

Fairy Tail 811

Chapter 811: Extinguished Star

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

While the other battles with the Etherious were raging on, despite having released his [Soul Armament], Dante, Alzack fired the pistols Alfonzo made for him, Ebony and Ivory, at Kyôka rapidly from a distance. Meanwhile, Mirajane, donning her [Satan Soul: Mirajane Seilah Take Over], was using all the rubble from the destruction of the Cube to her advantage, as this [Take Over] gave her the ability to control all the rubble in the area with little issue.

Unfortunately, despite having Kyôka at a disadvantage, neither Alzack nor Mirajane were able to land a solid blow. And the reason for that lie in Kyôka's Curse, [Enhancement].

Based on the name of the Curse, one would think that Kyôka could only enhance certain aspects. Like her own physical attributes or the senses of herself and others. In fact, she had done just that, enhancing her own physique while enhancing the sensation of pain in her opponents by using the [Per-Second Enhance] on herself and [Wide-Range Pain Amplification] on both Alzack and Mirajane.

As a result, the two Fairy Tail wizards, after understanding the effect of Kyôka's Curses, took special care to not take any damage.

However, Kyôka's Curse was not limited to its literal meaning. Instead, she was also capable of doing the exact opposite, decreasing the potency of what whatever she cast her Curse on. For example, a target's five senses.

In fact, that was the exact reason neither Alzack nor Mirajane were able to land a decisive blow on Kyôka since the battle started. Kyôka's [Sensory Deprivation] weakened their senses to the point where they were unable to precisely aim at her. If they had not mastered the use of [Magic Power Detection], they would have more than likely been left on the ground, curled up thanks to the excess amount of pain they would be experiencing from Kyôka's attacks.

"This isn't working." Alzack said with a frown on his face while ejecting the magazines from his pistols. Then, while quickly reloading, he continued. "With [Magic Power Detection], we can put pressure on her. But without the rest of our senses, we can't land anything that could turn the tides."

"I could switch to another [Take Over] and face her in close combat." Mirajane said as she flung a piece of rubble at Kyôka.

"That's too dangerous." Alzack replied as he aimed Ebony and Ivory in Kyôka's direction. "Just a glancing blow could leave you incapacitated with pain. We need to find another way to take her out."

"Just give up." Kyôka said with a sneer on her face. "You don't have what it takes to oppose us. That just goes to show that you inferior beings belong beneath us."

Though she said that in a confident tone, Kyôka could not help glancing at the battle between Alfonzo and Mard Geer. When she did, she felt as if her heart skipped a beat at the fact that Alfonzo was seemingly keeping up with the strongest Etherious.

Even more concerning than that was the fact that she had no idea what happened to Tartaros' most prized possession, the Book of E.N.D. The object that would lead to fulfilling Zeref's most cherished wish.

'Was the book destroyed when the Cube was destroyed?' Kyôka thought to herself. 'Hopefully, Lord Mard Geer was able to keep it safe. Otherwise, what reason do we have to exist?'

Shaking her head, Kyôka decided she would worry about that later. For now, she had to deal with the two wizards who were getting in the way of Tartaros' sacred mission. Turning her attention back to Alzack and Mirajane, Kyôka narrowed her eyes. Then, after focusing her curse power into her legs, she dashed forward at high speed.

Boom!

With the power of Kyôka's acceleration, the ground under her feet cratered as she sped across the battlefield.

"She's coming." Alzack muttered as he locked onto the higher concentration of curse power in Kyôka's legs.

"By me a few seconds." Mirajane said as she leapt back and flared her magic power. "I'll just go all out. She shouldn't be able to get away from this. Just be ready to fall back when I give the signal."

"Got it." Alzack said as he once again pulled the triggers of his pistols rapidly. "[Bullet Magic: Mud Shot, Freeze Shot]."

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

Alzack's magic bullets, though they did not hit Kyôka, were more effective than before thanks to being able to more easily sense her presence after she concentrated her power. However, just as Mirajane requested, he was not aiming to end the fight. Instead, he was trying to buy Mirajane time.

'Does he really think this will slow me down?' Kyôka thought to herself as she avoided the magic bullets that burst into extremely viscous mud while using her talon feet to dig into the ice meant to disrupt her footing that covered the ground. 'If this is all he's got, then this will be over soon. Still, I need to keep an eye on that woman using [Take Over Magic]. She could be an issue if I'm not careful thanks to her versatility.'

Almost as if she was responding to Kyôka's thoughts, Mirajane's magic power spiked dramatically, drawing Kyôka's attention at an inopportune moment, resulting in her almost being covered in mud.

"[Show the World the Power of Destruction, Bael]." Mirajane chanted, releasing her [Soul Armament].

With Bael's release command chanted, a blackish-red light crept down Mirajane's body, forming a pair of long white gloves on her hands and arms. She then raised her hands above her head. Then, in the air above her hands, a spark of blackish red energy manifested, drawing in ambient ethernano and fueling its growth.

Meanwhile, Alzack, after emptying Ebony and Ivory's magazines holstered his pistols. Then, he reached back and gripped the hilt of the greatsword on his back.

"Alright, let's see if that training with Erza did any good." Alzack muttered to himself as he drew Dante from his back.

As for Kyôka, when she realized that Alzack was no longer shooting at her, the corners of her lips curled into a sinister smile. Then, she corrected her approach and made her way towards Alzack in a straight line.

"It looks like you're ready to die." Kyôka said in a malicious tone. "Well then, I guess I'll help you along."

Then, with another burst of curse power, Kyôka's speed increased dramatically. In what seemed like the blink of an eye, she appeared in front of Alzack.

Clang!

As soon as Kyôka was in position, the nails on her hands lengthened into claws before she swept them at Alzack's chest. However, Alzack reacted quickly, positioning his greatsword horizontally to block.

Clang!

Then, using the recoil from the blocked strike, Alzack, while wincing at the amplified pain brought by the reverberation of the sword in his hands, made a quick turn and lowered his blade before raising it quickly in an upward strike. Yet, Kyôka reacted just as quickly and crossed her claws in front of her chest to block the strike.

Yet, because of the added strength provided by Dante's release, the force behind Alzack's strike was enough to send Kyôka flying straight up into the air.

However, before Alzack could capitalize on getting Kyôka airborne, she righted herself and swept her arms downwards. As she did so, her claws elongated even further while turning as flexible as whips.

"What the hell?" Alzack exclaimed as he was forced to abort the leap he was about to make to catch up with Kyôka.

Rolling out of the way of Kyôka's claws, Alzack drew Ebony with his left hand, snapped it down onto one of the magazine's strapped to his thigh, took aim, and fired in rapid succession.

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

Ting! *Ting!* *Ting!* *Ting!* *Ting!*

In response, Kyôka retracted her claws quickly. Then, she swung her arms at high speed to deflect all the incoming bullets. Unfortunately, these bullets were not normal bullets. Instead, they were [Glue Shot] bullets. As a result, Kyôka's hands and claws were covered in a thick layer of quick drying glue.

"Tch! Just petty tricks." Kyôka grumbled as she looked down at her hands while falling from the air.

Shatter!

A moment later, Kyôka extended her claws, their tips easily piercing through the glue on her hands. At the same time, she took a moment to glance at Mirajane, who had not attacked her for a while.

"What is that?" Kyôka asked in an incredulous tone when she saw the giant ball of blackish-red energy floating above Mirajane.

"Not something you need to worry about." Alzack replied from behind Kyôka.

Surprised to hear Alzack's voice from right behind her when he had been on the ground only a moment ago, Kyôka's eyes widened. Then, on instinct, she spun around and crossed her claws in front of her.

Clang!

Thanks to her instincts, Kyôka was just in time to defend against Alzack's heavy swing. However, because she had no footing in the air, she could not help the fact that she was sent flying. And to make things worse, she was sent flying towards Mirajane and that dreadful ball of blackish-red energy.

"[Extinguished Star]." Mirajane chanted while Kyôka flew in her direction.

Then, after chanting her spell, Mirajane motioned with her arms as if she were throwing the blackish-red energy ball in Kyôka's direction, sending the ball in the same direction. Though, it moved rather slowly.

"Do you really think you can hit me with something like that?" Kyôka asked disdainfully as she noticed just how slowly the energy ball was moving towards her.

Kyôka then pointed her hands towards the ground and extended her claws, intending to dig them into the ground before retracting them to pull herself out of the way of Mirajane's attack. However, before they even reached the ground...

Bang! *Bang!* *Bang!* *Bantg!* Bang!*

Ting! *Ting!* *Ting!* *Ting!* *Ting!*

... Alzack sheathed Dante on his back, unholstered Ivory, reloaded both pistols, and unloaded on Kyôka's claws. And although he was unable to damage them, Alzack was able to change their trajectory, keeping them from ever reaching the ground.

"Damn you!" Kyôka screeched.

In the next instant, Kyôka's curse power surged. At the same time, her appearance began to change. First, a mask with long protrusions that resembled horns appeared on her face, covering everything above her nose. Next, her outfit, which was already quite revealing, morphed into what amounted to black bikini armor that covered her arms and had feather pauldrons on the shoulders.

Then, her hair turned into what appeared to be feathers with a ponytail that extended down past her knees. And finally, a pair of mid-thigh-high black boots materialized on her legs and feet, completing the look.

"You worthless humans have truly angered me." Kyôka hissed out. "But I've had enough. Now that I'm in my true form, I'll end this. Then, I'll torture you and everyone you know until you wish for death."

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

Ting! *Ting!* *Ting!* *Ting!* *Ting!*

Despite saying that, Kyôka's strategy did not change, as she continued extending her claws towards the ground. And just like before, Alzack continued to fire at them, trying to deflect the claws away. However, unlike before, Alzack's bullets had no effect, making it clear that Kyôka's power had risen significantly while in her True Etherious Form.

Crack!

Eventually, Kyôka's claws sank into the ground. And when they did, she smiled with malice, thinking that now was her time to turn the tables. She then began retracting her claws to pull herself towards the ground. Yet...

"What?" Kyôka exclaimed in shock.

... instead of being pulled downwards, Kyôka's claws only ripped out chunks of the ground as they retracted.

Completely dumbfounded, Kyôka could only stare at the debris impaled on her claws in utter confusion.

A few moments later, Kyôka realized something else was wrong.

"Why haven't I fallen to the ground yet?" Kyôka asked herself, her confusion growing. "No, it's not just that... it feels like I'm being pulled in a certain direction."

After realizing that, Kyôka turned to look in the direction where she was being pulled. And when she did, she noticed that she was moving towards the slow-moving blackish-red orb. She also realized that the closer she got to the orb, the more her sense of crisis flared.

Realizing the danger she was in, Kyôka struggled with all her might to get free of the blackish-red orb's pull. Yet, no matter what she did, she found it impossible. Eventually, she turned her attention onto Mirajane, the source of the spell. And when she did, a murderous glint appeared in her eyes as she snarled angrily.

"I don't know if killing you will end this..." Kyôka growled as she pointed her hands in Mirajane's direction. "But even if it won't, I'll make sure that you die along with me!"

With that said, Kyôka extended her claws as fast as she could, each one aimed at the various vital points on Mirajane's body.

Bang! *Bang!*

Yet, just as her claws began to extend, two pieces of rubble, flying upwards at high speed, struck her arms from below, pushing them upwards. As a result, Kyôka's claws were sent off course. And to make things worse, they ended up colliding with the blackish-red orb and were completely atomized on contact.

"Damn it!" Kyôka roared.

"Do you really think I left myself completely open?" Mirajane asked playfully. "You're really underestimating me."

As she spoke, Mirajane controlled even more rubble, wrapping it around Kyôka's forearms and locking them in place. Though, with her mind split between maintaining the [Extinguished Star] and Seilah's [Macro] curse, she was struggling. Still, she knew she would only have to hold the stalemate for a few more moments before Kyôka was engulfed by the destructive energy.

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

On top of that, Alzack, not daring to get too close to the [Extinguished Star], fired his pistols, Ebony and Ivory, at Kyôka's back. And with every shot that landed, on top of damaging the Etherious, Kyôka was pushed closer and closer to her defeat.

"Ahh~~~~~!" Kyôka screamed in frustration when she was eventually pushed into the destructive blackish-red orb.

It did not take long for Kyôka's screams to cut off abruptly. Shortly afterwards, the [Extinguished Star] fizzled out. Then, from where the center of the [Extinguished Star] once floated, a charred, vaguely humanoid-shaped lump of flesh fell from the sky.

"Huh? I didn't think there would be anything left after she fell into that." Alzack said in a confused tone as he approached Mirajane while resealing Dante.

"Well, if I completely atomized her, how was I supposed to use [Take Over] on her?" Mirajane asked while dispelling her [Take Over] and resealing Bael.

With that, both Fairy Tail wizards approached what was left of Kyôka, who was missing most of her left arm, and all of her right arm and legs, had half of her face burned away completely, and was barely breathing.

"How does anyone even survive this much damage?" Alzack asked while grimacing at the grim sight. "These Etherious really have some tenacious life force, huh?"

"Yeah, it's almost unfair." Mirajane replied as she knelt down next to Kyôka and placed a hand on her chest.

At that moment, Kyôka, hearing voices so nearby, did all she could to crack open her remaining eye. Then, upon seeing Mirajane, she gritted her teeth in anger.

"Even if I was defeated, Lord Mard Geer will get revenge for me." Kyôka hissed out.

"I'm not so sure about that." Mirajane replied while shaking her head after glancing in the direction of Alfonzo's and Mard Geer's battle. "Alfonzo isn't even going all out. Yet, that Mard Geer guy looks like he's on his last legs. Anyway, please don't resist. It would just be a waste of time for both of us."

However, before Mirajane could activate her magic, both hers and Alzack's heads snapped in the northern horizon when they felt an immense magic power approaching in the sky at high speed.

"What the hell is that?" Alzack asked in an astonished tone.

"I have an idea." Mirajane said, her tone turning solemn. "And if it is what I think it is, we're in trouble. We're all gonna have to work together if we wanna have any chance of surviving this."

With that said, Mirajane activated her magic, absorbing Kyôka, before leading Alzack towards Laxus, Fried, Gray, Erza, Natsu, and Gajeel, who were gathering to face the incoming threat.

Chapter 812: The End of Tartaros

Just after the other three battles started, Alfonzo and Mard Geer were standing about thirty feet apart while staring at each other. Meanwhile, Happy, Wendy, Carla, and Panther Lily stood on the ramp leading to the Blackbird while holding their breaths in anticipation.

"You are quite the brave human." Mard Geer said in his usual gentle, yet disdainful, tone.

"Not really." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head.

"Really? You don't think so?" Mard Geer asked, a hint of interest making it into his tone. "But you're the first human I've ever seen who does not cower in terror in front of me."

"Well, in my opinion, bravery is not the absence of fear." Alfonzo replied casually. "Rather, it's when someone experiences fear and pushes through it. But you see... You don't have what it takes to make me feel afraid. So, there's no reason to be brave."

As he spoke, Alfonzo held his hands out to his sides with an expression of "what do you want me to do?" on his face.

Seeing that, Mard Geer's smile cramped slightly as his curse power surged in anger.

"I see..." Mard Geer said in a menacing tone. "Well then, you are right. You're not brave. Instead, you're simply a fool."

Alfonzo could not help but chuckle at Mard Geer's reaction.

At the same time, Wendy and the Exceeds were watching this with interaction with bated breath.

"Why is Alfonzo antagonizing him?" Wendy asked.

"He's just trying to get under his skin." Carla replied.

"Yes, Alfonzo is rather good at getting into his opponents' heads." Panther Lily added while gritting his teeth at the memory of his first meeting with Alfonzo back in Edolas.

"Yeah, he's got trash talk down to a science." happy said while nodding vigorously. A moment later, he pouted. "But if you try talking trash to him, he threatens to stop making yummy fish. He's such a hypocrite."

As soon as his words ended, Happy darted behind Panther Lily while ducking his head.

