds that showed up. But that happened when there were no other members of the guild around.

Alfonzo and Elicia also took the opportunity to finally tell everyone about the miraculous messages they received a little more than a year ago that led them to become multiversal travelers. They still did not let the secret of their reincarnations slip, though.

Other than those two things, not much of note happened. Though, there were a few things on the horizon to look forward to.

First, Shizuka was due to give birth any day now. And she was absolutely glowing at the thought of having her baby. Like Elicia and Mirajane, she also forewent learning the baby's gender before the baby was born. So, she was happy to know that there was a surprise on the way.

The next thing everyone was looking forward to was the Battle of Fairy Tail Tournament, which for the first time since x785, Team Steel Threads would be participating. Of course, that did not completely overshadow the rest of the Harvest Festival, as the Fantasia Parade is, and always will be, the day's main event.

As for the Battle of Fairy Tail Tournament, though. Everyone had one question on their mind. Who would be Team Steel Threads' fifth member. Because, the rules of the tournament have changed from a four on four tournament to a five on five tournament.

In fact, even the members of Team Steel Threads, Alfonzo, Elicia, Marin, and Sun were having the same issue. And they were currently seated in Elicia's room and playing Uno while talking about that exact problem.

"Seriously, what are we gonna do about the fifth member of our team?' Marin asked in an annoyed tone. "I mean, just about everyone is already on a team. Maybe we could poach someone?"

"But if we did that, then the team we take someone from wouldn't be able to participate. And that would be sad, wouldn't it?"

"Skip." Alfonzo said as he grinned at Elicia, who only had two cards left in her hand. He then turned to look at Sun, raising his free hand to comb his fingers through her hair as he continued. "It would be sad for them. But what else are we supposed to do?"

"I dunno." Sun replied while leaning into Alfonzo's hand with a contented smile on her face.

"Well, let's take a look at the teams." Elicia said while lightly glaring at Alfonzo. "Then, we can pick from who's left."

"I guess that's the best idea." Marin said as she drew a card from the deck. "first, is the Thunder God Tribe. They're made up of Laxus, Saya, Fried, Bickslow, and Evergreen." Then, there's Team Strauss. Mira, Lisanna, Elfman, Juvia, and Saeko."

"There's Team Old Guys, too." Sun added as she placed a card on the discard pile. "That's my dad, Maes, Macao, Wakaba, and Gildarts."

"I'm actually still amazed at how well Maes is keeping up with those wizards and a merfolk. Oh, and draw two." Alfonzo said, grinning at Elicia once again. "There's team Ultear, too. And that's Tear, Meredy, Cana, Laki, and, I don't know how they got Gozaburo to agree, but Masa, as well."

"Yeah, my dad was strangely agreeable to that." Sun added while nodding her head.

In actuality, Gozaburo had tasked Masa with throwing a match in a believable way if the two teams were to ever face each other in the tournament. However, that has not happened yet. So, the ruse has not been seen through, yet.

"Fonzie, are you picking on me?" Elicia asked after drawing her second card from the deck.

"Me? Never?" Alfonzo replied as his grin widened.

In response, Elicia did the most mature thing she could think of and blew a raspberry, which made everyone else laugh.

"Reverse." Marin said as she placed a "Reverse" card on top of the discard pile. "Next is team Natsu. Natsu, Gray, Erza, Lucy, and Wendy. There always gonna be a strong team."

"Yeah, and so is Team Alzack." Elicia said, happy to finally be able to play a card for the first time in three turns. She then played a "Wild Card" as she continued. "Red. Alzack and Bisca are both S-Class in strength and skill. Then, there's Max, Rika, and Kota. There a little long range heavy, though."

"That's true." Alfonzo replied as he played a card. "But they make it work. Plus, both Alzack and Rika can fight in close range. So, it's not so bad."

"Who's left?" Sun asked as she drew a card from the deck.

"Let's see..." Marin said as she dropped a "Skip card on the discard pile, causing Elicia to start pouting. "It's Team Shadow Gear. Levy, Jet, Droy, Gajeel, and Lily."

"Man, I'd love to see Lily show up in the GMG." Alfonzo said with a smile as he played a "Draw Two".
"Just imagine what everyone's faces would look like when the cute little black and white cat turns into his battle form and starts swinging his sword around at blinding speeds."

"I think some people will straight up faint." Elicia said while watching Sun draw two cards.

"And it would be hilarious." Alfonzo said in a clearly amused tone.

"Uno." Marin said excitedly with only one card remaining in her hand. "And I think that's everyone. There have only been seven teams for the last few years. No one else was confident enough to compete with the strongest members of the other guilds."

"Yeah, someone got a bye every year in the first round." Elicia said as she dropped a "Reverse" card.

Seeing that, Marin pouted, as her last card was blue, instead of red.

"The question is, who do we pick?" Sun asked as she dropped another "Reverse" card.

"Seriously?" Marin asked in an exasperated tone as she drew another card before putting it on the discard pile immediately.

"You're lucky." Elicia grumbled as she reached out to draw two cards.

"Hmm.... I'm not sure." Alfonzo replied as he played a yellow "Draw Two." "I mean, the only person I can think of would kind of make this over kill. But it might be fun, though."

"Who's that?" Sun asked as she drew two more cards while tilting her head in curiosity.

"Fonzie, you're not serious, are you?" Elicia asked with wide open eyes as she figured out who Alfonzo was talking about.

""Who is it?" Marin asked as she dropped a card. "Oh, and Uno again."

"Irene." Alfonzo said while watching Marin start to pout as Elicia dropped another "Reverse " card.

"Yeah, that would be overkill." Marin said as she drew a card before dropping a "Draw Four. "Blue. But I like it."

This time it was Sun's turn to pout as she still had the most cards of the four players. Still, she drew her cards without complaint.

"I think it's a good idea." Sun said. She then smiled as she continued. "I like Irene. I learn so much about magic every time we talk."

"But will she agree?" Elicia asked as she watched Alfonzo drop a card before drawing one of her own.
"Draw Four. Green."

"You gotta be kidding me." Marin groaned.

"Honestly, I'm not sure." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head as Marin drew her cards. "but it doesn't hurt to ask. The worst she could say is no."

"that's true." Elicia replied as Sun played a "Skip." She then played a "Draw Two" as she continued.
"Uno. And if that doesn't work, we could ask Naruto, Sasuke, and Jiraiya. They're all at least B-Class in strength, now."

"We could ask Brandish, too." Marin suggested.

"Those are good ideas." Sun said with a smile.

"Well, we'll see." Alfonzo said with a shrug. "I'll ask Irene later. We can think about the rest after she says yes or no."

"Okay~." X 3

Like that, the game of Uno continued. And in the end, despite having the most cards when the conversation about who they would invite to their team ended, Sun won. And with her win, she got to decide what they would be having for dinner tonight. And Alfonzo would naturally be the one to cook it.

October 7, x789.

Just as Alfonzo said he would the day before, he intended to ask Irene if she would join their team in the Battle of Fairy Tail Tournament. So, he called her up. However, before he could ask his question, Irene invited him over to her house to help her come up with a new sigil sentence to add to her house's defenses. And since he had nothing else to do, Alfonzo wasted no time heading over to Irene's house.

Knock! *Knock!* *Knock!*

About twenty minutes after the phone call with Irene ended, Alfonzo was standing outside the front door of Irene's house and had just knocked. And it did not take long for someone to answer the door.

"Good afternoon, how can I help--- Oh, it's you." Heine said, her cordial tone dropping after recognizing Alfonzo.

"It's good to see you, too, Heine." Alfonzo said with a smile. "I'm here to see Irene. Is she available."

"Yes, she's in her office." Heine replied. She then stepped aside and bowed slightly while gesturing for Alfonzo to enter. "Please, come in, I'll show you there."

"Thanks." Alfonzo replied as he stepped into the house.

A moment later, Heine closed the door. Then, she led Alfonzo through the house, climbing stairs, as Irene decided she did not want any elevators in her home. Then, after a couple of minutes, the two reached the door leading to Irene's office.

Knock! *Knock!* *Knock!*

"Lady Irene, Master Alfonzo has arrived." Heine said in her usual tone.

"Let him enter." Irene replied from the other side of the door.

Nodding in response, Heine then opened the door before gesturing for Alfonzo to enter. Then, once he was inside, she left to tell Juliet that she should prepare tea for Irene and Alfonzo.

"Hey, Irene." Alfonzo said as he made his way over to Irene's desk, where she was sitting and looking over the schematics for her home's defenses.

"Good, you're here." Irene said as she raised her head and smiled at her much younger lover. "I hate to bother you with this, but as much as I hate to admit it, you're better at arranging sigils than I am."

"Don't mention it." Alfonzo said with a smile as he arrived next to Irene, leaned down, gave her a kiss, and turned his head to look at the schematics. "So, what do you wanna do ?"

"Well, I wanna add a function that will teleport any intruders outside... No, to the torture chamber I'm going to build... if they try to access something they're not supposed to." Irene said, a sadistic grin spreading across her face.

"*Sigh* You can take the dog out the fight but you can't take the fight out of the dog, huh?" Alfonzo said while shaking his head. "but sure, I can do that."

Alfonzo then opened an [Archive Magic] screen before bringing up the blueprint of Iren's house.

"Just tell me which room you're gonna turn into your torture room." Alfonzo said while looking at the sigil matrix that was already present.

Irene then pointed out a room in the basement of her house before the two started rearranging and adding sigils to the defensive matrix of the house.

A couple hours later, Alfonzo and Irene were sitting across from each other while drinking tea, having completed the changes to the defensive matrix.

"So, why did you call me, Alfonzo?" Irene asked after taking a sip of her tea. "I didn't exactly give you the chance to say when we were on the phone. Though, it would be nice if you called just to say hello because you were thinking about me."

"Well, it's true I was thinking about you." Alfonzo said with a smile while lightly shaking his head. "But it wasn't so romantic as to just say hi. I wanted to ask you something"

"Oh, then what was it?" Irene asked in an interested tone.

"Well, you see, Lici, Marin, Sun, and I will be participating in the Battle of Fairy Tail Tournament this year, and..." Alfonzo said, but when he reached that point, he saw all the interest in Irene's expression basically evaporate. "That's about the reaction I expected when I brought it up."

"Sorry, Dear." Irene said while shaking her head. "But I'm simply not interested in participating in those games for the entertainment of others."

"I figured." Alfonzo replied with a shrug before taking a sip of his tea. "But the worst you could have said was no.... Which you did. So, I asked anyway."

Irene could not help but giggle at that, raising a hand to her mouth to cover it as she did so.

"I think you should ask Brandish." Irene suggested. "although she has never come out and said it, she is quite interested in participating in the Grand Magic Games."

"Really?" Alfonzo asked in a slightly surprised tone. "She's kind of hard to read with that perpetually bored expression she's always got on."

"Yes, I'm certain." Irene replied. "But you can think about that later. "

With that, Irene stood up, walked around the coffee table, and stood in front of Alfonzo. She then slipped off her left boot, and raised her foot before placing it on Alfonzo's crotch and rubbing gently.

"It's been awhile since the last time you came over." Irene said with a seductive smile on her face. "So, why don't we have a---"

Ring! *Ring!*

Before Irene could finish, Alfonzo's iPhone started ringing. Then, after giving Irene an apologetic smile, he pulled it out of his pocket and looked at the caller ID.

"Hmm? Mey-Rin?" Alfonzo asked himself as he pressed the answer button. "Hey, Mey-Rin, what's going on?"

{"Master Alfonzo, Madam Shizuka's water just broke!"} Mey-Rin shouted in a somewhat panicked tone.

Immediately, Alfonzo tried to shoot up to his feet. However, at the last second, he realized that Irene's foot was still rubbing his crotch. So, he calmly moved it to the side before shooting up like he originally intended.

"Alright, I'll be there in a minute." Alfonzo said in an excited tone.

Alfonzo then hung up the phone, pulled Irene into a hug and gave her a kiss.

"Go." Irene said with a smile after Alfonzo broke the kiss. "She needs you more than I do right now."

"Okay, I'll make it up to you later." Alfonzo said as he kissed Irene once more.

After that, Alfonzo walked over to the nearest window, opened it, and flew away before using his [Metal Magic] to close the window behind him.

Meanwhile, Irene sat back on the chair she had just been sitting in, and fell into deep thought.

"Maybe having another child wouldn't be so bad." Irene said as she slowly rubbed her abdomen. "But if I have one with Alfonzo, what would the baby call Erza? Sister or Auntie? Hehehe. That might be fun to see."

Chapter 663: Brandish's Proposal

After leaving Irene's house, Alfonzo rushed home. By the time he arrived, Shizuka was just about to leave with Maria driving her to the hospital. And he naturally joined them.

After that, it did not take long to arrive at the hospital. Nor did it take long for Shizuka to be admitted. However, once she was in the delivery room, things started taking their time. And it took a little more than sixteen hours before the sound of a baby's cries echoed.

The new born, a brown-skinned boy with blond hair and hazel eyes, was given the name, Calvin Edward Marcus. And although the labor was quite long, he came out as healthy as could be.

And after getting the chance to see the child for a while, the rest of Alfonzo's wives and girlfriends made him go home and get some sleep, as he had been awake the entire time Shizuka was in labor. And he listened. Because despite the fact that he wanted to spend more time with Shizuka and Calvin, they had both fallen asleep shortly after the delivery.

