Guns 'N Buttercups

by BonneyQ

Summary

Work in a Private Military Company after being trained for years, makes a person harder, colder and with deep scars that are not always physical. But sometimes, even between war, guns and murder, you can find the one you are supposed to love. [AU] [Gruvia]

Notes

This have been sitting on my mind for awhile and I decided to let it out.
Love At First Shot
"Non, non, non." The voice coming from her ear comm said with a heavy foreign accent. "Ameonna-sama, you can't just walk away from your target."
“Monsieur?” The woman with a heavy furry coat frowned.

“Mademoiselle over there is none other than our precious sible.” The voice said once again and the woman turned around to watch the person she just passed and was surprised.

The target walked down an otherwise empty alley besides the two of them, soaking wet and the woman wondered if there ever were an easier job. When the boss gave it to her, telling it was an easy one, he didn’t mention how easy it was. So easy that the partner designed to help her had to point it out exactly who the target was otherwise she would’ve just pass it.

“Oh my… So she’s the one?” The woman asked. The photograph she saw a few hours earlier had obviously been taken years before. Her hair was still blonde, but longer than the chin length of the picture she saw and clearly a few years older.

As if feeling someone watching her, the target turned around and both women stared at each other for a moment. They couldn’t be more different: the target was clearly a perky happy woman while the captor was dark and forgot about what happiness was a long time ago.

“How?” The target asked and with the heavy rain falling around them, the captor could only see the movement of the lips. She reached for the gun inside her heavy navy blue coat and when the other blonde saw it, she took a step back, clearly surprised. “Phantom?” The blonde asked and this time, loud enough to be heard over the rain and her surprised expression turned into one of anger. “Y-you’re the ones that attacked Levy-chan…!” She reached for her purse and took it out what seemed to be pepper spray and it was amusing to see such weak person putting on a fight.

The captor didn’t want for her to create more attention than necessary and shot a dart on the woman’s shoulder and another on her leg – to which the blonde gasped in surprise.

“Wh-what is this?” She asked, taking the darts out and dropping them on the floor and it was clear she was already getting dizzy.

“Juvia has given you a strong sedative that cannot be fought off.” The woman in a coat said, stepping closer to the blonde, who was trying her best to stay awake, but her legs gave out and she fell on the muddy ground. “Do not worry. Juvia will not kill you for it is Juvia’s mission to bring you back, Lucy Heartfilia-sama.” Even when losing consciousness, the woman named Lucy stared at the other with disbelief, fear and a good measure of anger in her clear brown eyes.

“Mmmmm! Tres bien!” Monsieur’s voice came through the comm once more. “Victoire!”

Juvia looked down to the unconscious woman lying on her feet and said: “Capture complete. Monsier, you may call our transportation. Master will be pleased.”

#

A few hours later at the Phantom’s Headquarters when Juvia was finishing her report at rescuing the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in the country, some low level solder knocked on her office’s door and quickly said: “We are under attack, Ma’am! FT is attacking us.”

For a stoic woman, even she looked surprised for a second, after all, Phantom had been the best Company for years and whoever was crazy enough to attack them had defeat certain in their future. “Stall them the best you can at the first floor.” She commanded, already in the attack-mode so natural
to her. “Take as many enemies down there as you can and whoever manages to go to the next floors we will take care of it. Go.” The boy ran away.

Juvia picked an earpiece and put it on and then picked up a radio and spoke on it. “Listen up: Phantom is under attack. I repeat, Phantom is under attack and it is not a drill. Units Charlie through Fox stand at the first floor, defense condition 4. Alpha and Beta protect the second floor and stairwells. Aria: eastern side of third floor. Totomaru, south corner. Sol, North. Juvia will take west. Gajeel-kun, stay with the Master and protect the mission.”

“Copy.” She recognized Aria’s voice.

“Roger.” Totomaru’s tone was of boredom.

“Oui.” Sol answered.

“You are not the boss of me, but fine.” Juvia smirked at Gajeel’s answer. “Whoever makes this far it’s worth fighting anyway.”

Juvia grabbed her two SIGs and checked if they had ammo and was glad she had them full. She grabbed four more clips and put two in each boot just in case she needed it. It was better to be prepared. She was about to grab her Kevlar when she heard gunshots and knew she had no time to protect herself any further. She put one of the guns secure on her belt and ran to her designed place, hearing the units downstairs through the radio.

Apparently, FT was not playing around and went in guns blazing, which was odd. Their business were just like Phantom’s, and they had been rising in the past year, but to take Panto head on like that… Something was wrong. She didn’t know exactly why because their briefing would be in the next hour, so, she had to assume the worse: it was about the blonde woman she got earlier that morning.

The west side of the third floor had a large balcony before someone could enter the building again and for Juvia, that was the best fighting ground there was: when it was raining. She trained so much in it when she was a child, that it felt more natural to her than anything else. That’s why her codename was ‘Ameonna’ – The Rain Woman.

Through her ear comm, she heard Sol and Totomaru being taken down and she gripped her gun harder. Granted that of the four of them, they were the least experienced, but they were her coworkers and she didn’t want them to die and hoped they could make it even if there was no feeling of friendship among them.

Juvia saw the opposite door open and a man step up, looking up and probably bothered with the rain. She readied her guns and stepped outside as well. Her heavy dress was still on and she wished for something that allowed her better movements, but there couldn’t be any changes now. It was time to fight for survival.

The man halted when he saw her and Juvia concealed her gun – the element of surprise was always better and men usually underestimated women. They stared at each other for a moment – one of his hands was behind him and she was sure he was also carrying a weapon.

“To think that you could defeat two of my Unit. However, Juvia and Aria are not to be taken lightly.” She raised her voice so he could hear her over the heavy rain.

He scowled. “Sorry, but it doesn’t matter if you’re a woman or even a child; I don’t go easy on anybody who hurt my friends.”
The most unusual feeling boiled inside her stomach and she vaguely recognized as lust; after all, the man in front of her was very handsome with his dark hair and eyes and most of all his clear determination. It had been so long since she’s seen someone who had that much determination in his eyes that she was thrown back for a moment because her stupid heart had beaten faster. The last one who did that tried to put a bullet through her skull and ended up with one, instead.

The thought of that other man angered her and she pulled her gun just when he did the same. Even as a great shot, Juvia decided that she didn’t want to kill her opponent, just incapacitate him enough so she could regain control of the Phantom building. She could do that, she was *that* good.

Luckily there were large plant pots at the balcony and a sculpture, where she hid behind so she couldn’t get shot. Once she found a good place and angle, she shot at him once more – it was strange, because he hadn’t look for cover yet. Juvia managed to graze him on the arm and heard him groaning in pain and was halfway through thinking that he was a wuss when she saw that his white shirt was now painted blood red at the stomach and, like a rookie, she took a step out of safety to have a better look at what she had done. She never missed. Never.

Her opponent had opened his shirt and hid behind a plant pot once he saw her, but not before she could notice he had bandages around his stomach and that’s where the blood had come from. She wasn’t one who hit him, then. He had gone to Phantom, injured and obviously expected to win. Fool man.

“Huh, ya got me good there, didn’t ya?” He said and Juvia returned to her spot behind the statue and changed her SIG’s clip and when she was about to shoot once more, she saw him taking off his shirt and throwing it away.

If it was a distraction, it worked perfectly because her focus went straight to how well sculpted his body was, even with the ugly bloody bandages. She was not prepared for him to raise his gun and shoot at her direction once more. Luckily for her, she had always been fast, and took cover and at the moment he stopped shooting, she began.

He was mostly likely recharging his gun and she did the same with her second weapon. “It is *impossible* for you to defeat Juvia.” She yelled from where she was hiding. “There is still time for you to be saved. If FT surrender, I shall speak to our Master and convince him to let you and yours live.”

“Oh! Quit saying screwed up things!” He yelled back at her and Juvia closed her eyes in sadness. In her gut she knew he wouldn’t just let things go. “Both sides have come too far to just stop fighting now. Lucy is our friend and we won’t let her stay in this place even if I die!”

A feeling of anger suddenly bubbled inside Juvia’s chest and she realized she was jealous of the blonde woman she took earlier. No one ever went to that extent to save Juvia. She had been in situations where she was just abandoned in the field and had to find her way through survival. Yet, when a girl is about to be taken back to her rich daddy, who will offer her a princess-like life everyone just flipped and went to war.

No one ever went to war for *her*.

She was trained to be calm under *any* circumstance, under any stress, but maybe she was in a bad day. Or that unnamed man had just pushed her buttons without even knowing, but suddenly she wanted to die other than to give back their princess, so, she shot aimlessly, trying to take off some of her frustration out on her opponent. “Juvia will never let her go!”

At that point she was firing her two guns and she could see that he was trying to find a breech but
she just couldn’t stop. But when both her weapons went out of ammo and she went to grab another clip, she failed to stay covered and suddenly she felt hot pain as a bullet got her on her left shoulder and she fell forward, cussing.

“Dammit, dammit, dammit!” Between her haze of pain, she felt two strong hands turn her around. “Fuck, don’t die on me. I hate killing women!” She felt him search for the wound – her navy wet dress hid quite well the blood. When he put a hand on her breast, she flushed and was about to tell him he was groping her when the pain on her shoulder it her in a wave again. The man finally realized where his hand was and if Juvia’s eyes were not deceiving her, he became quite red. “Oh, god! I wasn’t… Sorry!”

She tried to laugh because really: that had to be the most bizarre situation of her life, but the pain made her grasp her shoulder, which seemed to put him to work. “Fuck, I thought you were going to duck like you did before or you were wearing a fucking Kevlar! Who goes out knowing it’s going to be gunshots without a fucking Kevlar?” He said between gritted teeth and pulled her to a sitting position even when she moaned in pain.

“You… are not… wearing one also.” She panted, trying to push the pain away, but it was quite difficult.

He pushed her dress off her shoulder enough so he could see the damage. “Well, I’m crazy and cannot be used as an example.” He examined the front and then looked at her back. “Thank god: through and through.” He put her back on the floor and ripped a large piece of the bottom of her dress. She would’ve complained it if not even a moment later he was hauling her up once again and putting the rag under her armpit – to which she whimpered lightly in pain with the movement of her arm – before knotting it over her shoulder, earning another sound of pain from her when he made it too tight. “It’s not perfect, but this should hold on most of the bleeding.”

Juvia felt him take her off the floor bridal style and she was so stunned that the next thing she knew, there were no more raindrops falling on her face and she was being gently put back down on the floor and realized he had taken her inside the building.

“Why?” She asked in a whisper when he was almost leaving. “Why help me?”

He grinned. “You didn’t want to kill me even when I knew you could. I didn’t want to kill you too. Besides, we only came here to rescue a friend. Let me know when you are ready for round two.” He winked turned around and ran away and for just a moment, her wound hurt less when her heart beat faster than ever before.
For a month Juvia Lockser had been dealing with the fact that Phantom disbanded and she tried to help some former employees find new jobs at some security firms and took money from the firm’s accounts to pay for all types of damages. To complete her month of misery, by the end of it, she still was investigated by the Fiore Bureau of Investigation – FBI for short – as the only one who had not gone under the radar, but she pulled some strings from her Special Forces friends and was cleared.

All she had to do was to find a new job. She was good with being a lone contractor because sometimes it was better to work alone and worry about no one, but Phantom got her used to work in a team.

Her best bet, however improbable, was FT Security – they had been blooming for the past year and was currently one of the best alongside with Pegasus and Lamia.

The blunette sighed and touched the scar on her left shoulder without even thinking about it. She was used with working with the best and currently the best was FT and no matter how she didn’t like to grovel for work, she would not agree to not being in the best firm there was and her gut told her FT was the right choice.

Juvia counted the people she’d met from that day a month before and only came up with two: the blonde, Lucy, who would mostly likely either scream bloody murder when saw her – after all Juvia did kidnap her – or would find some guts and slap the blunette. Frankly, Juvia did not want to face either drama and turned the idea down.

The man with dark hair – Gray Fullbuster, she searched for his name the moment she was patched up –, though…. He worried about her well-being even after she shot a couple of rounds (or maybe a lot, but who was counting?) at him and he hit her back, hence the scar on her shoulder.

He was twenty-nine years old, his parents died during a home invasion when he was seven-years-old and was adopted by a war veteran, Ur Milkovich, when he was eight. Under Milkovich’s supervision, Fullbuster had gone to a military school and his career had been set from the moment he set his feet inside: his grades had been almost perfect in everything. When he became seventeen, though, he got mixed in some trouble and was almost expelled but after Milkovich died when he turned eighteen, he returned to track.

Since then, he had been in three tours out in hostile territory and became Special Forces at the age of twenty-five. It surprised Juvia how young he had been, almost as young as she was when she made it at the age of twenty-four but in different units otherwise they surely would’ve met – and just a year before traded the army for FT Security.

Juvia grabbed her phone, opened the file on him and looked at the picture she had of him. He was a handsome man, that was not up for argument, but in a crazy way, Juvia felt they connected during their shooting party. Plus they went to the army and got used by their country in order to maintain
peace. She chuckled bitterly as she remembered some of her missions. People didn’t even know what she had been through so they could enjoy freedom, so they weren’t under martial law and at war.

Gray knew, though. Most of his missions had been inaccessible even with her level of clearance, meaning he too suffered while in the army.

The best chance she got of getting a job was with talking to him. She could feel it.

Making up her mind, Juvia started to form a plan to meet him in a non-violent place and she smiled to her luck when she saw he had reservations to a place called Akane Resort. Well, wasn’t that lucky?

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Juvia could not believe her eyes as she watched three former Special Forces soldiers play in the beach with not a care in the world. She had looked up who would be going with Gray to the resort and found three more names Lucy Heartfilia – she felt the hot wave of jealousy come over her once more –, Natsu Dragneel and Erza Scarlet. It should come with no surprise that Dragneel had also been in the army and so was Scarlet.

Everyone knew Erza Scarlet. If Juvia had been very good during her training, Scarlet had been phenomenal. She was a legend…

…and was currently playing volleyball, laughing, just any other young woman would have been in a trip with friends. She and Dragneel against Gray and Lucy, and they seemed to be having the time of their life.

Juvia bit her lower lip from her hiding spot by the resort’s bar and a set of butterflies got loose in her stomach. Maybe her gut had been right: FT might be the right choice after all.

#

That night, Juvia produced herself the best she could and wore a low cut dress that showed a little too much of her cleavage; men seemed to forget to think straight when a beautiful woman showed more skin than she was supposed to. And she really needed Gray to stop thinking rationally and put in a good word for his Master about her.

After a final look at the mirror, Juvia left her room in search for Gray, and it was not too hard to find Natsu with all his yelling at the roulette table and she had giggled silently; surprising herself: Juvia Lockser did not giggle.

Not too far from where she stood, she noticed Gray at one of the Casino’s games and he was openly laughing at his friend. “That guy’s such a bumpkin!”

“How-sama.” She said, her whole body shaking, palms sweating and heart beating faster. What the hell? Gray-sama? When he finally looked at her direction after hearing his name and muttered a ‘hm?’, Juvia couldn’t look at him straight, her gaze went to the floor. “I tagged along.”

“Whaaa?” He looked surprised to see her there to say the least and Juvia bit her lower lip while he freaked out; “Y-y-you’re…. Huh?”

“Guess that last time we didn’t get time for introductions. I’m Juvia Lockser.” She offered a hand and Gray shook it, still looking confused and surprised.
“Gray Fullbuster.” He said without thinking. “What…? Why are you…?” His dark eyes shifted from her face to the scar on her shoulder and he frowned. “Sorry about that.”

“Not the first and won’t be the last.” Juvia shrugged, but he caught the meaning behind her words as ‘we get hurt in the job’ and gave her a short sure nod. “Can Juvia buy you a drink?” Gray frowned and looked at her in suspicion, making Juvia smile. “Juvia comes in peace, I swear.”

Gray looked at her for a few moments as if asserting if she was a threat at the moment and if he should trust her and Juvia waited as he made the decision – if she were in his place she would’ve done the same.

“Fine. But I pay for my own drinks, thanks.” He shrugged and Juvia had to stop herself from rolling her eyes at the macho attitude. Gray motioned his hand towards the bar and waited until Juvia walked past him before he moved. While he walked next to her, Juvia could feel his hand hovering on her lower back, but without touching her – she guessed it was instinctive of him and she felt her cheeks get warm.

He waited until she sat at one of the chairs by the bar before she sat next to her and a moment later a bartender got their orders – a beer for him and a martini for her. With promise to return soon, the bartender left and Gray turned to face her.

“How did you know I was here? I’m guessing this wasn’t a coincidence.” He raised his left eyebrow and Juvia noticed he had a scar just above it.

“If you don’t want to be found you shouldn’t use your real name.” Juvia smiled sweetly and Gray snorted.

“Guess you are right.” A moment later Gray narrowed his eyes. “So, why are you here exactly?” The bartender arrived with their orders and gave Juvia more time to answer. “I heard that Phantom disbanded or something like that.” Gray spoke once the bartender left.

“Yes.” Juvia sighed. “Master Jose was doing some serious illegal things behind our backs and now he is hiding somewhere or in jail.” She dismissed the subject, trying not to think about Jose, and looked at him. “Juvia is once again an independent contractor and searching for a job.” She said it in such a way that became quite clear to the man in front of her exactly why she had seek him out.

“And I’m guessing you have your eyes set on FT?” Gray asked and Juvia suddenly excited he understood her.

“Very much so!”

“But you know, after the stunt you guys pulled…” Gray said with a groan. “I mean, I wouldn’t mind, I saw what you can do and you are pretty good, but I wonder what Master would say.” Juvia’s heart almost came out from her mouth when he said he didn’t mind her joining and for the hundredth time she had to push the feeling down. She was there in a mission!

“Juvia will do anything!” Inside her head she winced with how needy she sounded. She did not grovel, yet there she was. What an uncharacteristic night for her.

“Even if you say that…” Gray was trying to explain it to her when a shadow appeared and both looked over their shoulders and saw that someone was casting it on them. Juvia could only see that it was a very large man before she saw his hand come right to her ear and only when it connected, she got so disoriented the man pushed her away as if she weighted nothing.

She barely heard Gray call her name before she fell, the world a crazy mess around her. That
technique was used to confuse and disorient whoever was at the end of the hit and it worked like a charm with charm.

Even with the world still shaking around her, from previous experiences Juvia knew that if she stayed down during a fight, she was as good as dead, so she got up and pushed away the need to throw up. She saw that the assailant was a tall and muscular man wearing some weird metal around his jaw, his hair wrapped in a turban and wearing a weird looking dark suit with a cloth full of scriptures she didn’t recognize.

“Where’s Erza?” The tall man asked and meanwhile Juvia reached for the small gun attached on her ankle, she heard Gray answer.

“What?”

The tall man ignored Gray. “Where is she?”

“Who the hell are you?”

Juvia stepped in front of Gray, gun pointing at the man, her face impassive, trying her best not to show that she was still feeling a little shaken up. “Juvia won’t let you lay a finger on Gray-sama. Juvia will be your opponent.” She didn’t miss the fact that the large man also had a gun in hand and what she had thought it was an eyepatch was not – it looked like some type of goggle, though.

“Juvia…” Gray said behind her, but Juvia didn’t move.

“Go and find miss Erza. She’s in danger.” Juvia could handle the opponent. He was big, but he wasn’t two and she had taken men larger than him, down, but him also holding a gun and the civilians running would make things messy. Her gut, though, was screaming something else was going on and that it was bad.

Her fears confirmed when the man touched his ear – Juvia did not notice he was wearing a comm – and he said, with a grave voice: “You’ve already found her?” A chill run over Juvia’s spine. “Oh, is that so? Then… mind if I tidy things up on my end? Do it.”

If she hadn’t been hit, Juvia would’ve been faster in realizing that the lights turning off were bad news. The next thing she felt was Gray’s forearm over her cleavage, pushing her behind him before he pushed her away, a second later, gunshots were fired and people screamed. Gray tripped and Juvia took over, she shot up, afraid she would hurt any civilians and hoping the big guy thought it was in his direction. She grabbed Gray’s hand and pulled him towards what she thought it was the entrance to the bar and pushed him down, covering his body with hers.

“Do you have another gun?” She heard Gray ask over the screams of the bartender, gunshots and glass breaking over their heads – it appeared the assailant wanted to have a big showdown.

“Sorry.” She told him and he cussed.

Just as suddenly as the light went off, it went back on again and Juvia looked down to Gray – she was still on top of him. Gray sat down and she sat as well, an weirdly close position that would’ve make her breath get caught in her throat but felt no shame at the moment, not when there was some crazy man shooting at them. Juvia was pointing her gun at the top of the bar, as if expecting the man to shoot at them from there.

Gray came out from under her trying not to move her so much, as she was the only one with a gun, and whispered. “Come from where we got in here and I’ll go the opposite way to be bait.”
“Don’t…” Juvia knew better than to look away from danger, but she wanted to ask him not to leave.

“Do it.” His words were harsh and Juvia knew he wouldn’t change his mind, so she followed orders so she could cover him and save his very handsome ass from being slaughtered by a maniac. Once she was next to the bar entrance, she finally looked at where he was – the poor bartender was crying and curled up in a ball halfway from her – and he nodded, getting up, being followed by her a moment later just to not find the man at all.

Juvia came out from behind the counter, pointing her gun down as if expecting him to being hiding and saw by her peripheral vision Gray jumping off the counter and holding a broken glass – better than no weapon, she guessed.

She glanced at Gray and he signed – just like they taught in the army – he would look left and she should check right and she nodded as they split up. After a few moments of looking around her designated area, she did not find the man, just a few frightened people and said out loud: “Clear.”

From the other side of the room, she heard him say the word back at her and only then Juvia lowered her gun.

“What the hell was that about?” Gray asked Juvia when they met halfway. “Who the fuck…?”

“Gray!” They heard a feminine voice call and Juvia vaguely recognized but couldn’t place it until she saw a woman with blonde hair running towards them and she suddenly became annoyed with the interference.

“Please, calm down.” Juvia said, her face stoic and Lucy slowed down just before she stopped in front of them when she saw the small gun on the blunette’s hand.

“Wh-who are…?” It seemed she remembered from where she knew Juvia from because she took a step back and her eyes widened in surprise.

Gray stepped in between the two of them and said to the blonde: “It got dark all of a sudden. Then this guy starts shooting at us…”

“Juvia protected Gray-sama!” Juvia said, proud.

Gray’s eyes were icy when he looked at her. “That was a waste of time! I was trying to make him talk!” Juvia suddenly felt her cheeks get warm just like a child who had been scolded in front of the class. Wasn’t she supposed to try to protect him? How would she know he wanted her to stay down? Gray returned his gaze to Lucy. “More importantly, what about Natsu and Erza?”

Lucy looked down, her brown eyes watering. “I don’t know about Natsu, but Erza…”

She was interrupted by a loud yell that could also be mistaken by a roar and the three of them looked at the direction of the sound and saw a man with pink hair grabbing his neck. “Who shoots someone in the neck? It hurts like a bitch!”

Lucy jogged to where he was and looked at the wound and saw that even though it was bleeding quite a bit, it hadn’t hit an artery, just grazed it and he was lucky. “That’s kind of the point! If you were a normal human you’d be six feet under.” She said and Juvia noticed how she seemed relieved Natsu was alive and almost in one piece.

“That asshole is not getting away!” He said, but Lucy grabbed his arm.

“You need to bandage that, stupid!” Lucy didn’t let go when he pulled his arm away. “Natsu
Dragneel, you will not be of any use to Erza if you get an infection in that wound. We will go after her, but after I patch you up, otherwise I’ll tell Erza when we find her.” Her words made Natsu stop and turn around to look at them before his dark green eyes met Lucy’s brown ones.

“Fifteen minutes.” He said between gritted teeth. “We leave in fifteen minutes, no matter what.”

“Fine.” Lucy didn’t sound too happy either and Juvia guessed they had arguments all the time.

“Did you bring any weapons?” Juvia suddenly said, their attention at her. “Any weapon?”

“I brought one gun.” Gray passed a hand over his face.

“Me too.”