Crack! x 6

At the same time, taking advantage of the fact that Alfonzo had turned away to glare at Happy, a half dozen thorny vines burst out from the ground at high speed while moving to entangle Alfonzo's limbs, torso, and neck.

Clang! x 6

Yet, before the vines could get close, they slammed into a metal barrier that rose from the ground around Alfonzo. And thanks to the force behind their movements, they were bounced off the barrier and snapped shortly afterwards.

"Oh! Not a bad sneak attack." Alfonzo said with mock praise in his tone. "But you'll have to try a little harder than that to catch me off guard, Bruh."

Crack!

Shatter!

After saying that, Alfonzo tapped a spot on the barrier. From that spot, cracks spread throughout the metal making up the barrier. A moment later, the entire barrier shattered. However, instead of just falling to the ground, the shards of metal shot outward, slicing through the remaining pieces of the vines.

Yet, the vines were not Alfonzo's only targets, as a fair amount of the shards hurdled towards Mard Geer, as well.

"Petty tricks." Mard Geer said as more vines broke through the ground in front of him.

Thunk! *Thunk!* *Thunk!* *Thunk!* *Thunk!*

The new vines, meant for defense, were much thicker than the first ones Mard Geer produced. As a result, although the metal shards pierced more than halfway through the vines, they were eventually stopped without Mard Geer having to take a single step to avoid.

Unfortunately, because the vines were so thick, and so intertwined, Mard Geer lost sight of Alfonzo for a moment.

Zap!

So, when he spread the vines to see Alfonzo, the Fairy Tail wizard was no longer standing there. Instead, the only thing left in his place was a flash of violet light. At the same time, Mard Geer caught a second flash of violet light out of the corner of his eye.

Bang!

And when he turned his head to look at the second flash, the only thing Mard Geer saw was the shaft of a tonfa enlarging in his vision right before it slammed into the left side of his face.

"Argh!" Mard Geer grunted loudly as he was sent flying.

Despite the force behind the attack, Mard Geer did not take much damage. On top of that, he righted himself in the air before landing on his feet and sliding back to bleed off the momentum.

"Hmm...?" Mard Geer hummed as he raised his right hand to rub the side of his face where he was hit, a somewhat nostalgic expression on his face as he looked at Alfonzo who was gripping the unreleased Riot and Bedlam in his hands. "When was the last time I felt pain? Such a curious feeling. Honestly, I never expected to feel it again before completing my goal."

"Oh, you mean reviving E.N.D., right?" Alfonzo replied casually. "So, that dusty old book wasn't destroyed in the explosion, huh? What a shame. I was hoping I'd manage to get that with all the damage I caused. I have to have a good reason to cause so much damage, after all."

Hearing that, Mard Geer frowned. No human should know Tartaros' true goal.

"It seems you know more than you should." Mard Geer said, his smile completely dropping from his expression. "It seems there is more than just one reason to have you die here."

"Dude, you're sounding like the guild master of a common Dark Guild." Alfonzo said in a mocking tone. "Come on, I know you have better lines than that, right?"

Instead of responding, Mard Geer only flared his curse power. A moment later, nearly a hundred roses sprouted and bloomed around Alfonzo before...

Boom~~~~~!

... they exploded, kicking up a mushroom shaped cloud of dust and debris.

Bang!

Yet, before the smoke even started to settle, Mard Geer was once again sent flying by a blow to the face. On top of that, the strike was an exact mirror of the hit he took on the left side of his face.

"Damn... I guess I didn't hit you hard enough." Alfonzo muttered while standing in the spot Mard Geer used to occupy. "Neither of those hits left bruises on your face. The art I envisioned will never be completed at this rate."

Shaking his head in mock disappointment, Alfonzo kept an eye on Mard Geer's expression. And just as he expected, after regaining his footing, Mard Geer, despite not being injured, was growing angrier from both humiliation at being struck by a human and disrespect.

"I've heard enough." Mard Geer said as he flared his curse power even harder. "[Prison Flower]."

With that, a monstrous flower grew from the ground between Alfonzo and Mard Geer. And the thing that made this flower so monstrous was not just its grotesque appearance. It also had something to do with the large, sharp thorns growing from its vines and the chains hanging from its bulb.

"What kind of flower is that?" Wendy asked with her eyes wide open in astonishment.

"I have no idea." Carla replied with disgust in her tone. "But it's hideous."

Happy and Panther Lily nodded in agreement, not knowing what words to use to describe what they were seeing.

"The prison flower which blooms in the Underworld." Mard Geer said, replying to Wendy's question without even looking in her direction. "Seeing this flower is an omen that a human has reached the end of their life."

Swoosh! *Swoosh!* *Swoosh!*

Then, without giving anyone a chance to respond, Mard Geer controlled the [Prison Flower] to attack, a flurry of vines and chains flying at Alfonzo from all directions.

"[Metal Magic: Circular Cutter]." Alfonzo chanted as the shafts of Riot and Bedlam transformed into a pair of circular saws that spun at high speed.

Swish! *Swish!* *Swish!*

Alfonzo, with a pair of spinning saws in hand, began to dance through the flurry of vines and chains. And with every swing of his arms, one of the [Prison Flower's] vines or chains were severed. All the while, he steadily moved closer to the [Prison Flower's] stem, clearly intending to cut it down.

All the while, as if he was completely unbothered by how easily Alfonzo was dealing with the [Prison Flower], Mard Geer simply watched in silence. Then, after nearly a minute, Mard Geer raised his right hand, palm pointed at Alfonzo, who was about to cut through the [Prison Flower's] stem.

"[Dea Yggdrasil]." Mard Geer chanted coldly as a spinning sphere of curse power formed in front of his outstretched hand.

Just as Alfonzo cut through the [Prison Flower's stem], Mard Geer fired an immense wooden pillar from the sphere. Naturally, its target was Alfonzo.

"You didn't really think such a low-level sneak attack would work, did you?" Alfonzo asked as he rode the momentum from slashing through the [Prison Flower's] stem to point Bedlam at the incoming wooden pillar. "[Electromagnetism Magic: Railgun]."

With Alfonzo's chant, several things happened in quick succession. First, both Riot and Bedlam reverted to their original shapes as tonfa. Second, a conical chunk of adamantite materialized at the tip of Bedlam's shaft. Third, an electromagnetic field formed around both Bedlam and the chunk of metal. Lastly, Alfonzo pulled Bedlam back slightly before tapping it against the flat side of the conical chunk of metal.

An instant later, the wooden pillar was splintered into wood chips and Mard Geer's right arm had been vaporized. Then...

Boom~~~~~!

... the sound barrier was broken several times over as a line of superheated air ran from Bedlam into the distance where a crater was carved into a mountain and rubble rolled down the same mountain's slope.

Meanwhile, despite just losing an arm, Mard Geer seemed completely unphased as he looked down at the stump.

"It would seem you're nothing like the rest of those worthless humans." Mard Geer said while examining the place where his arm used to be. "Perhaps I made a mistake underestimating you."

Reaching that point, Mard Geer looked away from his missing arm and made eye contact with Alfonzo, who was lowering his tonfa.

"This is the part where I should ask for your name. But I think I'll skip that. It's not like I'll remember it, anyway. Especially since there's no need to remember the name of someone who will be dead soon." Mard Geer continued in the same tone.

As he spoke, spiky vines grew from Mard Geer's shoulder before weaving into the shape of an arm. A moment later, the vines fused and took on the pale color of Mard Geer's skin. By the time all the changes were complete, Mard Geer's arm looked as if it had never been lost. Though, the sleeve of his clothing was no longer covering it.

"Regeneration, huh?" Alfonzo said with a shrug. "Not bad."

"Although you've been an entertaining diversion from the norm, I've grown bored with this altercation." Mard Geer said as he flexed his fingers. "Now, it's time for you to die. [Memento Mori]."

As he chanted the name of his curse, Mard Geer raised his hand, looking as if he planned to wave it at both Alfonzo and the Blackbird.

Zap!

However, before he could even start the motion, Alfonzo vanished from where he stood before appearing next to Mard Geer in the next instant. On top of that, he held Mard Geer's wrist in his hand, not allowing it to move.

"Yeah, I'm not really into letting the bad guys just use their big move." Alfonzo said casually while holding Mard Geer's arm in place. "Plus, if I'm translating the name of that curse correctly, it translates to Memory of Death. If I'm right, I'm not really cool with letting you cast it. You know what I mean, right?"

"Unhand me." Mard Geer said, his anger starting to overflow.

"Okay." Alfonzo replied as he flung his arm upwards, sending Mard Geer flying.

Zap!

An instant later, before Mard Geer could even right himself, Alfonzo appeared to his right, Riot, wreathed in arcs of violet electricity, swinging towards his abdomen.

Bang!

"Urgh!" Mard Geer groaned as he was sent flying higher into the air.

"[Electromagnetism Magic: Flash Point]." Alfonzo chanted as a pair of electromagnetically charged rails appeared on either side of him.

Boom~~~~~!

A moment later, Alfonzo, having shot back and forth past Mard Geer three hundred sixty-five times in the blink of an eye, was floating in the air while Mard Geer, most of the bones in his body completely shattered, fell towards the ground.

"Well, it was fun." Alfonzo said as he put Riot and Bedlam back in the strap on his lower back. "But I think it's time to bring this game to an end."

With that said, Alfonzo spread his arms wide. Then, he began gathering waves from most of the electromagnetic spectrum on his palms. Though, he purposefully left out gamma waves. And as the waves gathered and fused, they began sparking like electricity.

"[Electromagnetism Magic: Final Flash]." Alfonzo said as he brought his hands, and the fused form of EM waves together.

As soon as the two crackling orbs of EM waves came together, Alfonzo fired a column of energy down at Mard Geer, who was just about to slam into the ground.

Looking up, Mard Geer realized that if he did not do something, his life would end and his goal to fulfill Zeref's dream would end with it. Angered by the thought of failing his creator, Mard Geer gritted his teeth. Then, he flared his curse power to its limit.

"You wretched human!" Mard Geer shouted as his appearance began to change. "I've had enough!"

With his shout, Mard Geer's skin darkened and took on a texture similar to his tattered cloak, bat-like wings sprouted from his back, his ears elongated and turned pointy, he grew claws from his fingertips, long horns grew from his forehead, and feathers sprouted from his wrists and collar-area.

On top of changing his appearance, Mard Geer's injuries were healed. Then, just before he was hit by Alfonzo's [Final Flash] spell, Mard Geer spread his wings. And with one powerful flap, he vanished from where he was.

In the next instant, the [Final Flash] hit the ground. However, instead of causing an explosion, it simply dug into the ground. And because Alfonzo could sense that Mard Geer was no longer in the line of fire, he cancelled the spell.

As soon as the light vanished, everything in the path of the spell was gone, leaving a hole so deep that the bottom could not be seen.

Thud!

Shortly after Mard Geer vanished from in front of the [Final Flash], he reappeared to Alfonzo's left, clawing at the Fairy Tail wizard's heart. Yet, before his claws could get within an inch of Alfonzo's skin, Alfonzo raised his arm and put his forearm in the path of Mard Geer's stopping the Etherious' arm in its tracks.

Then, without exchanging any words, both Alfonzo and Mard Geer both vanished from where they floated in the air.

Boom! *Bang!* *Bang!* *Boom!* *Bang!*

The sounds of heavy collisions sounded repeatedly in the air. The two combatants moving so fast that Wendy and the Exceeds were unable to follow their movements with their eyes.

"Is that demon really so strong that he's even with Alfonzo?" Carla asked dumbfoundedly.

"No." Wendy replied while shaking her head. "Alfonzo hasn't even released his [Soul Armament] yet. That demon is strong, but he's not Alfonzo's match."

"But why isn't Alfonzo just finishing him off?" Happy asked curiously.

"He's just playing around." Panther Lily replied with a huff. "Then again, this is good training, I guess. Still, he should just---"

Before Panther Lily could finish his sentence, he and the others all snapped their heads in the direction of the northern border.

At the same time, Alfonzo did the same. And seeing that, Mard Geer decided that now was the perfect time to end things.

"*Smack!*

Yet, just like the first time he attacked after taking on his Etherious Form, Mard Geer's attack was stopped. However, instead of just blocking, Alfonzo caught his arm, his fingers tightening around mard Geer's wrist like a vice grip.

"*Sigh* Looks like playtime really is over." Alfonzo said wistfully. "I don't know what we were thinking sending all four of our Dragon Slayers out on this mission. Of course, that big bastard would show up. Oh well, we'll just have to do our best to drive him off. I'm still not strong enough to take him down for good."

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

Reaching that point, Alfonzo turned to look at Mard Geer, who was throwing punches and kicks in an attempt to free himself from Alfonzo's grip. However, Alfonzo in a show of precise control, materialized slabs of Vibranium in front of every one of Mard Geer's strikes. As a result, the sound of clanging metal echoed over the area while the kinetic energy from Mard Geer's blows was absorbed by the metal before each slab dematerialized.

"[Run Wild with Destruction on Your Fingertips. Usher in Pandemonium with Creation in Your hands. Riot, Bedlam.]" Alfonzo chanted as Riot and Bedlam liquified before crawling up from his lower back and coating his hands, wrists, and forearms in liquid metal.

Then, without another word, Alfonzo rammed his free hand into Mard Geer's chest, crushing his heart. After that, he pulled his hand out of the gaping hole in the late Etherious' chest and reached into his cloak. However, before even a second passed, he froze. Then, he exhaled an exasperated sigh.

"How did that son of a bitch even know we were fighting them?" Alfonzo muttered under his breath. "The damn Book of E.N.D. is already gone. Fucking [Time Magic]..."

Shaking his head at the loss, Alfonzo released Mard Geer's wrist, letting his corpse fall to the ground below. Then, he turned to look at Wendy and the Exceeds.

"Wendy, take the cats inside." Alfonzo ordered. Though, his tone was not all that harsh. "Close the ramp behind you when you go in. Then, go to the rear cargo bay and hit the big green button. That will create both a protective and isolation barrier. That should be enough for the big, black, fuck-off dragon to ignore your presence."

"The big... What?" Wendy asked, her cheeks flushing in embarrassment from almost repeating such crass language.

However, Alfonzo did not stop to explain. Instead, he turned in the direction where the others were gathered and started flying towards them. Meanwhile, Carla started tugging at Wendy's dress.

"Let's go back inside, Wendy." Carla said in a frantic tone. "He was talking about Acnologia. We have to get inside and put up the barrier."

"But I can't just leave them alone." Wendy protested.

"Carla is right, Wendy." Panther Lily said sternly. "We have to make sure that we survive. That way, we can tell the guild what happened here if things go wrong."

Biting her lower lip with tears forming in her eyes, Wendy eventually turned around and ran inside to follow Alfonzo's directions. All the while, she was lamenting her lack of strength, despite being even more powerful than most wizards at her age could hope to be.

"Next time I'll fight with them, too." Wendy said to herself in a determined tone as the isolation barrier went up. "I'll never leave my guild mates to fight alone while having to protect me ever again."

Chapter 813: Yup! He's Really Pissed Off Now

Standing in an area free of debris from the collapsed Cube, Laxus, Fried, Alzack, Gray, Erza, Mirajane, Natsu, and Gajeel were all looking towards the sky in the northern direction with apprehensive expressions on their faces.

"Looks like Alfonzo's done." Mirajane said solemnly. "Just in time, too."

"Indeed." Erza replied with a nod with Astraja drawn and held tightly in her right hand. "I fear fighting Acnologia without him would be nothing more than an exercise in futility."

"Hey, why not have some confidence in your training?" Laxus said with feigned disdain in order to hide his own apprehension. "We've all gotten a lot stronger than we were back then. We're all definitely stronger than Alfonzo was seven years ago. And he was able to hurt that big bastard. So, why can't we?"

"Lexus is right." Fried replied with a nod of his own as he tightened his grip on Thoth.

"Damn right!" Natsu shouted with a plume of fire shooting from his mouth. "This time, I'm gonna make that guy pay! Aw man! I'm all fired up!"