The next day, after getting a good night's sleep, Alfonzo spent the whole day with Shizuka. But the following day, he went to the guild hall to fulfill some point requests and to try and find the fifth member of Team Steel Threads.

"Finally, I'm done... for now." Alfonzo said as he came out of the guild hall's kitchen with a bacon cheeseburger and an order of jalapeño poppers. "This was a lot more fun when I was a kid."

"It's probably because everyone is more used to you after so many years." Laxus said from his seat at the bar.

"You're probably right." Alfonzo replied with a shrug as he set the order in his hands down in front of Laxus. "They still act like the same pack of animals if I go too long without cooking for them, though."

"Well, can you blame them?" Laxus asked as he picked up one of the poppers. "You are the best cook in Ishgar, maybe even the world."

"That's a bit too much." Alfonzo said with while shaking his head.

"Maybe." Laxus replied while chewing his food. "By the way, did you find your last team mate yet? I'm really looking forward to facing you guys in the tournament."

"Looking forward to getting your ass kicked again?" Alfonzo asked with an eyebrow raised. "Did Saya and Chico turn you into some kind of masochist? No, that's not it. You've been like that since I was six or seven. Could never get enough ass kickings, could you?"

"Shut the hell up." Laxus replied, the word masochist making him shiver while remembering Darkness.

Alfonzo could not help laughing at Laxus reaction. Meanwhile, he glanced in the direction where Elicia and Marin were sitting with Brandish, undoubtedly trying to convince her to join Team Steel Threads.

Sun would have joined them, as well. However, she was at the hospital with her mother visiting Shizuka and the baby.

"So, I noticed you have a theme going on with your kids names." Laxus said after swallowing a bite of his burger.

"Huh? What are you talking about?" Alfonzo asked, Laxus statement bringing his attention back.

"Well, it's kind of obvious." Lexus replied. "Amar'e, Bianca, Calvin... A, B, C. Is the next one gonna start with D?"

As if he had not noticed, Alfonzo opened his eyes wide in surprise. Then, after processing everything, he shrugged his shoulders.

"Who knows." Alfonzo said. "If it happens it happens. But if it does, then I'll follow the theme for the rest of them. As long as their mothers are okay with it."

"I see." Lexus replied with a nod. "By the way, Saya and Chico are finally ready to have the wedding. They wanna do it on the first of the year."

"You all sure took your time." Alfonzo said.

"That's because no one knew when you were going to take another long term job." Lexus replied snappily. "And since you accepted to be my best man, we had to make sure first."

"And what made you think this would be a good time?" Alfonzo asked in a curious tone.

"Because you're participating in the tournament." Lexus replied. "And I'm certain you think you're going to win. So, you'll be training for the GMG after that. At least, that's what you should have planned."

Lexus then grinned challengingly.

"Too bad those plans will be going up in smoke, though." Laxus said confidently. "But at least you'll be around for a while. It should take a while to set up any big jobs after you find yourself with all that free time, after all."

"You really have gotten confident." Alfonzo replied, a challenging smile of his own spreading across his face. "No, that's not it. You're just angry, angry that you lost to Mermaid Heel, aren't you?"

Zap!

Bang!

"Damn right I am!" Laxus growled as his lightning clad fist slammed into the bar top. "I'm gonna get back at them and show them that Fairy Tail is and always will be the strongest."

"Good ambition." Alfonzo replied with a nod. "But let the real professionals handle that, alright? Team Steel Threads will bring the title back home. Just sit back and enjoy the show."

Hearing that, Laxus' eyebrow shot up while his expression turned deadpan.

"You wanna say that again?" Laxus asked in a calm, yet threatening tone.

"We'll let our matches in the tournament do all the talking next week." Alfonzo said while waving his right hand dismissively.

"I guess we will." Laxus replied before taking another bite of his burger. "Anyway, have any idea what happened to that chick from the Village Hidden in the Mist? What was her name again....? Whatever... Anyway, wasn't she supposed to come here to form an alliance with us?"

"Mei Terumi." Alfonzo replied blankly. "She's the new Mizukage, the leader of the Village Hidden in the Mist. How the hell did you forget her name?"

"Because I don't make it a habit to pay attention to wizards from other nations unless I have a quest to work with them." Laxus replied with a shrug. "Plus, all my thoughts are on Saya and Chico. So, I don't have the time to think about other women."

"Good answer." X 2

Hearing those voices from behind him, Laxus quickly turned in his seat. When he did, he saw Saya smiling at him with her arms crossed under her breasts while Chico was standing next to her with her hands resting on her hips. And when he saw his two fiancées, cold sweat started to form on his back.

After Alfonzo reminded him of Mei's name, he remembered what she looked like. And he was about to say something about how good looking she was. But if he had, he knew he would have been in a world of hurt later if Saya and Chico had heard him.

"Hey, Saya, Chico, what's up?" Alfonzo asked, smiling at Laxus' almost unfortunate predicament. "You two just got back from a quest, right? Well, I'm working in the kitchen today. So, I got you if you want anything? Provided you have the points, that is."

Hearing that, both Saya's and Chico's eyes lit up.

"I'll have an open-faced roast beef sandwich with au jus dip, please." Chico said excitedly with drool starting to drip from the corner of her lips.

"And I'll have Steak and Shrimp Hibachi with fried rice and steamed vegetables." Saya added.

"Okay, I'll have that out in a few minutes." Alfonzo replied while wiping a bead of sweat off his forehead.

Though cooking the meals was no issue. Saya had a knack for ordering things that were rather exotic. For example, there was one time she caught Alfonzo cooking in the guild, and she ordered roast venison with a boysenberry sauce.

While that was not a terribly troublesome dish to cook, Fairy Tail's guild hall did not often stock venison... Or boysenberries, for that matter. So, he had to ask Maria to take a trip to the market to see if there was any venison and boysenberries on sale. If there wasn't, there would have been nothing Alfonzo could do about it. But there was. So, Alfonzo had to go through the process of tenderizing the meat before cooking it.

In the end, it was the longest he had ever taken to prepare a dish at the guild hall. So, he always had a little dread whenever he took Saya's order.

Even so, Alfonzo accepted the two ladies' orders and returned to the kitchen.

Meanwhile, as Alfonzo surmised while talking to Laxus, Elicia and Marin were sitting at a table with Brandish, who was sitting with her arms crossed and staring at them impassively.

"So, what you're telling me is, I was only your second choice?" Brandish asked in a tone that did not display her discontentment.

However, it was easy for people like Elicia and Marin to see through the façade Brandish had put on. Even so, neither of them were deterred.

"That's right." Elicia replied with a smile. "I know it sounds bad, but it's not because we think any less of you."

That sounded like an excuse to Brandish, though. There was only one person in the guild she thought was a better choice than her to join Team Steel Threads. But knowing Irene as well as she did, and as well as the members of Team Steel Threads should, she thought there was no way they would have asked her. So, Brandish was a little upset to think that they came to her second.

"Well, we actually expected our first candidate to say no." Marin added. "But Fonzie told us the worst that could happen was Irene telling us no. Still, that was no reason not to try."

That caused Brandish to open her eyes a little wider.

'So, I was second after Irene., huh?' Brandish thought to herself. 'Well, I guess I can't really be all that mad about that. But still, to think Alfonzo would ask her even though he knew what she would say. I guess he was just trying his luck. There's always a chance that she might have been in a good mood. And then, from what I've heard from Lucy, there's a chance that she might have said yes after they had some of the mind-blowing sex she always talks about, too.'

With those thoughts running through her head, Brandish could not help blushing slightly after thinking about all the rather vivid descriptions of Alfonzo's and Lucy's sex life that Lucy always told her about during their girl talks.

Meanwhile, Elicia and Marin both saw the color float to the surface of Brandish's cheeks and they turned to look at each other. However, neither of them knew what the younger girl could have been thinking. They had no idea that Lucy often bragged about her sex life to the child of her mother's best friend, after all.

"*Cough* Anyway, I can understand why I was the second one you asked to join your team, now." Brandish said, coughing to draw Elicia's and Marin's attention away from her blushing cheeks. "If it were me, I would have tried to get Irene on my team first, too."

"Then, does that mean you'll join our team?" Marin asked with a bright smile.

"On one condition." Brandish replied. "I want to fight Alfonzo. If he can defeat me, I'll join. If not, then you all have to join my team. Sure, the result will be all of us on the same team. But I'll be the leader instead of Alfonzo."

"Hmm... I see." Elicia said with a nod. "I guess that makes sense. No one wants to take orders from someone weaker than them, after all."

"Exactly." Brandish replied. "In fact, I can't understand why no one has petitioned for Irene to take over as guild master yet. You know, since she's the strongest member of the guild."

Just at that moment, Ur stepped out of the elevators and happened to overhear Brandish. And her eyes lit up as she started considering how to convince Irene to become the fifth guild master of the guild while she headed to the bar to place an order with Alfonzo.

"Well, Gildarts wasn't the guild master either." Marin pointed out.

"That's because that would have been a terrible idea." Elicia countered. "Gildarts just can't stay in one place long enough for that to work."

'I can still remember when Macao named Gildarts the fifth guild master in the anime.' Elicia thought to herself while trying not to giggle aloud. 'It couldn't have been more than a few days before Gildarts disappeared, only leaving behind a letter naming Gramps the sixth guild master.'

"Well, when Alfonzo is done in the kitchen, we can ask him if he's willing to go along with your proposal." Marin said with a smile. "But you know he's the publicly recognized second strongest member of the guild after Irene, right?"

"Even so, I want to see his strength with my own eyes." Brandish replied. "And if he is weaker than reported, I'll take control of this team and rename it to something I like."

"Then, we'll just have to wait and see." Elicia said as she turned to look at the door leading to the guild hall's kitchen.

Chapter 664: Irene's Ideas

"Hmm? Where is everyone?" Irene asked shortly after walking through the guild hall's sliding doors.

"Did they all leave on quests?" Juliet asked in her usual upbeat tone.

"I doubt it." Heine replied. She then pointed at the tables scattered around the guild hall's first floor.
"Look, there are a lot of empty plates and glasses on the tables."

"You're right, Heine." Irene replied with a nod. She then focused on the lone person sitting at the bar.
"But I think there is someone we can ask sitting over there."

At the end of Irene's line of sight, Ur, nursing a glass of wine, sat at the bar, seemingly deep in thought.

"Ur, good afternoon." Irene said as she, Heine, and Juliet approached the bar. "Quite the unusual sight to see you sitting at the bar alone. Did something happen?"

"Oh, Irene." Ur said, her eyes lighting up as she laid them on Irene. "Just the person I wanted to see."

Immediately, Irene went on guard. Ur looked way too excited to see her. And she did not like it. Not one bit.

"And what can I do for you, Ur?" Irene asked, making sure not to show her caution in her tone.

"There are two things, actually." Ur replied with a smile. "As I'm sure you are aware, there are a couple of openings among the Wizard Saints, most notably, one of the Four Gods of Ishgar. And I was hoping---"

"No thank you." Irene replied before Ur could finish her sale's pitch. "I'm simply not interested."

"Well, can't say I didn't see that coming." Ur replied, undeterred. "As for the second thing, how would you like to be the fifth guild master of the Fairy Tail wizarding guild. And before you reject, hear me out, at least."

Ur's last sentence cause Irene to not decline immediately. So, she gestured for Ur to continue. Meanwhile, Heine and Juliet were excited by the prospect of Irene becoming the next guild master. In their opinions, no position in the guild would fit her better.

"You see, ever since the Grand Magic Games started, I haven't had the opportunity to participate." Ur continued.

"Because guild masters cannot participate." Irene said, nodding in understanding.

"Right." Ur replied with a nod of her own. "In fact, that's the reason Alfonzo always rejects whenever I ask him to be the guild master in my place. He's always wanted to participate in the Grand Magic games. Unfortunately, his work has gotten in the way for the last few years."

"I see." Irene replied, once again nodding in understanding.

"So, I got to thinking..." Ur said, leaning a little closer to Irene as she did so, her eyes sparkling in anticipation as she continued.. "Since you aren't interested in taking part in the Grand Magic Games, it would be the right call to put you in the position of the guild master."

"I can definitely see where you're coming from." Irene replied with yet another nod after letting Ur's reasoning sink in.

"I know, right?" Ur replied with a wide smile stretched across her face.

"You're still young enough to compete with the best the kingdom has to offer." Irene continued.
"Powerful enough, too. It's no wonder you want to join the Grand Magic Games."

"Exactly." Ur said, nodding her head with great vigor as she did so.

"But..." Irene said before pausing for dramatic effect.

That one word was enough to make Ur's smile freeze on her face, the feeling that she was not going to like what followed after the "but" rushing to the forefront of her mind.

"I really have no interest in taking the position of guild master." Irene said. "I truly enjoy the fact that I can spend my days as leisurely as I'd like. Taking quests when I feel like it. Not having to deal with the Council, spending time with my daughter and my new family. It's all I could ask for."

Immediately after hearing that, Ur hung her head in defeat.

"*Sigh* I understand." Ur said in a defeated tone. "I suppose it would be cruel to ask you to take on a responsibility like that after everything you've been through and what you've finally been able to attain after so much hardship."

Seeing Ur's downcast mood, despite how sadistic she could be, Irene felt pity for her. So, before Ur's mood could spiral downward any further, she spoke once again.

"But I may have a solution." Irene said.

