

[Adam POV]

The Royal VIP train package was as decadent as the name suggested, the cart itself was crowned with gold-plated cherubs, and the seats were upholstered in the finest silk and velvet money could buy.

The cart even had a private chandelier hanging above a dining set.

I was honestly shocked.

But once that initial shock died out, I decided there was no point in not enjoying this.

I mean, it would come to bite me in the ass either way, I might as well make the most of it.

"Sebastian, would you be so kind as to bring me the menu?" I asked the personal butler inside my cart.

"As you wish, sir," Sebastian replied, bowing as he left to get a menu from the kitchen.

[Gildarts Clive POV]

I... something was wrong, I couldn't say what exactly, but something in the air didn't fit right, something was messing with me.

I could almost feel my wallet getting thinner for some reason as if my money was vanishing into the air as I sat here, drinking a beer with the guild.

"Are you okay, Gildarts?" Master Makarov asked.

"I.. yeah, just a strange feeling," I replied, scratching the back of my head as I pushed that strange feeling down. Maybe it was nothing, maybe I was just tense for the lack of fun quests.

"If you say so."

[Adam POV]

After fourteen hours on the train, most of which I spent eating delicious food, I arrived at Magnolia Town.

As I disembarked the train, I marveled at the sight I found myself face to face.

The town was as beautiful as I imagined it would be, but I couldn't help but feel a sense of foreboding, something strange was in the air, something that made my skin crawl.

"Sir, here's your copy of the bill," Sebastian said, handing me a ball receipt that seemed to be weaved around the edges with a gold thread.

I grabbed the receipt and my eyes widened.

Well, I'm dead. Gildarts is going to kill me. I survived slavery to die here.

"Is there any problem, sir?" Sebastian asked.

I shook my head. "Not at all, just surprised the burgers were 20,000 Jewels each."

"But of course, sir. The meat is sourced from the most luxurious camps in the Le'fagnon, the cows there are nurtured and treated like royalty, and only when they reach the most delicious age, they are harvested," Sebastian explained.

It was just a fucking burger!

A good one, but not that good.

"I see, that makes sense," I replied, wanting this conversation to end.

"It was my pleasure to serve you, sir," Sebastian bowed. "I wish you the best of luck in your journey ahead."

With the conversation over, I walked out of the train station, and started to wonder what were my odds of bullshitting my way out of this? I knew I shouldn't have eaten five burgers and so many drinks.

I was tempted by the menu, and the fact I hadn't eaten anything good in more than two years.

Taking a deep breath I pushed on forward, walking out of the train station. Now all that was left was finding the guild, and that should be easy enough.

, hoping to find someone who might be able to help me.

[Gildarts Clive POV]

I was having a nice day, drinking, breaking shit up, and eating all I could eat when all of a sudden, disaster struck. A representative from the Magnolia Station entered the guild, handing me a receipt.

I looked at the guy, perplexed, saying that this couldn't be mine.

To which the representative replied, it was my son who had used their services.

That made sense. There was only one, tiny, problem. I HAD NO KIDS!

I... think.

I mean, there was a chance.

But...

THAT'S BESIDES THE POINT.

The bill was for 324,989 Jewels!

"Hold on, you're saying he spent how much on a single meal?" I asked, wondering if this guy was joking or not.

"Everything in your bill is itemized sir," The guy replied.

"Why would anyone spend 20,000 Jewels for a burger?! I could eat 20 in the best burger joint in Magnolia with that!" I exclaimed, as one of my eyes twitched.

"We expect payment by the end of the month," The train guy replied, before turning around leaving me to panic.

"So, let's see if I understood all of that," Master Makarov said with an amused tone. "A kid you don't know claimed to be your son and used your reputation to travel to our town in the most expensive way one could imagine. HAHAAHAHHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA."

"This is not a laughing matter, I've been robbed!" I shot back.

"Let's agree to disagree," Master Makarov continued laughing to the point he felt out of his chair on his back. "I love the kid already, even if it's not your son."

My eyes twitched. "That's more than I had saved up! I'm going to pulverize that brat!"

"Bah, you won't do anything, you are a softy when it comes to children," Master Makarov waved me off, his eyes twinkling with amusement. "Besides, it's not the child's fault you have no money, you make more than enough to have millions in your savings, but you spend it all on beer and women."

"Maybe, but I will still pulverize the brat once I find him," I might not like hurting children, but there's a first time for everything!

"Whatever you say," Master Makarov rolled his eyes. "You know, if you didn't have such a reputation, this wouldn't have happened."

I...

Well, he's right on that one.

I sighed. "Do you think the kid is really mine?"