"Keep it down you fiery mouth breather!" Gray said in an annoyed tone.

"Shut up, Salamander!" Gajeel shouted while covering his ears.

"What was that?" Natsu asked indignantly. "You two trying to pick a fight?"

"So, um... I wasn't there last time." Alzack said while gripping his pistols as he turned towards Mirajane. "Was that Acnologia really that strong?"

"Undoubtedly." Mirajane replied. "Even with Master Makarov, Gildarts, Alfonzo and Elicia working together, we could do little more than just crack his scales. And that was mostly because of Alfonzo's spell, [Linear Cannon]. As for everything else, the only thing that did any damage was Alfonzo and Elicia's [Unison Raid]."

Alzack sucked in a sharp breath when he heard that. Having trained with Alfonzo and Elicia since he was a child, he could not imagine someone that could take all their attacks while barely getting injured at all.

"This is gonna suck, isn't it?" Alzack muttered while smiling wryly. "*Sigh* I guess I'll try out that experimental ammo Alfonzo came up with this time."

"Experimental ammo?" Erza asked with a curious glint in her eyes.

"Yeah, the type of rounds that you don't use against other wizards." Alzack said while nodding once again as he replaced the magazines strapped to his thighs with bright red, green, and blue ones. "Like plasma rounds, rounds filled with neurotoxins, and even ones that use gamma radiation. Those last ones are real last resort types, though. I wouldn't even use them in a last resort if Alfonzo wasn't around to manage the fallout."

While everyone had been present for one of Alfonzo's lectures on the Electromagnetic spectrum in the past, none of them truly followed. However, most of them, with Natsu being the exception, understood just how dangerous gamma radiation was to the environment. They also had some idea of how dangerous being exposed to that kind of radiation could be. So, they really hoped it would not come to a point where Alzack had to use those rounds.

"You don't have to worry about Alzack using those rounds." Alfonzo said, his voice floating down from above. "If it gets to that point, I'll be the one doing it. But it will be on a much bigger scale. So, if you hear me shouting anything like [Eraser Cannon] or [Gamma Ray Stream], I'd suggest you start running towards the blackbird so you can get into the barrier before shit goes to hell."

Looking up upon hearing Alfonzo's voice, everyone was greeted to the sight of Alfonzo, Riot and Bedlam still coating his arms, floating in the air with his arms stretched out in front of him.

A moment later, an enormous, conical shell materialized in front of his outstretched hands. Then, only an instant later, Alfonzo's entire body was cloaked in arcs of crackling, violet electricity that extended forward creating an electromagnetic barrel that surrounded the giant metal shell.

"You guys should brace yourself." Alfonzo said without looking down. "That big mother fucker just entered my [MPD] range. And I'm gonna put as much into this one shot as I can without losing my aim. So, the shockwave's probably gonna be a real bitch."

Hearing that, everyone's expressions tightened. Then, everyone with a weapon long enough to do so, stabbed them into the ground. Though, Erza was an exception.

"[Requip: Adamantine Armor]." Erza chanted as she switched armor in a flash of magic power light.

As soon as Erza's transformation was complete, now holding a pair of large shields, she stepped forward and connected the two shields, creating an additional magic barrier. And once the barrier was set up, those without weapons, Mirajane and Natsu, braced themselves behind Erza.

"[Electromagnetism Magic: Linear Cannon]." Alfonzo chanted as he flared his magic power to the limit his partial release could provide.

At the same time, the arcs of electricity crackling across Alfonzo's body flared wildly, shooting up high into the sky and illuminating the surroundings for nearly two miles while the light could be seen for many miles in all directions.

Naturally, that also included the direction from which Acnologia was approaching. And when the large, black dragon with white, feathered wings saw that light, he snorted disdainfully. The fact that someone was challenging his power causing him to flap his wings to gain speed so that he could destroy the arrogant fool.

Shatter~~~~~!

A moment later, Acnologia's eyes widened. However, before he could even open them all the way, the dragon instinctively tilted his head to the side before pain exploded through the base of his neck and right shoulder while the scales covering those areas shattered and splintered. On top of that, because of the force, Acnologia's entire body was sent flying backwards.

Boom~~~~~!

Then, just as Acnologia regain his balance in the air, the sound of the sound barrier being torn apart dozens of times over thundered through the sky.

"Roar~~~~~!" Acnologia roared in return, angered by both the pain he hadn o experienced for so long and the audacity of the fool who attacked him.

At the same time, back where the Fairy Tail wizards were gathered, Alfonzo floated down to the ground, landing among the rest of his guild mates, looking visibly drained from such a powerful spell.

"Are you okay, Alfonzo?" Mirajane asked as she approached to support him.

"I'm good." Alfonzo replied with a grin. "Just used up too much magic power at once. My reserves are still high, though."

"Well, that must have done some damage, at least." Laxus said with a smirk as he slung Elexion over his shoulder. "Hell, we can hear that big son of a bitch roaring from here."

"Yeah, but it sounds like he's really pissed off, too." Gray added.

Hearing that, Alfonzo's grin spread into a full-blown smile.

"Well, when he starts feeling the after effects of that spell, he's gonna be really..." Alfonzo began to say.

Roar~~~~~!

"Oh, there it is." Alfonzo said giddily. "Yeah, he's really pissed off, now."

"Just what did you do, Alfonzo?" Alzack asked in a slightly exasperated tone.

"Well, let's see." Alfonzo said while cupping his chin with his right hand. "First, the shell I used was created from Adamantite. So, it was hard as all hell. But that's not all. Nearly the whole front half was hollow. So, it most likely shattered on impact, sending shards of adamantite flying in all directions."

"Damn... That sounds so devious." Gray muttered while shivering at the mental image of such a shell hitting him.

"It sounds delicious, too." Gajeel added while almost drooling.

"That's not all there was to it, though. Was it?" Erza asked with an eyebrow raised.

"Of course not." Alfonzo replied, his smile looking just as devious as Gray thought the shell was. "That hollow part was filled with Techno Organic Metal."

This time, it was not just Gray who shivered. Because everyone had tried Alfonzo's strengthening method using Techno Organic Metal at least once and knew just how painful it was to have your body start to take on metallic properties, they all shivered.

'Now that I think about it, why did that shit hurt Gajeel so much?' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'I mean, he's supposed to be immune to damage from metal, right?'

["It probably didn't hurt that moron at all."] Bedlam interjected. ["The only reason he probably looked like he was in so much pain was because he would have rather eaten the metal instead of having it injected into him."]

'Ah! That makes sense.' Alfonzo replied while mentally nodding his head.

"Anyway, you guys should get ready for battle." Alfonzo said, ending the conversation right there. "Even if he's hurt, he's still a heavy hitter. And if we're not careful, everything's over for us."

"But what if he uses a breath attack like he did on Tenrou?" Alzack asked. "Are you gonna use [Fairy Sphere] again?"

"Nah... Besides, I doubt that would work a second time." Alfonzo replied. "First of all, I didn't set up the battlefield beforehand like I did on Tenrou. And second, he might not recognize our magic power signatures right now. But when Acnologia sees us, he definitely will. And unless we can drive him off, there's no way that mother fucker will make the same mistake twice..."

Alfonzo then dragged his gaze across the three Dragon Slayers, Laxus, Natsu, and Gajeel, before continuing.

"Not with three Dragon Slayers that he thought he killed last time still walking around." Alfonzo said in a solemn tone.

Understanding just how serious the situation was, everyone nodded their heads as they turned back towards the direction where Acnologia was approaching from. Then, they all flared their magic power in preparation for the battle.

"[Bow Down to the King of Lightning, Elexion]."

"[Overwrite, Thoth]."

"[Make it Stylish, Dante]."

"[Freeze All Creation, Ymir]."

"[Deliver Justice as Swiftly as the Wind, Astraia]."

"[Show the World the Power of Destruction, Bael]."

"[Burn Everything Before You, Igneel]." {A/N: Thanks, Charles_X_Flare.}

"[Crush Them with Claws and Fangs of Iron, Metalicana]."

Voom~~~~~!

With eight release commands chanted simultaneously, the magic power pressure in the area skyrocketed to a point where the air felt heavy. On top of that, any loose stones in the area began to float without any external interference before they were ground to dust by the magic power pressure.

"Well damn... This is kinda sick." Alfonzo said with a smile as he looked at his guild mates. "When we get back, you all should fight me while I'm using my [Bankai]. Should be some pretty good training."

While Natsu looked as if he was all for it, the other seven just rolled their eyes before focusing on the northern horizon.

"Well, we can talk about that later." Alfonzo said with a smile. "For now, we've got a dragon inbound."

Then, as if on cue, the clouds in the sky parted as Acnologia descended through them. Yet, as expected, he was not in pristine condition. It was clear to everyone present that Alfonzo's [Linear Cannon] did some real damage to the enormous dragon. Even so, that amount of damage did not look like it was enough to turn the tide in their favor.

"By the way, Alfonzo." Laxus said while spinning one of his halberds by the connecting chain. "Why didn't you use [Bankai] before you shot that attack at him."

"Because if he had felt that much power, he would have been on guard." Alfonzo replied while looking up at Acnologia, who's eyes made it clear that he was thoroughly pissed off. "And that would have made sneak attacking him impossible."

"[Eternal Flare]." Acnologia chanted in a deep, reverberating voice that was filled with wrath and malice.

With that, dozens, then hundreds of stars formed from [Arcane Dragon Slayer Magic] formed around Acnologia's outstretched wings before falling towards the group. Then, without even waiting to see if the [Eternal Flare] did the job, he opened his snout and began forming an orb of [Dragon Slayer Magic] between his jaws.

"Shit! He's not fucking around this time." Alfonzo groaned. "You all take care of the falling stars. I'll handle the breath attack. [Bankai, Upheaval]"

A moment later, Alfonzo's aura spiked noticeably. The surge in magic power was so high in fact, that even Acnologia raised an eyebrow in surprise. Though, it was not enough to make him stop his attack. Though, he did watch in interest as Alfonzo was covered in liquid metal and his height increased.

Meanwhile, the others sprung into actions, using everything at their disposal to destroy all the falling stars. Unfortunately, because of Acnologia's power, they found their own magic power depleting rapidly with every falling star they destroyed. But in the end, all the falling stars were destroyed, though the eight Fairy Tail wizards were nearly drained completely of their magic power.

"Damn... That bastard really was just playing with us last time." Laxus said while gritting his teeth in frustration.

"Alfonzo, are you sure you can handle this?" Mirajane asked with worry, not for herself but for Bianca, who, if things went wrong, she would never get to see again.

"Please don't talk to Us right now." Alfonzo replied, his voice strained from effort.

While the others were dealing with the [Eternal Flare], Alfonzo did not move from his spot. Like he said, he had been preparing to defend against Acnologia's breath attack. And the way he chose to do so was to create as many Vibranium/adamantite alloy barriers as he could that floated between him and Acnologia. On top of that, each one was etched with the [Reflection] sigils that were used in the barrier surrounding his mansion. But since Acnologia was so powerful, the amount of magic power he pumped into the barriers was so immense that even he was starting to run low on magic power, despite using his [Bankai].

"[Giga Flare]." Acnologia chanted with quiet menace, interrupting the conversation below.

In the next instant, Acnologia released his [Roar Spell].

Boom~~~~~!

Chapter 814: Repelling Acnologia, Alfonzo's Trust, and Wendy's Resolve

After all the falling stars were dealt with by Laxus, Fried, Alzack, Gray, Erza, Mirajane, Natsu, and Gajeel, everyone gathered together, low on magic power, below the barrier Alfonzo erected just as Acnologia unleashed his breath attack, [Giga Flare].

An instant after Acnologia breathed out, an extremely concentrated beam of incandescent blue magic power was fired from the jaws of history's most powerful dragon/Dragon Slayer. Then, in what seemed like the blink of an eye, that beam slammed into the barrier Alfonzo put up with everything he had.

Now, this barrier was not like any other barrier Alfonzo had ever raised. Built from more than a dozen overlapping sheets of Vibranium/adamantite alloy with [Reflection] sigils etched into each layer, it was possibly the most powerful barrier ever created on Ishgar, if not the entirety of Earth Land.

Yet...

Boom~~~~~!

Acnologia's [Giga Flare] hit the barrier with such force that gale force winds were blown in all directions, even causing great destruction to the nearest villages, which were more than a mile and a half away, at the closest. But that was not all. The initial impact also treated the first few layers of the barrier like they did not even exist, tearing through them with unsettling ease.

However...

After ripping through the seventh layer of the barrier, it seemed that the [Giga Flare's] rate of progress was showing signs of slowing down. In fact, it took an entire second before the seventh layer was destroyed. And when it moved on to the eight, that time tripled.

By the time the [Giga Flare] reached the eighteenth layer of the barrier, the barrier's final layer, it was clear that a lot of the power behind the breath attack had been spent. And that was exactly what Alfonzo was expecting.

Because there were two things built into each layer of the barrier that would raise his chance of surviving this assault. However, it also weakened each barrier slightly as a consequence.

"This better fucking work!" Alfonzo shouted as he struggled through the strain of pushing every ounce of his magic power into the final layer of the barrier.

"What the hell are you talking about?" Laxus shouted as he braced himself behind Erza's [Adamantine Barrier] with the other seven Fairy Tail wizards.

"Unless we survive this, that won't matter!" Alfonzo shouted back. "So, just shut the fuck up, brace yourself, and pray that it actually works!"

With that, Laxus gritted his teeth. However, he stayed silent. As for the others, they were just watching Alfonzo struggle to save all of their lives. At the same time, they also gritted their teeth while clenching their fists, vowing to train even harder if Alfonzo was able to succeed.

Meanwhile, Acnologia, still hovering in the air, was looking down at the barrier that he thought would have been crushed instantly before the insects who opposed him were vaporized, opened his eyes a little wider with every second that passed. Also, with the passage of time, he could feel the breath that filled his lungs was running out. Meaning, his [Giga Flare] was reaching its limit.

And Alfonzo could feel the same.

"Argh~~~~~!" Alfonzo shouted as he pushed the last drops of his magic power into the barrier. "Fuck off you big, black mother fucker!"

With Alfonzo's roar, Acnologia's [Giga Flare] finally ended. Yet, the gathered energy remained pressed against the barrier. And for a moment, the world seemingly fell silent.

Finally, as the world's sound returned, it became clear that Alfonzo's gamble was correct when the remaining energy from Acnologia's [Giga Flare], compressed into a giant, glowing sphere, shot back along the path from which it came and slammed into the enormous black dragon with Earth-shattering force.

Boom~~~~~!

"*Roar~~~~~!" Acnologia's roar echoed for miles. "This isn't over! I will kill all of you! Especially those damned Dragon Slayers~~~~~!"

A thunderous explosion, accompanied by a blinding flash of bluish-white light, sent Acnologia, the Black Dragon of the Apocalypse, flying towards the horizon as he roared, completely outraged by the wizards who opposed it from completing its mission to rid the world of all dragons and Dragon Slayers.

Meanwhile, with their ears ringing and their visions blurred by the explosion, Laxus, Fried, Alzack, Gray, Erza, Mirajane, Natsu, and Gajeel watched Acnologia disappear after becoming just a spot on the horizon with awe written all over their faces.

Thud!

A moment later, the sound of something falling to the ground drew their attention away from Acnologia. When they followed the sound to its source, they found Alfonzo, reverted to his base state, lying face down while breathing shallowly as his body convulsed violent with Riot and Bedlam on the ground beside him.

Seeing Alfonzo, arguably the strongest member of the guild, in such a state after narrowly surviving an attack from Acnologia made the eight Fairy Tail wizards simultaneously suck in a breath of air while watching him with expressions of incomprehension on their faces.

"Alfonzo~~~~~!" Mirajane screamed, breaking the others out of their states of stupor.

After screaming, Mirajane rushed forward to check Alfonzo's condition, with the others following a beat later.

"Lexus, you're the fastest one here." Erza said solemnly. "Hurry back to the Blackbird and bring Wendy here. Hurry."