As if a light had shined down from above, Ur snapped her head up to stare Irene directly in her eyes.

"Wha... What is it?" Ur asked as if she were grasping at straws.

"Well, why not ask Mavis?" Irene suggested. "I'm sure she would love to take charge of the guild she founded. Especially since her time as guild master was cut short thanks to Ankhseram's curse."

Ur's eyes shot open, surprise and realization dancing in their depths.

"Plus, Alfonzo sacrificed a Philosopher's Stone to have that curse removed, didn't he?" Irene asked, a smile spreading across her face at the sight of Ur's excitement. "And that means, not only will she finally start aging like anyone else, but she doesn't have to worry about hurting anyone she cares about, either."

"That's right, he did.!" Ur exclaimed happily. "I'll definitely ask Master Mavis once she gets back from visiting Warrod!"

"Good." Irene said. "Now, may I ask you a question, Ur?"

"Of course." Ur replied, clearly on cloud nine at the moment. "anything you want."

"Where is everyone?" Irene asked.

At the same time, in the large training chamber on the tenth floor of the guild hall, most of the guild was gathered, standing against the walls of the training room. Meanwhile, at the room's center, Alfonzo and Brandish stood across from each other.

"Are you sure you want to do this, Brandish?" Alfonzo asked, not really interested in having this match.

"Why, afraid you'll lose?" Brandish asked in an almost bored tone.

Despite her tone, the excitement in Brandish's eyes could not be hidden. It was clear she was looking forward to her upcoming fight with Alfonzo.

"*Sigh* Fine, if this is what you really want." Alfonzo said as he started shaking his arms to loosen up.

Instead of replying, Brandish raised her guard in a standard kickboxing stance. At the same time, she started bouncing on the balls of her feet, which looked a little strange with her high heeled sandals.

"Are you ready?" Brandish asked.

Seeing that Brandish was not using a weapon, Alfonzo did not draw his own, either. Instead, he took a Philly Style boxing stance, with his left hand dropped low and his right hand up near his chin. Then, he two started bouncing on his toes.

"Yeah, I'm ready." Alfonzo replied.

As soon as Alfonzo gave his affirmation, Brandish shot forward in a blur of speed. Then, once she was close enough, she snapped a jab at Alfonzo's chin.

In response, Alfonzo, though not wanting to have this fight, was focused, his right hand shot out, batting Brandish's Jab to the side while simultaneously tilting his head to the side, as well, as Brandish's hand opened just after her punch was batted away.

"[Command T: Expansion]." Brandish chanted.

Boom! *Boom!* *Boom!*

Alfonzo's left hand then shot up from below, knocking Brandish's left arm up before she could retract it. Then, Alfonzo stepped in and ducked under her raised arm while he hooked his left arm under hers and shifted his body around behind her in one motion.

Unfortunately, the spectators behind Alfonzo's starting position missed the smooth transfer into a grapple as the barrier separating them from the sparring ring was impacted by nearly a hundred tree limb-sized splinters.

"What the hell?" Gray exclaimed as he jumped at the pieces of wood that came flying from out of nowhere.

"Hmm... She must have had a hand full of saw dust or something like that in her closed hand before she opened it." Erza analyzed.

"Wait! Are you saying she was trying to throw all that in Alfonzo's face?" Lucy asked in horror.

"It looks that way." Erza replied with a nod. "Not that it would have harmed him, though. It would have probably pushed him back at the very most."

"Still, that's really dangerous." Lucy said while shifting her gaze back to Alfonzo. "By the way, why are those two fighting, anyway."

"I have no idea." Erza replied with a head shake.

Meanwhile, After slipping behind Brandish, Alfonzo tried to hook his right arm under Brandish's right, as well. However, Brandish reacted quickly, throwing her right elbow back with all her might.

Bang!

Crack!

"Argh~~~~~!" Brandish screamed from the unexpected pain coming from the tip of her right elbow.

Unfortunately for Brandish, Alfonzo reacted just as quickly, materializing a sheet of Adamantite on the surface of his skin at the point of impact. As a result, the sound of bone cracking echoed around the training room, causing a few of the guild members with weaker wills or pain tolerances to wince, pangs of phantom pain shooting through their own right elbows and arms..

Despite the pain, Brandish moved her arm once again, her hand surging towards the metal plate her elbow just slammed into.

"[Command T: Expansion]." Brandish chanted once again.

In the next instant, the thin plate of Adamantite swelled in size, forcing Alfonzo to release Brandish's left arm quickly before stepping back. Even so, while stepping back, Alfonzo tapped the tip of his right index finger on the sheet of Adamantite.

"[Electromagnetism Magic: Static Discharge]." Alfonzo chanted just as his fingertip touched the adamantite.

In the next instant, a bolt of purple electricity exited Alfonzo's finger, the adamantite sheet conducting it into Brandish's body.

"Ahh~~~~~ Ah baba-ba-baba." Brandish screamed unintelligibly due to the electrical current flowing through her body.

The sheet of Adamantite then disappeared, having been dispelled by Alfonzo before he shot forward again, still in his Philly Boxing stance. Then, when he was in range, his left fist shot out, burying itself in Brandish's abdomen.

"Gah!" Brandish grunted involuntarily as she doubled over Alfonzo's fist.

Then, in one smooth motion, Alfonzo slipped past Brandish, his left arm wrapping around her throat and causing her body to straighten up. Then, he hooked his right arm under her right, forcing her once again into a half-nelson before his left hand locked around his right bicep as he flexed his left bicep slightly as he lifted Brandish's 5'6" tall frame off the floor.

"You giving up? Or do I have to shock you again?" Alfonzo asked with his hold locked in.

However, it took a few moments for Brandish to recover enough to speak, with the injury to her elbow, her body still spasming from the electric shock, and having her breath knocked out of her by Alfonzo's punch.

Meanwhile, a short silence fell over the training room. Although most people expected Alfonzo to win, they did not expect him to win so easily. Brandish had magic power on par with, if not a little lower than, Gildarts, after all.

"I don't get it." Droy said in a confused tone. "Why didn't she try to use her [Command T] on Alfonzo directly?"

"It's because [Command T] doesn't work on individuals who vastly outstrip you in power." Levy replied. "And although it may not look like it, Alfonzo usually hides how much magic power he's outputting at all times."

"But is Alfonzo really that much stronger than Brandish?" Jet asked curiously.

"Honestly, if you had asked me earlier today, I would have said there was no way." Levy replied. "but now, I'm not sure."

"It's not that Alfonzo is that much stronger, actually." Gajeel, looking like he was ready to jump in the ring himself, said, cutting into the conversation. "Instead, he's just that much faster than her."

"what do you mean?" Jet and Droy asked simultaneously.

"I'm pretty sure she has to touch him with her hands to activate [Command T]." Gajeel asked. "Right, Pipsqueak?"

"If I had to guess." Levy replied with a nod while shooting an annoyed pout at Gajeel. "At least, I've never seen her cast it with any other parts of her body."

"That is actually incorrect." Irene, having entered the training room with Ur just a moment ago, said in reply to Levy's analysis. "Brandish doesn't actually need physical contact to cast her magic. The real reason Brandish did not use her magic on Alfonzo directly, is because she couldn't."

Hearing Irene's voice from so close by, Levy, Jet, Droy, and Gajeel all turned to look at her in surprise. However, they still paid close attention to her following words.

"And that's because, despite not having that much more magic power than Brandish, Alfonzo's magic power is so much denser than hers." Irene continued while watching Brandish tap her uninjured left hand on Alfonzo's bicep three times, signaling that she was giving up. "Honestly, it amazes me just how dense his magic power is. And he's not even twenty-five yet."

'Though, I'm not actually a hundred percent sure about that.' Irene muttered to herself. 'Not after all the things I learned about other worlds from him and his and Elicia's guests that stopped by a couple of months ago.'

While Irene was considering the possibilities of interdimensional travel, Alfonzo set Brandish back on the floor. Then, he gestured towards Wendy, asking her to heal Brandish's cracked elbow. Meanwhile, everyone else discussed the rather short spar that just took place. Not long after that, everyone got back to what they were supposed to be doing. Namely, Harvest Festival preparations.

Chapter 665: As Expected

"*Sigh* I can't believe I lost." Brandish said while resting her head in her hands at one of the guild hall's tables. "And so easily at that."

Currently, Brandish was sitting at a table with Elicia and Marin. And after hearing Brandish repeat the same thing for the fifth time, Elicia, who was sitting next to her, patted her on the shoulder.

"Well, Fonzie is called the second strongest member of the guild for a reason, you know?" Elicia said while smiling wryly.

"Ugh!" Brandish groaned in annoyance. "But I was a member of the Spriggan 12. The strongest wizards in Alvarez." Brandish replied.

"Well, I kinda beat Jacob in a one-on-one, you know." Elicia said. "And according to you and Irene, he was stronger than you, right? And Fonzie is stronger than me."

"Yeah, and the proof of that is that he's still locked up in the guild's prison." Marin added.

"The only reason I couldn't beat him is because I couldn't see him when he used his [Stealth Magic]." Brandish countered. "But now that I know [Magic Power Detection], I'm sure I could take him easily."

"Well, you're probably not wrong." Alfonzo, carrying a plate of peach cobbler said as he approached the table where the three girls were sitting. "And if your magic worked on me, that fight would have gone differently. I still don't think I would have lost, though. But I would have had to work harder for it."

Hearing Alfonzo's voice, Brandish raised her head just in time to see Alfonzo put the plate of peach cobbler in front of her.

"And just how the hell is your magic power so dense?" Brandish asked while looking up at Alfonzo who was walking around the table to sit next to Marin.

"Lots of hard work and training." Alfonzo replied while taking a seat next to Marin.

Brandish could only grumble at that response. It was not like she did not train hard, too. Though, she knew that thanks to her apathetic nature, she did not train as hard as she could. Plus, she had seen Alfonzo's training regimen before. And there was no way she would train like he did. Hell, she was sure that not even Zeref trained that hard when he was Alfonzo's age.

"Anyway, now that our team is complete, we should talk about our strategy in the tournament." Alfonzo said after he saw Brandish pick up her fork to start eating. "Lici, Sun, Marin, and I haven't participated in the tournament since it was four-on-four. And Brandish has never participated at all."

"Mmm~~~~~!" Brandish moaned in food-gasmic bliss after taking her first bite of the peach cobbler.

Having grown used to such a sight over the years, no one reacted to Brandish's faux pas, deciding to carry on the conversation as if it never happened.

"That's true." Marin said with a nod. "But shouldn't we wait to have this conversation with Sun? She's still at the hospital visiting Shizuka with her mom, right?"

"I don't think we need to worry about that." Elicia replied. "We can just tell her about what we came up with later."

"Yeah, she's pretty good at following the majority." Alfonzo added.

With that, the group of four started talking about their team set up in certain situations and against particular teams. And that continued for a while after Brandish finished eating. Then, they all left to do their own things. Though, Alfonzo and Elicia did make a trip to the hospital to see Shizuka and Calvin before heading home.

October 15, x789.

Time passed quickly after that. And before anyone knew it, it was the day of the Harvest Festival. And things went like they always did on that day. Or rather, like they have for the last five years.

The streets of Magnolia were decorated with festival decorations. The people were happy, looking forward to the festivities sponsored by Fairy Tail. Especially the Battle of Fairy Tail Tournament and the Fantasia Parade. Though, a lot of the men in the town were wishing that the guild would open the Miss Fairy Tail Pageant to the public. Unfortunately, all they could do was wish, as the pageant was an internal event.

Yet, all the free members of the guild were gathered in the guild hall's first floor. And like always, the stage used during important announcements had been lowered.

"Ladies and gentlemen, are you ready?" Warren asked from the top of the stage while wearing a midnight blue suit with a white dress shirt and no tie. "Then, allow me to welcome you to the fifth annual Miss Fairy Tail Pageant. Now, without further ado, let's kick things off with the Evening Gown portion of our proceedings. Please help me in welcoming our first contestant, Saeko Busujima."

With that, the Miss Fairy Tail Pageant began. And just like every year, there were three stages, the evening gown stage, the talent show stage, and the swimsuit stage. And by the end, after all the votes were collected, a winner had been decided.

"Ladies and gentlemen, it's been another great pageant, hasn't it?" Warren, standing on the stage with all the contestants standing in a line behind him, asked the audience. "And all the girls were amazing, weren't they? Unfortunately, there can be only one winner. And I'm sure you're all looking forward to finding out who that is, right? Then, I won't keep you waiting any longer."

With that, the lights in the guild hall went out. Then, spot lights fell onto all the contestants, highlighting their appearances in their swimsuits. A moment later, the spot lights began to flicker between all the contestants as Warren continued.

"And the winner is..." Warren said, doing his best to build suspense. "Brandish μ~~~~~!"

With that, the spot lights stop cycling, lighting up Brandish's figure. And just like always, she wore that bored expression on her face.

"You can't be serious!" Evergreen shouted. "How? Every year? How can the perfect example of beauty that is me not win this contest?"

"Maybe if you fixed your attitude, things would change." Ur said from her seat in the audience. "You act like this every year. Hell, I still remember the time I had to drag you back stage and teach you how a proper lady should act after you did this the first time."

"I really don't think you have the right to teach anyone how a proper lady should act, Miss Guild Master Wino." Alfonzo said with a cheeky grin on his face.

"What was that?" Ur asked as she snapped her head in Alfonzo's direction.