“I have my taser.” Lucy was checking Natsu’s wound.

“You are not coming.” He told her. “It’s going to be dangerous.”

Lucy gasped in indignation. “When I was kidnapped, she fought to bring me back. I will not stay here waiting! I will help.”

Juvia looked fascinated at the interaction until Gray touched her elbow and led her away. “They are going to be arguing for a few minutes, let them be. Lucy will have her way by the end of it.” Gray informed her. “I didn’t ask, but are you alright?” He asked her and Juvia looked confused. “I was at the end of one of those smacks on the ear and it’s awful. You got up pretty fast.”

She almost smiled with his concern, but she was trying to make a good impression. “Juvia was a bit dizzy, but if we go down and stay down, we are put down, right?” Gray understood her and nodded.

“What weapons did you bring?”

“Three SIGs, six clips. And this little one.” Juvia showed him the gun.

“Yeah, speaking of which, where the hell did you hide…?” He looked down at her well fitted dress. “You know what? I don’t want to know.” Feeling the pressure off for a second, Juvia raised her long dress to show him a strap on her ankle. “Oh. Makes sense.” Gray trailed off and looked past her just to walk to where the big man had been when they first saw him and Juvia followed and watched while Gray got something from the floor and showed it to her. It was a small device and Juvia recognized as an earpiece just like her team at Phantom used it. “Can we get a location out of this?”

“No.” Juvia took it away from him and looked at it. “But we can listen.” Gray took it back and put it on.

“They are not saying anything.” He informed her.

“Keep listening, they will.” Juvia guaranteed before she looked over her shoulder. “Lucy-san, Juvia has a first aid kit in her room.”

The blonde nodded and grabbed Natsu’s hand, offering no way out. “Let’s go.”

#

While Gray went to his room to change into something that wasn’t covered in shattered glass and booze, Juvia led Lucy and Natsu to her room and gave the blonde the small first aid kit. While Lucy dealt with Natsu’s whines about how they were losing time, Juvia grabbed a change of clothes and put them on, knowing her dress was less than ideal for a rescue mission.
She put black pants, black tank top, her dark blue coat over it and her dark brown boots. It would not be what she would choose to wear for that type of a mission, but it would have to do for the night.

When she came out of the bathroom, Natsu had a bandage on his neck and looked pissed off while Lucy nodded her approval. Juvia opened her suitcase and gave Natsu a gun and ammo. “Do not lose my gun.” She warned him.

Before the pink haired man could say anything, there was a bang on the door and instinctively Natsu raised the gun on his hands and Juvia reached for one off her suitcase. “It’s Gray!” He said from outside and the people inside sighed in relief and Juvia opened the door.

“They said something about an island!” Gray informed once he was inside. “Something about a tower too!”

“We can work with that.” Juvia pulled her laptop from inside her suitcase (Lucy said something like ‘What don’t you have in there?’, but the blunette ignored it) and turned it on and soon enough they were looking at a satellite map of the region they were in.

“This one.” Natsu pointed to a small island not too far from shore. Juvia looked at the man and he shrugged. “Called in instinct; just find the images of this island.” Juvia tried to, but for the life of her she wasn’t able to; she was no tech genius but the task was quite simple and when she informed the other three of the fact, they looked at each other.

“If that doesn’t scream shady, I don’t know what else does.” Lucy shrugged.

“I say we go for it.” Natsu said, putting the gun he got from Juvia on the waistline of his pants.

“We will get the coordinates and rent a boat.” Gray nodded and took his own gun from his pants, checked it and put it back.

“The fifteen minutes are up.” Natsu said. “Let’s go.”

Gray took a taser from his pocked and gave it to Lucy. “I went to you room and got you this. Try to stay away from trouble, please. But if you want a gun…”

“No guns, please and thank you.” Lucy shook her head and took the taser. “Let’s go.”

Juvia watched it all, trying to understand what was going on, but failed. “Wait, wait.” All eyes were on her. “We have only three trained people here, Lucy-san is a secretary who refuses to use a gun and this is it? We are most likely outgunned, outnumbered, we have nowhere to go other than an island that might be the one and no plan whatsoever and that’s it? Don’t you call reinforcements? Don’t you do surveillance first? Try to figure out who took her?”

Gray and Natsu looked at each other before Natsu stepped towards her. “We would if this were a job. But it’s not, it’s Erza and Erza is family. We will deal with things as they come in our way, and we will make our way in. We don’t wait for reinforcements when it comes to family, we do whatever we can do right then and we waited too long as it is. Let’s go.” Natsu turned around and Lucy followed right behind him. “Who the hell is that, anyway?” He asked the blonde.

The blunette blinked two times before Gray’s voice snapped her out of it. “You wanted in, right? Well, this is what we do in FT.” Juvia looked up to him and he shrugged one shoulder. “You can stay if you want. But we push forward no matter what.” Gray said and left.

She must’ve be insane, because she grabbed two of her guns and all her ammo and followed them. Maybe she had a death wish.
Or maybe she just wanted to see it through.

Renting a boat had been easy, piloting the boat also presented no problem for them – aside Natsu, who had the worst case of seasickness Juvia ever saw – but when they were a few miles in the GPS started to fail and made them even more suspicious.

“Where the hell are we? Where’s the island?” Gray yelled in frustration and it echoed through the dark. Thankfully the night was clear, because if there were clouds, they would be even more lost.

“It appears as though we have been drifting aimlessly for some time.” Juvia said, while looking at the failing GPS.

“Damn it! I can’t believe they took Erza!” Gray was utterly frustrated by then and it was turning into anger pretty fast. “How fucked up is that?”

“An accurate assessment. To think someone as able as Erza-san would be defeated…” Juvia agreed, thinking about all the storied she heard about the woman with red hair, but Gray’s next words cut right her.

“Ain’t no way she was beaten.” He looked at her with such hatred, Juvia took a step back. Not even when he was shooting at her the month before he looked at her that way. “You don’t know the first thing about Erza.”

“For-forgive me.” Juvia muttered.

“Gray! Calm down!” Lucy scolded him and Gray’s only reaction was to sit next to Natsu, who threw up outside the boat. “Erza mentioned something about those guys being her former unit. Face it, when it comes to Erza, no one here knows much about her at all.” Lucy sounded sad and the silence that followed only made the words truer.

A few minutes later, Lucy gasped and pointed to the horizon. “I see something!” She squinted her eyes and then gasped. “Is that… That must be the Tower of Paradise?”

Juvia tried to see what Lucy found and once she did, she was surprised with the size of the tower and wondered if they would ever find their way in, or even Erza in there. Maybe it was a suicide mission after all.

Docking had been easier than expected and only the weight of her guns inside her coat made Juvia feel slightly better. While they hid behind a huge rock and watched the guards, Juvia suggested she’d look around for another way in and the other three agreed after she told them she could take care of herself.

“That’s a lot of guards.” Juvia heard Gray when she was returning to where she had left them.

“Who cares? Let’s plough through ‘em!” Natsu almost yelled, but Lucy shut him up.

“No way! They’ve got Erza. If we do something we’ll put her in danger!” She said.

“Still, that tower thing is just ahead. If they find us here, we won’t stand a chance.” Natsu said and was about to just try to knock on their front door when Juvia arrived and was met by two guns pointing at her.
“Juvia has found another way into the tower’s basement.” She seemed unfazed by the guns, but the men put them down either way.

“Seriously? Great job!” Gray said, happily, which made Juvia look at Lucy, smugly.

“The one who was praised was not you. It was Juvia.” It was absolutely childish but Juvia just couldn’t stop herself. Lucy was so much closer than Gray than Juvia that the blunette just wanted to show that she had some sort of connection with him as well.

“Uh hu.” It was Lucy’s only answer before they started to walk behind Juvia as she led them through the darkness. The way was full of rocks and they had to be careful, but just like the blunette had promised, there was a cave that seemed to lead towards inside the tower. They had to get in the water and it reached their knees, but ten minutes later they arrived to what seemed to be an old dock.

“This is the basement of the tower?” Gray asked, reaching for some light sticks he was lucky to have brought.

“Erza is here somewhere.” Lucy whispered.

The next thing they knew, some guards were yelling “Who the hell are you guys?”, startling the three of them.

“Oh, crap!” Lucy gasped.

“We’ve come this far… We’ll just have to fight them.” Gray said, grabbing his gun. Juvia and Natsu did the same. Lucy stayed behind, but was in fighting instance as well in case it was needed.

“Who the hell are we?” Natsu yelled and shot at them, hitting only some in his rage. “Don’t you know good fighters when you see them? We are from FT!”

The ones who came towards them had no guns and seemed to be weak, so Juvia made the decision of saving her bullets. Three were coming her way and Juvia punched the first on the throat, the second on the balls and the third, she broke the nose easily before turning him around and hold him in a strong chokehold.

“Wh-what is she?” Some of the men surrounding her asked and she almost smirked when she ran towards them, kicking and punching them without even sweating. By the corner of her eye she saw Gray do the same, Lucy had found a piece of wood and was also hitting a guy and even Natsu forfeit his gun so he could punch them.

In no time, all the guards were down and did not dare to get up. “Remind me not to piss off your girlfriend.” Natsu whispered to Gray, but it echoed and she could feel her cheeks get warmer. Did Natsu-san really consider…? “Ouch! Jeez, I can’t even kid anymore.”

“Shut up.” Gray hissed.

“Hey, some sort of door just opened up there!” Natsu pointed up and true enough, there was a hatch at the top of some stairs that were attached to the cave’s wall.

“They’re telling us to come up?” Gray growled when he saw Natsu start to climb it up and followed him, muttering something about his friend being an idiot. Juvia let Lucy go after Gray and was the last one to come up just in case one of the guards decide to follow.

“Where’s that bastard?” Natsu yelled when all four were at the next level and Lucy put a hand on his mouth.
“Stop! We’re in the enemy’s headquarters! Don’t yell!”

Gray agreed. “We could only go crazy before because it was underground. Now we’ll just have to sneak about.”

“There’s more: this hatch was not opened by someone on this side.” Juvia said and suddenly all the attention was on her as she looked down to where they had come from. “It’s being controlled remotely.” She raised her head to stare at her three companions. “They’re completely aware of our movements.”

“If that’s true, then what’s the point in opening the door for us?” Lucy asked, confused.

“Are they trying to provoke us?” Gray muttered.

“Provoke…” The blonde seemed to think.

“There they are! It’s the intruders!” Loud voices came from behind them and Juvia reached for one of her guns.

“These guys just don’t know when to quit.” Natsu said, but before any of them could fire their weapons, they saw the guards gasping in pain before falling on the floor.

Between the falling men, stood Erza Scarlet holding what it seemed to be two swords (Where she even got swords? Juvia thought) and looking absolutely badass.

“Erza!” Gray sounded surprised.

“Thank goodness! You are safe!” Lucy cried in happiness.

“She… She’s so cool.” Juvia whispered, her heart beating faster as she looked at the legendary Erza Scarlet in action. It was so rare for people to live to their reputations that Juvia was truly surprised.

“Wh-What are you guys doing here?” Erza looked baffled.

Natsu got angry. “What do you mean? We’d be disgracing FT if we just backed off and let them walk all over us! And there’s no way I’m letting that bastard who shot me off easy!”

Erza finally noticed Juvia and looked surprised, while Juvia felt absolutely terrified – only a few people managed to make her feel that way. “Um… Juvia is here because…”

“Go back.” The red haired woman cut her off and everyone seemed surprised. “You guys shouldn’t be here.”

“But Erza…” Lucy tried.

“I don’t care about this crap.” Natsu said, running before anyone could catch him.

“Natsu!” Juvia called him.

“Hey! Natsu!” Even Erza tried, but he didn’t stop.

“That moron! Running off on his own!” Gray complained.

Lucy suggested: “Let’s follow him!”

Erza steps in front of them. “You can’t. Go back.”
“Erza!” Gray protests, but apparently the red haired woman would have none of it.

“I’ll take care of Natsu and bring him back. You guys, get away from here right now.”

“We can’t do that!” Lucy yelled and Juvia admired the woman’s guts for yelling at Erza Scarlet. “We’re not leaving without you!”

“This is my problem. I don’t want you guys getting involved.” Erza turned her back at them and her voice wasn’t much louder than a whisper.

“We’re already involved. You saw how Natsu was.” Gray tried to sound nonchalant, but Erza said nothing.

“Erza… What is this tower? Who’s this Jellal guy?” Lucy asked and Juvia just watched the interactions between them. “Though is fine if you don’t want to tell us…” Lucy’s eyes focused on the ground. “I know you said those guys were your friends before, but we are your friends now. We’ll always be here for you, Erza.” Lucy smiled and Juvia had to fight the urge to just pull Erza towards her friends and run away from that place – whatever that tower was, it was bad news.

“Go.” Erza said, and Juvia saw she was shaking and dared not say a word.

“this isn’t like you, Erza. Why can’t you just stop saying all this useless stuff and tell ‘follow me’ like you always do?” Gray asked. “We’ll help you out. Even you are allowed to be sacred sometimes, you know?”

Juvia felt as if Gray’s words were also being spoken to her. When she was a child, her uncle told her never to be afraid, then when she got in the army she was told that fear would kill her. Everyone always told her to be brave, but they never let her know that being brave allowed her to also be scared.

It came as no surprise when Erza turned around and she was crying. “In this fight, whether I win or lose, I’ll disappear from this world no matter what.”

“What?” Lucy asked, shocked.

“What do you mean?” Even Gray looked taken aback.

“This is an unavoidable future, so…. Erza gasped. “So, while I’m still here, I’ll tell you everything I know.” She took a breath. “The name of this tower is ‘The Tower of Paradise’ otherwise known as ‘R System’. Twenty years ago, a cult believing in the purity of human race tried to build a tower that would bring fear into the infidels’ hearts. This project wasn’t sanctioned by any government or church, so they bought people from all countries and forced them to work as slaves on the construction.” Erza looked down. “When I was young, I was one of those forced to work here.” To say that the other three in the room were surprised was an understatement. “That’s when I first met Jellal. He was my friend, he gave me – gave us – courage to fight. For the sake of freedom and to rescue Jellal when he was taken by that cult, we rose against them.

“Back then, Jellal was our leader, and he had a strong sense of justice. I looked up to him more than anyone else. However, after that time… Jellal became a completely different person. If you could ever call someone evil, that’s probably what I’d call Jellal.” Erza tried to hide another tear that fell, but couldn’t. The way she looked right then, Juvia knew she was remembering being a slave and had to put a hand over her mouth otherwise she would sob. Of course Erza had been the best when she entered the army: she wanted to become the strongest she could so nothing like whatever happened to her at the tower ever repeated. “People I loved died in here. So I fought and I lead whoever I
could, out. But when I found Jellal, he wasn’t the boy I knew.

“He told me we should not run. He stayed with those ‘priests’ for three days and somehow they brainwashed him. He was talking nonsense about serving Zeref’s wishes. He told me he would kill our friends, he killed a man in front of me just because and he almost killed me. Somehow I survived and ended up at the continent.” Erza was crying, then. “I am… going to kill Jellal.”

“Wait a minute, Erza… That Zeref you mentioned in the story…” Gray said.

“Zeref is the head of the cult, his followers think of him as a god walking on earth and they had turned Jellal to believe it as well.” Erza looked at Gray. “That’s not all, I daresay Deliora was one of Zeref’s followers as well.” Juvia didn’t understand what was happening, but she saw Gray’s body stiffen when he heard the words. “With the way Zeref could turn anyone, he could’ve turned terrifying people with ease.”

“And that’s the man Jellal is trying to impress?” Juvia asked, eyes wide. How could anyone be that stupid? Zeref sounded like a demon, not a god!

“I don’t know why he would do such a thing.” Erza looked pensive. “Sho, one of my former friends, told me that they plan to rule over a ‘paradise’ world of their own once they’ve impressed Zeref.”

“Speaking of which, I just can’t understand what’s going on with those old friends of yours.” Lucy said what they were all thinking. “They all called you a traitor, but wasn’t Jellal who betrayed you all?”

“I think Jellal has been planting strange ideas in their heads since I was chased out of this tower. But… I left them in his hands for twenty years. Either way, I certainly betrayed them.”

Lucy got angry. “But that was only because there was nothing you could do! Jellal threatened you with their lives! And after all that, they-”

“Stop tat now, Lucy.” Erza said, serious. “If I kill Jellal, this will all be over.”

“Nee-san…” They turned around and saw a man with a tan and light hair. He was shaking and his gaze was on Erza. “What do you think you are saying?”

“Sho…” She whispered.

“Trying to win over your friends’ heart with some stupid made-up sob story?” The man named Sho yelled, clearly angry. “Stop screwing around! That’s not what happened at all! Twenty years ago, nee-san, you planted a bomb in our escape ship and ran away all by yourself! If it hadn’t been for Jellal noticing your treachery just in time, we would all have been killed in the blast!”

Gray looked unimpressed. “And Jellal told you that?”

“Was the Erza you knew the sort of person who would do a thing like that?” Lucy asked and Juvia saw the younger man get pale.

“Wh-What do you people think you know about us? You don’t know the first thing about us, okay?” Sho yelled. “Jellal’s words were our sole salvation back then! That’s why…. Why we spent twenty years bringing this tower to completion! All for Jellal! You’re trying to tell me it was all a lie? That nee-san was in the right and Jellal was the evil one here all along?” Sho was out of breath and Erza closed her eyes without giving him an answer, that came back from behind them.

“That’s right.” The man who answered was no one else other than the big guy who attacked Gray
and Juvia back at the Resort.

“Simon?” Sho asked.

“Why, you….” Gray took a step forward and almost reaching for his gun, but Juvia caught him by the shoulders.

“Wait a moment, Gray-sama!” She yelled and she knew that if he truly wanted to, Gray could release himself from her grasp and was happy that he trusted her enough to stop. “Back then, that man attacked us knowing very well we were hiding behind the counter.”

“What?” Gray asked, baffled.

“He darkened the room, he wouldn’t do that unless he could see everything in the darkness. That eyepatch, Juvia suspects it’s not an eyepatch at all, instead it is some type of night vision goggle. He saw us hide and kept shooting at the bottles just for the noise.” Juvia kept her hands on Gray a little longer than needed. “He also dropped his comm on purpose so we could find it, isn’t it right? That was one of the reasons I came along: to find out his true intentions.”

The man called Simon offered Juvia a pleased look. “As I would expect of one of Phantom’s famous Four. You are correct. I had no intention of killing anybody. I had originally intended to simply knock you out to deceive Sho, but since you guys fought back, I decided to make it more convincing and just shoot.”

“You were… deceiving us?” Sho asked, surprised and angry.

“You, Wally and Miliana. All of you were deceived by Jellal. I pretended to have been deceived as well, waiting for you to come to your senses.” The larger man said.

“Simon, you…” Erza was surprised as well.

“I never stopped believing in you, Erza. All these years.” Even with the weird metal around his jaw, Simon managed to smile and Juvia saw that he was still in love with Erza and it warmed her heart how sweet he was. The red haired woman stepped closer to him and they hugged. “I’m so glad to see you again, Erza. From the bottom of my heart.”

The sweet scene was interrupted by Sho’s screams about how he didn’t trust Erza and how he didn’t know what was true anymore and everyone just let the man let it out and scream it all away, after all, his life had been a lie. Erza comforted him, telling she never forgot them and asking forgiveness for being weak then.

“But we can do something now, isn’t that right?” Simon asked and everyone looked at him in surprise. “This is the day I have been waiting for, the day many skilled people would gather at his place.”

“Skilled people?” Lucy whispered. “What? Even me?”

“We must rise against Jellal, combining all our skills.” Simon said, his voice decisive. “But first, we must intercept The Salamander before he hurts Wally.” All of them agreed to search for Natsu and ran to where he had gone a few minutes before.

After a couple of minutes, Gray ran next to Juvia and asked, quietly. “Hey, are you sure we should actually be trusting that guy? I mean, I’ll accept he didn’t actually try to kill us, and that’s all very well, but in that situation, Natsu and Lucy could easily have died. That Wally guy did shoot Natsu’s neck.”
Juvia was incredibly happy Gray went to her for a second opinion, instead of Erza or even Lucy, but before she could answer, Simon stepped in. “I do not plan on making excuses. If you were the sort of people who could be killed that easily, then you could never have fought Jellal anyway.”

Gray looked annoyed. “So, you were listening, huh?”

“Besides, I had faith that Natsu would not die.” Simon finished and Lucy whined.

“And… what about me?”

They had been running for almost five minutes when there was a loud noise followed by someone saying: “Welcome, everyone. Welcome to the Tower of Paradise.”

They looked up and saw that in every few meters there were stereos and Simon cleared up: “Jellal set this up so that he can be heard in every corner of the tower.”

“I am Jellal, the one who controls this tower. All the pieces on both sides have been placed, it is time to begin. The Paradise Game.” Jellal’s voice echoed through the halls. “The rules are simple. I will use Erza as my sacrifice in a ceremony that will please Zeref very much. That is to say, if I do that, I win. If you are able to prevent this, then you are the winners. But, to make the game more interesting, I have three players here. You must past them to reach me, thus, this is a 7-on-3 battle. Lastly, there is a special rule in play: the council might attack this place using a drone with something called ‘etherion’ capable of annihilating everything.” They gasped. “It is unknown how much time remains, but when this etherion hits, everyone here will die. There will be no winner. Hence, game over. That’s it. Enjoy the game.” Those were his final words.

“Wha-What’s Jellal’s thinking? He might be killed too and he calls this a game?” Lucy said, shaking and Juvia couldn’t hide that she was also very scared and thinking she should have stayed at the hotel when she had the chance, but she wouldn’t mop around. She would fight to survive.

The next thing she knew, there was a commotion and she couldn’t see past Simon, his body was blocking her view, but she heard them yelling Erza’s name and then Sho was dragging the red haired woman away from them while Simon told he was going after them.

“Damn it!” Gray was fuming with anger. “Why is every one of them so reckless!?” Juvia wanted to point out how they had been reckless going to the Tower without back up and now they were in an awful situation, but she didn’t think it would help, so she kept her mouth shut.

Instead, Juvia turned to Lucy. “Juvia and Gray-sama will go this way. Lucy, you go that way.”

“What?” The blonde almost yelled. “You want the weakest one to go by herself?”

“Look!” Gray said over Lucy’s shrieking. “I’m really pretty worried about Erza. I’m gonna go on after Sho and the big guy. You two go and find Natsu, okay?”

“Yes, Gray-sama!” Juvia said with a smile, eager to please Gray and took Lucy’s hand, going to the opposite side Gray headed out. “Come on, Lucy-san.”

“Why are you so eager about following his orders?” The blonde panted while they ran.

“Juvia has been at the army. Follow orders is what we do.” She clarified and it seemed to be enough for Lucy, who just nodded.
“Natsu!” Lucy yelled, followed by Juvia. “He should be able to hear us, these halls carry the sounds pretty well!”

“Now that I stop to think about it: why on earth is Juvia searching for Natsu-san together with Lucy-san?” Juvia asked herself aloud.

“Ignoring me, huh?” Lucy got annoyed. “Well, you are the one who pulled me when Gray told us to look for Natsu!”

“Well, Juvia could not disrespect Gray-sama’s wishes; but putting me together with my rival in love” to which Lucy repeated it in a high pitched voice “is he trying to cause a fight?”

“I’m really trying not to get involved in this whole thing, you know.” Juvia eyed her with suspicion, she saw how Gray treated her. “C-can’t we just get along?” Lucy seemed to be frightened by Juvia, which was good.

Out of nowhere, though, from the speakers a loud guitar started to play in the wrong way, making it a terrible noise – at least to Lucy, Juvia seemed to like it. “Wh-What’s that noise? A guitar?” Lucy yelled. “Argh, it’s so loud!”

“Juvia thinks it’s rather good, actually.” The blunette shrugged.

“There’s really something wrong with you!” Lucy said loud over the music and when she looked with wide eyes to a point behind Juvia. The blunette immediately turned around just to see a man who seemed to have come out from one of the covers from the CDs Gajeel-kun liked: black long hair, tight leather pants and a guitar.