Master Makarov laughed and turned his gaze to the sky. "The odds are against you. Or can you honestly tell me you used protection with every woman you've been with?"

I frowned, I wasn't that irresponsible.

In fact, I remembered every time I had fucked, and if I had used condoms, and the last time I used one was a year ago.

But...

I had slept with multiple women since that time...

Oh, God.

I truly was that irresponsible.

"Well, if he happens to be mine, I won't give him any allowance for a decade," I muttered to myself.

"How much do you want to bet the brat will come to the guild?" Master Makarov asked with a grin.

"I doubt anyone is that suicidal," I scoffed, rolling my eyes. "He has to know that this would be the worst place to come after the stunt he pulled."

"I'll bet 400,000 Jewels that he comes right through that door," Master Makarov grinned. "If you're right you would recover the money you lost."

If I was right, I would recover the money the brat had used, and a bit more. "You're on, old man!"

[Adam POV]

It didn't take me long to find the guild, it was as easy as asking anyone in town.

The guild itself was a big building, with a huge sign, on which it said "Fairy Tail". It was a big, big building, larger than I had expected it to be, which I guess made sense.

I sighed, taking a deep breath before pushing open the guild doors, and entering the building.

Now all I could hope was that I wouldn't find myself face to face with Gildarts Clive, the man whose name I had used pretending to be his son all in order to get a free ride here.

Actually, now that I really think about it, there's nothing to worry about really. I mean, Gildarts spends most of his time out of the guild, and he only comes to pick another quest and leaves.

The chances of him being here are nearly zero.

Feeling pretty confident I was right, I entered the guild without anything holding me back, only to find Gildarts sitting in the bar, staring... no, glaring at me, as the rest of the guild did what they always did, fight and make noise.

"HAHAHAHA, I TOLD YOU!"

Zanryuzuki if you can hear me, please tell me you have something to escape this situation.

Hello?!

Great now you ignore me.

"How was the train ride, champ?!" Gildarts asked, a vein popping in his forehead, as everything around him started to crack, breaking into cubes that broke into tinier cubes, and so on. "Did you enjoy it?! Was everything to your liking?!"

"I know you don't actually want an answer for that, but yes, it was the best," I replied, taking a few steps back.

"Relax Gildarts," Master Makarov said, with a grin. "You can pay that bill in just a few minutes of your day. In fact, you can't forget about 200,000 Jewels from our bet, how does that sound?"

Hearing that somewhat calmed the enraged man.

"In my defense, you do have a reputation which made... all of this, very easy," I interjected, cursing with all my heart that every time I was nervous I just couldn't shut my mouth.

"Ha! I like you brat!" Makarov chuckled, walking towards me as Gildarts mumbled something that I couldn't quite hear under his breath. "So, are you truly Gildarts' brat?"

I shook my head, seeing the tiny man approach me with a smile, I was probably almost twice as tall as him. "No, unless

my mother cheated on my father. But I doubt that to be the case."

Gildarts upon hearing this, gritted his teeth so hard it sounded like someone was breaking a bone.

"So, what brings you to our humble home, son?" Makarov asked, using a warm grandfatherly tone.

"A few things," I replied, my tone turning darker, which didn't go unnoticed by Gildarts and the old Master. "I was told by a friend of yours this guild was like a big family, and I promised him I would be a part of that if I ever escaped."

Makarov remained silent for a moment. "What friend?"

"Rob," I replied.

Makarov's eyes widened in shock, I could tell he couldn't find the right words to reply, his mind still processing what I had told him.

"He said that if I ever escaped, this guild would take me in," I continued, my voice thick with emotion, remembering my talks with the old man inside the cells.

Makarov smiled brightly. "Rob always was one to look out for others. How is he?"

"Last time I saw him, he was alive, barely holding, but alive," I replied.

"From where did you escape from, kid?" Gildarts asked, his voice kind but his eyes cold though I could tell that icy glare he carried right now wasn't directed at me.

I guess he's already connecting the dots.

"From the Tower of heaven," I replied, letting out a sigh. "I don't know where this place is located, other than that it's somewhere around the sea. The one behind this place is a cult, one that raids villages and makes everyone they don't kill a slave."

Makarov's eyes widened in shock as he looked at me in a mix of concern and rage from what he was hearing.

"That's how I met Rob, we were both slaves in the tower," I continued. "He made my days in that hell a little brighter."

Makarov didn't say a word; he simply wrapped his tiny arms around me and held me in a tight embrace. "Welcome to the family."

I remained stiff for a moment, before simply accepting the hug.

I felt a little guilty though, I hadn't been entirely truthful with them. I had left out one reason for me; wanting to join the guild when answering his questions, and that was that I wanted to grow stronger in order to kill Zero.