And just like that, in classic Fairy Tail fashion, the guild hall devolved into a brawl. However, this one did not last as long or get as intense as the usual Fairy Tail guild brawls. And the reason for that was simple, the Battle of Fairy Tail Tournament would start soon. So, after the brawl ended, everyone made their way to the town's outskirts where the usual arena was set up.

Once all the wizards and spectators had arrived, things proceeded like they usually do. The teams drew their lots, and the order of battle was decided. After that, it was time for some of the good old fashioned, controlled violence that everyone has come to expect from this tournament.

It should be noted that ever since the format of the tournament changed from four-on-four to five-on-five, the rules of the tournament had changed slightly.

It was still a single elimination tournament with the winner of each match moving on to the next round while the losers were eliminated. However, the way teams won points had changed. On top of that, the flow of each match had changed as well.

Now, instead of a one-on-one, a two-on-two, and a one-on-one match as a tie breaker, there were two one-on-one matches before the two-on-two match, which would be followed by the last one-on-one match.

And because the number of matches would be even, a point rule was introduced. Meaning, each one-on-one match won would net the winning team one point. While the winner of the two-on-two match would receive two points.

Then, after about six and a half hours, with breaks between rounds, it was time for the finals. And to no one's surprise, the two teams competing for the title of the strongest team in Fairy Tail, as well as the chance to compete in the Grand Magic Games, were the Thunder god Tribe, consisting of Laxus, Bickslow, Fried, Evergreen, and Saya, and Team Steel Threads, consisting of Alfonzo, Elicia, Marin, Sun, and Brandish.

And just as unsurprisingly, the match went to the final round, Alfonzo versus Laxus, a rematch from the very first Battle of Fairy Tail tournament. The other matches were quite similar, as well.

In the first round of the match, Elicia and Evergreen had a rematch, as well. And just like in the first iteration of this match, Elicia won. Though, it was not quite as close as the first time. Even though both fighters had grown since their match five years ago, Elicia had outpaced Evergreen since then in terms of training, despite having to take time away because of pregnancy, parenthood, and her business.

After that round, Brandish faced off against Saya. And unfortunately for Saya, she was just lacking too much in terms of power and experience to put up a fight against Brandish, resulting in an easy victory for Brandish.

The third round was another rematch from the first tournament, Marin and Sun versus Fried and Bickslow. And although it was much closer than the first time, Fried and Bickslow were able to just barely take the win.

The last match, Alfonzo versus Laxus, was not as anticipated as expected, however. It was common knowledge by now that Laxus, ever since the first time they fought a little more than seventeen years ago, had never beaten Alfonzo. And although they both used the [Partial Release States] of their [Soul Armaments], Elexion only had the effect of amplifying Laxus' [Lightning Dragon Slayer Magic]. And Alfonzo had already proven that he was able to handle that for years.

So, in the end, Team Steel Threads won the tournament and regained their title as the strongest team in Fairy Tail. On top of that, they would be representing Fairy Tail in next year's Grand Magic Games in a bid to reestablish Fairy Tail as Fiore's strongest guild.

After that, the wizards of Fairy Tail had just enough time to return to the guild hall and change into their parade costumes before starting the Fantasia Parade, the highlight of the Harvest Festival. But for some

reason, there were quite a few guests from out of town this year. And Alfonzo and Elicia happened to know most of them.

For example, from Tatsumi Port Island, Takeharu and Mitsuru Kirijo, Akihiko Sanada, and Yukari Takeba were in attendance. There were a few more people accompanying them, as well. They even brought a dog.

Then, there were quite a few shinobi from the Village Hidden in the Leaves, Roy Mustang and Riza Hawkeye from Fiore's Knight Order, Pinako Rockbell and Din from the town of Resenbool, as well as Moka and Bobo from Galuna Island. There were others, as well. However, those few were the most notable of the visitors from out of town.

And just like that, the Fantasia Parade went off without a hitch. And before everyone knew it, the time flew by, and it was almost time for the S-Class Promotion Exam to begin again. However, Team Steel Threads were not too concerned with that. Instead, they focused on training hard. And when they were not training, they all did the things they enjoyed.

Meaning, Alfonzo either cooked or tinkered with new inventions. Elicia made clothes. Sun went to Akane Beach to swim as often as she could. And Marin and Brandish spent, what most would say was, an unhealthy amount of time reading erotic novels with Erza and discussing their contents.

December 13, x789.

And some time just before the S-Class Promotion Exam was set to take place, while the S-Class wizards were on Tenrou Island getting the exam ready, Ao, from the Village Hidden in the Mist showed up with a message from Mei Terumi addressed to Ur. He then left to return to the Mist Village shortly after handing it over.

"So, she's finally got enough free time to make the trip, huh?" Ur said while reading the message from Ao. "Well, I'm sure Alfonzo, Laxus, and Marin will be willing to entertain her when she shows up after the exam."

Chapter 666: Welcoming the Mizukage

A week has passed since Ur received the message from the Village Hidden in the Mist. In that time, the preparations for the x789 S-Class Promotion Exam were completed, as well as the exam itself. And for the first time since x778, when Laxus was promoted to S-Class, no one was promoted during the exam this year.

So, with everyone feeling disappointed, the guild members returned from Tenrou Island with nothing to show for it. Even so, there were still things to look forward to when they got back.

For example, Mei Terumi, the Mizukage of the Village Hidden in the Mist would be showing up at some point before the year ended. Then, there was Laxus wedding. And finally, though a bit further way, there was Team Steel Threads participation in the x790 Grand Magic Games.

And if you were to tell anyone, even Chico, one of his brides to be, that Laxus would be getting married ten years ago, they would all laugh. Laxus was just as unlikely to get married as Natsu was before he started dating Lisanna. But somehow, both of them would be among the ranks of those with wives in the near future.

However, Laxus' wedding, that would have to wait for a couple more weeks. Instead, they would be welcoming a visitor before that. And many of the guild's members were waiting for that visitor on the guild hall's first floor.

"So, when do you think she'll show up?" Laxus asked from his spot at the bar.

"Who knows." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "But Ur said it would happen before the ball dropped."

"The ball?" Laxus asked in a confused tone.

"Is someone going through puberty?" Gajeel asked with a grin on his face.

Meanwhile, Alfonzo looked at not only Laxus and Gajeel, but Alzack, Gray, and Elfman, who also seemed to have no idea what he was talking about, as well, with confusion. A moment later, however, he understood what the issue was.

'Oh, that's right, there's no concept of the ball dropping at the end of the year in this world.' Alfonzo thought to himself with realization sparkling in his eyes. A moment later, he had a great idea as he continued his thoughts. 'But maybe I should do something about that. But do I have enough time? There are only eleven days left.'

"Hey, Alfonzo, I know that look." Gray said, leaning over the bar to look at Alfonzo intensely. "Over the years, every time you've had that look on your face, you've made quite a bit of money in the near future."

Hearin Gray's words, Laxus, Alzack, Elfman, and Gajeel turned to look at Alfonzo with inquiring gazes. And they all waited on tenterhooks.

"Oh, I just had an idea for an annual event." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "And I think it will be something people will come to love over the years. But if I want to have it happen this year, I'll have to make a few phone calls. And that may not even be enough to get things rolling this year."

With that, Alfonzo stood up and stepped away from the bar. He then pulled his iPhone out of his pocket and started walking towards a corner of the guild hall that was comparatively quieter than the guild hall's usual din. And just as he held his iPhone to his ear, they could only hear a few words before he was out of earshot.

"Hey, Masumi, I just had a great idea." Alfonzo said while walking away from prying ears. "I'll tell you what I'm thinking. Then, I need you to give me an estimate of how quickly you can get everything together. So, this is what I'm thinking..."

Lexus, Alzack, Gray, and Gajeel could only look on in curiosity. However, they were unable to hear anything Alfonzo said after a certain point.

"Seriously, he's always so secretive when it comes to things like this." Lexus muttered.

"Well, can you blame him?" Alzack asked with a shrug. "Even though we're all friends, he tries his best to keep business and his personal life separate."

"I know." Lexus grumbled before picking up his drink and draining it in one go.

Bang!

"That won't stop me from being curious, though." Laxus continued while slamming his empty mug on the top of the bar.

"What's got you so annoyed, Laxus?" Ur asked, walking up behind the group of four after leaving the elevators.

Ur's voice caused Laxus, Alzack, Gray, and Gajeel to look back. When they did, they saw Ur as expected. They also saw Marin and Shizuka flanking her on either side. And Shizuka was holding the sleeping Calvin in her arms, as well.

"Don't worry about it." Laxus replied while waving Ur's question off dismissively. "Anyway, do you need us for something? Actually scratch that. Since those two are with you, I can already guess what you're here for."

"that's right." Ur replied with a nod. "Come with me. We're going to the train station to greet our guests from abroad."

"*Sigh* So they're finally here, huh?" Laxus asked as he placed his hands on the top of the bar to support himself as he stood up. "Well, it took long enough."

"Don't say things like that, Laxus." Ur said. "It takes time to stabilize a situation when the leadership role is forcefully taken. In fact, I'm impressed that it only took her this long."

"If you say so?" Laxus replied with a shrug.

"Anyway, where's Fonzie?" Marin asked curiously.

"Over there." Alzack said while pointing at the corner where Alfonzo was having his phone call.

"Ooh! I'll go get him!" Shizuka cheered happily, speed walking over to Alfonzo before anyone could object. "I'm sure Cal will love to see his daddy."

Just like that, the group watched Shizuka approach Alfonzo happily. She then handed Calvin to him and Alfonzo put his iPhone away before they returned with Alfonzo cradling Calvin in his arms while Shizuka held onto Alfonzo's elbow.

"So, she's finally here, huh?" Alfonzo asked when he and Shizuka returned to the others. "Well then, I guess we should get going, shouldn't we? But I assume we're not gonna be walking, right? Then, who's driving?"

That question brought everyone up short. The only two cars that were present were Shizuka's, since she drove to the guild hall with Calvin and Ur's. However, neither vehicle was big enough to carry so many people. And even if they took both, there would not be enough space for everyone.

"*Sigh* I'll take care of it." Alfonzo said in an exasperated tone. "You should have told me we would be driving to pick them up earlier, Ur. If you had, I would have brought the limo here."

With that, Alfonzo handed Calvin back to Shizuka. Then, he walked towards the guild's sliding doors.

"I'll be back in a few minutes." Alfonzo said while walking away. "Shizuka, you should take the car seat out of your car. Unless you plan on leaving Calvin here with Ren."

"Nope!" Shizuka said in her usual, slightly airheaded tone. "I wanna show off Calvin to Mei. She'll be surprised by how cute he is."

'Yeah, and even more determined to get married, too.' Alfonzo thought to himself while shrugging his shoulders.

A moment later, Alfonzo was standing outside of the guild hall. The, his body was engulfed by arcs of violet electricity before he simply vanished from where he stood.

Not long after that, Alfonzo appeared outside of the Mansion on the Lake. He then opened the door and walked inside.

"Grayfia, are you here!?" Alfonzo shouted, his voice carrying to every corner of the mansion.

Swish!

Not even a second later, Grayfia appeared in front of Alfonzo with her hands folded over her lower abdomen and her head bowed in respect.

"Master Alfonzo, how may I be of assistance?" Grayfia asked.

"The guild is going to be picking up some important guests from the train station." Alfonzo explained. "And I'll need someone to drive the limo. I could do it myself, but I'm sure I'll be expected to entertain our guests on the way back to the guild hall."

"I understand." Grayfia replied.

"Good, then please get the limo out of the garage." Alfonzo said as he turned around. "I'll levitate it over to the guild hall to save time. Then, we'll drive to the train station."

"As you command." Grayfia replied, bowing her head once again before she vanished in a burst of speed to retrieve the limo's key and drive it out of the underground garage.

A few minutes later, a trio who was dressed differently than the townsfolk of Magnolia stepped out of the train station. When they did, the two men and one woman looked around, the wariness in their gazes evident to nearly no one.

"This is quite the peaceful town." The woman, Mei Terumi, said while watching the people of Magnolia go about their business. "It's rare to see such carefree people in Caelum outside of the capital city."

"Indeed." One of the men, Ao, replied with a nod. "There are so many rogue shinobi and dark wizards running around Caelum's countryside that it is impossible to have this many carefree people anywhere other than the capital."

"It's nice." The second male, a young man with short, spiky sky blue hair, standing at about 5'4" tall looking to be in his late teens and wearing a pin-striped shirt that matched his hair color and a pair of camouflage-patterned pants with standard ninja sandals with a large sword in the shape of a large flounder fish wrapped in bandages strapped to his back, said in a shy tone while looking around cautiously. "But what if it's just a façade to get us to lower our guard? How will we protect Lady Mizukage in that case?"

"Chōjurō, you're one of the Seven Ninja Swordsman of the Mist." Mei said in an exasperated tone. "How can you be so unconfident? You need to take pride in the fact that you've reached such a height."

"Y-yes, Lady Mizukage." The sky blue-haired young man, Chōjurō, replied while lowering his head. "I'll do my best."

Mei could only sigh in response. Even Ao looked at Chōjurō with a bit of exasperation. However, it was not long after that before the trio's attention was drawn to something in the distance. At the same time, Chōjurō flashed in front of Mei with his hand gripping the hilt of his sword and the shy expression on his face having been replaced with a resolute one.