Though he did not like taking orders, Laxus did not argue, taking on his [Lightning Form] immediately before disappearing in a flash of golden light. As for the others, no one really had any first aid skills. So, all they could do was crowd around Alfonzo with worried expressions.

"I'll do what I can to keep him stable until Wendy arrives." Erza said after noticing that no one seemed to know what to do. "[Requip]."

Flash!

A moment later, Erza, no longer wearing her [Adamantine Armor], was standing in front of Alfonzo wearing a short-skirted, white nurse uniform with the top few buttons undone to reveal a bit of cleavage, a pair of thigh-high white socks, and a pair of black high heels while carrying a clipboard with a medical chart clipped to it in one hand and a large roll of bandages in the other.

Undoubtedly, with Erza's explosive figure, her in this uniform was quite the stimulating sight for most men. However, when the men on scene saw her dressed like that, they all paled immediately. Having been in the same guild as Erza for so long, they were all well-aware of how terrible Erza's bedside manner was.

"Stop her!" Fried ordered sternly. "We can't let her get near Alfonzo while he's in this state."

Immediately following Fried's orders, Gray, Natsu, and Gajeel leapt forward and grabbed Erza with Natsu holding her left arm, Gajeel holding her right arm, and Gray wrapping his arms around her ankles.

"What... are you doing?" Erza asked in a confused, yet irritated, tone as she struggled to approach Alfonzo. "I'm trying to treat my husband's injuries. Why are you stopping me?"

"We're saving both of you, you crazy woman!" Gajeel shouted while being jerked around by Erza's inhuman-level of physical strength.

"Nonsense!" Erza shouted, her irritation growing.

"He's right!" Gray shouted as he was dragged across the ground with each step Erza managed to take forward. "If we let you go, there's a good chance you might kill him. Then, you'll get kicked out of the guild!"

"Yeah, just wait until Laxus brings Wendy back, Erza!" Natsu shouted as well. "She's the best at helping people get better, right!?"

"Let. Me. Go!" Erza roared as she continued to struggle.

Meanwhile, Fried and Alzack wiped sweat from their foreheads. Alzack then turned to look at Fried with relief.

"It's a good thing you reacted so quickly, Fried." Alzack said with a small smile. "Otherwise, things could have gotten bad.

"We're guild mates." Fried replied calmly. "We have to look out for each other."

Meanwhile, Mirajane had knelt down next to Alfonzo and carefully lifted his head before laying it on her lap. She then looked at the others and shook her head in exasperation.

"I know she means well." Mirajane said quietly. "But Erza really should think things through more."

Like that, the commotion around Alfonzo continued for another minute, or so before Laxus returned with Wendy, the three Exceeds accompanying them.

"Look, Wendy's here!" Natsu shouted. "Just leave it to her, Erza."

Hearing that, Erza stopped struggling. Then, she turned to look at Wendy, who was making her way towards Alfonzo. After that, although the tension did not completely leave her body, she nodded her head, accepting that her help was not needed.

Seeing that, Gray, Natsu, and Gajeel finally let go of Erza. Meanwhile, Laxus looked in the direction of the struggle just before it ended. And like the others, he immediately paled upon seeing ERza dressed in her nurse uniform.

"Damn... I don't know if that bastard, Alfonzo, is lucky or unlucky." Laxus muttered.

"I don't think Chico and Saya would be happy if they heard you say something like that." Fried said quietly after appearing behind Laxus without a sound.

Laxus only rolled his eyes as he turned away from Erza, who [Requipped] back into her [Heart Kreuz Armor]. His eyes then landed on Wendy, who was examining Alfonzo.

"So, how is he?" Laxus asked.

"He's uninjured." Wendy replied in a serious tone with a solemn expression on her face. "But he used up all of his magic power."

"That's good." Mirajane said in a relieved tone.

Mirajane was not the only one to show relief after hearing Wendy's assessment. However, Laxus noticed that Wendy's expression was still just serious as before.

"Is there something else?" Laxus asked. "I mean, Alfonzo should only have to wait until his magic power restores naturally before he's fine, right?"

"That would be the case if he was out of magic power in the sense that we're all used to." Wendy said as a pair of small, metallic dragon wings spread out from under her long, blue hair. "But when I said he was out of magic power, I mean completely. Like, there's no magic power in his body, at all. And with his magic power completely empty, if we don't do something, he won't be able to draw in ethernano from the atmosphere to refill it on his own. And that will lead to..."

"Magic Deficiency Syndrome..." Erza muttered, her tone low and filled with worry.

Gasp! x 10

No one present was unfamiliar with what Magic Deficiency Syndrome meant for a wizard. So, they could not help but show worry in their expression once again as they looked at Alfonzo and Wendy.

"Wendy, is there anything you can do?" Alzack asked in a shaky tone.

"In theory, yes." Wendy replied. "But I've never tried this before. So, I don't know if it will work."

"Just do what you can." Erza, having approached Wendy, said as she placed a hand on the younger girl's shoulder. "That's all anyone can ask."

Though she was a bundle of nerves at this point, Wendy nodded her head in response. Then, she flared her magic power as the wings on her back spread as wide as they could.

"[Let the Winds of Healing Spread, Grandeeney]." Wendy chanted solemnly.

With Wendy's chant, the wings on her back grew, their wingspan nearly three times Wendy's height while sprouting soft, white feathers that made them resemble Grandeeney's.

"[Heal]." Wendy chanted once her [Soul Armament's] transformation was complete.

As she chanted, Wendy shut her eyes and spread her arms. At the same time, the wind began to blow before swirling together and gathering in her hands.

"Ethernano is everywhere in the atmosphere." Wendy said as sweat began to form on her forehead from the strain. "As a result, it moves with the wind just like everything else in the air. Meaning, with enough control, I should be able to gather it. Then, with my [Healing Magic], I should be able to inject it into a patient. And with all that I learned from Master Tsunade, I have enough knowledge about a wizard's body to find their magic container and inject the gathered Ethernano directly into it. I'm just not sure if I have good enough control to make this work. And if I mess this up..."

Though her sentence was left unfinished, Wendy's meaning was evident. If she was unable to control her magic perfectly, Alfonzo would die.

With the meaning of Wendy's words hanging in the air, Wendy remained still with her eyes closed. Meanwhile, the others exchanged nervous glances, not knowing what the right thing to do was in this situation.

"Just... do... it..." A weak, raspy voice said, breaking through the silence. "I... believe... in... you... Wendy..."

Hearing that voice, everyone turned to its source, Alfonzo, who was still unmoving with his head lying in Mirajane's lap.

"But..." Wendy replied, her voice shaking nervously with the fear of failure.

"No... buts..." Alfonzo replied. "If you don't do it... I'll die anyway... So, it's better to regret doing your best... than not doing anything at all..."

Hearing that, everyone remained silent while Wendy gritted her teeth. A moment later, however, Wendy opened her eyes, the flames of resolve burning brightly within.

"You're right, Alfonzo." Wendy said, the nervous tremble nowhere to be heard. "I'll do it. And I won't fail."

When Alfonzo heard that, the corners of his lips curled slightly.

"I know you won't." Alfonzo whispered weakly.

Alfonzo then fell silent, waiting for Wendy to get started. Meanwhile, Wendy took a deep breath before bringing her hands to Alfonzo's chest and starting to slowly inject the ethernano saturated winds into his

body through his pores while delicately controlling the wind to move towards his magic power container, all her concentration focused on healing Alfonzo.

"Fried, go call the guild." Laxus said quietly. "Even if Wendy pulls him back from the brink, Alfonzo won't be in any condition to fly us back home. So, we're gonna need someone to bring the Fairy's Tail out here. We'll need someone who can fly the Blackbird, too."

"Understood." Fried replied quietly before turning around and walking out of earshot to not disturb Wendy before taking out his iPhone and calling Mavis to report the situation.

Chapter 815: Acnologia's Rage and Suspicion

Sitting in her office in the Fairy Tail guild hall, Mavis was sipping from a cup of tea with a smile on her face. The operation to deal with Tartaros had started early this morning. Yet, there was no worry to be seen on her face. Because she knew, the current generation of her guild could handle just about anything the continent of Ishgar could throw at them.

Meanwhile, on one of the couches in the office, Irene, swirling a glass of wine in her right hand, was holding a newspaper in her left while enjoying the company of the girl who looked much too young for her age while being the member in the guild who was closest to her in age.

"So, how long do you think it will take for those kids to come back?" Irene asked off-handedly while her eyes scanned the text on the page. "Those little demons shouldn't take long for them to deal with."

"Who's to say?" Mavis replied with a shrug. "Like Alfonzo said, his method of tracking Tartaros only indicated a direction. But there's no way to tell just how far away they might be. They could be all the way at the northeastern border of the continent for all we know. They might not even be on Ishgar. They could even be on another continent all together."

"I seriously doubt that." Irene said while shaking her head. She then took a sip from her glass of wine before laying the newspaper on the coffee table. "I know Zeref left them on Ishgar for a reason. And those little demons can't disobey any of his orders. So, they're definitely on Ishgar."

"*Sigh* You're probably right." Mavis replied as she hung her head. "How did he end up like this? He was so different when he helped me back then. But now..."

Irene opened her mouth to reply. Yet, before she could say anything...

{BGM: "Ashita Wo Narase" -- Amy B}

Mavis' phone rang, the ringtone one that Alfonzo and Elicia thought would be perfect for her. And as it turned out, Mavis loved it.

"Well look at that." Mavis said, her smile widening, knowing that her guild had completed their mission with no casualties, even if she had no proof yet.

"Yes, yes." Irene said nonchalantly. "Just answer the phone so we can hear the good news, would you?"

"Okay, okay." Mavis replied with a giggle. "You're so impatient."

After that, Mavis looked down at the iPhone she held in her hand. However, when she saw the caller's name, she was slightly confused.

"Hmm...?" Mavis hummed while tilting her head slightly. "I thought it would be from Alfonzo. Why is Fried the one making the report?"

Even though she said that, Mavis did not waste time answering the call and putting her iPhone to her ear.

"Fried, what's the situation?" Mavis asked as Irene raised an eyebrow at Mavis' previous question. "How did the Tartaros subjugation go?"

{"Tartaros has been completely annihilated."} Fried replied from the other side of the phone call, force calm in his tone. {"But we encountered a complication after defeating the Dark Guild."}

"What kind of complication?" Mavis asked, her smile vanishing quickly. "Is anyone hurt? Did you lose anyone?"

{"No, no injuries or casualties."} Fried replied, drawing a relieved sigh from Mavis. {"But Acnologia made an appearance."}

Thud!

Hearing that, Mavis dropped her iPhone in sheer surprise as her eyes opened wide with panic swirling in their depths. And when Irene saw that, her eyes narrowed as she stood up from the couch.

"What did he say?" Irene asked as she approached Mavis.

Irene's question snapped Mavis back to her senses as she quickly leaned down to pick up her iPhone from the floor.

"Acnologia." Mavis replied simply.

Mavis then put her iPhone on speaker, allowing Irene to hear the conversation, as well.

"What exactly happened, Fried?" Mavis asked in a serious tone.

Fried then went on to tell Mavis about the current situation, stating that Alfonzo was currently incapacitated after expending all of his magic power, though unharmed. He also mentioned that Wendy was currently tending to him.

{"The real issue is that with Alfonzo incapacitated, we have no way of returning at the moment."} Fried said, concluding his report. {"We request that someone come to pick us up. We'll need the Fairy's Tail. Also, we need someone who can fly the Blackbird, as well."}

"And where are you exactly?" Mavis asked, the relief she was feeling from not hearing the news that any of her guild members had been lost evident in her tone. "Alfonzo was not able to give us a location before departure."

"Don't worry about that." Irene said, drawing Mavis' attention from the iPhone. "Lici can track Alfonzo's location with her iPhone. Just put her on the team going to retrieve them."

Nodding in response, Mavis turned her attention back to the iPhone.

"I'll assemble a team for retrieval immediately." Mavis said solemnly. "Just make sure that you all stay safe."

{"Understood."} Fried replied. {"Then, we'll be waiting."}

With that, the call ended. Then, the office fell into silence.

"He said Alfonzo used all of his magic power." Irene said, breaking the short silence. "Do you think he meant that literally."

"Knowing Fried, he probably did." Mavis said, her tone still just as solemn. "I just hope this doesn't lead to Magic Deficiency Syndrome. All we can do is hope that he can pull through this."

With that, Mavis started going through her contact list, looking for a specific number. Finally, when she found it, she clicked the call button.

*Ring!**Ring!* *Ring!*

{"Hey, Mavis, what's up?"} Ur said with a giggle over the call.

"Ur, you're in the guild hall, right?" Mavis asked, her tone more serious than the former guild master was expecting.

{"Yes."} Ur replied, her tone turning solemn after hearing Mavis' tone. {"What happened?"}

"I've got an urgent mission for you." Mavis replied before explaining the situation with the Tartaros subjugation team.

After Mavis' explanation ended, the call fell silent for a few seconds.

{"Damn..."} Ur muttered. {"Are you telling me those kids managed to drive off Acnologia?"}

"For now." Mavis replied. "But we have no idea how injured the dragon was after Alfonzo's retaliation. So, I need you to prep the Fairy's Tail and move to extract them. Hopefully, you'll arrive before Acnologia comes back."

{"Understood."} Ur replied, the sound of footsteps cutting through the din of the guild hall audible in the background. {"The Fairy's Tail should be ready to go in half an hour."}

"Good." Mavis replied. "If Ultear is there, bring her with you. Take ren, as well. Even though Wendy is there, I know her [Healing Magic] uses up a lot of magic power. So, having someone else there who can tend to the wounded would go a long way."

{"Got it."} Ur replied, her footsteps stopping momentarily as she turned around to grab her daughter.

"Oh, and bring Lici with you, too." Mavis said, remembering that another pilot was necessary to bring the Blackbird back home, as well.

{"No problem."} Ur said as she lowered the iPhone from her ear. {"Hey, Tear, Lici! Come with me. We've got---"}

Beep! *Beep!**Beep!*

The call ended before Mavis could hear the end of Ur's sentence. She then put her iPhone down on her desk and turned to Irene, who was no longer standing next to her.

"Do you plan to go with them?" Mavis asked calmly, her expression loosening slightly now that a plan to retrieve the members of her guild was in place.

"Yes." Irene replied while making her way towards the elevator. "It's better than just sitting here and waiting for them to return. *Sigh* I really have changed. Back when I first came to Magnolia, I would have felt nothing if I heard that one of my so-called comrades had fought Acnologia. In fact, I would have just written them off as dead and wondered which book to read later. But now, the thought of seeing any of those kids, Especially Alfonzo, Erza, and Mirajane being hurt makes me worry to no end."

"I guess that's the benefit of being human again." Mavis said as a small smile curled her lips.

"If you say so." Irene replied with a shrug as she pressed the elevator's call button. "Anyway, I'll make sure to keep those kids safe if we run into Acnologia again."

"Are you sure you can handle him?" Mavis asked, a hint of worry making it into her tone.

"Alone? Probably not." Irene answered with a wry smile "As much as it pains me to admit. But if Belserion and I work together, we might just be able to."

At first, Mavis looked at Irene skeptically. But when she realized Irene's implications, her eyes widened in surprise. Yet, before she could ask Irene what she meant, the elevator doors closed, only leaving the image of Irene smiling mischievously as she disappeared from view.

"Could she have really reached it already?" Mavis asked as she rested her right elbow on her desk and used the same hand to cup her chin in thought. "But how is that possible? Alfonzo said it would take ten years. ON top of that, you had to completely master the partial release state, or [Shikai] as the people from Soul continent call it."

After voicing her thoughts aloud, Mavis fell into silent contemplation for the next few minutes. Her mind that was so interested in magic and magic theory trying it's best to come up with an answer to her question.

Bang!

Yet, before she could find an answer, Mavis' arm slackened and her head fell onto her desk, the sound of the collision echoing around the office.

"This isn't fair!" Mavis whined, sounding just as young as she looked. "Irene might have already unlocked her [Bankai]. Meanwhile, my [Soul Armament Embryo] hasn't even gone through it's first shift!"