“Hey Yeah!” He yelled, looking like the crazy shit he probably was. “Fuckin’ girls!”

“Now what?” Juvia muttered under her breath. She was getting annoyed with people trying to kill her.

“This is my concert of hell.” He showed his ridiculous long tongue all the while he played his guitar. “Destroy, wow!”

“Is this one of Jellal’s three warriors?” Juvia asked and he must’ve heard her, because he answered the blunette.

“I’m from Skull Order. Hey! We’re the skulls! Cool name, ain’t it?” Juvia thought it was, but she was not going to let him know that. “Member of Trinity Raven, they call me Vithaldas Taka!” He sang his introduction and suddenly she pulled a gun at them. Juvia shoved Lucy down to the floor and was out of the way when Vithaldas shot in her direction. She immediately grabbed her own gun and shot at him, but he had ran to stand behind a wall. “That’s a sweet aim you got there, girlie! If I hadn’t move, I’d be dead!”

“Good luck, Juvia! I can’t handle him!” Lucy yelled from her place, also hiding behind a wall, like both the blunette and the rocker.

Once Juvia had better aim, she tried to shoot him once again, but he seemed to be fast to predict her movements and Juvia cussed under her breath.

“My, my… we do have a couple of fine ladies here.” Juvia could hear him chuckle.
“Ahh, not this again!” Lucy whined from the opposite side of the hall, where she was hiding.

“Wh-What do you mean?” Juvia asked.

The blonde looked at her. “Being cute only ever attracts trouble.”

“Now–which-one-should-choose?” He sand and Juvia frowned when she imagine what he was doing. “Let’s-leave-it-up-to-the-de-vil-in-hell!” Vithaldas laughed. “Well, that’s that!! You’re gonna be my Succubus for today!” Juvia wondered who got picked and what he meant by Succubus. In her distraction, she failed to notice Vithaldas creeping in by the wall.

The next thing she knew was that she grabbed her right hand, took the gun from her and dodged the punch she threw in his face with her left hand. Suddenly she felt a cloth over her mouth and nose with a weird smell on it. “Rock of Succubus, darling!”

Juvia tried to fight it off, but her body didn’t seem to obey her. A few seconds after he put the cloth over her face, he removed it. “Wh-What is this?” She asked, weakly and she could faintly hear Lucy’s voice calling her name.

“You are going to do what I tell you to, aren’t you? I’m your new Master.” Vithaldas had his hand on Juvia’s neck and other on her stomach, holding her in place. The only thing between their bodied was his guitar. “Listen to my voice. I’m your Master now.” He repeated and his voice echoed inside Juvia’s mind and somehow he was making sense.” You are to fight the little blonde bitch. “Kill her.” Juvia tried to fight him off because she didn’t want to. He covered her mouth and nose once again and the blunette inhaled whatever was on the cloth and when he told her once more that she should kill Lucy, Juvia nodded.

“Yes.” She whispered, but her voice didn’t sound her own.

“Good.” He hid his face on her hair and inhaled the scent before he kissed her neck and in the back of her mind, she was disgusted by it. “Take off your coat, Succubus. I want you to see what I got.” He released Juvia and she struggled to stay up for a moment, but reached for her coat and slowly undid the buttons and let it fall. “Nice tits. It seems like I scored high. Go, kill the bitch and later I’ll take you as a prize.”

“Yes.” It felt as if her body didn’t belong to her, when her gaze fell on Lucy, who was eyeing her with worry. Juvia wanted to tell her to run, but nothing came out of her mouth.

“Juvia! Get a hold of yourself.” Lucy’s voice was damped by Valthidas echoing ‘fight her, kill her’.

“She’s my succubus now. She’ll only take orders from me!” He said and Juvia wanted to turn around and claw his eyes out, but she advanced towards Lucy – much slower than if she were in her normal state.

“Juvia! Are you serious?” Lucy was visibly scared when Juvia got too close and with the tiny bit control she had, which was almost nothing, instead of hitting Lucy on the face, Juvia decided that her new Master would be pleased if first she teared the woman’s shirt and did just that.

“Ohhhh Yeah! This is what I like to see!” Master’s voice said and inside Juvia wanted to cry. She didn’t want to do any of that. Lucy grabbed some of her shirt and covered herself.

Juvia pulled her up and gave her a headbutt, maybe trying to put herself unconscious so she couldn’t fight anymore, but neither she nor Lucy lost consciousness.

“Didn’t you say you wanted to join Fairy Tail? Then stop attacking your own friends!” Lucy’s
words were ignored and Juvia slapped her on the face and then held her by the hair, pulling some of it before letting her go. Why wasn’t she running? Juvia wondered. Her Master wanted Juvia to play with her, she was certain, but he also ordered her to kill.

“Hey yeah! Hair! Oh, I love it, Succubus. Keep it up!” Master said and Juvia reached for Lucy once again, grabbing her by the hair before spinning the blonde around and slapping Lucy’s ass, while she cried out.

“This is sadism!” Lucy said when Juvia once again had released her, just like a cat playing with its food.

‘This isn’t Juvia. Not any of it.’ Juvia thought, grabbing Lucy by the hair again and dragging her towards her Master and stopped halfway through, letting her go before kicking Lucy on her thighs. ‘Juvia doesn’t want to hurt her friend. It is presumptuous to call her that. She is Juvia’s rival in love. Juvia has come to love FT. It seems so friendly, fun and warm. As though even if it’s raining outside, in there the sun is always shining. Just when Juvia thought she was finally starting to get along with everyone… It seems Juvia can only bring sadness.’

Lucy was staring up to her, eyes wide and Juvia was having trouble seeing all of a sudden because her eyes were burning. Juvia threw Lucy away just as her master yelled: “Juvia-chan! It’s time to finish her!”

Somehow, Lucy got up and looked right into Juvia’s eyes. “Someone who shed tears for the sake of her friends could never be rejected by FT!” And only then Juvia understood she wasn’t seeing well because she was crying. She doesn’t cry. It was the only explanation, though.

“Juvia! Finish her off already!” Vithaldas yelled and Juvia launched herself towards Lucy, wishing the blonde could watch out.

“I would’ve been scared if the real Juvia were fighting me!” Lucy yelled, grabbing Juvia’s wrist and using strength Juvia didn’t know the blonde had, pushed her towards Vithaldas. “I’m not scared of you!” Juvia felt her back connect with Vithaldas’ body, who probably looked surprised Lucy had any claws at all, since she had acted like a scaredy-cat during the whole ordeal. Juvia watched as Lucy picked her taser and the blunette assumed she tasered Vithaldas right on his face.

Juvia felt some electricity on her, but it helped her feeling more aware of herself. Lucy released her without her to hold her down, Juvia’s knees gave in and she fell on her ass; she noticed that Vithaldas was also on the floor, unconscious.

Lucy walked to where he was lying down and kicked him in the nuts just because. “Don’t you ever do that again, you freak!” She kicked him on the stomach as well a few times – apparently she was not against kicking a man when he was down.

Still not feeling herself but with no one else to tell her what to do, Juvia just sat on the floor and a moment later, Lucy sat by her, but turned to the other site so they were face to face. The blunette looked up to her. “Well, it is proven you can be a crazy bitch. Do you think I will want Gray after this? No way in hell I want to go through this again.” Lucy winked. “Have him all for yourself.”

The next thing Juvia was aware of was of Lucy’s arms around her as she sobbed. The first thing she said when she was able to mutter a word was: “Sorry.”

Lucy’s answer was just to pull her to another hug.

#
Juvia didn’t know when she lost conscious, but when she woke up, she was at the boat they rented and people were screaming around her and suddenly there water all around her and suddenly she was searching for the surface.

Once she resurfaced, she looked around and she saw someone with blonde hair go under and she went under, knowing it was Lucy and pulled her up. She was still weak and was glad when Lucy gasped and asked: “Wha-What? What’s going on?”

Letting the blunette go, Juvia swam to a large piece of wood and hang on to it, noting that Lucy did the same. “Juvia? What happened?”

“Don’t know.” It was the blunette’s weak answer. “I woke up falling into the water.”

“Fuck!” They heard Gray’s voice.

“Gray-sama!” Juvia searched for him, but the waves were still wild. “What is happening?”

“Someone shot the Tower with a fucking drone!” He yelled and seemed closer that time. “It’s gone!”

“Gone?” Lucy whispered.

“Erza and Natsu are still there!” He informed them and was suddenly by Juvia’s side, he was evidently worried. “Dammit, are you two alright? You were unconscious when we found you.”

“Fine.” Juvia mumbled, eyes still heavy.

Lucy sent Juvia a dirty look for lying. “No, she’s not. Juvia was drugged, we have to look after her. I am fine, though.”

“Drugged with what?” Gray touched Juvia’s face and she opened her eyes – when did she close them? – and he seemed to be looking for something, probably the size of her pupils.

“Doesn’t matter.” She whispered, feeling tired. “We need to go back.”

“We need to look for them!” Lucy agreed and Juvia closed her eyes again, but opened again when she heard Sho’s voice, another male’s and a female’s and they gathered around the piece of wood and started to swim towards the shore of the Island.

“Who are they?” She asked Gray in a whisper.

“Friends.” He told her, looking intently to the crumbles of the tower. “If you think you are falling asleep, let me know.”

“I won’t.” Juvia complained, fighting it off, but her answer must’ve came out in a slur because he looked at her with his eyes narrowed. “Won’t.”

“Okay.”

A few moments later, she mumbled: “They will be fine.”

He set his jaw, but answered: “I know.”

It took them about twenty minutes to reach the shore and once they did, everyone just wanted to run and search for their friends – even though she felt better, Juvia was still tired and fell a bit behind.

When Lucy yelled Erza’s name, though, it seemed as if a rush of adrenalin went through the blunette
and she was able to jog to where Natsu was holding Erza. A moment later Sho and Lucy launched themselves on top of the red haired woman, who looked puzzled.

“Don’t make us worry like that, dammit!” Gray said a few feet away from the mess of limbs on the sand and Juvia smiled with the scene.

Juvia sighed in relief that they were fine and put a hand on the back of her neck. They, somehow, survived the night – the first rays of sunshine were appearing at the horizon and – without having a plan or backup.

That was FT. They were reckless, didn’t think things through and it was a miracle any of them was still alive. She would be crazy to join them after that mission. She would be insane.

“Thanks for your help.” Gray said and Juvia noticed he was in front of her. “You could’ve walk away, but you didn’t. I saw you going for Lucy when she went underwater. Which is weird, because I thought you two didn’t like each other.”

Juvia chuckled. “Don’t try to understand women’s friendship.”

“I won’t. Trust me.” He smirked. “Man, I’m tired.”

“Juvia thinks she will go back to the resort and sleep for two weeks.”

Gray snorted. “That sounds about the right amount to recover today.” He sighed. “I will put in a good word for you with Master Makarov.” Gray told her and Juvia looked surprised he still remembered it. “I think all of us will. Just pop by when you are ready to join.” He offered his hand and she shook it. He turned around and went to speak to the others.

The blunette looked at them and sighed. She would be insane to want to work with them she knew that. She should get used to being called insane, then, because if there was one thing she was certain was that she wouldn’t work anywhere else than with those razy people with no plans.

It sounded like the best decision of her life.

Chapter End Notes

Wow, now that was huge! I hope I didn’t bore you or confuse you! And while I was writing this, I felt so happy when I saw the Juvia x Lucy bits of friendship! I’ve never noticed that when their boat broke and everyone fell to the sea and Juvia made that bubble, she had Lucy with her. Not Gray, Lucy. I feel sad some people make Juvia and Lucy enemies when they have this strange, but deep connection.

Oh, well. Enough rambling, Bonney!
Civil War

Chapter Notes

This chapter has much less canon dialogue, I hope you enjoy it either way!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Juvia stood in front of FT Security building, suddenly feeling nervous about her first day. It had been three months since The Tower of Heaven and a month before she got in touch with Master Makarov and thankfully he wasn't opposed on giving her a job. Convincing him to hire Gajeel, her friend, had been much more difficult. Once she convinced the older man to meet with Gajeel, though, he changed his mind.

The building was just as big as Phantom's had been, the only difference was that the entrance was almost hidden by the huge bar called 'Fairy Tail' – maybe the owner was drunk and misspelled the name – and as far Juvia could tell, it was very classy.

Gathering her courage to step towards the next phase of her life, she got inside the hall and saw the doorman, an old man holding a beer. He had dark blue hair, a moustache and his skin was tanned.

"Good morning." She said politely. "My name is Juvia Lockser, I have an appointment with-

"With Master Makarov, yes." The man said, interrupting her. He smiled and looked at her from bottom to the top and when his eyes met hers, he had an appreciative look. "He told me you were a pretty girl, but he didn't mention how much." He winked. "Nice too meet you, Macao Conbolt." He offered Juvia a hand and she took it. "I work down here most of the time, but I do a little of everything. Don't hesitate to call me if you need anything."

Surprised with his friendliness, Juvia blinked two times before smiling back at him. "Nice meeting you, Macao-san."

"Now up you go, sweetheart." Macao pointed towards the elevators. "Makarov's on the fifth floor. Just talk to Lisanna and she'll know what to do."

"Thank you." She said and did as he instructed.

Once the elevator's doors opened on the fifth floor, Juvia was surprised at how neat the place was: high windows so light could come in and very spacious. There was a girl with short white hair in a desk right in front of the elevator.

Juvia stepped out and once she was close, the woman got up from her seat. She was very beautiful, her big clear blue eyes very mesmerizing and her skin was just as fair as Juvia's. She wore a red pencil skirt and white blouse.

"Hello!" She smiled, friendly, and Juvia found herself smiling back. "You are Juvia Lockser, right? Master's 10 o'clock?"

"Yes." Juvia nodded.

"Nice meeting you, I am Lisanna Strauss." She offered her hand and Juvia shook it. "I'm sorry, but
Master is only due this afternoon. He had an emergency meeting with an old client and it's taking longer than he anticipated." For a moment Juvia thought about offering to start the next day, but the other woman didn't give her the opportunity. "So, I'm going to give you the tour and show your office."

Her excitement was adorable – Juvia wondered when was the last time she felt that excited about anything – and the blunette just followed Lisanna around as she showed the fifth floor: it had a bit conference room with glass walls, three other offices (Lisanna informed they were Erza's, Laxus' and Gildarts', even if Juvia only knew one of those names).

The two women then, took the elevator to the fourth floor, where Juvia would be stationed. It was just as spacious as the fifth floor, but was divided in much smaller offices.

"This is your floor." Lisanna informed Juvia. "In here we have our most successful contractors. You could work with any of them if necessity arises, but you'll have a steady partner most of the times. I was told you'll be working with" the white haired woman looked down to her tablet "Gajeel Redfox. Master told me he will be coming in tomorrow, is that right?"

"Yes." Juvia nodded. "He is settling at his new apartment. Gajeel-kun just moved to Magnolia yesterday."

"Ouch, he's gotta to be tired." Lisanna winced. "I remember moving in here a few years ago; I didn't know how much crap I had until I had to pack it all up and then unpack." Juvia decided not to tell that she was the one who had done all the work regarding Gajeel's moving and just offered a smile. "Well, you and Gajeel-san will share a secretary and your offices are side by side. Come with me."

They passed a conference room (much smaller than the one at the fifth floor) and Lisanna finally showed Juvia her new office. It was much bigger than the cramped one she had at Phantom. There were bookshelves on a wall, two dark blue couches that seemed to be very comfortable, a mahogany desk, and a large window right behind where she would sit plus two chairs for clients.

Juvia was truly impressed. "This is beautiful."

"Master had the couches be changed three times before they got the shade right." Lisanna informed her. "He said you were very fond of dark blue." The blunette looked down to her coat that had almost the same shade of blue of the couches. "I guess he is right. As usual." Both chuckled. "Gajeel-san's is right next to yours, the set up is pretty much the same, but the couch is light grey." Lisanna shrugged. "Now come on, you have to meet your secretary."

Whoever she was, she was not at the desk in front of the offices and Lisanna sighed. "I hope you don't mind her, she tends to run off from time to time. She gets the work done, but in her time."

It was the first time Juvia would ever have a secretary. At Phantom she handled her own appointments. "It's fine. Juvia doesn't need a secretary, so, if you need to relocate her…"

"No one is relocating me." Juvia heard a strong feminine voice coming from her left side and when she looked in its direction, she was surprised to see a very beautiful woman with long wavy chestnut hair and brown eyes. She wore a tight dress that showed a little too much of her cleavage. She also had a tattoo around her right upper arm. "I go where the hell I want to."

"Hey, Cana." Lisanna greeted the other woman. "This is Juvia Lockser, you'll be working with her now."

The brunette looked at Juvia from bottom to top and raised an eyebrow before crossing her arms
under her chest. "I'm not very impressed, but what the hell, no one thinks Mira can go all demon when she wants as well. I'll try to keep my mind open." She shrugged with one shoulder. "When did you made it into Special Forces?"

Juvia thought about not answering it, but decided against it: if she was to build something during her time at FT, she would need to be more open. "Twenty-four."

Cana raised an eyebrow. "Nice. I was twenty-eight." Juvia couldn't help but to raise an eyebrow of her own, surprised with the information about her new secretary being ex-military. Seeing her surprise, Cana chuckled. "Oh, yeah, I'm pretty kick ass. I didn't like it there and the army was getting into my nerves, so I left. Just because I'm good at something it doesn't mean that I have to stay doing that forever. I like being a secretary." She shrugged. "I get to use my contacts to have intel and I just love to hear office gossip. Plus, I get weekends off, vacation and from time to time when some idiot tries to take one of us down, I get to shoot someone. What can I say? Office life just agrees with me." She winked at Juvia and the blunette couldn't help but to chuckle.

"Good to know you can take care of yourself." Juvia said.

"And don't you forget it." Cana smiled. "Now, here are the rules: you don't mess with my system and I don't mess with yours. If you like to think while wearing a tiara and a fairy dress, it's fine with me and I won't judge, god knows all of us need some princess fairy time. I'd like you not to judge me when I answer the phone in a bad mood and hung up on the clients. Whatever I do, I have a reason for doing so even if you can't see it. I accept that you call me once to know where I am if I'm not at my desk and you need something asap. But trust me: if I'm not here, I'm doing my work somewhere getting information. Get it?"

Juvia shrugged. "Fine by me and for Gajeel-kun too, I guess. We never had secretaries before, so, more than answering the phones to schedule meetings, I'm afraid you'll be very bored."

Chuckling, Cana put an arm around Juvia and led her inside her new office. "Oh, my sweet innocent girl, come with me and I'll teach you the way of the world. I'm never bored. Just focus on shooting the bad guys and let me worry about finding their every dirty secret and throw it on their faces, it's what I do best."

#

That first afternoon, Juvia chatted with Cana and Lisanna for a long time and the three of them even went online to buy Juvia some things to decorate her new office. Later, when Lisanna received the news about Master not going to FT that day and to tell Juvia he was sorry but would see both her and Gajeel the next day, the girls decided to call it a day.

Juvia never had girlfriends, when she was growing up she was homeschooled and when she joined the army, there were few females and most of them were focused on becoming the best and didn't have time for friendship.

As weird as it sounded, Juvia felt like she could be friends with the two women she met that day.

Her second day at FT started with her saying good morning to Macao (she was surprised to know that he was a war veteran and was still very handy with a gun) and proceeded to inform Cana about the clients she was bringing with her from Phantom.

Around lunch time, Gajeel finally appeared, to Juvia's delight. He was scowling, as usual. Gajeel Redfox was a tall, very well built man with long dark hair, red eyes and pierced eyebrows. He preferred to wear black most of the time and he wouldn't feel out of place in the middle of a bike
gang. People looked at him and felt terrified – with reason, Gajeel was as deadly as they come. To Juvia, though, he was her friend and once the initial shock of all the piercings and black worn off, people could see he could be a very nice man.

"Gajeel-kun! You came!" Juvia got up from her beautiful blue couch to greet her friend while Cana kept sitting. "Good! Master is in today and asked to meet us as soon as you arrived."

He sighed in annoyance. "Fine." He grunted while Juvia fussied around him.

"Wait, have you eaten today? You have to eat, Gajeel-kun. Juvia swears she has to go to your apartment every three days just to see if you have food in your fridge!"

"Fuck, Juvia, I'm not a fuckin' toddler. I can take care of myself." Gajeel tried to wave her off.

"Oh yeah? What did you have for breakfast today?" Juvia crossed her arms underneath her breasts and Gajeel narrowed his eyes at her and to everyone else, it would be threatening, but to Juvia, it just proved she was right. "Gotcha. We'll have lunch after meeting with Master."

Whatever Gajeel was about to retort, it was interrupted by Cana: "Just so I know if I can enter your offices while there's only you two: are you sleeping together? I don't want to walk in on anything…"

Their reaction was instantaneous. Gajeel said, outraged: "That is disgusting!" while Juvia gasped and said: "Cana-san! No! Never!"

"Sorry, sorry." Cana raised her hands in surrender, but didn't seem like she was sorry at all. "It's just that looking at you two arguing…"

"He's like a little brother to Juvia." The blunette assured her.

"I'm older." Gajeel rolled his eyes and Juvia just ignored him.

"Understood." Cana smiled. "By the way, I'm Cana Alberona, your new secretary."

"Yeah, Juvia called me last night to tell me." Gajeel raised his chin. "Gajeel Redfox. I'm just going to give you a heads up and let you know that my clients are not as fancy as this place's seems to be. Can you handle it?"

"You would be surprised of the shit I can handle." The brunette chuckled and after a moment, she got serious. "Look, I know what happened a few months ago between you, Levy and the boys. If Master says you are hired and you are ours now, I'll believe it. But you do that crap again and people will be scraping your remains from the walls for days. Got me?"

"Feisty." Gajeel grinned evilly. "I like it"

"We understand, Cana-san." Juvia was fast to tell the brunette; they had an agreement with Makarov and neither had any intentions on breaking it. "Now let's go, Gajeel-kun. Master is waiting for us." Juvia grabbed Gajeel by the hand and only when they were inside the elevator, she spoke to her friend after slapping his upper arm. "Start treating people better!"

"Shut up." Gajeel groaned. "I'm here, isn't it enough?"

"No! Our deal was for you to try! Being a jerk is not trying." Juvia narrowed her eyes and when Gajeel sighed, she knew she had won.

"Fine."
Once the door was opened at the fifth floor and introductions between Gajeel and Lisanna were made, the white haired woman led them towards Master's office and just as Juvia had imagined, it was just as beautiful and full of light as the rest of the building.

Makarov, an old man at his seventies, sat behind a huge desk and smiled when he saw the couple enter his office. "Juvia-chan! Gajeel! Nice seeing you again." He waved towards the chairs at the opposite side he sat. "How do you like our building?"

"Very much." Juvia smiled. "Everyone is being very nice and helpful."

"Good." The older man nodded. "The one who will be fussier about Gajeel, will be Natsu. You met him; he is very hot tempered. The others will understand. I talked personally with Levy about this and she guaranteed she was fine with you being here, Gajeel, as long you don't scare the shit out of her again. Her words." Gajeel seemed very interested in his boots at the moment. "Jet and Droy might try to do something, but I'll punish them if they do."

"Don't bother." Gajeel shrugged. "They are angry, I can take it."

Makarov sighed, one of his hands going to massage his temple. "Just stay clear of the third floor and I doubt your paths will cross much."

"Gotcha." Gajeel said, but knowing her friend, Juvia doubted he would.

"How are you holding up?" Master asked Gajeel.

It took the younger man a few seconds to answer. "Alright. It's better now. Juvia's been fussing as if I'm a baby." He sent the blunette a dirty look, to which she paid no attention to.

"Very good. Now, I got a message that Natsu and his team just arrived from their last mission." Makarov got off his chair and the other two could barely see him at the other side. "Now let's get this over with."

Once they went to the fourth floor, they could hear the ruckus that wasn't previously there. There were people shouting, but it was kind of friendly. It didn't take too long for Juvia to recognize the very unique color of Natsu Dragneel's hair, then Erza Scarlet's. Next to them to their backs towards the three people going their way, stood Lucy and Gray.