"*Sigh* Why can't you show this kind of expression all the time, Chōjurō?" Mei asked as she stepped forward and placed a hand on Chōjurō's shoulder. "It suits an Elite Jōnin like you much better. Even so, there's no need to be on guard. That should be our hosts."

As Mei calmed Chōjurō, the thing that caught the trio's attention, a long magic vehicle that resembled a stretch Lincoln Continental Limousine approached before pulling up in front of them. Then, once the magic vehicle came to a stop, the driver's door opened, and a tall, well-endowed, silver-haired woman wearing a blue and white apron dress, clearly denoting her status as a maid, stepped out of the vehicle before moving to the back door and opening it for the passengers.

With the back door open, a group of people started exiting the magic vehicle. Most of whom, the trio of Mei, Ao, and Chōjurō were familiar with, as they had met them during the Mist's Civil War. First was Marin shortly followed by Laxus. After him, Alfonzo stepped out of the door. Then, he held his hand out to help the next person, Shizuka, who was holding an infant in her arms.

'Oh! My! God!' Mei exclaimed internally when she saw Calvin. 'He's adorable! Now, I really want one of my own. I just need to get married first, though.'

As that last thought ran through her head, Mei's mood visibly worsened.

"Lady Mizukage." Ao, having noticed the change in Mei's expression, whispered. "Please, hold yourself together. I don't know what's bothering you, but you're too experienced to be showing your thoughts on your face like that."

'Too experienced?' Mei thought to herself. 'Is Ao calling me old? Too old to get married?'

"Ao..." Mei said in a low, threatening tone.

With that tone, Ao noticed yet another change in Mei's mood. However, he did not know what caused such a dangerous, for him, at least, change. Yet, before he could figure it out, Mei continued.

"Do you want to die? If you do, I can help you by melting you down to your bones." Mei asked quietly with a promise of pain and perhaps even death in her tone should he answer incorrectly.

"I apologize, Lady Mizukage." Ao replied, quickly lowering his head.

"*sigh* those two are at it again." Laxus muttered while watching Mei and Ao's two-man show. "I wonder what Ao said this time?"

"Who knows." Alfonzo replied with a shrug while watching the Mist Village trio. "Probably something she misinterpreted... again."

At that moment, Ur finally stepped out of the limo, as well. When she did, she wanted to welcome Mei grandly. However, when she saw the atmosphere surrounding the trio and how Mei was glaring at Ao, who had his head lowered in apology, while Chōjurō looked on with an expression that made it clear he had no idea what to do, she could only scratch the side of her head in confusion.

"Uh... hello?" Ur said in an uncertain tone. "Welcome to... Uh... Magnolia and the Kingdom of Fiore... Um... Friends from afar."

"Hold off for a few minutes, Ur." Alfonzo said while patting Ur on the shoulder. "This will probably take a little while. You can do another take once they're back with us again."

With that, the Fairy Tail wizards watched the Mist Village trio go through their usual song and dance. But the most impressive thing about the whole scene was the fact that once the civilians noticed the Fairy Tail wizards near the spectacle, they shrugged their shoulders and stop paying attention, as they had come to expect strange things that they could not comprehend to happen whenever members of Fairy Tail were present.

Chapter 667: Hurricane Elicia

Cough Please excuse me for showing such an unsightly display." Mei said after she realized that her hosts were just watching her berate Ao. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Ur Milkovich, master of the Fairy Tail wizarding guild. I am Mei Terumi, the Fifth Mizukage of the Village Hidden in the Mist. And these are my personal guards, Ao and Chōjurō."

As she finished speaking, Mei stepped forward with her right hand extended for a handshake with as much dignity as she could muster after such an embarrassing moment. IN response, Ur took her hand while smiling in amusement.

"Likewise." Ur said, her smile making Mei feel more and more awkward as time went by. "Anyway, why don't we relocate to somewhere more private. There, we can get to know each other and discuss the terms of our alliance."

Mei nodded in response as she released Ur's hand. Then, Ur gestured towards the limousine, signaling Mei, Ao, and Chōjurō to enter.

And the three shinobi from the Mist did exactly that before they were followed by Ur, Laxus, Marin, Shizuka, and finally Alfonzo. Then, once everyone was seated inside, Grayfia closed the door before heading to the driver's seat, starting the engine, and returning to the guild hall.

Along the way, the two groups of wizards engaged in small talk with Alfonzo, Laxus, Marin, Shizuka, Mei, Ao, and Chōjurō discussing the time they worked together in Caelum while Ur, despite having heard the reports from her wizards, asked questions about the situation from Mei and the others' perspectives.

Eventually, the limousine pulled into the guild hall's underground parking lot and Grayfia, after parking the car, stepped out of the driver's seat to open the door for the passengers.

"I've seen tall buildings like this before." Mei said as she stepped out of the limousine and looked around the parking lot. "But never have I sensed a building packed with so much magic."

"Well, you can thank our resident magic item crafter for that." Ur said with a smile as she followed Mei out of the vehicle. "He basically built this building single-handedly after our war with Phantom Lord five years ago."

"You're exaggerating, Ur." Alfonzo said while shaking his head as he helped Marin and Shizuka out of the limo. "This was a guild wide effort."

Alfonzo then glanced at Laxus.

"Well, almost guild wide." Alfonzo said while smiling playfully.

"Hey!" Laxus exclaimed while bristling with embarrassment. "Look, we don't talk about that anymore. I've changed a lot since then."

"Oh, sounds like there's a story there." Mei said, interest flickering in her eyes.

"Indeed." Ao added. "One that sounds as if it needs to be told."

"Ugh... You did this on purpose, didn't you, Alfonzo?" Laxus asked in a tired tone.

"Oh, whatever could you be referring to, Laxus, my good friend?" Alfonzo asked in the most innocent tone he could muster.

"You know I love you to death, Alfonzo." Marin said before planting a kiss on Alfonzo's cheek. "But I kinda wanna hit you every time I hear you talk like that. And I'm sure it's not just me. But all the girls feel the same way, too."

"Gasp!" Alfonzo said, actually saying the word in faux shock. "'Tis it true? Oh, my aching heart."

"I don't wanna hit Fonzie." Shizuka said. "I think it's cute."

Shizuka then proceeded to plant a kiss on Alfonzo's other cheek with a smile on her face and the sleeping Calvin in her arms.

Meanwhile, Mei, Ao, and Chōjurō watched the interaction with differing reactions.

While Ao did not show much in the way of a reaction, Chōjurō fidgeted back and forth, embarrassed to see such public displays of affection. Mei, on the other hand, was watching with sparkling eyes.

'Oh my, he's so affectionate with his wives.' Mei thought to herself. 'And he doesn't look shy about it at all. There aren't any men on Ishgar who are so open with their feelings. He really is a prime candidate to be a husband. Perhaps... If things go well, this alliance will be even more solid once we've had more time to get to know each other.'

"Alright, Alfonzo." Ur said, interrupting the three's world while shaking her head. "You can flirt with your wives later, when we don't have guests. Look at poor Chōjurō over there. If you keep going, he might start leaking blood from his face from how hard he's blushing."

As she spoke, Ur pointed at Chōjurō, who just as she said was blushing with great intensity. However, that did get Alfonzo, Marin, and Shizuka to stop flirting in public. After that, the group, including Grayfia, headed into the elevator. And while Alfonzo, Laxus, Ur, Marin, Shizuka, Mei, Ao, and Chōjurō would be heading up to Ur's office, Grayfia intended to get off on the first floor to head into the kitchen to make refreshments for the group while they discussed the alliance.

A few hours later, the alliance was finalized. And the terms of the alliance were as such. Because they were located in different countries, the assistance they could give each other was limited. However, if either the wizards from Fairy Tail or the shinobi from the Mist found themselves in the other's territory, they could request assistance from the other to help complete their quests or missions. Provided they were not in conflict with the standing alliances the assisting group already had.

However, even if they had to face their ally's other allies because of a quest or mission, they would not lend aid to either side. And because that was a common rule when it came to making alliances between guilds and other similar organizations, it did not cause any disputes.

"So, how long are you all planning to stay here in Magnolia?" Ur asked curiously once negotiations were over.

"We're not sure exactly." Mei replied while shaking her head. "But we do plan to be back in the village by the end of the year. So, maybe a week at the most."

"Well, that's a shame." Alfonzo said with a shrug. "I've got something in the works for New Year's Eve. But you'll probably miss it. Well, you have iPhones, right? Then, you'll be able to see it using those."

Hearing that Alfonzo was planning something, not only Mei was interested. But all the others in Ur's office were interested, as well. Meanwhile, Laxus snorted in annoyance when Alfonzo brought it up, connecting the dots between this thing he was working on and the topic he refused to share while they were sitting at the bar with the other guys from the guild.

"Oh, really?" Mei asked, batting her eyelashes flirtatiously. "And what might that be? You wouldn't mind sharing, would you?"

"Now, now, Mei." Alfonzo replied with a smile than made Mei's heart race. "If I told you that, it wouldn't be a surprise, would it?"

Although her heart continued to race, Mei's flirtatious expression turned into a pout immediately. And when Ao and Chōjurō saw that, they were both wondering who she was and where the real Mei had been taken.

"*Cough* Anyway, why don't you three let Alfonzo, Laxus, and Marin give you a tour of the guild hall?" Ur said, breaking up the awkward atmosphere that followed Mei's pout. "I'm sure Shizuka would like to join you, but she's actually still got work to do in the infirmary. Plus, I can see that little Calvin is starting to get restless."

"Yeah, Cal looks like he's getting hungry." Shizuka said while smiling down at Calvin with an infinite amount of affection in her gaze.

"Sure." Mei replied, getting her expression under control quickly. "That sounds lovely."

And with that, Alfonzo, Laxus, Marin, Shizuka, Mei, Ao, and Chōjurō headed into the elevator while Ur got back to doing a few reports for the Magic Council. However, just before the elevator doors could close, she remembered something and looked up.

"Oh, and Alfonzo." Ur said, her eyes lighting up at the thought she just had.

"Yeah, yeah, I'll cook." Alfonzo replied, not even letting Ur make her request. "I was already prepared to do so when you asked me to help show our guests around. *sigh* But seriously, Ur, you're getting predictable."

With that, the elevator doors closed, leaving Ur sitting behind her desk wither pleading smile frozen on her face.

About a minute later, the elevator's doors opened on the guild hall's first floor.

"Alright, this is the guild's main hall." Alfonzo said as he stepped out of the elevator. "And this is where most things happen in our guild."

Unfortunately, hearing Alfonzo's introduction to the guild hall was a little difficult at the moment, as the main hall was embroiled in a guild wide brawl. And the two who seemed to be responsible for this brawl, Naruto and Sasuke, were zipping around the hall, exchanging blows, while getting anyone unlucky enough to be in their paths involved, as well.

Seeing the state of the guild hall, Alfonzo, Laxus, Marin, and Shizuka did not even flinch, having gotten used to such scenes over the years. But Mei, Ao, and Chōjurō were shellshocked, to say the least.

In fact, Chōjurō was so taken aback that he first stepped back in apprehension before his expression firmed up and he flashed in front of Mei to protect her. Meanwhile, Ao showed, perhaps, the most expression he had shown since he arrived in Magnolia, other than when he was apologizing to Mei at the train station.

Mei, on the other hand, was looking around in surprise with her lips slightly parted and her eyes wide open as she took in the uncontrolled chaos on display. However, before she could comment on what she was seeing, she caught sight of a brown-skinned woman with short black hair and brown eyes staring at her, Ao, and Chōjurō.

"Oh, it looks like Lici's locked her sights on someone." Alfonzo said with a smile.

"Lici?" Mei asked, snapping out of her surprised state. "Who is that?"

"Oh, that's my first wife, Elicia Marcus Taylor. The owner of the Taylor Shop, as well as the continent's most popular fashionista."

Hearing that, Mei's eyes lit up. At the same time, Elicia stood up from her seat and made a b-line towards the elevator. Along the way, as Naruto and Sasuke got too close with their fight, she wrapped them up with her threads before flipping into a handstand and kicking them both away before she returned to walking towards the elevator with determined steps.

"Uh oh!" Marin said with a smile on her face. "Someone's in trouble."

"Yeah, I haven't seen that look on her face since Warren wore that orange and maroon suit when he hosted the first Miss Fairy Tail Pageant." Laxus said with an amused smirk on his face.

"Huh?" Shizuka intoned while rocking Calvin in her arms. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, that's right, you weren't here back then, were you?" Marin asked. "I think that happened the year before you joined the guild. Well, you see---"

Before Marin could explain, however, Elicia arrived in front of the group of new arrivals. And when she did, she stopped in front of Mei and Chōjurō. While looking up and down with displeasure written all over her face.

At first, Mei was a bit scared, thinking that the premier fashionista on Ishgar was dissatisfied with her outfit. However, when Elicia opened her mouth, all her fears were laid to rest.

"Um... Excuse me." Elicia asked after inspecting Chōjurō's attire. "But what on Earth Land are you wearing? I have no issue with sky blue and pin-stripes. Nor do I see anything wrong with camo. But what in the world gave you the idea that they looked good together? Especially when the camo is made of

such bright greens? Have you ever heard of the term, 'clashing colors?' For goodness sake, who dresses you? And sandals with an outfit like that? I know you're a ninja, but have some self-awareness..."