Earth Land, Ishgar, Stella/Isvan Border.

Boom~~~~~!

At the same time, a hilltop on the border between the two countries northeast of Bosco, Stella and Isvan, was completely blown apart when a giant black object slammed into it from high in the sky.

The collision was so powerful that instead of rubble rolling down the hillside, it flew off in all directions with enough force to destroy castle walls. Meanwhile, a cloud of dust shot up high enough into the air to be seen for miles. In fact, it had actually drawn attention from several nearby guilds. Luckily, those particular guilds were too far away to get to the scene quickly. Otherwise...

Roar~~~~~!

... there's no doubt that they would have been completely wiped out by Acnologia, whose enraged roar was powerful enough to disperse the dust cloud with its sound waves alone.

Yet, no one alive who had ever seen Acnologia, with Zeref and Irene as exceptions, would have ever imagined seeing the Dragon King of the Apocalypse in the state he was in.

Standing up from the rubble of the hill he landed on, Acnologia's eyes were wide open in rage. On top of that, many of the scales on his head were cracked and oozing blood. Even worse than his head was the injury on his right shoulder, the one that was hit by Alfonzo's [Linear Cannon], as all the scales in the area were completely shattered while bones poked through the flesh that was usually protected underneath. As a result, Acnologia's front right leg was hanging limply as he stood up on his three remaining legs.

Even worse, because of the force behind the rebounded [Giga Flare], throughout his entire flight, Acnologia was completely incapable of righting himself. As a result, when he slammed into the hill, he landed on his back. More specifically, his wings. Meaning, like most of his body, they were also heavily damaged, leaving him without the ability to fly fast or for long distances until they were healed.

"Damn those humans!" Acnologia snarled, his bestial voice rumbling through the surroundings. "If I ever meet them again, I'll make sure to erase them from this world completely!"

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

With his anger boiling over and showing no signs of simmering down, Acnologia unleashed spells on the surrounding area, completely flattening the hill he landed on while turning the rest of the area into a wasteland. However, he did manage to calm down some after there was nothing left to destroy.

"Wait... Those Dragon Slayers..." Acnologia murmured as he began to calm down. "Why did they smell so familiar? No, not just the Dragon slayers. Nearly all of those humans had familiar smells. But how is that possible?"

After asking himself that question, Acnologia began looking back through his memories. Eventually, the memory of an island, a pitiful counterattack from a group of humans with four Dragon Slayers in their midst, and the destruction of that island after he got bored of toying with the humans appeared in his memory.

When that happened, Acnologia narrowed his eyes.

"Did they somehow survive?" Acnologia asked himself, his anger beginning to boil once again. "Unbelievable. No human should be strong enough to survive what I did to them back then."

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

With that, Acnologia, once again enraged, began ravaging the wasteland. And once again, because there was nothing left to destroy, his anger calmed quickly.

"I'll just have to see for myself." Acnologia said in a low, dangerous tone. "Because if that island is no longer there, then it must be another group of humans and Dragon Slayers."

Once again, Acnologia's eyes narrowed, a dangerous light shining in their depths.

"And if they did somehow manage to survive, then I won't let them survive our next meeting." Acnologia said as he flapped his wings to take off. "Urgh!"

Yet, before he could get off the ground, Acnologia grunted from the pain flapping his wings caused. He then turned his neck to look at his wings, which, though still intact, were clearly damaged after being crushed under his weight.

"I should heal myself first." Acnologia said quietly. "I won't be able to fly that far with my wings in this condition."

Whoosh! *Whoosh!* *Whoosh!*

With that, Acnologia once again flapped his wings, the pain of the action making him wince. Even so, he eventually got airborne before flying off towards Isvan, where he knew there were a number of mountains he could use to rest and recuperate before leaving to find the answers to his questions.

A short while after Acnologia flew away, a man appearing to be in his early twenties wearing black and white clothing while carrying a book with the letters E.N.D. printed on its front cover, seemingly appeared out of nowhere. Looking into the distance where Acnologia flew away, this young man, Zeref Dragneel, the emperor of the Alvarez Empire, spoke to himself in a solemn tone.

"To think there are humans in this day and age who could harm Acnologia this much." Zeref said quietly. He then turned his head in the direction of Bosco as he continued. "And that was after dealing with my bookshelf. Unfortunately, as strong as they are, they will never be able to grant my greatest wish."

Zeref then looked down at the book he held in his right hand. He then raised it to read the cover.

"I'll have to leave all my hopes to you..." Zeref said, an almost tender light flickering in his eyes. "Natsu..."

With that, Zeref stared at the book for a bit longer before turning towards Alakitasia and taking a step forward. However, as he raised his foot, his figure started to fade, almost like someone was erasing his presence. And by the time his other foot touched the ground after his second step, the Black Wizard had disappeared completely.

Chapter 816: The Rescue Party Arrives

"How much further away is it, Lici?" Ultear asked urgently while sitting in the co-pilot seat of the Fairy's Tail.

"We're not far away." Elicia said, speaking surprisingly calmly. "It shouldn't take more than half an hour if we keep going at this pace."

Currently, several members of Fairy Tail, Elicia, Gildarts, Laki, Ur, Ultear, Sun, Ren, and Irene, were aboard the Fairy's Tail, the guild's airship, to extract Alfonzo and his team after their extermination of Tartaros and their encounter with Acnologia.

"But seriously, how unlucky are those kids?" Gildarts asked while lounging in one of the seats in the cabin. "I mean, isn't running into Acnologia once enough for a lifetime?"

"Says the guy who ran into him twice in less than three years." Ur shot back sarcastically. "At least they had a seven year gap between encounters."

"Well, I can't argue with that." Gildarts said while scratching his head awkwardly.

"Instead of focusing on the misfortune, perhaps you should pay attention to just how much they have grown." Irene said calmly while leafing through the pages of a book. "They did not just survive, they drove Acnologia away."

"Yeah!" Sun cheered excitedly. "Alfonzo's barriers are the strongest. They used to send Dad flying all the time."

"Hehehe." Ren giggled in surprise as she rested her right palm on her cheek. "*Sigh* That seems like such a long time ago. It feels like just yesterday when Ur and I ran into Marin outside of the mansion just to see Gildarts and Gozaburo fly over our heads after attacking the barrier."

"Ahahahahaha!" Ur, in response to Ren's recollection, immediately burst into uproarious laughter. "Oh! My! God! That was one of the funniest things I've ever seen. The looks on their faces was hilarious!"

Meanwhile, Gildarts, having one of his more embarrassing moments brought up was covering his face with his hands.

"Do we have to talk about that?" Gildarts asked in a dejected tone.

"I remember that." Elicia said with a giggle. "We were in the bath when it happened. We thought someone was attacking the mansion."

"Oh, I remember that, too." Sun said while tilting her head in thought. "I think it was right after I found out that I could... Uh... control my transformation."

"Transformation?" Laki asked curiously.

"Oh! Um..." Sun, having forgotten that not everyone on the airship could be considered family, found herself at a loss after Laki asked her question.

Sun then turned to look at her mother, Ren, with a panicked expression on her face.

"Don't worry about it, Dear." Ren said, patting Sun on the shoulder as she did so. "Laki is trustworthy. There shouldn't be any issue telling her."

Ren then turned to Laki with a smile. However, that smile also hid something that made Laki straighten her back when she saw it.

"But after you find out, you can't tell anyone." Ren said in a serious tone without losing her smile.

In response, Laki nodded her head before straightening her glasses.

"I understand." Laki replied solemnly. "The unknown will remain untold."

"Laki, never change." Elicia said with a smile. "If you ever started talking like everyone else, it would probably be a sign of the end."

Laki only tilted her head, seemingly not understanding what Elicia meant by what she said. A moment later, she returned her attention to Sun and Ren.

"Actually, we're merfolk." Ren said while continuing to smile.

To everyone's surprise, Laki only nodded her head.

"That's interesting." Laki said calmly while once again adjusting her glasses.

"Is that it?" Ultear asked in a surprised tone.

"Yes." Laki replied with a nod. "Regardless of the form they take, they are still members of Fairy Tail. That's enough, isn't it?"

Hearing Laki's calm response, everyone was surprised. Though, her understanding was not what surprised them.

"You know, I thought you might be more upset." Ur said without turning around from piloting the Fairy's Tail.

"Why?" Laki asked, a hint of curiosity in her tone.

"For being left out... Or something like that." Ultear said, replying in her mother's stead.

"Oh..." Laki replied without any further explanation.

"*Sigh* I forgot how frustrating talking to you can be from time to time." Ultear muttered after not getting any further explanation.

"I'll take a guess at what she's not saying." Elicia said with a shrug after getting over her own surprise. "Even though we've all known each other so long, she, just like everyone else in the guild, doesn't poke into everyone's secrets. So, there's no reason to feel like she was left out. Am I right, Laki?"

"Mhmm." Laki replied with a casual nod.

"I guess that makes sense." Ultear muttered. "Still, she could have elaborated on her own.

"You would have just spent more time trying to figure out what she meant if she explained it herself." Ur said with a chuckle as she took one hand off the airship's controls to stroke Ultear's hair.

"Leave me alone." Ultear shot back as she swatted away Ur's hand. "Saying it like that makes it sound like I'm as dumb as Natsu."

"Natsu always understands what I'm talking about, though." Laki added.

Hearing that, Ultear recoiled like she had just been shot in the gut. She then turned to look at Laki with her eyes wide open in disbelief.

"You can't be serious." Ultear shouted.

Laki only nodded in response. And when Ultear saw that, the only thing she could do was stare at Laki dumbfoundedly.

Like that, the trip to retrieve Alfonzo and the others continued among light-hearted conversation. Though, there was still an air of underlying tension in the cabin. Because despite the fact that Alfonzo managed to drive off Acnologia with his [Reflection Barrier], there was no telling how badly the Dragon of the Apocalypse was injured or if he would return to finish the job.

Eventually, the Fairy's Tail reached the area where the battle took place. It then landed near the Blackbird before Ur led her team down to the ground.

Upon leaving the Fairy's Tail, the group found Laxus, Fried, Gray, Erza, Natsu, Happy, Gajeel, and Panther Lily standing guard outside.

"You all don't look too bad." Ur said as she approached the younger members of the guild.

"Yeah, it definitely could have been worse." Laxus replied with a shrug.

"How's the kid?" Gildarts asked, a hint of worry hidden under his usual tone.

"According to Wendy, he's stable." Erza replied.

"But he'll be out of commission for a while." Fried added. "Wendy said that using up all his magic power so quickly put quite a bit of pressure on his magic power pathways."

"I can imagine." Ur said with a nod. "Still, he's really grown a lot. I still remember that cheeky little brat talking business with me the day I first came to the guild with Tear and Gray."

"Yeah, and Gray got mad at him because he wanted to charge you for the Automail leg." Ultear said with a smile.

"It's only because I was still feeling guilty back then." Gray said in his own defense. "My emotions were out of control."

"Anyway, Ren." Ur said, cutting off the topic of conversation. "Why don't you go and check on Alfonzo. Lici, Tear, and Sun, you three can go with her. I'm sure you're dying to see your husband."

"Uh... Lici and Sun are already gone." Ren said while smiling wryly.

"Huh?" Ur and Ultear intoned simultaneously.

"Damn it, they left me behind." Ultear said angrily as she turned towards the Blackbird and ran off.

As Ultear ran to catch up with Elicia and Sun, Laxus, Fried, Gildarts, Laki, Ur, Gray, Erza, Natsu, Happy, Gajeel, and Panther Lily were left outside.

"*Sigh* She's not a young girl anymore." Ur said while shaking her head at her daughters antics. "She needs to learn how to be more composed."

"Oh yeah, because you're the poster girl for composure." Gray muttered under his breath.

A moment later, Gray's back straightened as he felt cold sweat forming. The temperature dropped as well. But thanks to his training, he did not really notice it. The others did, though.

'What is this feeling?' Gray asked himself. 'Did Acnologia come back? No, if that was it, everyone else would be on high alert, too. Then, what could it be?'

Looking around at the others, Gray saw that they were chatting as usual, talking about the battles with Tartaros and Acnologia. A moment later, he realized that everyone was shivering minutely due to the drop in temperature. On top of that, he also realized that there was one person who was not engaging in the conversation, nor were they shivering. In fact, she was staring at him with a menacing gaze while cracking her knuckles as if she were getting ready for a fight.

'Did she hear me somehow?' Gray asked himself, though he realized the answer to that question was obvious an instant later. 'But how, that wasn't even as loud as a whisper.'

"Say, Gray." Ur said, her smile spreading even wider across her face. "We haven't trained together in a while. And I think it's about time I check your progress. So, as soon as we get back, we're going into a training chamber to do just that."

"I guess no isn't an option, is it?" Gray asked while hanging his head low.

"What do you think?" Ur asked.

"*Sigh*" That was all Gray could do in response.

"What a dumb ass." Laxus murmured while watching Gray and Ur out of the corner of his eye. "If you're gonna talk shit about someone, at least don't do it when they're looking at you and can read your lips."

Meanwhile, on the Blackbird, Elicia, Alzack, Mirajane, and Sun were gathered around Alfonzo and Wendy, who were both lying down on beds that could fold out of the cabin's walls.

"I'm sorry I couldn't do more." Wendy, exhausted from trying her best to refill Alfonzo's magic power reserves, said weakly. "But Alfonzo just has too much magic power. And it's so dense, too."

"You've done more than enough, Wendy." Elicia said gently as she stroked Wendy's long hair. "Just making it so that Fonzie's body could start refining magic power on its own again was amazing."

"Exactly." Carla said with her paws resting on her hips. "You should have stopped as soon as Alfonzo could start processing Ethernano on his own again. Instead, you kept going, even after everyone, including me, told you to stop. And ow, you can't even move."

Wendy could only smile apologetically in Carla's direction.

"Lici's right." Sun said with a bright smile. "What you did was amazing, Wendy. Alfonzo was in even worse shape than that time he used up all his magic power in Resenbool. Actually, now that I think about it, you look a lot like he did that one time."

"That's because Alfonzo didn't use it all that time." Mirajane said quietly while staring down at Alfonzo, who was asleep after Wendy's treatment. "But this time, he really went all out. And it was to keep everyone safe."

"That's about what I expected from the man who was able to give me my humanity back."

Hearing that voice speak so suddenly, everyone who was awake, jumped in surprise.

"Jeez, Irene." Elicia said while patting her chest. "I thought Fonzie put up sigils that stop people from teleporting into the Blackbird. So, how did you get in here without anyone noticing?"

"My technique has been improving, too." Irene said with a smile. "This is a kind of game Alfonzo and I play. He makes all sorts of barriers with sigils and [Sealing Jutsu], and I try to break them with my [Enchantments]. It's actually quite fun and intellectually stimulating."

"It's no wonder the two of you get along so well." Mirajane said with a smile.

"Ugh!" Ultear, having just arrived in the Blackbird's cabin, grunted when she saw everyone sitting near Alfonzo. "it's bad enough that Lici and Sun left me behind. But you, too, Irene?"

Irene only smiled with sadism in her gaze.

"Um... but we did say something." Sun pointed out while tilting her head cutely. "But you were too busy arguing with your mom. So, we just left."

"Yup! We sure did." Elicia added with a wide smile.

"I heard it, too." Ren added from behind Ultear. "You really shouldn't let your mother get into your head like that. You know how much she likes to mess with you, right?"

After speaking her piece, Ren walked past Ultear and approached Alfonzo. Then, after casting a simple diagnosis spell, she moved on to Wendy.

"Elicia, Ultear, would one of you mind piloting us back to Magnolia?" Ren asked while checking Wendy's condition. "Although neither of them is in serious condition, I'd feel better checking them back at the guild hall where I have all of my instruments. Plus, Shizuka would be a great help, as well."

"Got it." Elicia replied as she spun on her heels and skipped towards the cockpit. "I'll have us back as fast as I can."