"So you're finally back, are you?" Makarov said and the group turned around. Juvia's traitorous heart raced when Gray caught a glimpse at her and gaped at her in surprise. "This is our newest member, Juvia. Cute, ain't she?"

Juvia smiled to the people she knew, her hands behind her back because she didn't want them to see her twisting them nervously. "It's good to see you all again."

Gray let out a bark of laughter. "So you really joined up, huh? 'bout time!"

Erza took a step towards her. "Juvia, you left soon after we tidied things up so I never get to tell you: thank you for all your help back there." Juvia just bowed her head, accepting Erza's gratefulness.

"Juvia has all of you to thank." She grinned. "Juvia will do her best."

"Good luck!" Lucy said, excited.
"Well, make her feel welcome." Makarov said gently and then turned around, calling for Gajeel, who stood, brooding in a corner. "Oh, there's one more new member I'd like you all to meet. Hey, come introduce yourself!"

Juvia braced herself for the reactions and was not disappointed when Gajeel was in sight: Lucy took a step back, Gray yelled 'You are kidding, right?' while Natsu scream 'Gajeel? What's this punk doing-?'

"Master! What kind of joke is this supposed to be?" Gray asked, half yelling and already on his way to go supposedly beat Gajeel when Juvia grabbed his shoulder.

"Wait!" She said in panic. "Juvia brought him here!"

Erza didn't move, but was looking at Gajeel as if he were her pray. "Juvia is one thing, but this guy was directly responsible for our last building's destruction."

Gajeel just looked away and let out an 'hmph' sound. Juvia would have to talk to him again later about his manners.

"Now, now." Makarov tried to calm them down. "He was only acting on Jose's orders back then; it couldn't be helped. You know what they say: 'yesterday's enemies are today's friends'."

"I'm n-not bothered at all, really." Only then Juvia noticed a petite blunette hiding most of her body inside an office, two guys with her and Juvia realized it was the woman Gajeel attacked by the way she looked. Her confirmation was to see Gajeel look down to the floor in shame the moment she spoke.

"Levy-chan." Lucy said and went to be next to the blunette and after some rushed words, they entered the office.

"Stop screwing around! I can't work with a guy like that!" Natsu was angry, pointing at Gajeel.

"Oh, don't worry. I have no intention of being all buddy-buddy with you." Gajeel stepped closer to the pink haired man. "I need work, that's all there is to it. This is as good as the next. Not that I ever thought I'd end up working at nasty little firm like this."

"What did you say?" Natsu was almost spitting flames and Juvia wanted to slap Gajeel until he stopped being so rude; instead she tried to reason with them.

"Gajeel-kun always seemed so lonely. Juvia couldn't beat to just leave him." She said and then added, just so everyone – especially Gray – could know: "I-I mean, Juvia doesn't like him or anything…" They were mistaken as a couple earlier that day and she would be damned if she let anyone else think it again.

"It is the duty of an old man like me to guide young men who have lost their way back onto the right path. He's not a bad guy at heart, you know." Makarov shrugged and then added. "At least I hope not."

Erza sighed. "If this is the Master's decision then I will support it." She said and then leaned to whisper something to the older man.

Meanwhile, Natsu sulked. Cana, seeing that, put an arm around his shoulders and led him away. "Come on, let's go to your office and you can tell me all about your mission." Then, over her shoulder, she yelled. "Juvia, Gray, Uglyface, we're going to Fairy Tail's tonight for drinks. Don't bail; we do this every time we add a new member."
"Fuck her. Am I Uglyface?" Gajeel said loudly and Natsu laughed.

"Gajeel-kun…" Juvia tried to talk to him, but her friend was already close to his office and slammed the door. "Dammit." She cussed under her breath.

"This is fucked up," Gray said and Juvia jumped in surprise, forgetting for a moment he was there. "Gajeel?" He looked at her with a raised eyebrow.

"He's a friend. You can trust him." The blunette informed him.

"I'll trust him when he earns my trust, but I will keep an open min." He shrugged and Juvia nodded – it was the best she would get from him and she knew it. "You cut your hair."

Juvia had to stop for a second to think about what he said until she finally understood and reached for her short locks, she had cut it just a little over her shoulders. She really liked the way it curled by the end.

"Oh, yes." She touched it. "Juvia wanted a change. She's going to let it grow, now."

"Hm." It was his answer. "Can I crash in your office for a bit? Lucy and Levy are in mine with Droy and Jet; I'm not in the mood for drama. Too tired." Oh, that meant his office was right across hers. Nice.

Her heart beat faster as she nodded. "Of course." She led the way and showed him the couch. A moment later he was sprawled all over, his forearm over his eyes and he sighed in relief. "Was the mission successful?" Juvia asked as she sat on her chair, turning to look at him.

"Yeah." He told her. "Son of a bitch stole almost 5 million and thought he would never get caught."

"Don't they always?" Juvia smiled and turned to her computer, logging it in, leaving Gray to rest.

He had other ideas, though. "Why did it take three months for you to come here, by the way?"

Juvia froze for a second before continue to look through the files she brought with her. "Not my story to tell."

"That's right."

"Unbelievable." Gray shook his head. "Are you alright, though?" She looked confused. "After this time you spent at the hospital – are you alright?"

"Yes." She smiled gently. "It's alright now."

"Good." Gray nodded and finally put his head down, using his arms as a pillow. "Wake me up when Cana decides it's time to go to the bar. I know better than to skip that."
Juvia woke Gray up when Cana knocked on her door to let her know they were leaving in five minutes and Juvia thanked her for the reminder – she had been so absorbed with her files that she lost track of time. He had actually fallen asleep and when he woke up Gray mumbled something about women getting better couches and it was sexist before going to his office for a few minutes.

After logging off the system and locking her office with the keycard she had, Juvia waited as Cana gathered her belongings. When everyone – there were people Juvia hadn't even met yet – was gathered at the common area, they left together, Gajeel one of the last and Juvia waited so she could be with her friend.

The Fairy Tail bar was full, apparently it was a huge success and with reason: the bar was spacious, the waiters seemed to be very attentive, the music was very good and there was even a designed place for people to dance. The best part was that FT had an exclusive large table and any employee could get inside without waiting in line.

All the tension from earlier had vanished as everyone laughed and ordered drinks when the lights went off, only a couple of lights stayed on so people wouldn't panic. Juvia almost reached for the gun inside her purse, but relaxed when people around her started to clap.

Lucy, who was seated by Juvia's side, touched the blunette's elbow and pointed. "There's a stage over there!" The moment the words left her lips, the lights of the stage went on and there was a woman with a guitar, sitting on a chair.

She was beautiful, white hair falling in waves reaching her waist, her bangs were tied up and the dress she wore showed a lot of her legs – which were spectacular, if Juvia dared to say. When the woman started to sing, she sounded like an angel.

Everyone started to yell 'Mira!' or 'Mirajane!' and Juvia was shocked. When she talked to Master Makarov to join Fairy Tail, one of the conditions was that both Juvia and Gajeel had to go to meet a psychiatrist at least once a week and told them her name was Mirajane Strauss (Juvia was surprised, just like Erza, Mirajane had one hell of a reputation.

Juvia hadn't connected the dots before, but Mirajane wasn't a very common name and Lisanna looks so much like the woman at the stage, that their blood connection would be no surprise.

So that was Mirajane Strauss.

FT wouldn't stop surprising her, would it?

The next thing she knows the boys are fighting each other (in a friendly manner, she checked) and the girls were chatting excitedly. Mirajane, then changed the ballad and started to sing much more upbeat tone.

Juvia didn't see the time pass as she talked with Lucy, Cana and Lisanna, drinking and laughing and then Erza joined them alongside with Laki and Biska, whom Juvia got introduced. She never had such a fun night before.

It was after midnight when they decided to call it a night and go home. The large group went out the door and said their good-byes as they took cabs and ride alongs. Juvia lived four blocks away and wouldn't need it, especially that she didn't have much to drink.

"Do you want me to take you home?" Gajeel asked her.
"No need." Juvia smiled to her friend. "We are going to opposite sides of the town. Juvia's apartment is close. Drive safe." She told him and he nodded. The only reason she let him drive his motorcycle was because he hadn't had a drink all night, otherwise he would be getting inside one of those cabs.

Once everyone was at their designated means of transport, the only ones left were her and Gray.

"Where do you live?" He asked her. "I can call you a cab."

"No need. Juvia will just walk." She pointed over her shoulder. "Just a few blocks this way."

"Me too. I'll walk with you." Gray said and they started to walk. They stayed in silence during the length of the first block, then, he asked: "How do you like the nut house we call it FT Security?"

Juvia chuckled. "Juvia has never met such lively people before. All of you are very kind and willing to help."

"Yeah." Gray shrugged. "None of us had the best history in the world, so we know how it is to be alone. Mirajane says we try to help people so they don't have to go through what we did."

She looked at him in surprise. "Mirajane? She is the psychiatrist of more people in FT?"

Gray snorted. "Oh yeah. She probes inside all of our heads. The old man makes us see her at least once a week if we are not in a mission. To keep us saner, I guess. You'll have your turn soon. Prepare some tissues for that first session."

It wasn't as if Juvia hid her feelings, she was very open about them, actually. Well, most of them. If she probed about her childhood, things could get ugly.

"Wow." Gray said, looking at her. "You must have some real dark secrets if your face lost all color like that."

"It's fine." Juvia waved him off and tried to change the subject from her. "Did you need those tissues for the first session."

"Perhaps." Gray looked at the path in front of them. "I turn to the next left. What about you? I can take you there before I go home."

"Oh no, Juvia is on the next left as well." Juvia tried to hide her smile.

"What?" He asked in surprise and she just shrugged. Once they turned left, Juvia said. "Well, Juvia was looking for somewhere close to FT and to someone she knew..." They stopped in the middle of the street and she turned to look at him; she pointed to the building behind her. "This is where Juvia lives."

"But I live in this one." Gray pointed behind him, confused with the situation.

"Yeap. Juvia told you before: if you don't want to be found, don't use your real name." She grinned and grabbed her keys from her purse. "Good night, Gray-sama."

When she opened the front door of her building, she heard his voice. "This is very weird!" Gray yelled at her.

She laughed aloud and yelled back from over her shoulder: "Juvia knows!"
A couple of days later, Juvia was at her office typing what happened in her last mission when she heard a knock on the door and told the person to come in, distracted.

"You know, I saw you looking when I was doing pull-ups this morning." She looked up and saw Gray leaning on the doorway, looking at her with a raised eyebrow. After that night, he realized that Juvia also had her apartment at the same floor as his and their windows faced each other's.

"Oh, Juvia knows you saw." She smiled. "Yet, you kept going."

"I needed to reach 100. It's not nice to spy on your neighbors." Gray scolded her and the blunette laughed.

"You should tell this to Mrs Moretti, as well, then."

"Who?" Gray was confused.

"She lives above me. Your pull-ups are her entertainment." Juvia informed him. "Her kids are off to college, her husband has lost interest… Seeing you like that every morning is the closest thing she'll get to sex."

Gray blinked a few times. "Good to know: I'm closing my curtains from now on."

"Such a waste." She sighed. "But why are you here?"

"Master asked me and you to look into an old friend of an old friend's company. Apparently, the son hired a team that it is not good enough and just last week they got a bomb threat." He gave her a folder with the information. "Gajeel is out on a solo mission, Natsu is out with a stomach thing… So you and I are teaming up."

"Great." Juvia looked over the files briefly. "When's the meeting with the client?"

"3 p.m." Gray told her. "Master said that this time I'm in charge. You'll get the next one."

"Alright." Gray took it as the conversation was over and turned around to leave, but she called him and he stopped. "Just so you know, Juvia does her yoga around seven in the afternoon and she doesn't close the curtains."

Gray groaned and started to leave again. "Shut up."

"Juvia doesn't mind if you look!" She said loud enough for him to listen and she laughed when she was alone again. Why pretend? She thought he was handsome, he did look magnificent when doing pull-ups and she watched it shamelessly. The quid pro quo there was for him to know she too did some exercise and she didn't mind if he saw it.

Her phone rang and Juvia answered. "Juvia Lockser."

"Slut." It was Cana's voice, she was calling from her desk outside.

"You heard that?" Juvia suddenly felt her cheeks burn. "Sorry."

"Oh, don't mind me. I told you: information is my weapon of choice. The 'slut' was totally a compliment, though." Juvia chuckled with her secretary's words "You just can't do subtle with the men in this firm. It's possible that you are dry humping one of them and they are still clueless."

"Go to work, Cana."
"No, I mean it. One time, I was..."

"I'm hanging up..." Juvia said and put the phone back in place, chuckling.

#

The client was an old man, around their Master 's age and he had been listening very carefully to what Gray and Juvia were saying about how many security breaches they found just on their way to the man's office and he seemed inclined to consider FT.

His son, though, was a nightmare. He kept saying how the one he hired was better and cheaper and how he was going to be the head of the Company and he should make the decisions.

While father and son were discussing, Juvia whispered to Gray: "He will listen to the son if we don't do something."

"I know." Gray scowled. "But what can we do?"

Juvia thought for a moment and then an idea came to mind. It was crazy, she could end up in jail if it went wrong, but what the hell... She was from FT now. "Juvia has an idea. Just roll with it." She couldn't give more details because father and son were returning.

"I'm sorry." Mr. Arata senior said. I promised my old friend that I would hear you out, but I don't believe we need more security."

"We understand." Juvia smiled and got up as if to shake hands with the older man. "So, me, getting in here with a gun," she took the gun from her purse and pointed right into Arata's Senior forehead "that was on purpose?"

Arata Jr yelled security and Juvia didn't bother looking away as some poorly trained agents entered the room, instead she stared at the older man in the eyes. "You need better security, sir. If I could get in with this, someone else can too."

"Take that bitch down!" Arata Jr yelled.

"You see, she's new at our firm." Gray, who didn't move from his spot on the couch, looked as if they were discussing the weather, told the agents pointing guns at him. "I'm her boss, but she's still a little trigger happy and I can't foresee what she will do." Gray's eyes shifted to Arata Jr's. "I'd be careful to what you tell her."

Oh, her boss wasn't he? Juvia smirked. "Not trigger happy, sir. Just happy; the trigger comes with the job."

"Shoot her!" Arata Jr said it again, in panic.

"Shut up, Kenji!" Arata Senior said. "She's not going to hurt me – her gun is probably without bullets. They are trying to make a point and they have made it." Arata took a step back and Juvia pulled her gun away. "We will hire FT to fix our problems. I like people with guts and they have it."

Juvia saw Gray get up from the couch and offer Arata Senior his hand to shake. "We will get in touch with you, sir."

"Of course." Arata said and Juvia felt Gray's hand on her lower back, urging her to leave the room. Just before she went through the door, though, she stopped and turned around.
"Oh, Mr. Arata?" He looked at her as she took out the clip from her SIG and showed it to him that it was full. "I'm never without bullets."

The older man let out a bark of laughter. "Gutsy indeed! Feisty girl. Very feisty."

Once they were inside the elevator, alone, Gray turned to face her. "Are you crazy? They could've shot us! They could place charges!"

"Juvia thought it was what we did in FT." She shrugged innocently and Gray opened his mouth to argue and when he found no answer back, he closed his mouth and started to chuckle.

"Goddammit, you might work out with us yet."

#

A week later, Lisanna came in Juvia's office and told her to stand up because she was going to take her measurements to the parade. And when asked what parade was that, Lisanna started to talk about the charity work the firm made every week.

They would close the street, for a parade where the employees of the establishments there would dress up with costumes and all money they made would go straight to an orphanage not too far away. The children also went to see the parade. It was a tradition that went back decades and that year, Juvia would participate as well.

"Mira and Cana decide on the costumes." Lisanna informed while checking for Juvia's chest size. "We have all kinds of costumes in storage. You'll get something as well and it will fit just fine."

"But-but…" Juvia tried to say, but Lisanna waved her off.

"No buts. Trust me, this project is my sister's baby. She loves it more than she loves me and you don't want to cross her right now."

And just as sudden she arrived, Lisanna left and Cana took her place inside the office.

"It's fun. We have two days until the real deal. Tomorrow we'll have some contests, games, baking sales, this types of things. I put your name on the 'Miss Fairy Tail' contest, by the way."

"Cana-san!" Juvia complained.

"What? Everyone is participating! It'll raise money for the kids. Think of the children, Juvia." What could Juvia argue with that line of thinking? Cana explained how things would go and Juvia had time to prepare herself, thankfully.

So, the next morning she picked her prettiest dress, the bad with what she would need for the contest and went to the Fairy Tail bar, and it was even more crowded than usual – and it was lunchtime yet.

"It sure is crowded." Juvia said with a smile on her face when she found Gray and Lucy in the middle of the bar.

"I can't believe there are so many people in this city." Lucy said, looking around.

"In order to watch the Fantasia Parade, many people have traveled here from other cities." Gray explained. "You'll participate, you'll see."

"Speaking of participating, the Miss Fairy Tail contest will be starting soon!" Lucy said and ran off. Gray laughed at her and Juvia felt the green-eyed monster inside her. It wasn't as if she didn't like
Lucy – she liked the blonde quite a bit – she just didn't want her anywhere near close Gray.

"Juvia won't lose to Lucy." Juvia said, her eyes narrowing.

"You're joining… too?" Gray asked, looking at her weirdly.

"Yes." Juvia nodded and her curls bounced – she had spent extra time in front of the mirror to make it pretty. "Cana-san signed Juvia up, but now Juvia really wants to participate."

Gray sighed. "I will never understand friendship between women."

#

"People of Magnolia Town and visitors from neighboring cities!" Juvia heard and she felt nervous. Beauty contests were never her thing. She was fast with a gun, she could kill a man with her hands, but modeling had never been in her mind. She wasn't ugly, but she worked with some very beautiful women and sure she would come last. Well, she wasn't going to quit now. "The moment you've been waiting for! The beautiful Fairies of Fairy Tail will take the stage! So, without further ado, let the Miss Fairy Tail Contest… Begin! Your host tonight will be none other than myself, Max!" He was one of the IT guys, Juvia remembered.

She saw as Cana entered the stage and people cheered for her, her bikini was green and it suited her very well. Why did Juvia have to be second? Everyone would compare them, she thought as Cana walked around the stage. Juvia sighed and looked to her heavy dark coat.

Sooner than she wanted, Cana returned backstage, giving Juvia thumbs up. "The second contestant, a newcomer. A Fairy of Water, demure like a gentle rain, Juvia Lockser!" They must've searched the meaning of her name. She kind of liked being the Fairy Of Water.

Juvia walked on the stage with the heavy coat. She stopped, turned around from the audience and then opened it, letting it fall off her shoulders, but not entirely and the crowd cheered when she smirked. Feeling a little more secure, Juvia turned to the audience and let the coat fall on the floor, showing everyone her purple bikini with white polka dots and the crowd went wild.

"Gray-sama, are you watching?" Juvia whispered to herself, as she was unable to see anyone with the lights pointing at her direction. She wanted him to see that she was beautiful too. Even if they worked with a hundred beautiful women, she was just as pretty.

She left the stage after grabbing her coat back and met with Cana, who hugged her while laughing. "You looked so hot! That stunt with the coat was magnificent. You make me proud!"

"Thanks." Juvia's cheeks got warmer. "Juvia just wants to put some clothes now. Just go around in a bikini when we're not in a pool or at the beach feels weird."

"Thanks." Juvia's cheeks got warmer. "Juvia just wants to put some clothes now. Just go around in a bikini when we're not in a pool or at the beach feels weird."

"Come on, there's a bathroom back there." Cana said and led the way.

While they were walking, Juvia bumped into a woman with light brown hair and wearing glasses. The blunette turned to apologize and then turned back, just to see Cana's eyes wide open in surprise. Before she could do anything, Juvia felt pain on the back of her head and the world went black around her.

#

She woke up with her head throbbing in an annoying way and female voices all around her. She moaned and heard a familiar voice say: "She's waking up too!"
"Good!"

Juvia opened her eyes and it took her a moment before she could understand what had happened; someone had hit her on the back of her neck. No, not someone, that bitch with glasses.

"Come on, sit up." Juvia saw Lisanna and accepted the white haired woman a hand to help her sit down. "Don't do anything too sudden or you might get nauseous."

"What happened?" Juvia asked, seeing that there were only women plus Master Makarov at the room. The others continued to talk while Juvia tried to make sense of her world once again.

"What happened? I'll tell you what happened." Cana was clearly furious. "Master Supreme of Dickheads, also known as Laxus Dreyar, never grew out of his emo phase and now joined it with his rebellious phase and is gone complete psycho."

Juvia blinked two times. "None of those words makes sense to me."

"Laxus, Master's grandson is making us fight one another. He's saying something about building a better FT with the people who survives. He wants it to only have skilled people to make more money." Lisanna explained. "Some of our people are already fighting because he had us girls as hostages."

"Oh." That's why she was hit. With Lisanna's help, she got up from the floor and saw that besides Makarov, there were two other males: Natsu and Gajeel.

Natsu was finishing talking: "All I'm saying is... don't be too harsh on the guy, okay, old man?" Makarov looked so proud of the pink haired man until the next words came out of his mouth: "Let's start the battle of FT round 2! Who wants to try me, huh?" He said to the girls, who just shoved Natsu away. "Come on, bring on the battle."

"Please..." Lucy whined. "Coming from you, it's hard to tell if you're joking or not."

"Hell, if you really want to, I wouldn't mind giving you a round, though." Cana said with a smile.

"Don't encourage him, Cana" Bisca scolded, just like the mother she was. Fortunately little Asuka had been visiting her husband's parents and wasn't in Magnolia.

"Come on, let's go for it, Lucy!" Natsu ran after the blonde who ran away yelling no while everyone else laughed.

Gajeel went to stand next to Juvia and he had a peculiar look on his eyes. "What's wrong, Gajeel-kun?" Juvia asked.

"Nothing." He answered her, fast.

He did not have to tell her, though. She understood. FT was complete insane, but there never were a boring moment.

"they are a lot of fun, aren't they?" Juvia asked, sweetly.

"They're fucking crazy." Gajeel answered and Juvia chuckled.

"So, here's the plan." Master took over. "Laxus had Freed locking FT with our Omega level security and no one can access the fifth floor, where he is. But Levy here is even smarter than Freed is and she is willing to try and overrun its commands." He pointed to the petite blue haired woman. "Natsu
and Gajeel, you are the ones who can beat him. Mira, I assume you want to go find your brother, otherwise I'd send you."

"Yes, Master." The white haired woman nodded.

"Very well. The others," Master looked at them, "Laxus hired some help for this, but I have no doubt they are not even a match for you." He looked proud of his team.

"Can ya hear me, old man? And everyone from FT too?" An unknown voice to Juvia spoke from the speakers around the bar. "It looks like we've lost one of ours rules so I'm going to instate a new one so was to keep this battle of Fairy Tail moving, I've activated the Hall of Thunder." Master seemed shocked. "Only half an hour remain, Do you think you can defeat us? Or will you play nice and retire? Master." The last word was said in mockery, followed by laughter.

"What on Earth are you thinking, Laxus?" Master said, his face red with anger. "Are you trying to kill us?" Makarov groaned and grabbed his chest, clearly in pain.

"Old man!" Natsu yelled.

"What is wrong?" Lucy questioned as Master fell to his knees.

Mirajane was already running. "This is bad, he needs his medicine!"

"At a time like this…" Biska said, trying to help the old man and massaging his chest.

"Master, get a hold of yourself, please!" Levy tried.

"What is the 'Hall of Thunder'?" Natsu yelled, but all Makarov could do was groan in pain. "Old Man!"

A few moments later Mirajane returned with the medication and gave it to him just before Master lost consciousness. Juvia only realized she had Gajeel's hand when he tug it away from her so he could talk to Natsu, mostly like about Makarov's wishes of having them fighting Natsu.

"Hall of Thunder is FT's highest level of security." Mirajane explained to them. "It should never be used. When the countdown is over, the air ducts will release a drug to put everyone to sleep and if not treated in ten minutes, it leads to death. The last Master put it on the building a long time ago and it can't be removed otherwise it activates every other supply and closes all the exits of the buildings. Basically, Laxus just activated our self-destruction button."