And Elicia's verbal onslaught just kept going. And because of her trip across the guild hall, the brawl came to an end, as well. And although the fact that she incapacitated the two who caused the brawl in the first place was a contributing factor in that, the aura she exuded while lecturing/scolding Chōjurō on his fashion choices played an even bigger roll.

Warren was even shuddering, looking like he was going through an episode caused by PTSD. Meanwhile, everyone else watched as the shinobi with the large, bandaged swords on his back fidgeted nervously while trying his best to not make eye contact with the taller, extremely passionate woman berating him about his clothing choices.

At the same time, three of the women and two of the men in the guild hall, namely Fried, Erza, Sun, Saeko, and Sasuke, the most skilled swordsman, had their eyes light up. Because despite Chōjurō's timid nature, they could all tell that he was a master swordsman. And they all wanted to test themselves against him in swordsmanship.

Even so, they all knew better than to get in the way when Elicia was acting like that. So, they all decided they would challenge him to sparring matches once Hurricane Elicia had passed.

Chapter 668: Erza Vs. Chōjurō

It took nearly an hour for Elicia to finish reprimanding Chōjurō about his sky blue shirt/green camo pants combo. When she did, Alfonzo led the group around the guild hall for a tour. And when Mei saw the training chambers, he could tell that she would be ordering some for her village.

'I really need to find a way to make these damn training rooms something that can be put together like Ikea furniture.' Alfonzo thought to himself while continuing the tour.

And when the tour finally came to an end, the group found themselves on the first floor of the guild hall again. And this time, they were sitting at one of the many tables spread around the main hall.

"This place is quite impressive." Mei said while leaning on the table and supporting her head with her right hand. "To think you designed it all. You really are something, Alfonzo."

"Well, it was either that or not having a guild hall for a while." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "And I liked having somewhere to meet up with my guild mates. Plus, I always wanted to be able to put myself through harsher training."

"Indeed." Mei said with a nod. "Now it's clear to see why all the wizards of Fairy Tail are so strong."

"Just out of curiosity, how much gravity can you stand?" Ao asked curiously.

"Hmm... Last time I checked, I maxed out at around 200G." Alfonzo replied after thinking for a short time.

"Damn... Seriously?" Laxus asked in a dumbfounded tone. "I just hit 175G and I thought I had finally caught up to you."

"Well, I spend more time working on my body than anyone in the guild." Alfonzo said with a shrug.

"That's because you have an unfair method." Marin said with a pout.

"An unfair method?" Mei asked, her interest rising as she did so.

"Sorry, that's one of my secrets." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head. "It doesn't leave the guild."

"Hmph!" Mei snorted while pouting cutely.

Like that, Alfonzo, Laxus, and Marin continued to chat with Mei and Ao. All the while, Chōjurō, who was sitting at the same table was fidgeting nervously. He could feel several rather intense gazes on him. But he had no idea why.

"Chōjurō, is something the matter?" Mei asked curiously after trying and failing to get Alfonzo's secret training method out of him for a while.

"It-It-It's just... There's someone staring at me." Chōjurō replied in a nervous tone.

"Oh, there's not just one person staring at you, man." Alfonzo said with a wide smile on his face. "But from what I can tell, there are at least five. And if I had to guess, it's because of that sword on your back."

"Ah! I see." Mei said in an understanding tone. "So, they either want to fight him or see his sword then, huh?"

"In most cases, it's probably both." Laxus said casually.

"A fight?" Chōjurō asked. "Do I have to?"

"You don't." Mei replied.

In response, Chōjurō exhaled a relieved sigh.

"But, if possible, I'd like to be able to show off the strength of the Seven Ninja Swordsman of the Mist to our new allies." Mei continued, causing Chōjurō to tense up again.

Seeing the expression on Chōjurō's face, Mei and Ao knew exactly what he was thinking. He was afraid that he would let the Mizukage down and bring dishonor to the village. Because of that, both Mei and Ao could not help but sigh at the lack of confidence the swordsman had.

"*Sigh* I'd like to show off the power of the Mizukage, as well." Mei said in a wispy tone while cupping her right cheek with her right hand. "Unfortunately, my Kekkei Genkai are not suitable for sparring."

"[Boil-Style] and [Lava-Style], right?" Alfonzo asked. "Yeah, that would cause some trouble if you used them in the training chambers. Not that the chambers would be harmed. But there would just be nowhere for your opponent to dodge."

"Are you saying that Lady Mizukage would be unable to destroy one of those training chambers you showed us?" Ao asked with an eyebrow raised in irritation.

Even Mei looked at Alfonzo in interest after hearing his statement.

"Well, they are made of an Adamantite alloy." Alfonzo replied with a casual shrug. "So, unless they get to a temperature so high that they could melt Adamantite, then the training chambers will be fine."

"*Sigh* I haven't reached that level quite yet." Mei replied while shaking her head.

Meanwhile, Ao was looking at Alfonzo with disbelief. It was common knowledge throughout Earth Land that Adamantite was the strongest metal in terms of defensive properties. And that, in turn, made it exceedingly difficult to mold or alloy with other metals. So, his surprise was understandable.

"You know what my moniker is, right?" Alfonzo asked after seeing Ao's surprised expression.

Before Ao could respond, one of the pairs of eyes that were staring at Chōjurō and his sword could no longer hold back. Then, before they knew it, a tall woman with long scarlet red hair was standing behind Chōjurō and staring at the bandaged sword on his back.

"Oh, hey, Erza." Marin said with a smile. "What's up?"

"Good afternoon, Marin." Erza replied without taking her eyes off Chōjurō's sword. "I was just curious to see the sword this young man is carrying. And if possible, I'd like a chance to spar with him, as well. From what I can tell, he's quite skilled."

"Why doesn't it surprise me that she was the first one to show up?" Laxus asked.

"Because you're not a total moron." Alfonzo replied.

Meanwhile, the owners of the other four pairs of eyes clicked their tongues after realizing that Erza had stolen the opportunity to spar with the swordsman from the Mist.

"Well, if it isn't Titania, Erza Scarlet." Mei said, turning to size up the newcomer. "Tales of your skill with a sword have spread all over Ishgar."

'She might even be stronger than me.' Mei thought to herself. 'Now, I'm really looking forward to seeing her in action.'

"The only way I have been able to hone my swordsmanship to a degree where rumors like those have spread is through testing my blade against strong swordsman." Erza replied without taking her eyes off Chōjurō's sword. "And I would relish the opportunity to do so once again."

"Well, I think that can be arranged." Mei replied with a smile. "I've often wished I had the opportunity to witness one of the continent's strongest swordswomen's skill with a sword myself."

Nodding in response, Erza kept her eyes on Chōjurō, and despite how rude her actions were, Mei did not seem to be bothered by it at all. Chōjurō, on the other hand, found the fact that Erza had not even looked in Mei's direction quite the insult to the Mizukage.

"Very well." Chōjurō said, his shy and nervous tone nowhere to be seen. "If that is what you want, then, I'll oblige. I'll teach you a lesson in respect with this sword, the Hiramekarei."

However, although Erza could be quite forward, she would have never been so disrespectful to Mei. She understood that Mei was the leader of an allied force. So, in normal situations, she would have shown her the proper respect. However, the reason she never truly acknowledged Mei was because of Alfonzo.

Understanding Chōjurō's personality and lack of confidence, Alfonzo, after Erza appeared behind Chōjurō, set up a [Telepathic Link] between himself, Laxus, Erza, Marin, Mei, and Ao. He then explained his plan to get Chōjurō interested in fighting Erza. Though, he knew they would have to explain the entire situation to him after the spar was finished.

But Mei, after hearing Alfonzo's plan, was all for it. She knew exactly how skilled Chōjurō was. It was just his lack of confidence that was holding him back. So, he would have never accepted the offer to spar under normal circumstances.

Then, with the spar decided, Alfonzo, Laxus, Erza, Marin, Mei, Ao, and Chōjurō headed toward the elevators so they could move to a training chamber. At the same time, the other swordsman in Fairy Tail, namely Fried, Sun, Saeko, and Sasuke, also moved toward the elevator. However, before they could all enter the elevators to watch the spar, Alfonzo stopped one of them.

"Hold up, Sasuke." Alfonzo said. "I can't let you watch this."

"Why not?" Sasuke asked in an irritated tone.

"It's because you're from different villages." Alfonzo explained. "Non allied villages, at that. And if you knew how one of the trump card shinobi of another village fought, it would give your village an advantage."

Though he was not happy to hear that, Sasuke understood the reason. So, he snorted to show his discontentment. Then, he crossed his arms and turned away from the elevator.

"Thank you for that, Alfonzo." Mei said with a smile. "As he is a member of your guild, I would have had no justification to send him away."

"*Sigh* Although I hate to say this..." Alfonzo began to say as he pressed the button for the tenth floor. "Although he is a member of our guild, he will always be a member of the Leaf first."

With that, the elevator doors closed, and the elevator began ascending. And before long, it stopped on the tenth floor. Then, Alfonzo led the group to the large training room where most of the important spars happened in the guild.

A few moments later, Erza and Chōjurō were standing opposite each other near the center of the training chamber, both with swords drawn. Though, the bandages were still wrapped around Hiramekarei.

"Erza, don't use Astraia." Alfonzo said before the two could start with their spar.

"I understand." Erza replied while nodding without taking her eyes off her opponent.

"What is Astraia?" Mei asked curiously.

"Something exclusive to our guild." Alfonzo replied while wearing a teasing smile.

Once again Mei pouted at not getting a straight answer to her question. Even so, she remained focused on the upcoming spar.

A moment later, without any kind of starting signal, Erza narrowed her eyes. Then, she dashed forward with anormal long sword primed to thrust forward.

Clang!

In response, as soon as Erza was in range, Chōjurō, with a solemn expression on his face, swung Hiramekarei to the side, deflecting Erza's blade to his left. However, instead of being thrown off balance, Erza rode the momentum of his parry and spun around, launching a horizontal strike at Chōjurō's waist.

Clang!

In response, Chōjurō repositioned his sword, holding it vertically on his right, and blocked Erza's strike. He then leaned his shoulder into the flat of his blade and pushed Erza's sword away, then he raised his sword and performed a diagonal slash.

Clang!

With her sword out of position, Erza had no way of defending against Chōjurō's slash. So, she did the only thing she could. She released the hilt of her sword with her right hand and [Requipped] a second longsword into it. Then, she used the new sword to parry the incoming slash.

Unfortunately, thanks to her unstable posture, Erza was blown backwards by the force behind Chōjurō's strike. And Chōjurō had no intention of letting her regain her footing. So, he dashed forward while circulating his magic power through his legs to increase his speed.

However, Erza was much more agile than the armor she wore would suggest. Meaning, by the time Chōjurō was close enough to strike again, Erza had recovered and raised both her swords in an X-shape and caught the downward strike Chōjurō performed in the hope of ending the match.

Cling!

With his sword caught between the two Erza wielded, Chōjurō, with fire in his eyes, stared into Erza's eyes. However, when he did, he was surprised to see that she was smiling.

"Good, you're just as skilled with a blade as I expected." Erza said. Her smile then disappeared as she pushed Chōjurō's blade back and continued. "Now, I think that's enough of a warm up. [Requip: Heaven's Wheel Armor]."

In the next instant, Erza was covered in the light of her magic power. At the same time, Chōjurō leapt away from her. He then started flowing his magic power into Hiramekarei. The magic power in the blade then began flowing out of its tip as the bandages began to unravel.

By the time the blade of the Hiramekarei was revealed, Erza was now donning her [Heaven's Wheel Armor] with nearly two dozen swords floating around her, held aloft by [Telekinesis].

"[Hiramekarei Unleashing]." Chōjurō chanted as the magic power flowing out of the tip of the blade coated the sword.

Chōjurō then removed a thin cord was wrapped around Hiramekarei's hilt, revealing that there were actually two hilts, not one.

"Oh, that's unusual." Alfonzo said while looking at the two hilts.

"Those two hilts are where Hiramekarei gets its nickname, the Twin Sword." Mei said proudly. "And I'm sure you'll find out why in a moment."

In the next instant, Erza pointed one of the swords she was holding towards Chōjurō. At the same time, she commanded her floating swords to shoot forward.

In response, Chōjurō held one of the two hilts in each hand. Then, he pulled them apart. When he did, Hiramekarei also split into two blades. Then, with great skill and precision, he rapidly swung the two large swords as if they weighed nothing and deflected all the incoming swords.

Cling! *Cling!* *Clang!* *Cling!* *Ting!* Clang!* *Cling!*

Though she found herself more and more impressed by Chōjurō's skill, Erza did not stop her onslaught. While Chōjurō deflected her swords, she floated slightly off the floor. Then, she rocketed forward with the swords in her hands drawn back and ready to attack.

"[Blumenblatt]." Erza chanted as her speed increased significantly.

Noticing Erza's approach, Chōjurō swung his swords even faster to clear the incoming telekinetically controlled blades. Then, he crossed his blades in front of him in preparation for Erza's attack.

Clang~~~~~!

The impact between Erza's and Chōjurō's swords echoed loudly throughout the training chamber as Erza zipped past Chōjurō. However, before she could even come to a stop, Chōjurō slammed his two swords together, creating one sword once again. Then, the blade of the sword changed shape into a large hammer before he spun on his heels and swung it down at Erza's back.

Reacting just as quickly, Erza was covered in the light of her magic power once again while quickly turning around.

"[Requip: Adamantine Armor]." Erza chanted.