"*Sigh* I'll make sure she doesn't do something crazy." Ultear added as she, too, turned towards the cockpit to pilot the airship."

"Shouldn't we tell Ur and the others we're leaving?" Sun asked curiously while looking at the group of Fairy Tail wizards talking near the airship through one of the windows.

"They'll notice when they see us take off." Irene said while waving off Sun's concerns. "Instead, you should just enjoy the ride."

With that said, Irene decided to lead by example. Turning towards the mini-bar installed on the Blackbird, she quickly poured herself a glass of wine before taking a seat, making sure that she was finished before Elicia and Ultear took off.

The others followed shortly afterwards, with Mirajane making sure to strap Alfonzo down while Ren did the same for Wendy.

Meanwhile, things went just as Irene said. As soon as the Blackbird's engines engaged, the others ran to board the Fairy's Tail, as well. Though, that run was accompanied by quite a bit of cursing from the more irritable members of the group.

Chapter 817: Smile! You're on Candid Camera!

'Fuck... I feel like shit.' Alfonzo muttered internally as his consciousness returned.

Ever since losing consciousness after Wendy's treatment, Alfonzo has been asleep for more than two days. During that time, Elicia and Ur returned the two airships, the Blackbird and the Fairy's Tail, to Magnolia, Alfonzo's condition was checked by both Shizuka and Porlyusica, and he was brought back to the Mansion on the Lake to rest and recuperate.

Without opening his eyes, Alfonzo tried to circulate his magic power to get a sense of the state his body was in. However, because of the low amount of magic power in his container, he found circulating his magic power much more difficult than usual.

'Damn... This is bad.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'Although my body is fine physically, I have so little magic power that training is gonna be impossible for a few days, if not weeks.'

["Just be glad that you made it out alive."] Bedlam said, a grin audible in his tone. ["Without Wendy, you would have never made it this long after using up all of your magic power."]

'I know.' Alfonzo replied while continuing to circulate his magic power, all the while, trying to compress it even further than what it was before he ended up in this state. 'If I play my cards right, this could be a blessing in disguise. I could make my magic power even denser than it was.'

["You'd better get this shit right!"] Riot bellowed, clear irritation in his tone. ["Because the next time we see that overgrown lizard, we're gonna kill that son of a bitch, cut off his head, and mount it on the roof!"]

Alfonzo could not help but chuckle internally when he heard Riot's rant. Though, he could not disagree with the sentiment, if not the entire execution.

'Well, I'm down for killing the big bastard and cutting off his head.' Alfonzo replied with a hint of amusement in his tone. 'But I don't know about--- Hmm?'

Before Alfonzo could finish his internal response, he felt the bed shift slightly. On top of that, he could also feel a warm breath brush across his face. And judging from how close it was, and the fact that he was just waking up, he had a pretty good idea what was going on.

With a slight smile curling the corners of his lips, Alfonzo slowly, and with a fair amount of struggle, opened his eyes. And just as he expected, someone was hovering over him, staring at his sleeping face intently. However, when his eyes focused, he did not see the face of the black-haired maid that he was expecting.

"Ahh! Ma-Ma-Master Alfonzo!" The bespectacled maid with hazel eyes and maroon-colored hair shrieked in surprise as she reeled back upon seeing Alfonzo open his eyes. "You're awa--- Kya!"

Thud!

Unfortunately, the maid, Mey-Rin, while pulling away from Alfonzo, ended up losing her balance. As a result, she flailed around, trying to regain it. But in the end, she tumbled off the bed and crashed to the floor on her backside.

"*Sigh* Mey-Rin, are you okay?" Alfonzo asked while trying to turn his head to look at his clumsy maid.

"Ow! Ow! OW!" Mey-Rinn cried out as she rubbed her backside with a bright red blush on her face, clearly embarrassed that her clumsiness was the first thing Alfonzo saw after waking up. Then, when she heard Alfonzo's question, she lowered her head and spoke in a quiet voice. "Um... I'm okay..."

A moment later, Mey-Rin scrambled to her feet. Then, she bowed quite elegantly, despite her usual clumsiness.

"Please forgive me for my mistake, Master Alfonzo." Mey-Rin said, her tone hiding the panic she was feeling. "I'm glad to see that you have awakened. "I'm sure the ladies and the children will be happy when they hear about this, as well."

"Yeah..." Alfonzo replied with a smile while watching Mey—Rin. "I'm sure they were worried. *Sigh* I hope the kids didn't take it too hard."

'Looks like Grayfia's really put in a lot of work with her over the last few years.' Alfonzo mused. 'Back when we first hired them, Mey-Rin would have run off in a panic after a blunder like that. *Sigh* Time really flies.'

While thinking back on the past, Alfonzo's thoughts were interrupted by the sound of footsteps approaching his bedroom. A moment later, the door was opened. And through the open door, another pair of maids entered the room.

"Mey-Rin, is everything okay?" Maria asked as she entered the room. "We heard something fall from downstairs and rushed up here to help if necessary."

"It was probably just Mey-Rin being Mey-Rin." Ai said with a smile as she looked around the room to see if anything was wrong. "She probably got flustered by something and lost her balance."

"*Sigh* I hope that was all it was." Maria said while shaking her head with a smile on her face. "Master Alfonzo needs his rest, and we should not disturb him unnecessarily."

Hearing that, Alfonzo's smile widened. Meanwhile, Mey-Rin, having been seen through so easily by her colleagues, lowered her head even further as her blush intensified to a nearly incandescent hue.

At the same time, both Maria and Ai finally noticed that Alfonzo's eyes were open. And when they did, they both widened their eyes in surprise. Then, while Maria sighed in relief, Ai quickly approached the bed before throwing herself on top of Alfonzo, completely forgetting her position as a maid, letting her role as one of Alfonzo's lovers take its place.

"Tch!" The sound of a clicked tongue sounded as Ai buried her head in Alfonzo's chest. Yet, thanks to the fact that he could barely move, Alfonzo was not able to tell who it came from.

"I'm so glad you're okay, Alfonzo." Ai said quietly as her eyes reddened and she tried to hold back tears. "When I heard what happened, I was afraid of losing you. Miyuki even fainted immediately after hearing it."

"Sorry for worrying you all." Alfonzo said gently. "But you know why I had to do what I did, right? If I didn't, there's no guarantee that any of us would have made it out alive. Acnologia was just too much for any of us to handle."

"I know." Ai replied softly as she hugged Alfonzo tightly.

The room fell into silence after that.

"Anyway, who else is at home right now?" Alfonzo asked. "I can't activate [Magic Power Detection] right now. I don't have enough magic power."

"The ladies went out with the children to try and improve their moods." Maria replied. "Young Masters Amar'e and Calvin, and Young Miss Bianca did not handle seeing you unconscious very well. So, Madam Elicia and the other ladies decided they needed a change of scenery. So, they all went to Crocus to spend some time at Ryuzetsu Land."

"Lady Ireen is still in Magnolia, though." Mey-Rin said quietly.

"Well, that doesn't surprise me." Alfonzo said in response to Mey-Rin's additional comment. "She doesn't really like being around all those people. So, she very rarely goes to the capital."

Reaching that point, Alfonzo, with Ai still hugging him tightly, tried to raise his upper body to sit up. Unfortunately, his body was still too weak from complete magic power exhaustion to do so.

"Damn... I hate this feeling." Alfonzo groaned, unable to raise himself into a sitting position.

"Let me help you." Ai replied as she unwrapped her arms from around Alfonzo. "Did you want to get up? Are you hungry? Or maybe you would like to take a bath?"

"A bath and some food don't sound so bad, actually." Alfonzo said with a smile as Ai climbed off the bed to help him sit up.

"Understood." Ai replied with a smile.

Then, instead of simply helping him up, Ai reached out before hooking one arm under Alfonzo's back and the other under his knees. Then, she lifted him in a princess carry before starting to walk towards his bathroom. All the while, Alfonzo, completely caught off guard by Ai's actions, could only blink in confusion while he was carried away.

Giggle! x 2

At the same time, despite trying their best to hold it in, Maria and Mey-Rin could not help giggling at Alfonzo's completely dumbfounded expression. Adding to that, the sight of Ai, standing at just under 5'4", carrying Alfonzo, who stood at 6'6", like a damsel in distress, the moment was simply too funny for words.

IN fact, Maria even stealthily took out her iPhone to snap a few pictures of the moment, both for herself and the ladies of the house, who were out in Crocus, to see upon their return.

"Hey, you two come help me." Ai called out just before entering the bathroom. "Master Alfonzo is too tall. This will go faster if you give me a hand."

"Very well." Maria said calmly as she, too, approached the bathroom.

Mey-Rin, on the other hand, was not able to stay quite so calm. Just the thought of seeing Alfonzo naked made her remember the scene she walked in on between Alfonzo, Elicia, and Irene some time ago. She did eventually make her way into the bathroom, though. All the while, she could not help but wonder if

something like that would happen between the three maids and their master. And if it did, would she be able to refuse.

In the end, Mey-Rin experienced both feelings of relief and disappointment when Alfonzo turned out to be too weak to make any moves on her. She also noticed that Maria, though better at hiding it, was feeling the same way.

Even so, the day continued without much of note taking place.

When Alfonzo first woke up, it was a little after noon. After being bathed by Maria, Mey-Rin, and Ai, he was brought down to the dining room. And while Mey-Rin and Ai kept him company, Maria prepared a meal for him. Then, after he finished eating, Alfonzo spent the rest of the time sitting in the living room just spacing out and chatting with the three maids.

"I know this is gonna sound like a dumb question, but Grayfia, Ikaruga, and Miyuki all went with the others to Ryuzetsu Land, right?" Alfonzo asked after looking outside and noticing that the sun was starting to set.

"No, only Ikaruga and Miyuki went with them." Ai replied while shaking her head.

"Miyuki wanted to stay here with you, though." Maria added. "But Grayfia ordered her to go with the ladies and the children, afraid that she might do something unbecoming if she were to be left without supervision."

"*Sigh* I can't even argue with that." Alfonzo said while smiling wryly. Alfonzo then shook his head lightly and continued. "Anyway, if Grayfia didn't go with them, where is she?"

"She went to deliver orders to Mr. Kitagawa." Mey-Rin said quietly as she entered the living room with a pot of tea. "You discussed the next steps for Sixth Sense Holdings with her before you left to subjugate Tartaros, correct?"

"Oh, right." Alfonzo replied, finally remembering his plans for after he returned from that mission. "What's today's date, anyway?"

"The twentieth." Ai replied as she took a freshly filled teacup from Mey-Rin and held it up to Alfonzo's lips.

"Okay, now I get it." Alfonzo said with a nod before allowing Ai to help him drink the tea. "I was supposed to go see him today. *Sigh*This is even worse than being sick. At least if I was sick, I could flood my body with my magic power and get through what I needed to do. But this..."

As his words trailed off, Alfonzo tried to raise his arms. And although they did move, they moved much slower than he intended, as he had gotten used to using minuscule amounts of magic power to aid all of his actions over the years.

"Fonzie~~~~~!"

Before the conversation could continue, the group of four heard the sound of the elevator doors opening followed by Alfonzo's nickname being shouted at the top of someone's lungs.

"Well, I guess there back." Alfonzo said with a smile. "And Lici should be in here in three... two... one..."

In the next instant, a pink and white blur zipped into the room and landed on Alfonzo's lap. And just as he expected, the blur turned out to be Elicia, who was holding Amar'e in her arms. Meanwhile, Alfonzo only smiled at his first wife and his firstborn son when he saw them smiling back at him.

"Hey, I think I overslept a little." Alfonzo said as he carefully took Amar'e from Elicia's arms. "Sorry for worrying you."

"You don't need to apologize." Elicia said happily. "But more important than that..."

Leaving Alfonzo completely confused, Elicia turned to look at Ai with her eyes sparkling. At the same time, Amar'e began to giggle, knowing exactly what his mother was about to say next.

"Ai, do it again!" Elicia exclaimed excitedly. "Fonzie looked so cute when you were carrying him earlier. That confused expression was totally adorable!"

"Huh?" Alfonzo's confusion was completely on display when that unfortunately unintelligent sound came out of his mouth.

Meanwhile, Ai smiled nervously. She did not expect anyone other than Maria and Mey-Rin to know about that. A moment later, however, her eyes opened in realization. She then slowly turned her head in Maria's direction.

"Maria, you didn't..." Ai said as she raised a hand to cover her mouth.

"*Whistle* I have no idea what you could possibly be referring to." Maria said, sounding absolutely suspicious.

Immediately afterwards, Alfonzo snapped his head in Maria's direction as well, the expression on his face making it obvious that he felt completely betrayed.

"Ai, do it again!" Amar'e cheered, breaking the silence. "I wanna see you carry Dad!"

Not long after that, the rest of the ladies and children entered the room. Even Irene, who did not go to Crocus with the others, showed up with Heine and Juliet. And just like that, the rest of the evening went by during this happy family atmosphere.

Chapter 818: Elicia... Raising Flags Again

Bang!

The sound of a fist being slammed down on a desk resounded through the Magic Council's meeting chamber, drawing the attention of all of its occupants.

"Master Makarov, is something the matter?" Jura asked in a concerned tone.

"Damn that Acnologia!" Makarov, not even hearing Jura's question thanks to his rage, roared. "Wasn't attacking my children once enough?"

During a routine Magic Council meeting, one that was not discussing anything classified, Makarov received a message on his iPhone from Mavis. Since this was a rather rare event, Makarov turned all of his attention away from the contents of the meeting to the message. And when he read what Mavis had to say, that led to his, not so, uncharacteristic outburst that completely derailed the meeting.

At the same time, most of the continent of Ishgar knew that Fairy Tail faced off against Acnologia seven years ago. That event was part of the reason why the entire Magic Council system changed, after all. But when they heard Makarov's outburst, they were completely flabbergasted. How unlucky did a single guild have to be to encounter that dragon more than once in a lifetime?

"Which of your children faced off against Acnologia?" Retsu asked with her eyes narrowed. "And were there any casualties?"

Makarov then went on to tell those present in the Council's meeting room what he heard about Fairy Tail's attack on Tartaros, how the Dark Guild was completely wiped out, and finally the encounter with Acnologia after the mission was complete. And with every word, the Council member's eyes widened further and further.

"Wait! Are you telling us the Balam Alliance has been completely destroyed?"

"And Fairy Tail had a hand in all three subjugations?"

"Had a hand? Other than when Oración Seis was defeated, Fairy Tail took down the entire Balam Alliance on its own."

"Just where do you find so many monsters to join that trouble making guild?"

"Hey, we haven't caused trouble in a long time!" Makarov shouted back at the last question. "Fairy Tail is no worse than any other guild when it comes to causing property damage, now!"

"Maybe as a whole."

"Yeah! But you have three or four members that cause most of your guild's destruction on their own."

"In fact, why aren't we fining them more for the destruction they cause?"

Makarov wanted to argue more with the other Councilors. But when he remembered all the fines and reflection letters he was forced to write on behalf of Fairy Tail's wizards, he began to shudder while he started feeling phantom pain in his hands thanks to all the cramps he got from writing in the past.

Meanwhile, the other members of the Council began discussing the ramifications of a handful of Fairy Tail wizards being able to drive off Acnologia. However, no one seemed to realize that the acting guild master of Mermaid Heel had disappeared from the meeting room.

Ring! *Ring!* *Ring!*

{"Hello, Master Retsu?"} Tsunade asked after receiving an unexpected call.

"How much longer until your preparations are complete?" Retsu asked in a no nonsense tone.

Currently, after slipping out of the meeting room, Retsu was on her way to where her motorcycle was parked. Originally, when she arrived in Era, she took a boat from Cedar. And to make getting around the area easier, she also brought her motorcycle with her. However, after hearing about Fairy Tail's run in with Acnologia, she had every intention of rushing back without waiting for the ship to return to bring her to Cedar once again.

Though the trip by land would take a few days, it would still be faster than waiting for the ship to return at the end of the scheduled meetings, bring her back to Cedar, then drive her motorcycle to Mermaid Heel HQ.