Juvia's eyes were wide. No boring day indeed.

#

After dividing their tasks, the women went separated ways to try to take as many thugs as they could and if possible one of the Raijinshuu, Laxus' team. Juvia and Cana rode the elevator until the fourth floor where Juvia had guns and so did Cana.

Thankfully they didn't meet anyone on their way up and after Cana got her SIG from underneath her table, Juvia went in her office to grab his own weapons when suddenly the door closed behind them.

Juvia grabbed her keycard and swiped, but it's access was denied. She tried again and the answer was the same. She didn't like that.

The phone rang and both women looked at each other before Cana punched the 'speaker'. "Who's
"There's just one rule to come out of this room: leaving if forbidden until one or other of the occupants is rendered unable to fight." Said another unknown voice to Juvia, but Cana groaned a 'Freed' and Juvia assumed it was the man's name.

His words finally sank in and Cana looked up to Juvia with wide eyes and surprised. Juvia thought it over three times before whispering: "Until one of us is rendered unable to fight?"

"I'll take on the winner myself, whenever you are ready." His voice came from the phone.

"That's dirty, Freed! If you want to fight one-on-one, that's fine by me! I'll take you on!" Cana yelled, furious. "So, let us out of here already!"

Juvia was feeling sick. "Making comrades fight one another like this…"

"Or what?" Cana continued to yell to the phone. "Are you too scared to take both of us on at once? Is that it? Terrified of a couple of girls, are you? Pretty pathetic of you, huh, Freed?" Juvia watched as Cana's face went red with anger.

It took a moment, but he answered. "I am merely attempting to limit the number of people I am forced to kill to the best of my ability."

"The fuck was that?"

Juvia thought of her options and they weren't good: the door was reinforced and they couldn't break it. Plus, Juvia didn't think she could hack into the system and unlock them. That left with this Freed's person word.

"I suppose this leaves us no choice." Juvia muttered, but Cana heard and looked up to Juvia in disbelief.

"Juvia… you…"

"Freed-san." Juvia said. "You promise that once one of us is incapacitated, you will fight the other like a man?" The blunette asked, looking for something inside her second drawer.

"I am not the kind of a man who breaks his own rules."

"Good." Juvia reached for her gun and pointed it at Cana, just to keep her away while she searched for what she needed.

"Are you serious, Juvia? If we go at it here and now, we'll just be doing exactly what he wants!" Cana exclaimed and the blunette could see her hand going to her back pocket, where she had put her gun.

Finally finding what she needed, Juvia put her own SIG on the table and held two big tasers. She looked into Cana's eyes. "If I have to hurt someone, If I have to injury a friend, then it may as well be myself."

Before Cana could protest, Juvia turned both tasers on and at the same time, she tasered herself right under her collarbones and for a second time that day, she let blackness surround her.

#

The second time she woke up, she was lying on something comfortable. Her whole body ached and
she didn't want to get up, but had little choice; she needed to know what had happened to Cana.

"Easy." It was Cana's voice that made Juvia's eyes open.

"Cana-san!" Juvia managed to breathe out. "Are you alright?" The brunette seemed a little worse for wear, but otherwise seemed to be uninjured.

"Me? What on Earth were you thinking?" Cana said, mad at the blunette. "You could've died!"

Juvia tried to shrug, but her muscles complained. "Juvia just wanted to make you all accept her as a true member of FT." Her eyes watered. "Juvia loves you guys so much."

"Of course you are one of us!" Cana all but yelled. "There was never any question about that!"

"Oh." It was Juvia's answer and the next thing she knew, Cana had her arms around her in a tight hug.

"Don't you fucking do this again, you stupid woman." Cana sobbed.

Juvia was in shock for a moment before also wrapping her arms around her friend.

"Did we win, by the way?" Juvia asked and Cana laughed.

"Yeah, we won."

#

The day after the Battle of Fairy Tail, at the Fantasia Parade, Juvia was surprised to see her costume. Not even when she was a child she dreamt of being a princess, but Mirajane had given the very ornated dress and told her to put it on because she was going on the top of one of the cars.

While changing, Juvia couldn't help but to feel sad about the outcome of the previous day: Master had to banish his own grandson from the firm. That had to hurt so very much to everyone who knew Laxus before he did the things he did. And it had all been about making more money. They had something really good going on and greediness tried to destroy it.

Thankfully, FT was stronger than that.

After putting the dress on, Juvia saw that she wouldn't be able to cover the burns where she was tasered and sighed. At least if he was in one of the cars, no one would notice. She put her tiara and looked herself on the mirror and she suddenly felt better.

It was weird, she wasn't a girl who liked girly things while growing up, but that dress and that tiara were making her feel like a little girl all over again. Maybe Mirajane was a better psychiatrist than she gave her credit for.

What really surprised her though, was seeing Gray with a prince costume coming her way. "I swear to god, Mira gets worse each year. A prince? Seriously?"

Juvia smiled. "Juvia guesses we are teaming up on this one?"

"Yeah." He sighed in defeat. "Come on, let's find our car. It's not too hard, it has a big ass castle on it."

She giggled and halfway through the way, they were stopped by a group of little girls who were awing Juvia.
"Are you a princess?" One of the girls asked, eyes wide in reverence.

Not sure if what to do, Juvia nodded and smiled. "Yes. Yes, I am."

"Wooow!" They said together and both grown-ups chuckled.

"What are those?" The little girl with pigtailed hair asked, pointing to the wounds under Juvia's collarbones. Caught. Damn.

Trying to gain more time, Juvia kneeled in front of the girls. "These?" She pointed at the burns and the girls nodded. "Well, these are battle scars, of course."

They seemed confused. "But princesses don't go to battles."

"Oh, we do. How else are we supposed to keep the kingdom safe?" Juvia asked the girls. "Princesses have their own battles too and sometimes it leaves scars." The little girls' eyes were wide.

"Aren't you her prince?" The first little girl asked Gray. "Why didn't you help her?"

"Nah, she didn't need my help." Gray shrugged. "When I got there she had saved herself. Let me tell you a secret," he leaned over and whispered. "princes take a while to arrive, so princesses need to help themselves out of trouble." He winked and the girls nodded. "Now go back to your parents. Prince's orders."

The girls waved and each gave a kiss on Juvia's cheek before running away back into the crowd. Gray offered Juvia a hand so she could get up and she was smiling so wide she almost hurt herself. "You were adorable with them."

"I'm never adorable." Gray rolled his eyes.

Juvia looked at him in his prince clothes and it just hit her that she was falling in love with him. It wasn't a crush anymore, she was falling too fast and nothing in her life prepared her for it. Not like that. Not with that intensity.

She was so fucked.

"Now, let me explain about this thing we are gonna do in the middle of the Parade." Gray's voice snapped her out of her thoughts. "It means 'Even if I can't see where you are, I'm always watching you' and we're doing it for Laxus…"

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked the friendship between Lisanna and Juvia / Cana and Juvia. I love this arc so much. When Juvia hurt herself to protect Cana was the moment I knew she would be my favorite character and five years later, she still is my beautiful sweet baby girl.
It became a routine procedure for Juvia to wait for Gray to go home and he didn’t seem to mind too much about it while they talked about the jobs they had once and what was coming next. She, on the other hand, knew every time she told him a joke and he laughed, her heart melted. Whenever he seemed impressed by one of her stories, she felt pride.

She had fallen in love with him.

Oh, she had been in love before, but she never felt *that* in love before and it had turned out so awfully wrong. Bora had been a recruit just like her when they met and Juvia really thought he liked her. As it turned out, he wanted her to fall in love with him so he could be the best in their troop.

But Juvia didn’t fall for that, if her uncle ever taught her anything was that she shouldn’t let anyone best her, not while she could fight.

When Bora told her the truth after their tests and she turned to be number one, her heart had been broken. But it also made her stronger. She climbed the ranks really fast and in just a couple of years, she was Special Forces while her ex had been thrown out of the army.

After that, Juvia thought her heart would be frozen forever; she wouldn’t let anyone get in. Whenever she felt the need, she could always find a willing man in a bar to take home and never see again. It had been working very well until she met Gray.

He, like every other person he met at FT, was so unique; he cared for her even when they were enemies, he let her help him without feeling emasculated and he was kind with children, for god’s sake! And he didn’t do any of those things to impress her, on the contrary: it seemed as if it were the last thing in his mind. He was just that way.

Yeap, she was doomed. And loving every moment of it.

Juvia had joined the firm for almost two months when he went on a mission with his team. She didn’t like it, not when it involved the Balam Alliance. While working at Phantom, Juvia and Gajeel had helped take down mercenaries all over the country, but there were three groups that were the pillars and all seemed to come back to Zeref.

That man was like a virus, infecting everything around him; manipulating people into doing his dirty work for him. He wanted to be some kind of godsend gift to humankind but to do that, he needed to put the world in chaos so he could solve the problems he created.

The number of bombings had been increasing in the past two years as he became more fluent. So many victims: women, children, men… The more, the best for Zeref. And his bombs were nasty, made to kill, maim and panic with the pieces of nails and glass plus chemicals inside.

Zeref aimed for the headlines.
Nothing was ever traced back to him because he was too careful, his goons did the work for him while he stayed perfectly clean as a head of his church, calling people into his crazy religion and brainwashing them into thinking he was the next messiah.

God, Juvia hated radicals.

Once Gajeel and Juvia had given all they knew about the Balam Alliance (she had been very proud that she and Gajeel had destroyed some of it), she had taken Gray to the side and told him to be careful; Zeref had eyes everywhere and, just like many psychopaths, was highly intelligent. He would probably know there was a team trying to take a mercenary group called Oración Seis.

“Don’t worry.” Gray told her. “We are good, we have intel and we are teaming up with the FBI and CIA. My foster brother is with the CIA, actually.”

Juvia was very surprised with that information; at his dossier there were never the mention of a brother. “You have a brother? And the works for the Crown Intelligence Agency?”

“Foster brother, and yes, he’s with the Agency for a year now.” Gray shrugged. “His boss saw he was good and chose him for the job. My brother is a sneaky bastard and told him that it would be better if they had a team under no known agency, not CIA’s nor FBI’s, because if anything went south, we’d be the fallout guys.”

“He seems… calculative.” Juvia frowned.

“Oh, he is.” Gray snorted. “He’s a pretty smart bastard and our foster mother knew it. She trained us to use what we’ve got. He’s smarter than me, I can tell you that, but he didn’t use his brain right until I knocked him onto his ass when he went rogue after mom died.” Juvia gasped. “Don’t worry, he’s straight as an arrow now and for the past seven years; I asked help and deleted any files anyone had on him. What can I say? He’s older, but I’m the big brother.”

“Just…” Juvia sighed. “Be careful. They play dirty and the bombings are getting too close to each other.”

“That’s why we have to hit them hard now. They are planning something.” Gray informed her. “You know that.”

“Yes, of course.” Juvia shook her head lightly. “Be careful, watch your back.” She put a hand on his shoulder and squeezed it before leaving the room.

For a week, she didn’t have him to walk with back home and during the whole time, she worried. She worried so much about Gray, Erza, Natsu and Lucy (she went as tech support) that she barely slept and when returned, the mission had been done and they were alive.

They looked worried, though. Erza hadn’t even stopped on the fourth floor and when she knew why, Juvia almost cried.

“Jellal appeared. He’s rehabilitated for the past six months, forgot about the Zeref craziness.” Gray explained the blunette when she walked into his office and sat on one of his chairs while he did the same at the opposite side. “He helped us take the bomb down, without him…” Gray sighed and passed a hand over his face. “It didn’t matter, though. Another team from the Crown appeared and arrested him. We tried to… we wanted to prevent it… But they didn’t hear and by the end, Erza told us not to get involved and they arrested him.” He looked at her. “She’s in love with him. She’s still in love with him even after all the crap he pulled and now that he’s close to sane again, she lets him be taken.” Gray looked so confused. “I don’t understand.”
Juvia smiled sadly and tried to explain it to him. “Juvia thinks Erza-san is trying to help him.” When Gray gave her an even more confused look, she tried to speak simpler. “What would you feel if you ‘woke up’ after so many years and found out that everything you did, everything you believed in, hurt people? People you love?” Gray seemed to understand, then. “She’s giving him a way to feel redemption.”

“If he’s locked up, he is paying for his crimes.” He breathed.

“Yes.” Juvia nodded. “She’s far stronger than we give her credit for. And Juvia’s not speaking about her physical strength; she has to be the strongest person I know.”

“This is crap.” Gray groaned. “Wasn’t she supposed to want to be with him?”

“She does.” The blunette told him. “But she’s choosing his redemption over her happiness. That’s what love is,” Gray had a scowl on his face. “Like Juvia said, strong.”

“Thank god I never felt this way. Never intend to.” Gray snorted and missed Juvia’s look of pain as he opened one of the drawers on his desk. “Pain in the ass, that is.”

“Yes.” Juvia tried her best to mask her reaction. “Well, apparently we are going to the Fairy Tail in a couple of hours because of the new addition to the firm. Wendy, was it?” Juvia asked and he nodded. “She was being recruited by the Bureau and decided to come here instead?”

“Yeah. She’s a doctor, she was an army kid and is just out of med school. Real good kid.” Gray smiled and Juvia tried to do the same.

“Well, see you later.” She got up from her chair and was about to leave when he called her.

“Are you alright?”

“Uh? Oh, yes.” She tried to cover up that he had squashed her hopes with just a few words. “Juvia is just tired, she was worried about you. All of you.” She added quickly. “See you at the bar.”

“Okay.” It looked like he didn’t believe her, but she left either way.

She didn’t even stop to talk with Lucy on her way out – she was stationed at the front of Gray’s and Natsu’s offices – and ignored when Cana asked if she was alright. All Juvia wanted to do was get inside her office so she could try to hold it together, because she sure couldn’t if people were asking all the time if she was fine.

“Hey.” Juvia heard Cana’s voice and turned just in time to see her close the door. “Tell me what’s wrong. Did Gray do something…?”

“No.” She defended him. “I mean, yes, but he doesn’t know.” Seeing the confusion in Cana’s face, she tried to explain. “He told me… we were talking about Erza-san’s feelings and he told me he never wants to feel that way.”

“Of course he doesn’t. What…?” Cana started, but Juvia interrupted her.

“No, not about the whole psycho-boyfriend thing. He said it about love in general.” A couple of tears fell and she dried them. “And I… I just…”

“Oh.” Cana finally understood. “Oh. I thought you just had a crush on him, but… you’re in love with him.” The brunette just stared at Juvia, who just started to dry her tears as they fell. “Really in love.”
“I am.”

“Damn it, Juvia.” Cana sighed and walked to where the blunette was and put her arms around Juvia’s shoulders. “Him of all people, silly girl?” Juvia just nodded and hugged the other woman back. “You are such an idiot.”

“Thanks.” When Juvia tried to get away from her embrace, Cana didn’t let her.

“No, come here. I didn’t mean it like that.” Cana said. “Look, Gray is… I’ve been his friend for years and I’ve never saw him get a girlfriend. Love… He’s not interested in that because he has lost a lot of people in his life. He has one-night stands, but… Gray doesn’t do relationships.”

“Why do I always fall for the wrong guys?” Juvia asked.

“Don’t all of us?” Cana asked and caressed the blunette’s hair. “Maybe you can win him over, but… it might take a while. I think Gray only knows the bad stuff about loving someone, he knows how it feels when he loses them. If you are okay with waiting, maybe you have a chance. We never know. I don’t want to see you hurt, but I can’t lie to you. If you want him, Juvia, it’s going to have a lot of waiting and heartache.”

“It sounds awful.” Juvia whispered.

“Maybe.” Cana agreed. “You have to weight if you think it’s worth it to try something that might not work at all.”

“How will I know?” Juvia asked.

The brunette smiled and kissed the top of Juvia’s head. “You’ll know.”

#

Juvia sat one of the booths of Fairy Tail the next day, Mirajane sitting across from her. She still thought it was weird that Mirajane performed her consults at the bar. The first time it happened, the white haired woman explained how she thought it was best if her patients felt they were having more of a friendly chat than therapy.

“So, Juvia…” Mirajane said. “We talked a lot about your job in our other sessions. We talked about what happened between you and Gajeel a few months ago, too. But you always dodge when I ask you about your childhood.”

“Because there was nothing wrong with Juvia’s childhood.” The blunette shrugged.

“Then tell me about it.” Mira pressed. “I read in your file that your parents died when you were a child…?”

“Five.”

“That’s right.” Mira nodded. “And then your uncle took you in.”

“He did.” Juvia haven’t thought about her uncle in a while. “He was a Colonel. Juvia grew up in army bases after her parents died.”

The psychiatrist hummed in agreement. “You moved a lot, didn’t you?”

“We had to. My uncle needed to go wherever the army needed him to.” Juvia told her.
“Did you have a lot of friends growing up?”

Juvia snorted. “It is hard to make friends when we moved every few months. Juvia was always the new girl, the strange girl who never had any friends. When I started to look less weird, we were on the road again.” The blunette realized she said a little too much and it might give Mira the wrong impression. “It was not that bad. Other people have it worse. He sent me to school, fed me, took me to the hospital when I was sick. He didn’t abuse me, didn’t hit me.”

“It’s not a competition of who had it worse or not.” Mira informed her patient. “What else did he do for you? Him being an army man gave you the idea about going into the military?”

“Of course.” Juvia nodded. “He taught me everything until I joined at the age of eighteen. I think the first time I held a gun, I was seven. It was air compressed, but a gun either way and he was just so proud when I started to hit the targets.” Juvia smiled at the memory. “He taught me how to fight, how to use my size as an advantage, how to be strong.”

“I see.”

Juvia didn’t like her tone. “What do you mean ‘I see’?”

“You tried to please him, didn’t you? Your whole life. You became the best in your class – I saw your grades – then you joined the army and became the best in there too. Was your uncle happy with that?”


“Did you like it? Any of those things you did, did you like it?” Mirajane asked and the blunette blinked a couple of times, thinking about her answer.

“Juvia was good at it.”

“I didn’t ask that.” The psychiatrist pressed.

It took her a few seconds to answer. “I learned to like it. He talked a lot about how Juvia would be good at the army, how she was talented… Juvia just… never saw another option. She was raised to be in the army.”

“You did have other options, Juvia, but your uncle pressed you into going to the army.” Mira informed her. “You should have been free to make your own choices.”

Juvia thought about it and shook her head. “It doesn’t matter. It’s the path Juvia took it, her profession now. I am grateful my uncle gave me that.”

Mirajane stared at Juvia for a moment before nodding. “Alright. But tell me something, did you ever have a pet?”

The blunette thought it was a strange question, but answered it anyway. “No. We were constantly moving, Uncle didn’t let me.”

“Well, our session is almost over but I will give you the same ‘homework’ I gave Gajeel. Different reasons, though. I want to see if he can take care of anything other than himself, but you… I want you to have company.” Mira told Juvia. “I want you to get a pet. You choose what you want to have, but get a pet.”

“Why?” Juvia frowned.
“You never had a pet because you were always moving, right?” Mirajane and Juvia nodded. “Are you planning on leaving Magnolia soon?”

“No.” The thought have not cross her mind.

“Have you ever wanted a pet?”

“Yes.”

Mira smiled, then. “There you go. You’ll like to have a companion. If you are worried about your long missions, I can assure you that Lisanna or I wouldn’t mind taking care of it. There are also kennels that take animals for a couple of days.”

“Juvia… Juvia doesn’t know how to take care of a pet.”

“You’ll learn.” The psychologist smiled. “Do this for you.”

#

Juvia was still thinking about her session with Mira when she went up to the firm. Next time she would not schedule one so early; she was already exhausted and it was only ten in the morning. Talk about her uncle and Mirajane’s inputs made her think too much of the past and how her choices made her life the way it is.

“Hey.” Gray was waiting by the elevator. “Good morning. Sorry, but we already have a mission.” Juvia looked confused. She usually teamed up with Gajeel. Seeming to read her mind, he answered her unsaid question. “Gajeel is running an errand for Master, Erza and Natsu are in another mission. It’s you and I in this one. My team is getting ready.”

With a nod, Juvia followed Gray towards the conference room. “What is the job?”

“Kidnapping.” He handed her a folder. “Mr. Jones’ wife and his two daughters were taken from his home this morning. He is a VP of a large company and they want some kind of secret as ransom. We have footage of them; Levy is running a plate we managed to get.” He stopped her. “I’ve watched the kidnapping: these are mercenaries, Juvia.”

“Of course they are.” She sighed and then mumbled. “Just what Juvia needed to complete her day.” Gray frowned but she waved him off. “Morning session with Mira-san.”

He immediately understood her mood. “If you are not up to it…”

“No, Juvia wants to do this.” She informed him. “I need this.”

“Alright.” Gray nodded. “Let’s go.”

#

Juvia looked at the seemingly abandoned building – the night had fallen, she and Gray plus his team of six men were looking over a blueprint. They knew there were about fifteen men inside because Levy had done her magic and found footage around the block plus, she hacked the mercenaries’ security system.

“The girls and their mother are in this room.” Gray pointed at the blueprint. “If we go through the front door loudly, they can use them as shields.”
“Then we take them out of there first.” Juvia said and all of a sudden, all eyes were on her, so she took charge. “I can go through these vents, they go all way through the building and to the room they are being held.”

“Too dangerous.” Gray cut her.

“No, it’s not; it is our safest bet to get them alive.” She looked at Gray. “You saw the sheets of the ones Levy-san could identify, Gray-sama. They killed children and women before, without mercy and they will kill them if they feel threatened. If we take their advantage away, we can get in without worry.” Gray looked into her eyes and she knew she had won the argument.

“Someone else, maybe…”

“None of you will fit in that vent. Juvia will, and so will the children and Mrs. Jones.” Juvia told him. “The last time we were in a mission, you were in charge and told Juvia would get the next. This one is mine and I am going in.” She moved her gaze away from his, to the team and put her hair in a ponytail. “Someone get me a tool so I can loose the screws.”

Five minutes later, Juvia was heading inside the building with Gray by her side. They managed to get to the second floor without getting attention and Levy managed to put the footage for whoever was watching to be in loop. Gray held Juvia up while she opened one of the vents. He put her down and watched as she put an ear comm.

“You get them and come back.” He whispered and Juvia nodded, focusing on the mission rather than how close their bodies were pressed. “Bring them and we will take the kidnappers down. If something goes wrong…”

“Juvia will tell you, don’t worry.” The blunette put her hands on his shoulders, waiting for him to push her up. “Ten minutes.”

“Ten minutes. After that, I’ll assume something went wrong and go in.” Gray informed her.

“Roger that.” She nodded, grabbed a small flashlight and Gray gave her a boost so she could enter the vent.

#

Four minutes later following the blueprint she memorized, Juvia finally found the room they were keeping their prisoners. As quietly as she could, Juvia loosened the screws of the panel and put them inside the vent to prevent it from falling and get attention.

“I’m in.” Juvia whispered into her comm.

“In and out Juvia.” It was Gray’s answer.

Juvia took a peek inside and saw a woman lying down and two children next to her. With as much finesse as she could gather, she came out of the vent and landed in a soft thud. She looked to the door as if expected for it to open; instead, the oldest child had gasped and sat down.

“Hi.” The blunette smiled. The little girl had blonde hair and green eyes. “My name is Juvia. Are you Angelique?” She had read the files on them: Angelique was 8, Grace was 4 and their mother, Iliana was a little over 40. The little girl nodded. “Your dad sent me here to help you, your mother and sister to go back to him.”

“Daddy?” Angelique gasped and Juvia saw she missed one of her front teeth.
“Yes.” Juvia gently touched the youngest one’s face. She seemed unarmed, like the oldest. “But we have to be really quiet. Think of it as a game.”

“Okay.” The little girl woke her little sister.

Juvia didn’t like the way Iliana hadn’t move and when she got closer, she saw why. Her face was pale, her lips had lost its color and when the blunette touched the woman’s neck, she found no pulse. ‘Damn it,’ she thought.