Clang~~~~~!

In the next instant, Chōjurō's hammer strike was stopped and Erza was revealed once again. This time, however, instead of holding a sword in each hand, she was holding a pair of shields that had been combined into a single, large shield that she used to block the hammer blow.

"Seriously, every time I see how fast she can [Requip], it feels unfair." Laxus said while shaking his head.

Meanwhile, Mei and Ao had widened their eyes in surprise. After seeing how expertly Chōjurō had defended himself from Blumenblatt and how quickly he had counter attacked, they were both sure that the spar was about to come to an end. Yet, neither of them expected just how quickly Erza could [Requip]. So, when they heard Laxus' comment, all they could do was nod their heads dumbly.

Alfonzo and the other Fairy Tail wizards, on the other hand, only watched the spar as if something like that was expected. And when you consider how long they've known Erza, it was.

Erza then used her abnormal strength to push Chōjurō back with her shields. Then, she stepped forward and was once again covered in the light of her magic power.

"[Requip: Black Wing Armor]." Erza chanted.

Then, in a burst of speed, Erza vanished from where she stood. And when she reappeared, she was standing in front of Chōjurō with the sword she wielded resting against the side of his neck. Chōjurō, on the other hand, had only raised his sword, which had transformed back from the hammer, halfway into position to guard.

A moment later, when Chōjurō realized the outcome of the spar, he exhaled a sigh. Then, he lowered his sword.

"I concede defeat." Chōjurō said calmly, bringing the spar to an end.

Nodding in response, Erza lowered her own sword before [Requipping] back into her [Heart Kreuz Armor]. However, before she could say anything, Chōjurō's resolute expression was replaced by his usual shy and apprehensive one. Then, he ran towards Mei, bowing his head when he arrived in front of her.

"I'm sorry, Lady Mizukage." Chōjurō said, sounding as if he were on the verge of tears. "I've dishonored the village and the title of one of the Seven Swordsman of the Mist."

In response, Mei could only sigh in exasperation. Then, she tried her best to assure Chōjurō that he had not dishonored anyone with his display.

'You're sure as hell dishonoring yourself by acting like this after a match like that, though.' Mei thought to herself while trying to calm down her shinobi.

Meanwhile, Erza was left in the sparring ring with a dumbfounded expression on her face. She had wanted to let Chōjurō know that he was quite good and discuss the match with such affine swordsman. However, now that he was almost crying because of his loss, she had no idea what she was supposed to do.

"It's okay, Erza." Alfonzo, after approaching Erza, said while combing his fingers through her hair. "Let's just let Mei figure that whole mess out. For now, how 'bout heading downstairs? I'll even bake you a strawberry shortcake to celebrate your victory."

Immediately, Erza lost interest in Chōjurō. She then wrapped her arms around Alfonzo's while [Requipping] out of her armor and into some casual clothes to make his arm more comfortable. Then, she dragged him towards the training chamber's exit excitedly.

"Alright, everyone." Alfonzo said with a smile while allowing himself to be dragged along. "Let's head back down stairs. I'll be cooking a feast to welcome our guests from the Village Hidden in the Mist."

Just like Erza, when the Fairy Tail wizards heard that Alfonzo would be cooking, they lost interest in watching the drama. They then hurried to follow Alfonzo and Erza out of the training chamber, leaving Mei, Ao, and a still saddened Chōjurō standing there in confusion.

"Is his cooking so good as to make everyone act like that?" Ao asked in a dumbfounded tone.

"I have no clue." Mei replied. "I was invited to have dinner with them a few times while they were in the village. But I was too busy to attend."

'But if he truly is that good a cook, then he's even better husband material than I thought.' Mei thought to herself as her dumbfounded expression slowly morphed into a smile. 'And that might be one of the reasons he can keep so many lovers happy. I'm looking forward to finding what else he has in store.'

Chapter 669: Catching Mei Off-Guard

Eventually, all those who went upstairs to watch the spar between Erza and Chojuro returned to the main hall of the Fairy Tail guild hall. When they did, Alfonzo immediately broke off from the rest and made his way into the kitchen to start working on the welcome feast for their visitors from the Mist. And although it would have not been a big deal, he was glad that Grayfia had not returned home yet, as he had an assistant in the kitchen.

However, since he had an idea of what he wanted to serve for dinner, Alfonzo also contacted the mansion to call for a few extra pairs of hands.

"Everyone in the hall looks so excited." Chojuro said after coming out of the elevator.

"They do." Mei replied. "It looks like we're in for a treat tonight."

"That, or something horrible." Ao added. "But... I suppose we'll find out soon."

"That we will." Mei said as she led her two subordinates towards the table where Laxus, Marin, and Shizuka, after finishing the last of her work, sat.

And like that, the entire hall waited with excitement. It had not been that long since the last time Alfonzo stepped into the guild's kitchen. Yet, they were going to get to eat his cooking again after such a short period of time. On top of that, this time there would be no need to spend their points.

"What's wrong, Sasuke?" Elicia, who did not follow the group up to see the spar, asked. "You look even grumpier than usual."

"I'm not grumpy." Sasuke said without looking in Elicia's direction. "But I wanted to watch that spar. I wanna try my sword against that guy, too."

"Are you mad that Fonzie stopped you from watching?" Elicia asked curiously.

"*Sigh* No. No, I'm not." Sasuke replied. "Disappointed? Yes. Angry? NO. I understand exactly why he did it. But still..."

"Aww, is little Sasuke pouting?" a new voice asked while approaching the table, the amusement in his voice audible to anyone who could hear it.

"Shut up, Loser!" Sasuke bit back without even looking in the voice's direction.

"Oh, you wanna find out who the real loser is, Sasuke?" Naruto, the owner of the previous voice, asked in an irritated tone.

"Any time." Sasuke replied as he stood up from his seat. "If it weren't for Elicia saving you last time, you'd be unconscious in the infirmary right now."

"I think you got the two of us mixed up, Sasuke." Naruto said as he formed a [Rasengan] in his right hand.

"Why don't we test that." Sasuke replied, a [Chidori] forming in his left hand.

"*Sigh* You two are almost as bad as Natsu and Gray." Elicia said as she threw her hands up in exasperation.

A moment later, Naruto and Sasuke charged at each other, ready to start their second fight of the day.

At the same time, Elicia ejected a number of nearly invisible threads from her fingertips before flicking her fingers to manipulate the threads...

"Ahh!" Naruto yelped in surprise, his [Rasengan] dissipating with his surprise.

"Damn it!" Sasuke exclaimed, his [Chidori], like Naruto's [Rasengan], dissipating before he could put it to use.

Then, faster than either Naruto or Sasuke could react, they found themselves hanging upside down from the ceiling of the guild hall by one foot each.

"Now, you two take some time to think about what you did wrong." Elicia said with a smile while looking up at the two Leaf Chunin. "And I'll give you a hint, Fonzie is in the kitchen."

Hearing that, both Naruto and Sasuke wore looks of shock. Then, Naruto turned towards the kitchen while still hanging upside down and shouted.

"Hey, Big Bro Alfonzo, can you make some ramen for me?" Naruto asked with both excitement and anticipation in his tone.

"Not today." Alfonzo replied. "Today is a welcome feast for our friends from the Hidden Mist Village. Just save up points like everyone else and wait until the next time I'm taking requests."

In response, Naruto crossed his arms and pouted without even trying to cut himself down. Meanwhile, Sasuke was trying his best to do just that. However, Elicia's threads were no ordinary threads, as Sasuke, despite flowing [Lightning Magic] into his sword was unable to cut himself free.

Elicia, on the other hand, skipped towards the kitchen door with a smile on her face.

"Fonzie, what are you making for dinner tonight?" Elicia asked in a cheerful tone.

"It will be something like Fogo de Chão." Alfonzo replied. "I'll even be laying out a salad bar."

"But that means you won't be able to eat with the rest of us, right?" Elicia asked.

"More or less." Alfonzo replied. "But I'll be helping serve the first round. I'm not gonna miss our guests reactions, after all."

Hearing that, Elicia could only shake her head with a smile on her face. Then, she glanced at Mei with pity. For some reason, she felt as though Mei would embarrass herself more than any other woman who had eaten Alfonzo's cooking for the first time.

With Naruto and Sasuke hanging above the rest of the guildhall, time passed relatively peacefully... Rather, there were no more fights that started. However, the bickering between guild members such as Natsu and Gray, Natsu and Gajeel, Natsu and Laxus... Pretty much anyone who Natsu wanted to defeat, minus Alfonzo, could be heard from everywhere in the guild hall.

Until Alfonzo exited the guild's kitchen, that is.

Along with Alfonzo, Grayfia, Ikaruga, Maria, Ai, and Miyuki also exited the kitchen, the other four maids having come over to help with the night's preparations. On top of that, they were all carrying platters filled with different cuts of different kinds of meat.

"Okay, listen up everyone!" Alfonzo shouted, his voice carrying over the din in the guild hall. "I'm only going to explain this once, so pay attention!"

Alfonzo then went on to explain how things worked in a Brazilian Steak House. He also manifested a large number of round metallic plates, each with a red and a green side, that he distributed to all the diners. After that, he created a long table along the wall that hid the stage. Then, a number of guild staff came out and set up a salad bar and placed plates on the tables.

"Alright, everyone go and get a plate." Alfonzo said once the guild staff was finished. "Oh, and don't forget to flip your circles to green."

With that, Alfonzo, Grayfia, Ikaruga, Maria, Ai, and Miyuki split up to serve different parts of the guild hall, with Alfonzo moving towards the table where Mei, Ao, and Chojuro sat.

"I have Seering Bull Prime Rib." Alfonzo said when he arrived at the table. "Can I interest any of you in this cut?"

"Hell yeah." Laxus cheered. "That's the good stuff."

"I think I'll have some of that, as well." Mei added, much more politely than Laxus, though.

"I'll pass." Ao said. "I'm in the mood for pork rather than beef."

"I see." Alfonzo said with a nod. "Well, someone will be around with pork shortly."

In response, Ao nodded in understanding. Meanwhile, Alfonzo turned his gaze to Chojuro, Marin, and Shizuka.

"Ah... Um... I'll... Have some, too." Chojuro said shyly.

"Me, too." Marin said with her hand raised.

"Did you make any chicken, Fonzie?" Shizuka asked while tilting her head.

"Yeah, Ai has the chicken." Alfonzo replied. "But I'll be making more when I get back into the kitchen. I'm only here to serve you all your first cut."

"I see." Shizuka said with a smile. "Then, I'll wait for the chicken."

"Got it." Alfonzo replied with a nod.

Alfonzo then turned back to those who wanted a cut of prime rib.

"So, how would you like it cooked?" Alfonzo asked.

"Medium, please." Mei was the first to answer.

"Well done." Laxus said shortly afterwards.

"Medium Well." Marin added.

"Um... I'll have mine... medium-rare." Chojuro said, ending the requests.

Having received everyone's order, Alfonzo conjured a knife with his [Metal Magic], he then cut pieces of meat according to everyone's orders. The knife then morphed into a spatula before serving everyone. After that, he gestured for everyone to dig in.

Despite being invited to eat, Laxus and Marin waited for Mei and Chojuro to eat first. They and Shizuka were looking forward to the expressions the Mist shinobi would make.

Meanwhile, Ao, who was seeing everyone's reactions, was somewhat concerned.

'Is the food poisoned?' Ao asked himself as the [Sealing Tag] earrings he wore lit up. 'Is this all just a trap? But everyone else is eating happily. Am I overthinking everything? Or is it just the food on Alfonzo's platter that is poisonous?'

Despite his suspicions and the fact that he activated his hidden Byakugan on reflex, Ao could not see anything wrong. So, instead of speaking up and possibly ruining the fresh alliance, he watched for any funny business. However, he was not expecting what he ended up seeing.

"Mmm~~~~~!" Mei moaned loudly after taking her first bite of the steak.

Not only did she moan loudly, but her body stiffened after shuddering violently. On top of that, her eyes lost focus, as well. The quivering of her breasts, the hardened nipples that poked through the fabric of her dress, the rubbing of her thighs, and the beads of sweat that formed on her neck and dripped down into her cleavage made it quite clear what kind of experience she was having.

When the wizards of Fairy Tail saw such a reaction, after having gotten used to reactions much like Mei's, they only smiled mischievously. Ao and Chojuro were a different story, however. Between the two of them, there were three, visible, wide-open eyes and two agape mouths. Never had either of them seen Mei in a position like that, and they had no idea how they should react.

Mei, on the other hand, after coming down from her food induced orgasm, flushed to the tips of her ears while lowering her head to hide her embarrassment. Even so, she did not stop moving her fork and knife to continue eating the delectable food sitting on the plate in front of her.

"Well, I do believe I should get back to the kitchen." Alfonzo said in a self-satisfied tone. "The food isn't going to cook itself, after all."

With that, Alfonzo tossed the platter he was carrying into the air and turned around. Then, just as the platter fell to his shoulder-level, he started walking while controlling the platter to float along behind him.

"Damn show off." Laxus grumbled while cutting his own piece of steak. He then turned his attention to Chojuro with a hint of amusement in his tone. "Hey, Kid, aren't you going to eat?"

Hearing Laxus' question, Chojuro jolted out of his surprise, turning his attention away from Mei, who was still as red as a perfectly ripe tomato. He then looked down at the cut of meat on his plate.