{"Um... To be honest, I'm not exactly sure."} Tsunade replied in an uncertain tone.

"No matter." Retsu replied in an uncaring tone. "I will be stepping down as the acting guild master of Mermaid Heel in a week. It will be up to you to have someone in place by then. Otherwise, you can take care of the guild's affairs yourself."

{"Huh? Wait! What are you talking about, Master Retsu?"} Tsunade asked, clear panic in her tone. {"Are you going back to the Soul continent? Why are you in such a hurry?"}

"You'll find out soon enough." Retsu said, her tone not changing in the slightest. "I've already said what I had to say. Just remember, you only have one week."

With that, Retsu ended the call, leaving Tsunade with an uncountable number of question marks floating around in her head.

At the same time, Retsu reached the area where her motorcycle was parked, put on her helmet, which was locked to the handlebars before she arrived, and mounted the vehicle.

Vroom~~~~~!

She then started the magic vehicle and drove away at high speed.

Earth Land, Ishgar, kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

Meanwhile, in the living room of the Mansion on the Lake, Alfonzo, his wives and lovers, Mavis, Gildarts, Ur, and a few of the strongest members of the guild's current generation were gathered discussing what they should expect after Acnologia's attack in Bosco.

"Maki said they were discussing the incident in Era." Mavis said after reading the latest message she received from Makarov.

"Well, I doubt they'll come up with anything in the short term." Ur replied with a shrug.

"Of course not." Irene said. "When too many people gather to make a decision, it is never a quick affair."

Seeing as all the Councilors were now former guild masters and members of the Ten Wizard Sains, it was no surprise to anyone that they would take a while to come up with a plan of action in case Acnologia attacked again.

"Most of them probably don't even need to worry about it." Alfonzo said while lounging on one of the couches in the living room. "More than likely, Acnologia realized that he had met most of us before. And when he realizes that he failed to kill us back then, we're probably gonna have a big ass problem on our hands."

"What do you mean?" Ur asked with a frown creasing her brow.

"He's gonna have a training arc!" Elicia exclaimed with an exaggerated expression of shock on her face.

After Elicia's outburst, the room fell silent as all eyes slowly turned towards her while the expressions on the faces of almost everyone in the room turned blank. Naturally, there were a couple of exceptions. The first of which was Alfonzo, who could only smile wryly as he was probably thinking the same thing as Elicia.

'I was actually thinking the same thing.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'If Acnologia starts training like Frieza after he was brought back in Resurrection F, we're gonna be fucked.'

The other person who had a different reaction from the rest was Irene, who only thought that Elicia's outburst was amusing. But she knew that what Elicia said was almost impossible.

'After being a dragon for over four hundred years, I can confidently say that Acnologia will not go off to train.' Irene thought to herself while grinning at all the blank looks on everyone's faces. 'That rush of power you feel as a dragon makes you feel like every other lifeform is beneath you. So, even if Alfonzo was able to bounce his attack back at him, he'll think that he would just have to use his powerful body to attack. And even if he's more arrogant than expected, he'll just make sure that no one has enough time to set up a barrier like the one Alfonzo used that day. And without that, he would be able to wipe everyone out without much difficulty.'

While Alfonzo and Irene were reacting to Elicia's outburst internally, the silence in the living room continued. And as time passed, Elicia started to feel awkward, nervously looking around at all the blank stares she was receiving until she could no longer stand it.

"What?" Elicia asked as she raised her right hand and awkwardly scratched her cheek. "Why are you all looking at me like that? Is there something on my face?"

Sigh

Hearing Elicia's question, all those who were staring blankly collectively exhaled a tired sigh.

"Lici, you totes raised a flag." Marin said while shaking her head.

"Huh?" Elicia exclaimed in surprise as her eye shot wide open. A moment later, she put on a sheepish smile as she used the hand she was scratching her cheek with to knock on the side of her head while sticking out her tongue. "Tee-hee! Oopsie!"

"And Lici strikes again..." Cana said while shaking her head slowly. She then took a swig from a flask with the words "Take a Shot and Shut the Fuck Up" etched into it before she continued. "Now, we're all gonna have to train extra hard to make sur that when Acnologia shows up again, we'll be able to at least survive the encounter."

"And that's why none of us ever want to take quests with you, Lici." Ultear said while shaking her head in a similar manner to Cana. "You always raise flags. And every time you do, the things you say come true and the quests end up being harder than they should be."

"Hey! That has nothing to do with me!" Elicia objected. "It's not like I have some kind of foresight ability. I just sew, even if I'm really good at it. That's all."

'You're a world hopper, too.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'But I'll keep that to myself since only the family know anything about that.'

"Lici's prophetic words aside..." Alfonzo began to say, trying to bring the conversation back on track.

"Fonzie~!" Elicia squealed at her husband's teasing.

"We still need to put everything we have into training." Alfonzo said. "Because regardless of whether Acnologia has his training arc or not..."

"Fonzie~~~!" Elicia squealed once again.

"Ahahaha!" Alfonzo could not help laughing at Elicia's reaction while everyone else giggled at Elicia's misfortune, as well. He then continued once his laughter was under control. "*Cough* *Cough* Anyway, like I was saying, regardless of Acnologia disappearing to train, he's definitely gonna want revenge on us after what happened. So, we need to be at the top of our games if we want to make it through the inevitable rematch."

"Agreed." Mavis said with a nod. She then let her gaze sweep over everyone in the room before continuing. "Because I know that, like me, no one present wants to lose anyone when Acnologia shows up."

Everyone nodded to Mavis' and Alfonzo's words with solemn expressions on their faces while waiting for Mavis to continue. Meanwhile, Mavis turned her attention to Alfonzo.

"And it's likely that Acnologia will find his way to Tenrou Island after he recalls the incident from the past." Mavis said solemnly. "Are you sure that he won't be able to detect the island if he were to check it out?"

"Don't worry about that." Alfonzo replied with a slow, dismissive wave. "I got that taken care of. I put up a barrier that supplements the anti-recognition barrier that was already on the island. So, no one should be able to see, feel, or hear the island unless their part of the guild."

Hearing that, Mavis nodded in satisfaction. However, when she heard Alfonzo's following explanation, she could not help but frown slightly.

"But if that big mother fucker decides to just carpet bomb the whole sea region with his breath attack, well..." Alfonzo said with a shrug. "... there really ain't shit I can do about that."

Mavis was not the only one to frown when Alfonzo's words ended, as everyone present, with the exceptions of Ur and Irene, had taken the S-Class Promotion Exam on Tenrou Island, thus creating unforgettable memories. So, the thought of losing the guild's birthplace was not a thought they wanted to consider.

"Well, I suppose that's the best we can hope for." Mavis said, her tone sounding even more solemn than most of the expressions on the other's faces.

"Not necessarily." Irene said with a shrug.

"What do you mean?" Gildarts asked curiously.

"Well, I'm pretty sure I could relocate the island with enough preparation." Irene replied. "The only issues with that are if we have the time and where we wanna move the island to. [Enchantments] are quite versatile, after all."

The dumbfounded expression on most of the room's occupants made Irene giggle to herself. Yet, before she could bask in the feeling for too long, Mavis snapped her head in Ur's direction.

"Ur!" Mavis shouted urgently.

"I'm on it!" Ur replied just as urgently as she shot to her feet and dashed towards the mansion's front door.

It was obvious to everyone present that Ur was heading towards the guild to get the Fairy's Tail prepped so that she could check the situation at Tenrou Island.

"Alfonzo, do you have a map of Ishgar?" Mavis asked after Ur left.

"Yeah, there's one in my workshop." Alfonzo replied while pulling his iPhone out of his pocket. "I'll ask Grayfia to bring it down."

Shortly afterwards, Alfonzo sent the request to retrieve the map to Grayfia. And only a few minutes later, Grayfia entered the living room and rolled out the map. From there, the group discussed where to relocate Tenrou Island, provided it still existed, when Ur returned.

All the while, Acnologia, who was still trying to recover from having his attack turned back on him, was raging in the mountains of Isvan because the Techno Organic Metal that seeped into his injuries from Alfonzo's [Linear Cannon] were proving harder to remove than he expected. As a result, even though his injuries had healed completely, parts of his body were stiffening, albeit at a slow pace, just like the initial victims of the metal back in Resenbool.

Chapter 819: Tsunade Returns to Mermaid Heel

"Why in the hell is Master Retsu in such a hurry?" Tsunade asked as she stepped out of the train station in Cedar. "I mean, it's only been three years since I took over as Hokage. Is there really something so urgent that she can't wait for a few more years?"

It has been a weeks since Tsunade received the call from Retsu ordering her to get the Mermaid Heel's guild master situation taken care of. Since then, Tsunade, who tried to slack off from her official duties as often as possible, was forced to work overtime so that she could make time for a three-day trip back to the guild that helped her through some of the toughest times in her life, having lost both her fiancé and her younger brother in short order. Retsu was even the one who helped her get over the hemophobia that had developed when she was not able to save either of their lives.

While Tsunade, who was irritable from losing her drinking and gambling time over the last few days, continued to grumble, the two who accompanied her on this trip, her disciples, Shizune and Sakura, both rolled their eyes at their teacher's shamelessness.

"It's only been three years, she says." Sakura said in an exasperated tone. "She pulls her old mentor out of retirement for three years and thinks there's nothing wrong with that. *Sigh* Sometimes I wonder what goes through Lady Tsunade's head."

Shizune could only chuckle wryly at Sakura's question. As someone who had been traveling and living with Tsunade since she was even younger than Sakura, who was sixteen this year, she knew Tsunade's personality better than most. So, she was able to see through Tsunade's thoughts much better than the younger kunoichi.

Even so, Shizune decided to keep her thoughts to herself. And the reason became obvious only a moment later.

"What did you say, Sakura?" Tsunade, who Sakura did not think was paying close enough attention to hear her through her ranting, asked in a menacing tone without turning around. "It sounded like you were asking me for more instruction on the [Magic Enhanced Strength] technique. Well, since you're in such a hurry to continue improving, we'll have a spar when we get to Mermaid Heel. I'm sure that will help answer all your questions."

"Huh? What? No!" Sakura replied in a fluster. "I didn't say anything about that."

"Oh, then what did you say?" Tsunade asked as she looked back over her shoulder with her eyes narrowed, her gaze daring Sakura to repeat what she said before.

Meanwhile, Sakura shot a pleading gaze in Shizune's direction. However, her elder apprentice sister only looked away, finding the scenery of the town of Cedar quite interesting, despite having seen it quite often for the last fifteen, or so, years.

"Tch! Traitor..." Sakura muttered under her breath.

"Don't blame me, Sakura." Shizune whispered back. "Getting on Lady Tsunade's bad side when she's in this kind of mood is not worth the trouble. Honestly, I thought you would have figured that out by now when considering how smart you are."

"Well?" Tsunade asked as she came to a stop and turned around. She then crossed her arms under her more than impressive chest and stared at Sakura coldly.

Seeing Tsunade's posture, both Shizune and Sakura, who had much more modest assets, felt as if they had been punched in the gut when they saw her proud peaks standing out even more. And when Tsunade saw that, she grinned triumphantly as she straightened her back even further, emphasizing them even more.

"Life isn't fair." Sakura muttered to herself while looking down at her own chest.

"I can definitely agree with that." Shizune added while doing the same thing.

"I'm waiting." Tsunade said in an impatient tone while tapping her right index finger on her left bicep.

"Oh... Right..." Sakura stammered while trying to think up something to say. "Right... What I said was... Naruto should be ready to be Hokage soon. He's going to be a Jōnin soon. So, once he's got a few more missions under his belt, you can promote him. Then, he will be ready to take the position from you. And when that's done, you'll be able to take over as Mermaid Heel's guild master again. If Master Unohana could just be a little more patient, everything would settle itself."

Hearing that, Tsunade nodded her head. Because despite still being in a position of authority as Mermaid Heel's guild master, the workload was considerably lower. And that meant she would have much more time to drink and gamble, which she would always call a win in her book.

"Oh, even better than that..." Sakura said, trying to earn a few more brownie points. "You could make Kakashi-Sensei the next Hokage. That way, you could kill two birds with one stone. Especially since the last time that Fairy Tail wizard, Laki came by, she mentioned something about Miss Porlyusica researching the Sharingan. Maybe she could find a way to integrate it into Kakashi-Sense's bloodline."

That did more than just make Tsunade nod in agreement. It also made her eyes light up in anticipation.

'If Sakura's right, Kakashi's magic power amount would no longer be a problem.' Tsunade thought to herself. 'And with his only weakness taken care of, he would be the perfect Hokage candidate. Then, I will be able to retire even sooner. And just like Sakura said, it would kill two birds with one stone. Looks like I need to make an official visit to Fairy Tail to discuss things with Porlyusica. *Sigh* But there's a

chance she won't even see me. Her hatred for other humans is well-known among the medical community of Fiore. I'll have to consider this more carefully.'

Seeing Tsunade fall into contemplation with an excited glint in her eyes, Sakura could not help sighing in relief. She then turned to look at Shizune. And when she saw the impressed expression on the older Kunoichi's face, she felt rather proud of herself. However, she also noticed something strange in Shizune's expression that she could not place.

Meanwhile, Tsunade was feeling a bit of glee at Sakura's expression. A rather dark glee, at that.

'Yes, let's make Kakashi Hokage.' Shizune thought to herself. 'Ever since Lady Tsunade came back to the village, I've been giving that man hints that I'm interested. Yet, the only thing he cared about was reading that smutty book Jiraiya wrote. And when he does finally show interest in a woman, it's an outsider. That's not to say that I have anything against Laki, she's actually quite nice, if not a bit weird. But still, Hmph! He deserves all the long days of paperwork for ignoring my feelings.'

"Hehehe." Shizune then started to giggle maliciously while those thoughts ran through her head, causing Sakura to take a step back.

In fact, Sakura was not the only one who was put off by Shizune's giggle, as everyone in the vicinity, except for Tsunade, who was off in her own world, took a step back, the malice rolling off the black-haired kunoichi making them all feel uneasy.

"Um... Lady Tsunade... Shizune..." Sakura called out after recovering from her initial fear. "I think we should get going. We wouldn't want to keep Master unohana waiting, would we?"

That question snapped both women back to their senses. A moment later, after nodding their heads, they both started moving towards the town gate closest to mermaid Heel's HQ as if nothing happened, leaving Sakura standing there dumbfoundedly.

"Seriously, how can they act like they weren't both being creepy as hell just now?" Sakura asked herself in a volume even lower than a whisper, having learned her lesson earlier.

Sakura, after shaking her head to get rid of those thoughts, mostly for her personal safety, hurried to catch up with Tsunade and Shizune. And before long, the trio passed through the town gate. Then, they picked up the pace, vanishing from the sights of the people near the gate when they started moving at full speed.

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

About an hour later, the trio arrived at the small town that served as the Mermaid Heel HQ. Wasting no time, they made their way to the headquarters building. And just before Tsunade opened the doors, Shizune asked a question that had been on her mind for a while.

"By the way, Lady Tsunade..." Shizune said in an inquisitive tone. "Who have you chosen to take over as the new guild master? Because I doubt that Yoruichi would accept it. On top of that, her free-spirited nature doesn't really make her a good fit for the position."

"I had no intention of making her the guild master in the first place." Tsunade replied without looking back. "There's actually only one real choice."

Then, without explaining even further, Tsunade opened the doors to the guild hall. And just like always, she found the hall filled with members of the guild who were not currently on quests.

As soon as the guild hall's doors opened, the hall quieted down as everyone looked to see who entered. And when they saw their absentee guild master, more than a few mouths opened in surprise.

"Master Tsunade?" Araña asked dumbfoundedly. "She's actually here?"

"How long has it been since we saw her?" Beth asked curiously.

"Should we still call her master?" Risley asked. "Didn't she retire to become the leader of her village?"

"No, she didn't retire, Meow!" Millianna replied. "Kagura said she was serving as the guild master and Hokage of her village at the same time."