“Mommy?” Angelique tried to wake her mother. “Mommy, wake up. We are getting out.”

“Angelique, sweetheart.” Juvia whispered. “We need to leave. We will get your mother later. I have to take you and your sister to your father.”

“But mommy…” Angelique looked down to her mother and tears formed into her green eyes, the youngest, Grace, looked confused.

“She would want you and your sister away from the bad guys, wouldn’t she?” Juvia tried to reason with the girl. “She didn’t let the bad guys get to you, did she?” Angelique shook her head. “There you go. We will get her later. Right now, we need to leave.” After a moment’s hesitation, Angelique nodded. “Brave girl. Help me with your sister.” Juvia got up from the floor and took Angelique into her arms. “You are going in first, then I’ll get your sister up. Go to your left and don’t stop until I tell you to.” Juvia raised the girl and she was in a moment later. She picked up Grace with a smile. “Want to play a game with your sister?” The timid girl nodded. “You have to follow her and be very quiet, we are playing hide and seek.”

Grace smiled and raised her hands when Juvia held her up, Angelique helped her sister and, with a final look at the dead woman, she also went up through the vent.

#

“Juvia? The ten minutes are up.” She heard Gray through her comm. “Talk to me.”

“The girls are coming your way. Forty seconds.”

She heard him sigh in relief. “Roger.”

The blunette could hear Angelique’s soft sobs – she was young, but she knew something happened to their mother. Even so, she was being a brave little girl.

“Juvia!” Angelique gasped when she saw Gray waiting for them; she naturally thought he was a bad man after her experiences that day.

“He is my friend.” Juvia hushed the girl. “Your dad asked him to get you too. You can go with him.”

Gray picked Angelique and soon after, Grace. He helped Juvia down and looked up as if expecting another person to come down. He waited for Iliana. When no one else appeared, Gray looked at Juvia with a frown.

Her answer was to shake her head slightly and he understood she didn’t make it.

“We need to leave.” Gray told her and kneeled in front of Angelique. “I’m going to pick you up, okay? I’ll take you outside and then to your dad.” Juvia picked Grace up and when the older girl looked at Juvia for approval, she nodded and Angelique let Gray pick her up. “I need you to close
your eyes and not look. Can you do that?” Gray asked her in case they met with any of the bad guys and she agreed. He looked at Juvia and they left.

Once they were out, Gray put Angelique on the floor and Juvia tried to put Grace down but the little girl didn’t let her. Seeing that the girls trusted her enough, Juvia looked at Gray.

“Go in. Juvia will stay with them at the car.”

“Are you sure?” Gray hesitated.

“Yes. Juvia fulfilled her part in the plan.” She told him. “This is my op and now it’s yours. Go.”

He nodded and gathered his men while Juvia took the girls into the large black SUV not too far away from where they were. The three of them waited inside while Gray’s team neutralized the kidnappers. By the time Gray was back, the girls were asleep. He nodded to let her know they got all of them. Juvia kissed the top of Grace’s head. At least she could give Mr. Jones his children.

#

It had been awful, delivering the news to Mr. Jones about his wife. He had sobbed and hugged his daughters very close. They would have a full autopsy, but according to Angelique’s story, her mother took a beating trying to protect her and Grace. Juvia bet she had internal bleeding. God, she had to be in pain for hours before she finally died. Yet, she never scared her children. Just told them they had to stay in silence and sleep.

‘What a day.’ Juvia thought when she lied down on her couch after she had given her statement to the police and typed her version of the events for the firm’s log. She was so tired, so sad for that family. Two perfect little girls lost their mother all because of greed.

After a few minutes, she got up and grabbed her purse. She locked her office and was about to leave when she saw Gray’s office still had its lights on. Curious, she went over there and leaned on the doorway when she saw him typing on his computer.

“Aren’t you going to get home?” Juvia asked and it startled him. “Sorry.”

“I thought I was the last one here.” He looked at her and put a hand on the back of his neck. “What a day. I was finishing my report.”

“Juvia finished hers a few minutes ago.” The blunette sighed. “Not a good one, huh?”

“The children were fine, at least.” Gray stretched his arms.

“They will grow up without a mother.” Juvia said, sad. “It’s awful.”

“You…” He let the question in the air, but she understood.

“Yes. I was five.” She told him. “My uncle raised me.” The earlier session with Mira came back to her mind and she groaned. “Juvia just remembered her session with Mira-san earlier today. She gave Juvia ‘homework’. She made quotation marks with her fingers.

“Been there, done that.” Gray snorted. “What did she make you do? I had to go to my foster mother’s grave and say what I felt. It was very weird.”

“She told Juvia to get a pet.” Juvia told him. “It’s not talk-to-a-grave weird, but it’s still pretty weird.”

“Nah.” Gray shrugged. “Usually Mira knows what she’s doing. I felt good when I went to the
cemetery, actually. She knows her stuff and if she says you need to get a pet, you probably do.”

When Juvia nodded, he logged off his computer. “I know a shelter, if you want to visit to choose a
dog, a cat, or whatever.”


“No.” He opened the last drawer of his desk and took a helmet. “And neither are you.” He gave her
the helmet. “This mission got to you; I saw it when you were with the girls and when you told Mr.
Jones about his wife. You need to breathe for a moment: you won’t do it at home and if we go to
Fairy Tail, people will hover over you.”

“So, your idea is to…” She took the helmet.

“To take you somewhere else I know. Let’s go.” Gray got his own helmet from the top of his couch
and rushed her out of his office.

Even though Juvia knew how to pilot motorcycles, she didn’t know much about it, but she knew
Gray absolutely loved his Harley and is she had to be honest, she liked to ride with him; she had to
put his arms around his waist.

The place Gray took her was a cart called ‘Frank’s’ and was at Magnolia’s Park. Gray parked close
and told Juvia to go sit at one of the plastic tables while he ordered for them.

A few minutes later, he arrived with two plates and what seemed to be some kind of sandwich. “I got
Frankie’s coming to take our drink order in a moment.”

Juvia took his word for it; the food did smell delicious but when she tried to take it off her plate, it
slipped from her hands making them oily. “You’re sticky now.” She gasped and he raised an
eyebrow. “Can’t you eat it any better?”

“I… It’s Juvia’s first time eating this, so…” Juvia grabbed a napkin and cleaned her hand.

“This is how you eat Caramade Franks! Like this. Open your mouth wide open.” He opened his
mouth to show her and took a bite from his food.

Juvia managed to grab her food and tried to imitate Gray. “Like this?”

He shook his head. “This isn’t something that’s meant to be eaten politely.”

“Oh, this is good!” Juvia’s eyes widened as she chewed the piece she had in her mouth. “What is this
sauce? And what is that… bacon?”

Gray chuckled. “Frankie doesn’t share her recipe.”

“I sure as hell don’t. My dad, Big Frank, only told me in his dying bed.” Juvia heard a woman’s
voice and she looked to her side where a large woman in her fifties, stood. Her hair was grey in a
pixie cut and had chocolate brown eyes. “Who is this?”

“Hey, Frankie.” Gray smiled. “This is a friend of mine, Juvia. Juvia, this is Frankie.”

“Nice meeting you.” The blunette smiled to the older woman, who narrowed her eyes.

“She’s too skinny, Gray.” Frankie said to him and then to Juvia. “You need food, girl. I’ll make you
two more to go. Put more meat in those bones.”

“You really don’t have to…” Juvia tried to protest, but Gray interrupted her.

“Thank you, Frankie.” He said and then looked at the other woman. “We’re gonna have two sodas, please.”

“Coming right up, Gray.” She winked and left.

Gray looked at Juvia and raised an eyebrow. “I’ll take the two Caramades to go if you don’t because you never say no to Frankie. She will kick your ass if she wants to.”

“Noted.” Juvia chuckled and took another bite of her Caramade Franks and moaned. “This is so good; I think Juvia will put on some weight now that you showed her this.”

“Glad you liked it.” Gray smiled.

Gray parked his motorcycle in front of his building and Juvia got off, took the helmet and waited for him to do the same before she handed it to him.

“Can you tell Juvia where the shelter is?” She asked. “Maybe Mirajane-san’s right and Juvia needs a companion.”

“Sure.” Gray offered her a one shoulder shrug. “Since we had an op today, we are free tomorrow. Just text me and I’ll take you there.”

“Thanks.” Juvia smiled and put a lock of her hair behind her ear. “And thank you, Gray-sama, for taking Juvia out tonight; she really needed that.”

“You’re welcome.” Gray nodded. “I know how it feels when a mission gets to you and being alone helps nothing.”

“Either way…” Juvia tip toed, put a hand over his chest for support and kissed his cheek. “Thank you.” She could’ve sworn she saw his eyes darken for a second but pushed the thought away – he never showed any interest in her. “Good night.”

“Good night.” He said in a low voice that made her shiver and Juvia suddenly couldn’t take her eyes off his; she felt his heart beat faster under her hand and for a second she thought he would lean in towards her, but instead he took a step back and cleared his throat. “See you tomorrow.”

“Yes.” She blinked, turned around and went towards her building. When she looked over her shoulder, he was still looking at her, waiting for her to get inside. She waved goodbye and when she stepped inside her building and closed the door, her heart was beating fast; she was sure blushing and had a silly smile on her face because maybe, just maybe, she had a chance.

Cana had told her she would know if it was worth it? Well, she just found out it was.

The day Juvia got her first pet, she never thought she could get that happy. She fell in love with a mixed-breed four-months-old puppy. Snowball, as Juvia named it, was a mix between Coton de Tulear and West Highland White Terrier, and according to the veterinarian, a perfect healthy puppy. Her fur was white, her ears pointy and she had the most beautiful brown eyes Juvia ever saw.
She was sold the moment she looked at Snowball.

Juvia didn’t even feel ashamed when Gray raised an eyebrow as she fussed over the dog, choosing instead to show him how cute her new dog was. For about a week, she would arrive at work with photographs of Snowball doing all types of things and wearing clothes or ridiculous costumes.

Well, it was her first pet. She had to do it right.

“You are turning into those crazy people with dogs as children.” Gray told her one night when they were going home together.

“Juvia thought about them that way too, before she had a pet. Now, it makes sense.” The blunette shrugged. “She is about the cutest thing on earth. And it feels incredible when Juvia gets home after a hard day and she’s at the door, happy to see me.”

“Yeah, that is good.” Gray agreed.

“Have you ever had pets while growing up?” Juvia wondered.

“Oh, yeah.” He chuckled. “My parents had a cat when I was little and when I was adopted, my brother and I ganged up on my mom to get a dog. She gave us one with the condition that we would have to take care of it. We learned a lot about responsibilities.”

“That’s nice.”

“Why you never had any?” Gray asked.

“Juvia’s uncle was at the army, we moved a lot.” The blunette shrugged. “No reason to get a pet and drag it all over the country.”

“I see.”

“Wanna come up and see her?” Juvia asked, excited, when they arrived at their street.

Gray seemed to think for a moment before nodding. Juvia couldn’t help but to giggle at how happy Snowball was when she saw Gray and vice-versa. He could try to hide it, but Juvia saw that his eyes lit up when the little ball of fur barked in excitement around him. She showed him her apartment – he’d only knew it from seeing through his window – and he nodded his approval before leaving after petting Snowball on her head. The pup whined when he left and Juvia whispered into the dog’s fur: “I know the feeling, baby, but get in line; Mommy saw him first.”

#

Two weeks later it was Lucy’s birthday and she decided that she wanted go to a karaoke bar – Mira tried to move it to Fairy Tail, but Lucy argued that if they had her party there, Mira wouldn’t enjoy herself, so, the white haired woman caved in.

After a couple of drinks Lucy made all of her friends get up and go to the dance floor while a group sang at the stage. Cana pointed at Gray, who was at the dance floor talking to his friend, and the next thing she knew was that her friend had pushed her towards him and then his arms were around her.

“Sorry.” She managed to say as he helped her up.

Gray chuckled. “We just got here and you already had much to drink?”

“No.” Juvia smiled, a hand on his chest and other on his upper arm while his hands rested on her
hips, as if he didn’t even thought about it. “Someone pushed Juvia.” He hummed his agreement and was about to let her go, when she asked him: “Want to dance? We’re already close enough.”

He stared at her for a moment before give her a one-shoulder shrug that she took as an affirmative answer with a smile. When they began to dance, everyone else seemed to fade and only she and Gray existed. He was not the best dancer in the world, but she didn’t care because during those couple of minutes, they were together.

When the song stopped and everyone was going back to their tables, both Gray and Juvia were breathing hard. Their chests touched with each breath they took and the way he looked at her eyes, then lowered his gaze to her mouth, and down to her chest, the blunette could’ve sworn he would kiss her. ‘Thank you, Cana-san for choosing this dress!’, Juvia thought even though when her friend showed it to her, she thought it was slutty. Everything seemed to point to him finally kissing her and she was preparing herself for it.

Juvia tip toed so her forehead touched his and their faces were so close any movement would make them kiss. “We can’t.” Gray said between gritted teeth when his eyes met hers once more, as if guessing her thoughts. “We work together. We. Can’t.”

Her heart broke with his words, but pushed it away. “Even if we want to?”

“Yes.” Even so he didn’t let go of her yet. “I thought about it, but we can’t.”

She thought about pushing him further, but maybe it wasn’t the time yet. Maybe they needed to dance around each other for a little longer before he could get his mind around it. The blunette tried to focus on the thought that he had considered her.

She definitely had a chance and she wasn’t going to blow it.

If he needed more time to see that she was the woman of his life, she would give it to him.

“Alright.” Juvia muttered and she kissed his cheek, lingering a little longer than necessary. “Just tell me when.” She whispered before taking a step back and walking away from him.

Juvia took a few steps before looking over her shoulders and seeing that he was frowning deeply as if he was having a serious discussion inside his mind. She saw as he shook his head as if to clear it before turning around and leaving the dance floor.

When Juvia found their friends, she was dragged to the stage alongside with the birthday girl, Cana, Levy and Lisanna. They had drank a few shots of tequila before going up when the music started to play an old pop song. Between all the laughs and the drinks, Juvia was having the time of her life.

Once the song was over, Cana grabbed her hand and led Juvia to the bar before offering her another glass, which the blunette took happily and drank it. Her secretary was babbling excitedly with a guy next to her and Juvia took a look at the crowd and saw the happy faces of her friends and an amazing feeling warmed her insides.

It changed, though, when she found Gray across the bar talking to a pretty blonde woman, who was clearly flirting with him.

Oh, Juvia never felt so possessive before. Her breath got caught on her throat, her heart raced and her stomach twisted. Juvia knew she didn’t have Gray, she was barely his friend and there she was, feeling so jealous she wished she had brought her gun just to shoot that woman. Thankfully when Cana went to Juvia’s apartment to help her get dressed, she forbade Juvia to take any guns.
Fuck waiting for Gray to be ready. He seemed to be ready enough while talking to the blonde woman. Juvia would not stand and see the man she had been trying very hard to even look at her, get involved with some bimbo.

And unluckily to that particular bimbo, Juvia Lockser never needed guns to make someone run for their life.

She asked for another drink, all while staring at Gray and Blondie talking – she needed some liquid courage to do what she wanted to. After she drank it, she took a deep breath and walked towards them.

Juvia stopped next to Gray, her eyes cold as she glared at the blonde, who just looked at Juvia and asked with a pout: “What are you looking at?”

“Leave.” The blunette told her and Gray realized she was there; he looked surprised and when he tried to talk, Juvia looked at him and he closed his mouth without saying a word.

“What are you…?”

“Now.” Juvia made sure to put the right amount of venom in the word and that, combined with her steely eyes, the woman seemed to notice that she was in danger and after her blue eyes widened, she left.

“Juvia, what the fu-” Gray started to yell at her, but Juvia just grabbed his hand and pulled him through the crowd to a darkened corner of the bar. “Juvia, you better have a goddamn good excuse for…”

“I do.” She told him before putting a hand on the back of his neck, getting on her toes and crashing her lips on his. When he didn’t respond to it right away, she worried he was going to push her away, but a couple of seconds later, he flipped them so her back was at a wall, his body pressing on hers and then Gray was kissing her.

And it was exactly what she always thought it would be.

He kissed her as if he wanted to as much as she did and suddenly her whole body was on fire; everywhere he touched, it burned and she never felt more alive. That was what she had been missing her whole life because no other man ever made her feel what she was feeling.

“Damn it.” Gray whispered when they needed to get air, but Juvia didn’t want him to talk or think; he wasn’t very good at those since he always got the conclusion that they were not supposed to enjoy each other. To remedy that, the blunette kissed him again.

Thinking-Gray was Not-Kissing-Juvia-Gray.

She had no idea how long they just kissed, it was so amazing she didn’t want to know, just feel. Juvia let out a tiny moan when his hands moved from its place on her hips to her ass and then to the back of her thighs. Thank god the dress was extremely short – she felt his warm hands touch her skin and she almost melted. She caught his intentions the moment he pulled her up a little bit and let him raise her while she wrapped her legs around his hips.

With a hand at the back of his neck and the other gripping his hair, Juvia needed to breathe for longer than two seconds and didn’t want to let him go, so she just let their breaths mingle and her lips hover his.

“Fuck, Juvia.” Gray said, breathless when she let her nails scratch the back of his neck and he
shivered. “That feels good.” Oh, she could feel exactly how good he thought it was, his hips were between her legs, after all and Gray seemed to be enjoying their making out session a little too much.

She smiled lazily and kissed him for a second before whispering to him: “Let’s go.”

“Huh?” He seemed to have lost control over his brain, which was good. Thinking—Gray seemed to be checking out.

“Let’s leave.”

“We shouldn’t.” Gray told her, but Juvia interrupted him with another kiss, that one was deeper than the others, full of promises. Juvia felt his grip on her thighs tighten and she felt hotter thinking about how close his hands were of where she needed him the most. Juvia bit down his lower lip slightly and Gray’s moan seemed to be wired right into her core; she never heard anything sexier.

“We should.” She told him, a hand caressing his back—and what a marvelous back it was. “We could have tonight.” If she promised just one night, perhaps she could make him go with her. Whatever happens in the future, she’d have that one night to remember. “Nothing has to change.” That seemed to get his attention, because he looked at her: his black eyes glowing with desire. “Juvia would still be your friend, your partner. You can’t deny there’s something between us.”

“I can’t.” He granted her that and sighed when Juvia started to kiss his jaw. “Nothing changes?” Gray asked and Juvia knew he was finally seeing her point.

“Juvia won’t bring it up.” She told him. It would be hard, it would be so very difficult, but damn it… it would be worth it. She never felt that turned on before and they were still on their clothes.

Gray stared at her for a couple of seconds, trying to decide his course of action and suddenly Juvia felt unsure of herself. What if he rejected her? Could she bear the humiliation? She shouldn’t let her jealousy out of control. She should’ve thought things through. She should’ve-

Her line of thought was interrupted when Gray kissed her lips, that time it was his kiss that promised her all sorts of things. “My place.” Gray said, putting her down, as soon as he released her lips. “Come on. If we only get one night, we have to make it count.”

And, just like a dream, Gray grabbed her hand and led her through the crowd.

The whole drive in a cab, Gray and Juvia just couldn’t stop touching each other: they kissed all the way to their street and Juvia didn’t even felt ashamed of the cab driver, not when Gray’s kisses made her drunk with desire.

Juvia remembered Gray paying for the ride, opening the door of his building and getting inside the elevator because the moment the doors closed, they were kissing again. It felt like they were magnets, attracting one another from the moment Juvia gathered the courage to kiss him.

One of her best ideas, really.

When they reached the front door of his apartment, Gray had trouble with his keys and they stayed a little bit longer than necessary there. The problem with the keys might or not have been caused by Juvia kissing and sucking his neck while petting his ass.

Once they were inside, though, it seemed that Gray stop controlling himself (if groping her in a cab counted as control). After the apartment door closed, Gray had pulled Juvia towards him, a hand
tangled itself on her hair, his lips trailed paths on her neck while his other hand grabbed the back of her thigh.

“Gray-sa-” She gasped when she felt his erection pressing on her. Gray bit her neck and had to put her arms around his shoulder for support when he sucked the same spot, the sting replaced with pleasure. “Oh, that feels…”

“Fucking great.” Gray finished the sentence and grinded his hips on hers. He wasn’t wrong. ‘Fucking great’ was a great definition of what was happening. He kissed her lips and if he weren’t holding her, Juvia was sure her legs would’ve given in. “Bedroom.”

She tried to say that it was a good idea, but it came out as a whimper. Thankfully, he seemed to understand and pulled her through the hall and into his room. Gray took the hand purse she had completely forgotten she had and threw it somewhere on the floor and kissed her again.

Juvia could swear that she was high on his kisses; whenever his lips met hers she forgot everything else and just wanted to surrender to him.

It almost startled her when Gray stopped kissing her just to turn her around. She was about to ask what he was doing when she felt the zipper of her dress being dragged down. The blunette let Gray pull it down; the soft black fabric pooling on her feet and her demicup black bra followed a second after.

He turned her back to him and his eyes seemed to become even darker. She should’ve feel ashamed of being watched that way, but could only find it incredibly arousing the way he took in her whole body, the only thing covering her was her lacy black thong.

“Damn.” He breathed and it made her body get goosebumps, her nipples tighten even more and her want for him to increase. She needed him close, it was stronger than her; so, she reached for him, then, pulling him for a kiss just like she had done at the bar.

His hands wandered way more that time with all the new skin to touch and Juvia wondered for a moment how it seemed as if he was touching her everywhere at once.

A ringtone from a cellphone made them freeze for a second. “Damn it.” Juvia recognized as hers and looked at Gray. “Just a second.” Unfortunately she really needed to answer, in their line of work, they had to stay as tuned with the means of communication as they could in case they were to get new information and since Juvia left without telling no one, Cana could get the idea something bad happened to her boss.

And nothing would kill the mood as much as all their co-workers appearing at Gray’s apartment because they were worried. Juvia had been around long enough to know it was a serious possibility, Gray kept touching her while she grabbed her purse from the ground and got her phone. Cana’s name was at her screen and Juvia kicked herself for not telling her friend she was leaving – she didn’t want to leave Gray alone so he couldn’t overthink their agreement of a night together.

“Oh, she was not going to survive that night. She was sure of it. Not while he used all of those tricks
to make her crazy for him – that pain shot straight to her core and Juvia was certain she never felt wetter in her life.

With shaking hands, Juvia touched the ‘Answer’ button and put the phone on her ear. “Cana-san. Hey.” She was proud of how her voice seemed almost normal.

“What the hell are you?” She heard Cana’s voice.

“Sorry. Juvia got tired.” The blunette said and felt Gray’s hand trailed down her stomach and into her panties. “She left a few minutes ago.” The moment she felt Gray’s finger touch her folders, she almost cried out and was lucky he was still holding her.

“You should’ve told me.” Cana scolded her.

“Sorry.” Juvia squeaked when Gray seemed to test her readiness.

“I was going to use the same cab as you did, Juvia.” Her friend said, but the blunette almost didn’t hear because at the same time, Gray whispered into her ear: “Take off your shoes.”

“Sorry again.” Juvia whined in frustration when Gray removed his hand from inside her panties (the tease!) and stepped away from her entirely. She finally turned around to face him and saw the moment he started to unbutton his white shirt at the same time he was kicking off his shoes.

“I help you dress, show you a good time and I don’t even get a good-bye.” Cana said, but Juvia tuned her out as she watched as Gray pushed his shirt away; her mouth watered when she saw his naked torso and even more when he reached for his belt.

Juvia stepped out from her stilettos and hummed in agreement whenever Cana let her. She would apologize to her friend later; at the moment she was seeing the most handsome specimen of male she’s ever seen unzip his pants, pull it down and realize that the erection his white boxer couldn’t hide, was because of her.

“…right?” Juvia heard Cana ask.

“Sure.” She licked her lips and Gray pulled her to him, earning a gasp from her – his beautifully tanned, hot and smooth skin touching her naked body.

“What was that?” Cana asked.

“Juvia just hit her toe.” The blunette hissed when Gray massaged her breast and decided that she really couldn’t stay on the phone any longer. “Cana-san, Juvia will buy you lunch tomorrow at that fancy restaurant you like. How about that?”