Gulp I-I-I'm not sure if I'm hungry anymore." Chojuro replied, his own cheeks reddening at the thought of reacting like Mei had.

"Do you intend to waste our host's good intentions, Chojuro?" Mei asked without looking up from her plate. "If so, then I will be quite disappointed in your lack of manners."

In response, not only Chojuro, but Ao also froze. Then, they slowly turned to look at Mei, who had still not raised her head since her embarrassing display. Even so, they both felt like they could hear her inner voice at that moment.

'Hmph! If you think you can get out of embarrassing yourselves after seeing me like that, you two have another thing coming.' Mei thought to herself while continuing to eat, every bite making her feel warmth in her lower abdomen.

"Besides, it would truly be a waste to not try such food." Mei continued with no remorse. "It will quite possibly be the best thing you've ever eaten. Trust me on that."

Neither Ao nor Chojuro doubted that last sentence. However, neither man wanted to be embarrassed in such a way. And if the onlookers were being honest, they would be fine if Ao did not eat. No one wanted to see a middle-aged man moaning in delight, for any reason.

Though, there were several female members of the guild that were looking forward to the face that the young looking Chojuro would show them when he was writhing in ecstasy due to a food-gasm.

Then, there were two people who had no way to enjoy the current situation, as they were still hanging from the ceiling.

"Hey, Sasuke, do you think Big Sis Lici forgot about us?" Naruto asked while staring at all the food.

"I doubt it." Sasuke replied, having given up on trying to cut himself free. "She said she wanted us to think about what we did wrong, after all."

"I hope you're right." Naruto said in an uncertain tone.

And Naruto's fears would turn out to be correct. As Elicia was not even the one to let the two shinobi down from the ceiling. Rather, it was Alfonzo who felt bad for them after seeing them hanging upside down for so long.

Chapter 670: What Has Alfonzo Been Up To?

A little more than a week has passed Since Mei, Ao, and Chojuro arrived in Magnolia. During that time, Alfonzo, Laxus, Marin, and Shizuka were in charge of showing them around the town and keeping them entertained. And the four Fairy Tail wizards showed them everything they could think of during their time in Magnolia. From the tour of the guild hall to a visit to Alfonzo's Mansion on the Lake.

However, Alfonzo was not completely invested in showing the Mist shinobi around the town, as he was frequently seen taking calls on his iPhone. And from what everyone knew, those calls were related to the idea he had just before Ur had him and the others go to the train station to pick up Mei and her entourage.

Despite everyone knowing he was planning something, no one was able to get an answer from Alfonzo in reference to what exactly he was planning. Instead, all they received was a knowing smile and a reminder to look out for a special message on their iPhones.

Another thing that made everyone suspicious was the fact that there were a number of container trucks pulling into Magnolia over the last seven days. However, no one, except for the people working at a warehouse that Alfonzo owned knew what was inside. But like everything else, Alfonzo kept that information under wraps.

Eventually, the day when Mei, Ao, and Chojuro had to return to the Kingdom of Caelum arrived. However, instead of taking the train back to Akane Beach before boarding their ship, Alfonzo decided to deliver them to Akane Beach in style.

"I still can't believe something so big and made of metal can fly through the sky." Mei said, a hint of awe in her voice as she disembarked from the Blackbird. "Having one of these would make travel much more convenient."

"I'd sell you one if I could." Alfonzo replied with a shrug as he followed Mei, Ao, and Chojuro off the Blackbird and into the Akane Resort's docks. "But after seeing the Blackbird and the Fairy's Tail at the Grand Magic Games, the king passed a law that disallowed me from selling airships to powers outside of the kingdom. And to be honest, I can understand why."

"Indeed." Mei replied. "Even though there is an alliance between all the nations of Ishgar, that could change at any moment if any one nation gets more power than the others."

As she spoke, Mei narrowed her eyes at Alfonzo. He was the factor tipping the power balance that she was referring to, after all.

"Exactly." Alfonzo replied with a nod, pretending to be oblivious. "Anyway, it was nice to have you here with us in Fiore. Hopefully our forces can work together again. Preferably not during a civil war next time, though."

"Yes, I think that would be nice." Mei replied with a smile as she extended her hand to Alfonzo.

In response, Alfonzo extended his own hand to accept Mei's handshake.

"And who knows, maybe we'll be able to work together in a more personal way the next time we meet." Mei added in a somewhat sultry tone as she used her thumb to sensually rub the back of Alfonzo's hand.

Raising an eyebrow in surprise, Alfonzo was not dense enough to miss Mei's meaning. However, he was taken aback. Never did he expect the leader of a major power to be so blatant in her flirting. Even if he had already noticed the rising romantic interest she held for him back in the Mist Village.

"Well, I certainly would not be against it." Alfonzo replied with a smile.

"*Cough* Lady Mizukage, I do believe that its almost time for us to return." Ao said, breaking up the atmosphere that was turning more intimate by the second.

In response, Mei glared at Ao with the threat of melting him burning in her eyes, which caused Ao to gulp audibly before lowering his head in apology. Mei then sighed in exasperation before turning back to look at Alfonzo.

"Ao is right." Mei said, reluctantly releasing Alfonzo's hand as she did so.

"I guess so." Alfonzo replied with a smile as he stepped back. "Well then, I wish you all a safe voyage."

With that, Alfonzo waved his hand before turning around to return to the Blackbird. However, just before he reached the stairs, he turned back around.

"Oh, and don't forget to watch for notifications on your iPhones in the next few days.' Alfonzo said with a grin. "I promise you, you don't wanna miss it."

"Really, Alfonzo?" Mei asked while pouting. "Even now, you won't tell us what you're planning?"

"You only have to wait a few more days to find out." Alfonzo replied with a chuckle. He then winked at Mei as he continued. "Don't be impatient."

With that, Alfonzo turned back around and headed up into the Blackbird. Then, after only a couple of minutes, the airship's engines roared to life and the Blackbird took off before orienting itself towards Magnolia. Finally, it flew off at high speed.

"*Sigh* He really likes his secrets, doesn't he?" Mei asked in an annoyed tone. She then turned towards Ao and Chojuro as she continued. "Okay, let's board the ship. I want to be back in Caelum by nightfall. Understood?"

"Ma'am." Ao, Chojuro, and the crew of the ship replied in unison.

Then, while everyone was boarding the ship, Mei took her iPhone out of a pocket and looked at her reflection in the screen.

"I'm really curious to know what he's up to." Mei murmured as she stepped onto the ship.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

December 31, x789.

"Hey, Lici, good morning." Marin said as she entered the dining room, looking as if she had just woken up.

"Morning." Elicia replied with a smile while she fed Amar'e. "Did you sleep well?"

"Yeah, more or less." Marin said as she sat at the table.

Marin's smile then turned into a pout. And Elicia knew exactly why that was. However, before she could say anything about it, someone else entered the dining room.

"Oh, you actually got here before me today, Marin?" Lucy asked as she, too, entered the dining room. "That's unusual. But why are you pouting so early in the morning?"

"Oh, hey, Luce." Marin replied, her pout turning into a smile in an instant. "I'm just frustrated."

"It's about what Alfonzo has been planning, isn't it?" Lucy asked as she took a seat at the table next to Amar'e.

"Yup." Marin replied with a nod. "*Sigh* Even if it's a surprise for us, why does he always keep secrets from us?"

"Oh, stop making it seem like he's the bad guy." Lucy said while rolling her eyes. "You got the same way when he was building the mansion."

"Lucy is right." Erza added as she entered the dining room, as well. "Alfonzo would never do anything behind our backs to hurt us. But I'm sure you already know that, Marin."

"*Sigh* I know." Marin said in an annoyed tone as she laid her head down on the table. "I'm just so curious."

"Well, normally I'd just tell you to ask Fonzie." Elicia said with an awkward smile on her face. "But in cases like this, that doesn't really work. Fonzie likes his surprises, after all."

"And theatrics." Ultear added as she entered the dining room just as Erza sat down.

"Ain't that the truth." Cana said, following just behind Ultear. "**Burp**"

"That's so charming first thing in the morning, Cana." Mirajane said with Bianca in her arms.

"I know, right?" Cana replied with a cheeky grin on her face while holding her bottle of champagne up as if making a toast. "I'm just so classy. I'm a real f'in' lady."

"Foregoing the orange juice altogether this time, huh?" Marin asked with a grin while looking at Cana.

"Nah." Cana replied as she took a seat at the table. She then continued with a smile. "I just didn't have any orange juice in my room. But there was no reason to not get started without it, was there?"

"**Sigh** You never change, do you, Cana?" Lucy asked while shaking her head in exasperation.

"Nope!" Cana replied, once again raising her bottle into the air.

"Would it be so bad if she did?" Saeko asked as she, Shizuka, and Rika entered the room, as well. "All that alcohol can't be good for your liver, you know?"

"Don't worry about it." Cana said nonchalantly. "My magic power treats the alcohol like poison, dispelling it without conscious effort from me. So, my liver should be fine. At least, that's what Porlyusica and Shizuka told me."

"Yup." Shizuka said as she sat down with Calvin in her arms before unbuttoning her blouse to start feeding him. "But I've never seen anyone else's magic power treat alcohol like that, though. It's kind of a mystery."

"I bet Bacchus' magic power used to do the same thing for him." Elicia replied.

"Used to?" Lucy asked in an unconvinced tone.

"Well, I heard from Ikaku and Yumichika that he doesn't drink anymore." Elicia replied.

"Well, a near death experience like the one you put him through might do that to someone." Marin said with a smile.

"Maybe." Elicia replied while rolling her eyes.

"By the way, where's Sun?" Rika asked after pouring herself a cup of coffee. "She's usually one of the first ones up in the morning."

"I'm in here." Sun's voice carried from the kitchen. "I'm getting cooking lessons from Grayfia and Maria. That way, Alfonzo won't always have to cook for us alone with the maids."

"Oh! That sounds like quite the good idea." Erza said with a nod. "Perhaps I, too, shall start taking lessons."

"No!" x 10

The strong denial she received from all her harem sisters made Erza balk for a moment. However, she then lowered her head in defeat.

"*Sigh* Not even mother will allow me to learn how to cook." Erza said in a downcast tone. "Is my cooking truly that bad?"

"Erza, Honey, how many times have you almost burned down the whole kitchen just trying to boil water?" Elicia asked while wiping Amar'e's mouth, who started giggling happily.

In response, Erza could only lower her head further, burying the tip of her chin between her breasts in the process.

"Anyway... Anyone have any idea about what Fonzie has been doing for the last week, or so?" Cana asked curiously after laughing at Erza's misfortune for a while. "I mean, he hasn't even been here when we wake up in the mornings."

In response, all the other ladies shook their heads while Amar'e, Bianca, and Calvin perked up at the mention of their father's nickname.

"I have no idea, but it's probably something big." Sun said as she walked into the dining room, flanked by Grayfia and Maria, with a platter of food in her hands. "I mean, so many people and goods have been brought into town since he had that idea that Laxus mentioned."

"Yeah, I even saw Loli Chapati walking around the town a few days ago." Ultear added.

"Really?" all the ladies asked in an amazed tone.

They then started discussing all the celebrities they had seen walking around in the last few days, and those people included famous songstresses, the most famous being Sun's friend, Lunar Edomae, a few theater troops, the most famous among them being Rabian, the owner of the Scheherazade Theater in Onibus. The same theater where Team Natsu helped with the production of the play, "Frederick and Yanderica," a few years ago.

"Yes, I've seen him, as well." Erza said after Rabian was brought up. "He even asked if we would be interested in performing Frederick and Yanderica once again."

Erza then hung her head in defeat for the second time this morning.

"But when I brought it up to the rest of Team Natsu, they all firmly denied my request." Erza said in an almost heartbroken tone. "*Sigh* And we put on such a good show back then, too."

"You're clearly delusional." Lucy said with a scoff. "I've seen train wrecks that were better put together than what we did back then."

"I'm sorry to say, but she's right, Erza." Elicia said while smiling wryly. "If it weren't for Lyra, Lucy's Celestial Spirit, that would have probably been unwatchable."

"Indeed." Mirajane added with a nod and a hint of sadism in her tone. "I mean, you freeze up on stage, Gray forgets his character's name, and Natsu... Well, Natsu is Natsu."

With every point Mirajane, who had come to see the very first performance of 'Frederick and Yanderica' with Makarov, made, Erza lowered her head even further. And by the time she was finished, Erza's face, up to her cheeks, was buried between her breasts.

Buzz!

Beep! *Beep!*

Ring!

Jingle!

However, before Mirajane could continue to remind Erza of how bad the production was, everyone's iPhones began to vibrate, sound out with notifications, or both. And they all took their iPhones out to look at them.

"For the first time ever, a broadcast like no other will be brought to you live from Magnolia's Central Plaza to celebrate the new year." Elicia said, reading the message aloud. "There will be performances from some of the most famous names in Fiore's entertainment world for your viewing pleasure. So, please tune in at 8 pm for something the likes of which no one has seen before."

Not only the ladies living in the Mansion on the Lake saw this message. Instead, every person on the continent with an iPhone received it. And needless to say, the majority of those who saw it were intrigued at the very least. The levels of entertainment in the world were still at the level of the Middle Ages on Earth, after all. So, something they had never seen before was something to look forward to for most people.

"I think I have an idea what Fonzie is planning now." Elicia said with a smile on her face. "And if I'm right, tonight is going to be fun."