"Does that mean she's finally back to lead us again?" Beth asked, a slight hint of fear in her tone. "But we just got used to having the guild not be in debt."

"Don't worry, Beth." Araña said while patting Beth on the shoulder. "I'm sure everything will be fine."

The rest of the girls sitting at the table all looked at Araña skeptically. Even Araña, despite trying to console Beth, did not truly believe what she just said. And when she looked away from the piercing gazes of her team mates, it made that fact clear to the others.

Many more conversations of a similar nature could be heard all over the guild hall. A fact that made the veins on Tsunade's temples pulse violently.

At the same time, Shizune and Sakura, who were standing behind Tsunade, had to do everything they could to not laugh out loud at the guild's misgivings about having Tsunade come back to take over as the guild master once again. Yet, they both knew that if they were to lose their battles with their laughter, life would not go well for them in the near future. So, they had to do everything they could to not laugh, from pinching their thighs to thinking about some of the most gruesome kills they've made during their shinobi careers to keep the impulses in check.

"Enough!" Tsunade bellowed, her anger finally getting the best of her. "It looks like without me here, your respect for your guild master has left, as well. Looks like I'll need to remedy that before I head back to the Village Hidden in the Leaves."

The malicious smile on Tsunade's face, combined with her threat, silenced the guild hall immediately. Seeing that, Tsunade nodded in satisfaction. Then, she returned to scanning the main hall as she, alongside Shizune and Sakura, entered the building.

"Hmm...?" Tsunade hummed after not seeing the people she was looking for. She then turned to Araña and asked a question. "Where are Master Retsu, Kagura, Yoruichi, and Sui-Feng."

"Oh... Um... Yoruichi and Sui-Feng are on a quest with Rangiku right now." Araña replied. "As for Master Unohana and Kagura, they are at Master Unohana's residence, making the final preparations for Master Unohana's departure."

"I see." Tsunade replied after taking a few moments to think. She then looked up and let her gaze drag over all the members of Mermaid Heel in the main hall. "In that case, I'll go to see Master Unohana. As for all of you, don't leave on any quests until I return. I have an announcement to make."

With that, and before anyone could respond, Tsunade turned around and walked out of the guild hall with Shizune and Sakura following closely behind her. As for the other members of Mermaid Heel, they could only watch her retreating back before exchanging glances.

A few minutes later, Tsunade, Shizune, and Sakura arrived at the modest, two-floor Japanese-style home that served as Retsu's residence while she stayed at the Mermaid Heel HQ.

Knock! *Knock!* *Knock!*

Without any hesitation, Tsunade knocked on the door of the residence. Then, she and her two apprentices waited for someone to answer the door. Before long, the door was opened. However, instead of Retsu, Kagura was the one who opened the door, her usual emotionless expression on her face.

"Good afternoon, Master Tsunade." Kagura said calmly. "Master has been expecting you. Please, come this way."

Then, without giving Tsunade a chance to say anything, Kagura stepped aside, allowing the trio to enter. Then, once all three were inside, Kagura closed the door behind them before leading them to where Retsu was.

Chapter 820: Tsunade's Plan for the Future

"You've arrived." Retsu said while packing a kimono into a box. "Tsunade, have you made a decision about the future of the guild yet?"

Led by Kagura into the master bedroom of Retsu's residence in the Mermaid Heel HQ, those were the first words Tsunade, Shizune, and Sakura heard when they stepped inside. However, instead of registering Retsu's words immediately, Tsunade found herself in a state of disbelief when she saw the state of the room.

Naturally, this was not the first time Tsunade had been invited into Retsu's personal living space. Whether to learn more about healing that [Medical Ninjutsu] could not achieve or to just chat about life, Tsunade was used to seeing the room filled with meticulously groomed bonsai trees, elegant pieces of calligraphy, and swords of all kinds hanging on the walls. But now, the room was bare, with all of Retsu's personal effects packed into boxes. And that sight made her feel as if something was wrong.

'I've been with Mermaid Heel for decades.' Tsunade thought to herself. 'And even before I joined, Master Retsu was already the guild master. So, knowing that she is about to leave... possibly for good... just feels... wrong. Honestly, I couldn't imagine what this guild would be like without her. And for the first time, I'm starting to feel uneasy about this.'

"Tsunade?" Retsu asked, her tone even more gentle than usual when she saw the expression on Tsunade's face.

"Ah... Sorry, Master Retsu." Tsunade said, her tone mixed with sheepishness and unwillingness. "Yes, I've decided what to do. But..."

"But?" Retsu asked while already knowing what Tsunade's next words would be.

"*Sigh* Do you really have to leave?" Tsunade asked, a hint of pleading in her tone. "Although I know you've given more than enough to Mermaid Heel over the years, we still need your guidance."

Hearing the vulnerability in Tsunade's tone, Sakura was deeply surprised. She had only known her teacher for the last three years. And during that time, she had only seen the confident woman all the shinobi in the Village Hidden in the Leaves knew as the Fifth Hokage. So, to even hear a hint of pleading in her tone was more than just a little surreal to the young kunoichi.

As for Shizune, she could only sigh at Tsunade's question. She had been a member of Mermaid Heel for just as long as Tsunade. And just like Tsunade, she had come to see Retsu as a staple of the guild. She'd also learned a lot about healing from Retsu, seeing the acting guild master as a mentor as well. So, she knew exactly how Tsunade was feeling.

Meanwhile, Retsu could only smile gently at her longtime friend. She then, instead of answering immediately, finished packing the kimono she was folding before standing up to face Tsunade.

"It's been a long time since I joined Mermaid Heel." Retsu said softly as she stepped towards Tsunade. "Before joining the guild, I left the Soul Continent on a journey. A journey to find an opponent who could push me to my limits. To force me to use all my skill and ability in a fight to the death."

While Kagura, Tsunade, and Shizune had already heard this story, Sakura found the beginning of Retsu's story unbelievable. Although she had been in many life and death situations since becoming a shinobi, looking for such situations was something she would never do. Even so, she remained silent while Retsu continued to speak.

"And for years, I challenged every strong wizard I could find, looking for the thrill of battle." Retsu continued as she reached Tsunade. She then raised her right hand and placed her palm on Tsunade's

cheek gently. "I've fought with most of those who had gained the title of Wizard Saint over the past fifty years. And I defeated them all. Even so, none of them gave me the feeling that I was looking for. So, to enjoy the thrill of battle, I even stopped using my [Bankai] in fights. On top of that, I improved my [Healing Magic] to make fights last longer. Still, no one was able to give me the fight I wanted. Though, there was that one young man. The one who left the scar on my chest when he pierced me through with his sword."

As she spoke the last two sentences, Retsu used her free hand to rub the braid that fell over her chest and hid the scar she mentioned.

"But in the end, that young man disappointed me, as well." Retsu said while shaking her head as she let both of her hands fall to her side. "After wounding me, he began limiting his own power subconsciously. And though I had every intention of helping him reach his full potential once again in the future, I found another young man who could push me to my limit. And as someone with something to protect, I also knew he would never limit his power. Especially if he found someone to be a threat to what he wanted to protect."

Retsu then wore an expression filled with anticipation for the future and uncontrolled bloodlust.

"On top of that, this young man was strong enough to defeat me while I fought at my full power without killing me." Retsu continued after her expression returned to normal. "Although that was not the kind of fight I was looking for initially, seeing someone fight so fiercely for a reason other than just wanting to be the strongest or test himself, I found my reason for fighting begin to change, as well."

As she spoke, Retsu's expression continued to change between gentle and serene, and battle hungry and bloodthirsty, making the three kunoichi almost feel sorry for the young man Retsu mentioned. As for Kagura, she only observed Retsu with her usual impassive expression on her face.

"*Cough* Anyway... I guess you've answered my question." Tsunade said after exchanging uneasy glances with Shizune and Sakura. "So, I guess it's my turn to answer yours. I've decided what I'm going to do with Mermaid Heel."

Tsunade's words made Retsu focus on the here and now once again. And she was not the only one, as Kagura, Shizune, and Sakura turned to look at her with focused expression, as well.

Meanwhile, Tsunade took a deep breath to organize her thoughts before speaking.

"I won't be stepping down as guild master." Tsunade said while looking Retsu directly in the eyes. "Unfortunately, none of the S-Class wizards in the guild are ready to take on the responsibility of being guild master... yet... The closest one is Yoruichi... But... You know how she is."

Hearing that, Retsu nodded her head.

"So, instead, I'll choose an acting guild master to let her get experience in the position." Tsunade continued. "And with the invention of the iPhone, she'll be able to contact me if there's anything she doesn't understand."

Once again, Retsu nodded her head.

"I'll also have Sakura join the guild to act as the acting guild master's assistant." Tsunade said.

"Wait! Is that why you had me come with you?" Sakura exclaimed in surprise. "Why didn't you tell me about this sooner? And what about Sasuke? I already waited three years for him to come back to the village. And now, you're telling me I have to be separated from him again? And it doesn't even sound like you know for how long!"

Ignoring Sakura's outburst, Tsunade continued without looking away from Retsu.

"In the meantime, I'll be training the Sixth Hokage." Tsunade said solemnly. "I think Kakashi will be an excellent choice. Especially after hearing about Fairy Tail's medical expert's, Porlyusica's, research on the Sharingan. Then, once Kakashi has been named Hokage, I will return to Mermaid Heel and fulfill my responsibilities as guild master until the one I've chosen is ready to replace me."

Everyone other than Sakura, who Tsunade was actively ignoring, remained silent for a few moments after hearing Tsunade's plan as they internalized what they heard. Then, after a few moments of silence, Retsu looked at Tsunade with a knowing smile on her face.

"And who is this girl you've chosen to act as the guild master in your absence?" Retsu asked.

Tsunade did not respond immediately. Instead, she ran her eyes over everyone in the room. And when they landed on Kagura, she lingered for much longer than they did on the others. And when Retsu, Shizune, and Sakura saw that, they all knew the answer to Retsu's question.

As for Kagura, her expression did not change. Not that it did very often. Instead, she only nodded her head in understanding.

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

Having spent almost two weeks healing from the injuries sustained during his encounter with the wizards of Fairy Tail, Acnologia was flying over the territorial waters of Fiore. However, the Dragon King of the Apocalypse was not flying randomly. Instead, he was looking for a specific island. One that he had not visited for seven years. And if his memory served him correctly, one that should no longer exist.

'I will kill those wizards.' Acnologia thought to himself as his powerful wings carried him through the skies. 'Because of that strange metal that was injected into my body, it took nearly three times longer than it should have for my injuries to heal.'

Just as Alfonzo mentioned, the shell he fired at Acnologia with is [Linear Cannon] was partially hollowed out. And that hollowed out section was filled with Techno Organic Metal that seeped into the injuries caused by the shards of adamantite that shredded Acnologia's shoulder. And thanks to the additional injuries he sustained when his [Giga Flare] was reflected back on him, the Techno Organic Metal spread even faster than it would have.

As a result, while healing the injuries he sustained was made easier thanks to the properties of the Techno Organic Metal, Acnologia spent a lot of time understanding and removing the living metal from his body. On top of that, he had to limit its spread so that it did not begin hardening his vital organs. Because despite the power he wielded, if his heart hardened to the point it stopped, not even Acnologia would last very long.

While roaring internally about the humiliation he suffered, the Dragon Slayers who he was unable to kill, and plotting murder and destruction on a possibly massive scale, Acnologia eventually reached the sea region where he remembered encountering the Dragon Slayers who had somewhat familiar scents. However, when he arrived, there were no islands in the location he remembered.

Roar~~~~~!

Unleashing a world-shaking roar when he found what he expected to see, Acnologia still found it hard to believe that the scents of the wizards and Dragon Slayers he encountered recently could have been so similar to the ones he remembered from seven years ago.

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

Splash! *Splash!* *Splash!* *Splash!* *Splash!*

So, just to make sure there were no tricks at play, Acnologia released several [Giga Flares] all over the sea region.

Yet, despite the devastation Acnologia brought down on that region of the sea, no debris from a destroyed island could be seen flying up with the gigantic spouts of water. And although he was unsatisfied with what he saw, Acnologia eventually stopped his onslaught.

"Hmph! Something still feels wrong about this." Acnologia said after a disdainful snort. "Still, if there was anything here, there's no way it would have survived that."

With that said, Acnologia took one last look at the sea region. Then, he turned around and headed back to the mainland.

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

Meanwhile, the residents of the Mansion on the Lake, including Alfonzo, all of his wives and lovers, his children, and the maids, along with Irene, Heine, and Juliet, were gathered in the underground training room.

While the women, Bianca, and Calvin were standing around the edges of the room, Alfonzo and Amar'e were sitting in the center of the training room, with Alfonzo sitting behind Amar'e, his hand resting gently against his first son's back.

"Alright, Amar'e, just relax." Alfonzo said in a soothing tone. "I'm sure there won't be any problems."

"Let's do it, Dad!" Amar'e shouted back energetically. "I wanna use magic, too. Then, I'll beat up all the bad guys like you and Mommy."

Hearing his son's enthusiasm, Alfonzo could not help but smile as he realized that his concern was completely unnecessary. Then, he glanced in Elicia's direction. And when he saw the smile on her face, his smile widened.

At the same time, Alfonzo could not help but notice Mirajane and Shizuka, who were standing on either side of Elicia. Nor could he overlook Bianca's and Calvin's expressions, who were being held in their mother's arms.

"Not fair." Bianca said quietly with an almost criminal pout on her face. "Why is Amar'e the only one who gets to do it."

"Just wait for your next birthday, Sweetie." Mirajane said in a soothing tone. "Daddy will do it for you when you're four, too."

"Hmph!" Bianca only snorted in reply. Though, the smile on her face could not be hidden despite how hard she tried not to.

As for Calvin, he was just happy for his brother. Today would be the day Alfonzo awakened his magic power, after all.

Seeing the expressions on his children's faces, Alfonzo felt his pride well up. These three children brought him more pride and happiness than any of his own accomplishments, whether they were from this life or the last one. He then turned his attention back to Amar'e and started to circulate his still recovering magic power in preparation to awaken Amar'e's.

'Although the chances of Amar'e awakening an innate magic drops drastically if it doesn't awaken naturally, I'd much rather do it this way.' Alfonzo thought to himself as his expression turned serious. 'Natural magic power awakenings usually come with traumatic experiences, like the ones most of us had before we awakened our magic. And if I can help it, my children will never have to go through something like that.'

["Damn right."] Bedlam chimed in from Alfonzo's inner world. ["There have been enough experiences like that in this house for a lifetime."]

["Fucking right!"] Riot shouted belligerently. ["And I wish another fucker would put any of those kids in that kinda situation. They'll never live to regret it!"]

Nodding internally at his [Armament Spirits'] words, Alfonzo focused on the task at hand once again.

Beep! *Beep!* *Beep!*

However, before he could start the process of awakening Amar'e's magic power, Alfonzo's iPhone began beeping in a specific pattern. And when he heard that series of beeps, Alfonzo's expression turned grave.

"Gimme just a minute, Amar'e." Alfonzo said as he took his hand off Amar'e's back and reached into his pocket. "Something just came up."

Though he pouted at being made to wait, Amar'e did not interrupt his father's matter.

As for Alfonzo, he unlocked his iPhone and checked the notification he just received. And when he did, a live video of Acnologia flying in the sky appeared on the screen. He then watched as Acnologia repeatedly fired [Giga Flares] into the surroundings that caused massive spouts of water to shoot into the air. On top of that, large amounts of water rushed past the image, undoubtedly flooding the area where the monitoring device was set up.

A few minutes later, the destruction came to an end and Alfonzo watched as Acnologia flew away. And when he saw that, Alfonzo's lips curled into a smile. However, this smile was not like his usual smile. Instead, it was filled with the desire to kill.

"Don't worry, we will meet again, Acnologia." Alfonzo said so quietly that only he would be able to hear.
"And when we do, I'm GOING TO kill you. You've put the people I care about in danger two too many times. And there won't be a third."