“Sure.” Juvia could almost see her friend shrug. “Wait, why are you breathless?”

Damn it. She could swear she saw Gray smirk before he started to kiss her neck. “The elevator of my building is not working, Juvia had to walk.” Gray started to suck a particularly amazing spot and Juvia had to bite down her moan. “See you tomorrow, Cana-san. Sorry again, bye.”

“By-” Juvia cut off the call and her phone fell from her hand when Gray kissed her lips.

#

Gray lied her down on his bed while kissing her and Juvia tried to understand what was happening around her, but her mind seemed to have shut down. There were too many sensations, too many
feelings inside her.

He trailed a path from her mouth, to her jaw, neck, collarbone and breasts that made Juvia put her hands on his hair and call his name when his hot mouth sucked on one nipple and then the other all while he pushed her underwear down to the middle of her thighs.

The moment his hand touched the heat between her legs, though, Juvia yelped in surprise and called his name in a moan when he slowly circled her clit, testing her responses.

“Gray-sama, please.” Juvia whimpered, his mouth on her breasts and his fingers on her sex were becoming a little too much to bear. Her skin felt like it was burning, her blood was boiling and she suspected that her life would end in a fire caused by him. Spontaneous combustion.

Not a bad way to go, not if Gray kept doing his magic and making her feel like never before.

His fingers seemed to find a spot inside her that made her raise her hips and moan so loud she felt embarrassed. Juvia fisted his hair and felt him chuckle and whisper something before curling his fingers inside her over and over again, driving her crazy.

“Oh, god.” His thumb on her clit circled it with just the right amount of pressure and Juvia was getting closer and closer to the edge – she didn’t even had the time to think how odd it was, usually she took much longer to get even close to get pleasure. “Gray-sama, pl-please.” She gasped and Gray stopped.

Juvia whined when she felt his body leave hers but when she opened her eyes and saw him taking off his underwear and open his bedside drawer, pulling out a square foil packet, she bit her lower lip.

She watched while Gray rolled the condom over his shaft and her mouth went dry – he had just the right length and girth. Oh, that night promised to be the best of her life so far.

In a flash, he was back on top of her, his hips settling between her legs. He kissed her lips his hand returned to tease the place between her legs for a moment before grabbing her ass to bring her closer to him.

“Juvia.” He breathed when he freed her lips. “I don’t think I can control myself.”

“Then don’t.” She caressed his chest, stomach and finally put her small hand around his shaft, making him moan. She felt so empowered at the moment; Gray Fullbuster wanted her. He really did and the evidence of it was very obvious.

Juvia started to guide him inside her and her breath got caught in her throat when Gray pushed his way in. She sunk her nails on his back and put a hand on his lower back, trying to get him to fill her faster. It had been a while for her and the stretch felt absolutely marvelous.

The moment he was fully sheathed inside her, Gray rested his forehead on hers and took a few deep breaths, but she wanted for him to move, to make their night even better.

“Gray-sama.” Juvia whined when he didn’t move and she tried to wiggle her hips, but Gray held her down.

“Stop it.” He said between gritted teeth. “I can’t come now. Give me a fucking moment.” It surprised her to hear those words, but also a sense of pride to make him lose a bit of his control. In response to it, Juvia just kept kissing his jaw and caressing his back. A few seconds later, when Gray began moving inside her, Juvia couldn’t help but to moan with the feeling of being full with him. “You are so tight, Juvia.” Gray told her while palming her breast. “So fucking wet, just like I dreamt you
would be.” Her answer was to moan with his rhythm and words. “I thought about this, dreamt about this.” He panted, picking up his pace. “You have no idea how many mornings I woke up hard for you.”

“Oh, god.” She breathed when he angled his hips just the right way so it hit that amazing spot inside her. “Gray-sama.”

“Fuck, I love it when you call me that.” He told her and kissed her lips, biting her lower lip.

“Gray-sama.” She gasped when he put a nipple inside his mouth and sucked. “Gray-sama. Gray-sama.” It seemed the only thing she was capable to say at that point; where the pressure in her lower belly kept boiling and threatening to send her over the edge. “Please.”

“Cross your legs over my ass.” Gray gritted his teeth and Juvia did it without even thinking about it and suddenly he was sliding so much deeper than before. “Just like this.” He hissed.

He put a hand under her head and twined his fingers on her hair and pulled it until her throat was in full display for him – he lost no time in kissing and biting all places he could – and he increased his speed.

Knowing she was getting closer and so was he by the way his thrusts started to lose synchronicity, Juvia put a hand between their bodies and touched her clit. “That’s hot.” She heard Gray say and he angled her head so his lips could hover hers, not yet touching. “Don’t come yet.” He told her when she started to feel the beginning of her peak. “Wait.”

“Oh.” She moaned, trying to hold off, but it was really hard to do so when he was hitting all the right places. “I- I- I can’t.” She sobbed.

“Wait.” He hissed and put his hand between, pushing hers away and taking over. His touch was rougher, stronger and much, much better than hers.

“Pl-please.” Juvia begged him, knowing she couldn’t hold on any longer. “Please, Gr-Gray-sama.”

“Now.” He told her the same moment he rubbed her clit rougher and angled his thrusts and then, Juvia let go and felt every cell of her body awake and explode in pleasure. She screamed out and the sound was muffled by his lips on hers the same moment he grunted and stilled on top of her.

Her toes curled, her vision turned white and all she could think was that she never felt that way before.

#

She was still panting a few minutes later. Gray had rolled over from her and seemed to have trouble breathing as well; he had discarded of the condom moments before on the trashcan close to his bed and seemed it was the only thing he was capable of doing.

“Holy shit.” He whispered, in awe.

“Yeah.” Juvia agreed with a chuckle and even with such meaningless task, her body ached. God, she was sore in all right places. She gathered all strength left in her to turn to face him. Gray was looking to the ceiling, his naked chest going up and down with every breath and his naked body just as gorgeous as she remembered. She bit her lip when she felt something inside her stir once again and worried he had just created a monster. “Still remember why this was a bad idea?”
Gray snorted. “I have no idea of what you are talking about.” Juvia giggled and saw him look at her and grin – she loved to see him smile and it never been as carefree as it was at that moment. “I think this rush will last until morning, no thoughts will go through it, I’m sure.”

Juvia shyly got closer to him, afraid that he might push her away and was surprised when he pulled her closer to him, an arm under her head and her body pressed against his side.

“I think I won’t be able to walk straight for a couple of days.” He told her.

“You?” Juvia raised an eyebrow. “Wanna trade places and see who will have more problems?” Gray laughed and Juvia followed. “God, I knew it was going to be good, but… I never thought…”

“Yeah.” Gray sighed. “But… it’s only for tonight.”

Juvia froze for a moment and grimaced. She had forgotten about that while he certainly did not. She forgot they had a deal to just have that night and that it wouldn’t change anything between them, she couldn’t even mention it.

She did not know if agreeing with it had been smart or incredibly stupid.

The bright side was that she would have a wonderful memory with him. The down side was that it would be nothing more than a memory soon enough.

Deciding that she was already in trouble, she would enjoy it while it lasted.

Using his chest as support, Juvia rose from her spot next to him and threw a leg over his hips, straddling. Looking down at him, naked, hair a mess because of her hands, lips swollen by her kisses and an incredibly hot love bite on his neck darkening, Juvia knew he was the most beautiful thing she’s ever saw. Especially when his eyes darkened again when he put his hands on her hips and his gaze swept over her – Juvia bet she looked as messy as he did and by his expression, he enjoyed what he saw.

“Juvia was quite serious about trading places.” She leaned in and used her forearms as support and kissed his lips lightly. “Are you against a girl on top?” By the way she could already feel his length twitch, he wasn’t opposed to the idea at all.

“I think we can arrange that.” Gray said and Juvia kissed him.

She would deal with heartbreak in the morning, she would think about not talking about it when he wasn’t so close, when he wasn’t kissing her, touching her and making her feel butterflies in her stomach.

Tomorrow she would deal with the consequences. That night, she had him and she would enjoy every moment of it.

Chapter End Notes
So, yeah. Juvia couldn’t stay in line after seeing Gray with another woman and her plan to wait went to space. Well, good for her. At least she got something out of it. HAHA

So… thoughts? :D
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Chapter Notes

Not too much plot in this one. But soon. ;) 

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Juvia could hear the strong heartbeat and the soft breath of Gray’s while she rested her head on the top of his chest. He had fallen asleep twenty minutes before after they exhausted each other in the most delightful way. It was 4:11 a.m. and she was trying her best to gather courage to do what she had to, but the feeling of his warm better next to her made her hate the idea of leaving.

But she had to. She couldn’t wait until the morning, not when she knew Gray would ask her to leave and tell her their night had ended; as amazing as it was.

Juvia had to leave because if he rejected her, she would break in front of him and she couldn’t, not after he had held her so close. She sighed and, trying not to wake Gray, she sat on the bed and looked at him. His expression was soft and the sheets he had covered them with after their last round were on his hips.

Remembering it, Juvia could feel her cheeks warm; God, he was so good. Juvia had had one night stands before when she craved some human contact – sometimes to get off by herself just didn’t cut it – but none of the previous men made her feel the way Gray did. After that explosive first time, Juvia climbed on top of him and it had been just as amazing, but the best part was when Gray’s eyes flared up when her rhythm was way too slow for him and his patience ran thin when she refused to move faster. Annoyed, he spun her around – she giggled when he did that – and once Gray was on top, her laughter died when he started to thrust inside her and all she could do was to feel.

Gray had scowled at her once they reached their peak and breathing returned to normal. Juvia just pulled him and kissed his lips and by the time they were done, his scowl was gone. Gray told her he didn’t like going slow during sex and she shrugged, telling him it never annoyed her, it was actually amusing.

She should have not said that.

When he was quiet for way too long and she was starting to freak out about him kicking her out, Gray had started to kiss her lips in a slow but tempting way, then proceeded to kiss his way down to her neck and breasts. Juvia knew he was trying to make a point about going slow, but she couldn’t find in her the strength to complain. By the time he rolled a condom over himself and slid in her and started to thrust into her in a slow pace, exciting her, keeping her close but not enough to release, she was begging for him to go faster. His dark chuckle was the last thing she noticed before the world became blurry as he finally complied her request.

“I can see now why you find it amusing.” Gray said between breaths when he fell next to her in bed with a chuckle.

“Changed my mind.” Juvia told him. She rested her head on his chest and she could feel his chest
move with his chuckle. A couple of minutes later, Juvia noticed his breathing even and noticed he’d fallen asleep.

It made sense, though, they were exhausted and Juvia wanted to sleep as well, but her fears prevented her from it.

Juvia kissed his lips and touched his jaw; only then she got up. She found her underwear and dress, put them on and stepped on her shoes. With a final longing look at the man sleeping on the bed, she left quietly.

#

The good thing about living across the street from the man you just slept with was that only the night-time doormen from their buildings witnessed her walk of shame. Not that it matter, she was a healthy twenty-eight-year-old woman with a healthy sexual appetite. She smiled to both men and proceeded to enter the elevator without paying attention to what they thought.

Snowball barked in excitement when Juvia entered the apartment and Juvia caught the puppy in her arms. “Sorry, baby. Mommy was… busy.” Knowing she would not get up early like she usually did, Juvia put food and water for the dog. She kissed the soft fur and put her on the pink dog bed she bought for Snowball.

Juvia went to her bedroom, closed the door and took off her dress, stepping inside the bathroom. She looked herself in the mirror and could see her that her cheeks were pink, her hair was in a messy bun, but she looked… happy. It was so unusual for her that she took a moment to understand exactly what she was seeing.

Pushing the thought about not mentioning it again, Juvia basked in the feeling for a couple of minutes and smiled. Earlier, she thought that maybe that night was a mistake, that she would break her heart. Well, she would break her heart either way, at least now she had the memory of Gray kissing her, touching her, holding her. He had laughed with her, joked and didn’t push her away when she rested her head on the top of his chest.

Whatever happened, she would have that night and no one would ruin it. Not even herself.

Deciding that she was going to enjoy the feeling until she couldn’t anymore, Juvia stepped into the shower and then went to sleep with a smile still on her lips.

#

In the morning when Juvia arrived at work, Cana had told her that she already made reservations for lunch and Juvia apologized to her friend for leaving – even though she didn’t regret it at all.

Juvia went inside her office and looked over what she had to do that day and did research on hers and Gajeel’s next mission. She was so focused that it startled her when someone cleared their throat and she almost jumped from her seat.

Gray was leaning on the doorway, arms crossed over his chest, his face was impassive and Juvia didn’t know what to think of it.

“You startled me.” Juvia breathed, her heart beating faster – and most of it was because of seeing him again brought the images of their night together. And her cheeks felt incredible hot.

“You left.” It was all Gray said.
Juvia blinked two times, trying to understand his words. “I did.”

“And exactly why was that?”

“Well…” Juvia hesitated “We agreed it would be one night. You remembered me about it.” She pointed out.

Gray raised an eyebrow. “It didn’t mean I would kick you out of my apartment. Especially at 4 a.m. You could’ve at least told me.”

“You fell asleep.” Juvia shrugged.

She saw his cheeks pinked a bit. “I just want to say in my defense that I don’t usually fall asleep right after sex. But we did it three times and I am only human.” Gray cleared his throat. “I did stay awake long enough for you to tell me you’d leave, though.”

Juvia couldn’t refute that. She had chickened out and waited for him to sleep to avoid him. “Sorry.” She told him honestly. “Juvia just wanted to avoid an awkward morning after.” And to see you reject me, she finished in her head.

“I can relate to it, I did that a few times.” He shrugged. “I just wanted to make sure we are good.”

“Of course.” Juvia smiled, feeling better knowing he never planned on being awkward with her.

“Okay, then.” Gray nodded and was about to leave but stopped and walked to her desk. He leaned over, looked right into her eyes and said in a low voice. “Just so you know: this morning wouldn’t have been awkward because I had every intention of waking you up and have my way with you before you left. It would’ve made both our moods better today.” Juvia felt her whole body warm up and she gulped. Seeing that, Gray just smirked and left.

“This is playing dirty!” Juvia said once she recovered the ability to speak and he was out of the door. The only thing Gray did was to raise a hand as a good-bye without turning around. Once he was out of her sight, Juvia smiled to herself. Oh yeah, it was going to happen again. It was just a matter of time.

#

From: Gray-sama

08:23: I can see you.

08:23: This is ridiculous.

Juvia looked to the messages in her phone and smiled. As usual, she woke up early and walked with Snowball. By the time she arrived home, she grabbed a glass with juice and pulled a chair in front of one of the large windows at her living room.

And just like every day, at 8:15 a.m. Gray started to do his pull ups. Before, Juvia tried to hide that she watched him exercise at iron bar at the doorway of his bedroom but it didn’t matter anymore; he knew she watched him and honestly, she had done way more than watch his body a few nights before. No time for subtlety.

To: Gray-sama
08:24: I’m not hiding, of course you can see me. ;p

08:24: Is it really ridiculous when you know I watch and still do it every morning?

She sent it and watched his reaction when he read it and scowled her way before sending her another text.

From: Gray-sama

08:24: Yes.

08:25: God, your neighbor IS watching. This is weird.

Juvia laughed and typed her answer while biting her lower lip. She sent it and a moment later her phone rang and she saw his name on the screen.

“Yes?”

“I am not an exhibitionist.” He said.

“You are, Gray-sama.” Juvia smiled, got up from the chair and went near the window. “You don’t wear clothes inside your apartment. Juvia can see you.”

“Don’t say it like I walk around naked. It’s my apartment. I can be only in my underwear if I want to.” He emphasized the word. “I grew up in the cold and Magnolia is fucking hot.”

“You don’t even close your curtains.” Juvia pointed out.

“My apartment.” Gray told her. “Jeez, that woman is scrubbing that window for almost fifteen minutes.”

The blunette laughed. “She needs an excuse to watch you. And you do this every morning you are at home.”

“It’s creepy.”

“So, Juvia is ridiculous but she is creepy?” Juvia asked, amused.

“I don’t mind you watching.” Gray said and seemed to understand what he said because he coughed. “I mean… What I meant was…”

“That Juvia can watch you? I’ll remind that.”

“Shut up.” He hung up and Juvia laughed when she saw him scowl her way. She waved good-bye and went to prepare herself to work.

#

A week later, when Juvia got at FT after being gone for two days, she went straight to Gray’s office to see if he wanted to go out and eat Caramades Franks with her so she could tell about her mission but he was not in.

“Hey, Juvia. Just arrived?” Lucy asked after coming out of Natsu’s office and going to her desk.

“Gray didn’t come in today.” Lucy told her. “He called in sick; didn’t sound too good on the phone.”

“Sick?” Juvia gasped.

“Flu.”

Juvia wanted to ask more questions but she didn’t need for Lucy to know that. “I see.” Juvia controlled her tone. “Well, Juvia will be going home now, then. She’s tired.”

“Of course.” Lucy watched her expression closely and then said in a low tone: “You know, there’s a drugstore in the way of your apartment…”

The blunette was surprised for a moment before clearing her throat. “Yes, there is.”

“He has no allergies we know of.” Lucy winked and returned her attention to her computer.

Juvia hesitated for a few seconds before she turned around and left. She grabbed her purse from her office and after telling Cana she was going home, she got in the elevator.

Fifteen minutes later, she was in front of Gray’s apartment holding a bag with medicine. She was crazy; he didn’t ask for her help but she had to see how he was.

She knocked on the door a few times but got no answer. She tried again; nothing. Worried, she grabbed her phone and called him. Juvia could hear his ringtone echo inside.

A few rings later, he answered. “What is it?” His voice sounded awful.

Juvia sighed in relief, she didn’t want to knock the door down, but would if necessary. “Open your front door.”

“What?” Gray seemed not to understand her words.

“Juvia is at your front door.” She explained it.

He groaned. “Fine.”

Juvia waited and a minute later he opened the door. He was only wearing his pants but he looked awful, his cheeks were rosy, eyes glassy and sweat all over his body – some of his hair was glued on his forehead. Gray leaned on his doorway.

“Couldn’t you let me die in peace?” Gray groaned.

She put a hand on his forehead; god, he was really hot. “Let’s go inside, Juvia brought some medicine to make you feel better.”

“Don’t need it.” He mumbled.

“Yes, you do.” Juvia grabbed his hand and led him inside. “Have you eaten today?”

His expression turned sour. “No. Kept throwing up.”

“I’ll make you something.” Juvia made him sit down on his couch and he just lied down. “You have to eat before I give you anything.” The only answer she got from him was a grunt.

Leaving him on the couch, Juvia went to his kitchen and became annoyed he almost didn’t anything inside his fridge. She would have to tell him to go to the grocery store soon once he was feeling
better. She sighed and picked up a box with orange juice and a few crackers. It would have to do until she could find anything better.

After pouring some juice in a glass, she returned to the living room and saw that he was sleeping. It broke her heart, but she needed to wake him up.

“Let me sleep.” He mumbled when Juvia shook him gently.

“In a few minutes. You have to eat.” She told him and he whined. “Come on, just a little bit. Juvia can’t give you medicine if you don’t eat.”

It took her a little longer to coax him to sit down and to drink the juice and then to eat the crackers, but he did as she instructed even if protesting all the way.

“I’m hot.” Gray complained and Juvia touched his forehead once again – he was even hotter than before. She needed to do something.

“Come on up.” The blunette helped him get up and then to his bedroom. Gray tried to go straight for bed, but Juvia didn’t let him; instead, she took them to his bathroom. “You need to cool down a bit.” She let go of him and watched if he needed any help standing, but he seemed okay enough. “Here we go, let’s take you out of these clothes.”

“What?” Gray sounded confused.

“You need to get in the shower.” Juvia reached for the button of his pants and undid it and then the zipper. She pushed his jeans down and when she went for his underwear, he grabbed her wrists and looked scandalized. “What is it?” She asked with a frown. “This is no time for modesty, Gray-sama. Juvia already saw everything, no reason to feel ashamed.” When he looked at her in confusion, she gasped. “Oh my god, did you forget we slept together? Really?”

His mind seemed to clear a little with her words. “Excuse me slipping off for thirty seconds in my feverish mind that we had sex.” He let go of her wrists. “Trust me, when I’m in my normal mind, every time I look at you I remember we slept together.”

Juvia’s cheeks warmed up and she cleared her throat. “Okay, then. Can you take your underwear off?” Gray nodded and Juvia turned the water of the shower on and tested the water until it was lukewarm.

Gray was naked when she turned around and Juvia pushed the flashbacks of what exactly that body felt against hers two weeks before – he was sick, for god’s sake. “Get inside, come on.” Juvia held her hand to him and Gray took it. Once he was under the spray of water, she was stepping down, but saw him rest his body on the wall.

It took her a second to decide what to do. Juvia kicked off her shoes, her jeans following suit and then her shirt. Only in her underwear, Juvia stepped inside in the shower with him.

“Lean on me.” She told him, putting him back under the spray and he did what was told, he his face on the crook of her neck.

“The water is cold.” He complained.

“No, it’s not.” Juvia told him, while caressing his back in a soothing way. “You are way too hot and the water just feels cold. If it were cold, you could go in shock. It’s lukewarm.” His answer was to hum. A couple of minutes later, she told him to stand straight so the water could fall on his front.
Once he felt much cooler, Juvia turned off the water and led Gray out. She saw him shiver and grabbed his towel to dry him. She dried his hair the best she could and put the towel around his waist.

“I leave the towels there.” Gray told her and pointed to a cabinet and Juvia was confused until she figured out he meant for her to have one too. The blunette complied his unsaid request and put a towel around herself.

She led them out of the bathroom into his bedroom and Gray went straight to his wardrobe and opened a drawer. He let the towel fall down and put on black boxers. Juvia saw him go to his bed and fall on the mattress. She put a blanket over him and told him not to sleep yet.

Juvia went to the living room, grabbed the medicine she brought for him and a glass with water before returning to where he was. She sat next to him in bed, asked him to sit down and gave him two pills and the water. After he took the pills, he lied down once more.

“Juvia will stay; she doesn’t think you will remind to take another dose in eight hours.” She told him.

Gray hummed in agreement. “I won’t. Pick something to wear.” He waved towards the general direction of his wardrobe and sighed when Juvia slid her hands through his hair. “Gonna sleep now.”

The blunette smiled at how adorable he sounded and stayed looking at him for a few minutes until he fell asleep. She kissed his forehead and went back to the bathroom to take a proper shower.

#

The next morning when she woke up, Juvia felt oddly hot and she frowned in confusion of why. She blinked a few times and noticed there was an arm across her stomach and the reason she was feeling so hot was because she was wrapped by a warm body.

Gently, she turned around in his arms and watched his expression; he looked as peaceful as he had when they slept together. She put a hand on his forehead and sighed in relief when noticed his fever was almost gone.

She had to wake him up in the middle of the night to give him his pills and he whined, but took them and fell asleep right after. Somewhere after that he had put his arms around her.

Juvia gently pushed his arms away from her and got up from the bed. She hissed when her feet touched the cold floor. She grabbed her cellphone and went to the living room to check her messages.

From: Lisanna-san

07:23: Just tell me when you want to have your baby back.

07:23: I might not give her to you, though.

Whenever Juvia was out of town, Lisanna took care of Snowball and the blunette was really grateful, she’d hate for her dog to stay at a kennel for too long.

To: Lisanna-san

08:09: Thank you for taking care of her. Can you drop her at my apartment before you go to work?

08:09: And remember that I have a gun and not afraid to use it. ;)
Juvia went to his laundry room and saw that her underwear was dry – after she took a shower, Juvia had grabbed a t-shirt from his wardrobe and boxers and put them on, but couldn’t go back home in those.

She took off the boxers and put her panties back on, but cursed herself when she noticed she forgot to bring her clothes with her.

Returning to the living room, Juvia spotted her clothes on his couch and ran there. She was about to put her pants on when by the corner of her eye, she saw movement. Gray was looking at her, his eyebrows raised at the sight.

“Uh… Good morning, Gray-sama.” She said. “How are you feeling?”


She sighed in relief. “Good. That’s good.”

“Thank you for coming over.” Gray walked to where she was and Juvia put a hand on his forehead. “I feel better, Juvia.”

“You are still a little hotter than usual, though.” She bit her lower lip in concern. “Juvia will text you every time you need to take your medicine. She gave you the last dose at three in the morning, your next dose will be around eleven.”

“Alright.” Gray was looking at her strangely and Juvia felt her body heat up and her breath got caught in her breath.

“Um… Juvia will make something healthier for you to have for lunch. Is soup okay?” She suddenly felt nervous with how close he was.

“Sure, but I don’t need to be babied.” Gray stepped close to her and every time she took a breath, her chest touched his and the only thing between them was the shirt Juvia had borrowed from Gray.

“Not babied.” Juvia stuttered. “You are not a baby.” She looked appreciative at his body and then back to his face. “Not a baby at all, B-but you need to eat something and you don’t have anything here,” Gray put his hands on her hips. “Y-you re-really need t-to go to th-the grocery store.”

“I do, yes.” He said and put a hand underneath the shirt she was wearing and put them on her ass and then caressed his way up on her back and Juvia’s breathing became faster.

“Gray-sama.” Juvia warned him but didn’t protest when he pulled the shirt over her head. “Gra-”

She couldn’t finish the sentence because his lips were on hers and she surrender herself to him. Gray spun her around and gently lied her down on the couch with him on top of her. He kissed a trail down her throat.

“Gray-sama.” Juvia breathed. “We can’t. You are sick.”

“Not sick enough to not enjoy this.” He answered and Juvia was having a hard time recalling why that was a bad idea, especially when he was touching her.

“We need to stop.” She managed to mutter before Gray push her legs apart and settle there. “Oh, god.”

“That was how I was planning on waking you up that morning.” Gray bit her neck and sucked the
bite and Juvia moaned when he grinded his hips on hers, the only barriers between them was their underwear and it did nothing to hide his growing want for her.

“That would’ve been…” The blunette gasped. “Good. Very good.” She put her hands on his hair and pull him back up so she could kiss his lips. When they needed to breathe, Juvia pushed him away just enough his forehead touched hers. “Gray-sama, we really can’t.”

“Juvia…”

“You were barely standing last night.” Juvia caressed his scalp and Gray’s eyes fluttered close. “Juvia thinks it wouldn’t help you if we…” She bit her lower lip. “You are recovering.”

“But…” Gray tried, but she cut him off.

“Trust me, this is just as hard on you than it is on me.”

He let out a breathy laughter. “I don’t think so.” Gray pressed his hips on hers to make a point and she felt exactly what he meant.

“Oh god, stop it.” She pulled him for another kiss and that time it wasn’t so rushed. “When you are not sick anymore…”

“Goddamn it.” He told her and let his head fall forward on the crook of her neck. “What a day to be sick.”

Juvia giggled and her phone buzzed on the coffee table and she reached for it without Gray moving from top of her.

“What is it?” He asked her, watching as she unlocked the screen of her phone.

**From: Lisanna-san**

08:25: *I’m leaving home right now with Snowball. Be there in ten. ;)*

Juvia read the text and sighed. “Lisanna-san is coming over to return Snowball to me. She’s ten minutes away.” She looked to him. “Juvia really needs to go.”

“Fine.” Gray groaned and got up from top of her and handed her clothes. Gray grabbed a pillow and put it over his groin to hide his obvious arousal. She saw him watching her as she dressed and when she put her bra back she finally looked back at him. “The next dose is by eleven and then seven p.m. Don’t forget it. Juvia will bring something for you to eat later.”

“I don’t like to be b-”

“Babied, Juvia knows.” She rolled her eyes and put her shirt back on. “Juvia is not babying you, she’s just being a good friend.” She leaned towards him and kissed his lips. “Go to bed, rest, and drink a lot of fluids.”

“Alright.” Gray agreed and yawned.

Juvia showed him where she put the pills and told him she would text the time he should take them. Gray rolled his eyes and told her to go.

Once Gray recovered from his flu, both him and Juvia were on missions out of town and when one
was in Magnolia, the other wasn’t and Juvia was getting frustrated. She thought that they would have
time to explore what was going on between them, but there wasn’t any time.

When Juvia arrived at FT that morning, she stopped by her office and Cana told her there was a
client at the conference room. Juvia thanked her secretary and grabbed the folder. The client owned a
grocery store and there was a gang that was terrorizing the neighborhood and needed help with
scaring them off.

Juvia bumped into someone while she was reading the file and she looked up to apologize, she saw it
was Gray and her heart almost jumped out from her chest. She hadn’t seen him since the day she
brought chicken soup to him when he was sick, almost a week before.

“Hi. Sorry for bumping on you.” Juvia breathed and she was sure her cheeks got pink. “When did
you come back?”

“Last night.” Gray told her. “You?”

“Last night.” She answered. “Sorry, Juvia has a job-”

“Grocery store guy?”

“Yes.” Juvia frowned. “How did you know?”

“I think we are sharing this one.” Gray shrugged. “I hope we can resolve this quietly, I was supposed
to have the day off.”

“Me too.” Juvia whined. “I’m so tired.”

“Yeah.” He sighed and pointed towards the conference room. “Let’s go? The fastest we solve this,
we are free.”

#

Things did not work as they expected it to; the gang was not too compliant with their demands of
leaving and the situation spiraled down when guns were drawn. Bullets started to fly and the next
thing Gray and Juvia knew, they were hiding behind an old car in a sketchy neighborhood.

“Damn it.” Gray said next to her before he raised and shot a couple of rounds. He hid once again and
saw Juvia hang up her phone. “What did they say?”

“Three minutes before the police arrives.” Juvia told him. “The good news is that they will see these
thugs have all these guns and they will be going to jail.”

“Yeah, happy ending for the client and not so happy for us if we get shot.” Gray told her. The shots
stopped and Juvia was the one who shot at the guys and saw them go for cover. They needed to get
out of there, their ammos would run out soon and the other guys numbers over them. She looked
around and spotted what would be their way out. “Juvia, get down.” Gray pull her down behind the
car just when the shots started again. “Are you out of your mind? You could’ve been shot!”

“Sorry.” She told him and went for his pants, straight for the front pockets.

“Alright, as nice as this feels this is not the time.” Gray told her, his eyebrows raised.

She giggled and kiss his lips lightly. “Cover me.”

“What?” He frowned when his eyes shifted to her hand, where she held his keys.
“Cover me.” She pointed at the general area the men were and then she ran away from behind the car and could hear Gray cussing at her; then shots from both sides. She ran in a z line until she was behind another car, waited until she saw Gray change his clip and nod her way before she ran again.

She hid behind a warehouse where Gray’s motorcycle was parked and hopped on using the keys she got from Gray to start it. She had her gun in one hand and charged in Gray’s direction, shooting at the bad guys.

“Come up.” She told Gray, who looked at her in surprise for a second before got on the motorcycle as well. Juvia shot one of the guys on the shoulder when she felt him sit behind her. Juvia gave him her gun. “You shoot, I drive.”

Gray took her gun and said: “Gotcha.” And when Juvia drove past the thugs, Gray shot them and she hissed when one of the bullets grazed her leg, but kept the way until the men were down. She doubled back and when she stopped, Gray got off, gave her the gun back; Juvia also came down of the motorcycle and while Gray secured three men from his side, Juvia did the same with the other two by kicking their guns away and pointing her own weapon at them.

“Juvia?” She heard him call her.

“Yeah?”

“You okay?”

She felt the sting on her leg, but she knew it wasn’t grave. “Fine.”

Before they could say anything else, they heard police sirens and when the officers arrived, they raised their hands and dropped the weapons as asked. Juvia looked at Gray over her shoulder and saw the police search for more guns on him. One of the officers asked for an ambulance and Juvia knew they would be there for awhile.

#

Juvia felt so tired she felt she could fall asleep any second, but held on while her arms were around Gray as they rode his motorcycle back to their street. It took a while for the officers to take their statement but as soon they found out who the couple was, things went smoothly.

He parked in front of his building and waited Juvia to get down before he did the same. She gave him the helmet she used and Gray put it on top of his motorcycle before he looked her direction.

“That was not as fast as I thought it would be.” Gray said and she sighed.

“Yes. Juvia thought we could’ve resolved this without bullets.”

“At least they are locked up now.” He shrugged. “The client and neighborhood are safe for now.”

Juvia smiled tiredly. “All in a good’s day work.” She hesitated, not entirely sure what to do: they were friends but at the same time, much more than just that and the last time they were together for more than a few minutes, they almost had sex. Again. “Well, Juvia is going up-”

Her words were cut off when he crashed his lips on her, kissing her just as hungrily as that first night and she felt her whole body heat up. “Damn it, Juvia.” He whispered before kissing her again.

“What is it?”

“What?” She asked, confused and dazed
“What is it about you that makes me want to have you every time I see you.” Gray put his hands on her hips. “It’s like I’m a virgin teenager with a girl for the first time.”

“I… don’t know what to say to you.” Juvia put her arms around his shoulders. “Juvia feels the same way.”

Gray groaned. “Fuck. Seeing you riding my bike and then kicking ass…” He pulled her to his body and she could feel exactly what he thought of her actions that day. “Come upstairs with me. Perhaps if we have a second night I can stop thinking about you.”

She didn’t want that, she didn’t want Gray to stop thinking about her; on the contrary: the more he thought of her, the better. But they couldn’t go back to his apartment, not that night.

“I can’t go up your apartment tonight.” She whispered and but her lower lip.

“Oh.” He saw disappointment in his expression and he let go of her hips, but she grabbed his shirt to prevent him from stepping away from her.

“What Juvia means if that she can’t go up to your apartment because Snowball needs to be fed and I have to put water for her and…” She kissed him before she could babble more nonsense. “We could come up to Juvia’s apartment.”

He nodded and picked the helmets from the motorcycle. Juvia walked towards her building and Gray followed her close by. He looked incredibly uncomfortable and put the helmets in front of his groin to hide his erection and when the elevator door opened and they stepped in front of him and Juvia kissed his lips.

A soft cough made them stop kissing. Juvia turned around, but Gray kept her in front of him by putting an arm across her stomach so people couldn’t his reaction to her.

Juvia’s eyes widened when she saw the mid-forties woman with straight dirty-blonde hair, blue eyes, narrow face and button nose.

They were inside the elevator with Juvia’s neighborhood, Mrs. Moretti. The same woman who watched Gray exercise every morning.

The moment Juvia recognized the woman, her eyes widened. Mrs. Moretti’s got red when she looked at Gray but when she stared at Juvia, she became beet red and couldn’t meet Juvia’s eyes.

What was that about? Every time they met at the elevator, they smiled at each other; then why on earth…?

Damn it. That morning Gray was sick they had been on the living room when things got heated. And it had been around the time Gray exercised.

Mrs. Moretti had seen them.

“Oh, god.” Juvia whispered and tried to hide her face.

“What is it?” Gray said in her ear.

“Nothing.” She answered and the rest of the ride was silent even though Juvia could feel Gray didn’t buy it.

When they arrived at her floor, Juvia muttered a ‘good-night’ and Gray threw a smile the older
woman’s way and she became even redder.

“What was that about?” Gray asked Juvia when she was trying to open her door.

“Nothing.” Juvia answered too fast and saw Gray put down the helmets on the floor and he turned her around to look in his direction.

“Juvia.”

The blunette sighed. “That’s Mrs. Moretti.” When she saw the confusion on his face, she cleared it up. “The neighbor who watches you exercise every morning.”

His eyebrows rose up. “Oh, that’s her? I didn’t recognize her without a rag and, you know… cleaning a window.” Gray narrowed his eyes. “But that’s not why you look so red. Tell me.”

“Remember when you were sick and Juvia spent the night?” He nodded. “Remember that morning?” His smirk told her he didn’t forget at all about it. He put his hands on her hips just like he did and it felt very nice. “We were at your living room.”

“Yeah?”

“At 8:15.” She looked pointedly at him.

“Alright.” He frowned.

“You exercise at 8:15.” Gray didn’t seem to get her, so Juvia spoke freely. “She saw it. Us.”

“Oh.” Gray looked surprised and she felt her cheeks get hotter. “Oh, god. I took your shirt off. We were dry humping like crazy.”

“Yes.”

“I can’t believe it.” Gray frowned. “I am painting my windows black. I am never opening the curtains again. She saw us?”

“That’s why she couldn’t look Juvia in the eyes.” The blunette bit her lower lip. “If you don’t want to stay… Juvia will understand.” God knew the mood had cooled off a bit.

Gray narrowed his eyes before kissing her. “Let’s get inside.” At his words, she nodded dumbly and went to open the front door.

Snowball made such a fuss about Gray and vice-versa that Juvia thought for moment that he would pet the white dog all night long. Juvia put the food and fresh water for her dog. Seeing that his attention was still on Snowball, Juvia decided that she wanted his attention back to her.

Gray was on her couch, petting the dog, his helmets next to him. Juvia narrowed her eyes and decided her course of action. With a smirk, she walked past the couch, took off her shirt and threw it on the couch next to Gray, who looked over his shoulder, eyes wide when he saw her in her white bra Juvia and took it off on the way to her bathroom.

“If you want to join Juvia in her shower, now it’s the time.”

The next thing she knew, Gray was following her and already shedding his shirt away from him. She laughed when Gray grabbed her from behind and pulled her up from the floor and dragged her inside
It should be a crime for Gray to be that good at making her forget everything around her. They were under the spray of hot water and he was kissing her and touching her like he knew exactly what buttons to push to make her crazy.

He was kissing her neck, one hand down between her legs and the other fondling her breast. Juvia could feel his erection on her back. “I didn’t know you could ride a bike.”

Juvia processed his words slowly. “I can.”

“It was one of the hottest things I’ve ever seen.” He whispered and Juvia smiled.

“Good to know.”

Gray stepped away from her and went out the shower to fumble over his pants while he did that. Juvia turned around and watched him as he found his wallet and took a condom from inside it. He opened the packet and rolled the condom over himself before stepping back in.

“Sex in the shower is dangerous.” Juvia told him.

“Yeah, says the person who ran in the middle of bullets flying around today.” Gray said before kissing her and pulling her up by the back of her thighs and pressing her on the wall.

He touched her to see if she was ready and when he saw that she was, Gray slowly slid inside her and all she could do was kiss him and hold him tighter.

“Just as I remembered.” Gray breathed and started to move. “Just as good as I remembered.”

Juvia smiled and pulled him by the hair and kissed his lips. “Right back at you.”

Their moans filled the close space they were in and all Juvia could think was how happy she was about being so close with her. She could tell he was impatient, that his release was close—they shared one night, but she knew it wouldn’t take much longer to him.

“It’s alright, Gray-sama.” Juvia whispered in his ear. “Let go.”

“No.” He was stubborn. “You aren’t…”

“This is for you.” Juvia told him and when he shook his head, Juvia grabbed his hair and made him look at her. “Let go.” She kissed him and Juvia clenched her inner muscles. Gray gasped and moved quicker while she dug her nails on his back. She threw her head back and moaned when Gray lost all control and thrust inside her.

A few moments later, Gray stilled and groaned as he reached his peak. Juvia felt him kiss the side of her neck muttering something she couldn’t understand. He raised his head and kissed her lazily and Juvia gladly accepted it.

He slid out of her and put her down gently. Gray disposed of the condom at the trash at the corner of the bathroom and when he stepped under the shower with Juvia, she wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him.

“This is humiliating.”
“What?” Juvia frowned.

“That first night I fell asleep and today I couldn’t wait for you. I seemed like a freaking kid.”

Juvia chuckled and pushed some of his wet hair away from his forehead. “I don’t need to come every time we are together. Juvia like just being next to you.”

He frowned. “I don’t like that.” She raised an eyebrow. “What I meant was that I don’t like leaving you hanging.”

The blunette shrugged. “You could balance that later. We don’t have to be at work until 9 and Juvia doesn’t need to sleep early.”

“Deal.” Gray smiled.

“Let’s finish this shower otherwise we’ll get here all night.”

#

Gray had left her apartment around three in the morning and only then Juvia got some sleep – god, he was serious when he said he didn’t like to leave her hanging and wanted to balance things out. She was spent and every muscle in her body was sore.

The next morning they left their buildings at the same time and walked together to FT. Juvia knew she was blushing, but didn’t care too much because Gray was grinning and she never saw anything more beautiful in her life.

They rode the elevator together and when the door opened, Gray put a hand on the door so it wouldn’t close on her. She thanked him and felt Gray’s hand on her lower back until they were close to Cana’s desk – the brunette was typing on her computer.

“See you later.” Gray gave her a meaningful look that made Juvia feel hot all over once again – it didn’t matter she had him most of the night, she wanted him all over again. By the way he looked at her, it meant she would spend another night awake because of him.

‘Can I get a hallelujah?’ she thought and smiled shyly at him. “Yes, later.”

Juvia said good morning to Cana and went inside her office with a smiled still on her face. She put her purse on her couch and sat on the chair behind her desk. She hummed a song while her computer turned on and checked her phone.

“Juvia?” Cana said by the door

The blunette didn’t look up from her phone. “Yes?”

“Where is the weird sexual frustration between you and Gray?”

Juvia looked up in shock. “What?”

Cana crossed her arms over under her breasts. “You came in together today, he put a hand on your lower back and said ‘see you later’ as if you two would get down and dirty later.” Juvia could feel her cheeks warm up and her look of surprise probably gave her away. “Oh my god, you screwed him?”

“Cana-san… shhh!” Juvia got up from her chair.
“Oh my god!” Cana grinned and then turned around to shout. “Lucy! Lucy! Come back here right now! Girl emergency!”

“Don’t call—” Lucy arrived – she must’ve ran. “-Lucy-san- and you are here.”

“What is going on?” The blonde woman frowned and closed the door of the office. “What’s the emergency?”

“Juvia slept with Gray!” Cana was almost jumping in excitement.


Juvia couldn’t lie to them, not when they knew the truth. “Yes, but…”

“Finally!” Lucy hi-fived Cana. “Gosh, you two needed this. I was afraid he was going to impregnate you with only the way he looked at you when you were not looking.”

The blunette’s cheeks got hotter. “Tell me all about it.” Cana pulled Juvia towards the couch and made her sit down. “I have been waiting for this from the moment you told me you were in love with him.”

“She told you that?” Lucy beamed.

“Yes!” Cana said. “Now, spill.”

“Look…” Juvia caught their attention. “Juvia knows you think this is some kind of cute story, but it really isn’t.” They didn’t seem to understand it, but she told what happened between her and Gray a month before at Lucy’s party.


“Wait a minute. That happened weeks ago.” Cana frowned. “Why did I get this vibe from you only today?”

“Because last night it happened again.” Juvia’s blush felt even worse. “It shouldn’t have happened because we had agreed with only one night.”

“Why did you agreed to it?” Cana asked, curious.

“Because Juvia rather had at least one night than none at all.” The blunette saw the pity in their eyes for a split second. “But it felt so good, for both of us, I think, because we just couldn’t stop. Maybe he felt lonely and knew I wanted him… I don’t know.”

The women looked at Juvia in surprise for a few seconds before Cana broke silence. “Juvia, I didn’t tell you this before because I didn’t want you thinking I was some kind of a threat, but I’ll tell you now. Five years ago when I was still in the army, I met Gray in hostile territory and when we came back, we went out to a bar. We slept together.”

Juvia’s eyes widened and a knot formed inside her stomach. “What?”

“It was nice, but the moment it was over, we realized it was a mistake. Both of us had been alone for a while and we had this weird attraction. But as it turned out, we were only feeling lonely. We were friends and nothing more. After that night, we decided that we were better off as friends and here we are, five years later: I consider him like a brother and I like to think he feels the same way about me.”

“Is there a moral to this story?” Juvia’s tone was cold, she couldn’t help it. God, she felt so jealous.
“Oh, stop it.” Cana rolled her eyes. “It was good but I prefer my men blonder and bulkier. And it was five years ago, I don’t want him. If I did want him, you’d have no chance? I know things that would make the filthiest men blush. He’s all yours.”

“Cana!” Lucy exclaimed, her cheeks were rosy.

“What? I do.” The brunette shrugged. “What I need you to understand is that if Gray only felt lonely, he wouldn’t come back to you. He’d say you were friends and move on. He doesn’t beat around the bushed when he knows his feelings. If he keeps coming back to you… Maybe you know better things than I do – doubtful, but an option – or… maybe he feels that something between you two just clicked and he is not ready to leave it behind just yet.” Cana smiled to her boss. “You better use this opportunity while you can, Juvia. You might not get another one.”

Juvia bit her lower lip and nodded. The brunette grinned and said: “Now, let’s talk lingerie shopping. I’ve been to your apartment to feed your dog and I went through your underwear drawers – oh, don’t look at me that way you know I snoop around and Lucy, we are talking about your drawer soon as well. You know what? We are shopping later. Lucy can get red lingerie for Natsu and Juvia something black for Gray. I know my boys so I will help you find some things to get their attention.” Both women looked scandalized but didn’t stop their friend as she tried to explain them some of her techniques.

Thinking about her words, Juvia smiled. She wouldn’t lose that chance.

#

Chapter End Notes

I’m not sorry for the sexy times in this chapter. I’d like to thank endingsarenotalwaysbad for giving the idea of Juvia meeting the neighbor. I added Gray because I thought it could be even better LOL

And I know Gray sounds OOC and he is, but he’ll be back on track soon. Next chapter we’ll be back to canon.

08/21/2015 ~ BonneyQ
Their secret nightly meetings went unnoticed to most of their coworkers after Juvia made Cana and Lucy promise not to tell anyone about it or it could spook Gray away from her. Both women agreed knowing she was right, Gray would retreat if people knew about it before he wanted them to.

Two weeks after their second night, when Juvia arrived at work, she noticed her colleagues were much more excited than normal and when she asked Cana about it, she just smirked and told the blunette she’d have to wait until the night, when they would gather at Fairy Tail later that night.

Juvia shrugged it off, knowing that if it was really important, she would know eventually.

After work hours, Cana dragged Juvia down to the bar and the blunette was surprised with how many people were there. Pretty much everyone who worked at the firm was there and Juvia wasn’t able to recognize many of them.

Cana’s smile vanished when she caught a glimpse of someone, but before Juvia could see who, Lucy stepped closer to them. “Finally the secret will be revealed.” The blonde woman said. “No one tells me what is going on.”

“It’s different every year but the fact that it’s hard doesn’t change.” Warren a man from the IT department, who was next to them, said.

“At any rate, it’s a survival trial where Master chooses from all sectors every year. And if you are good enough, you get a promotion to S-class!” Alzack said, excited.

At the stage, Master kept talking: “Strength, heart, soul. I’ve been watching for each of these things this past year. There will be eight participants. Natsu Dragneel.” The crowd cheered and Juvia hear
his scream of excitement. “Gray Fullbuster.” There was a round of applause and the blunette cheered in excitement. “Juvia Lockser.” She froze mid-cheering when she heard her name and was surprised she was even considered.

“Eh? Juvia too?” She whispered and felt Lucy put her arms around her, laughing in happiness. And she barely heard the other names being called. She was chosen for a trial to have a chance to become one of FT’s S-class operatives!

Wow.

“So that’s it... That’s why they were working so hard to increase their appeal because they wanted to be chosen.” Lucy said and Juvia finally understood why Gray had been tired and getting as much jobs as he could, to get attention.

“This time only one will be selected to pass from among them. Get into your best condition within one week’s time.” Everyone started to talk at the same time, but Makarov interrupted them once again. “There are some newbies here, so I’ll explain the rules.”

“Within a preliminary period of one week, you 8 are to select a partner.” Mirajane explained.

“There are two rules to partner selection.” Erza said. “First: they must be a member of Fairy Tail. Second: They cannot be S-class.”

“The details of the exams will be revealed after arrival to the Island.” Master smirked. “But this time, Erza will attempt to block you all from proceeding.”

“Eh?” The crowd exclaimed in disbelief.

“I’ll also be a troublemaker this time.” Mirajane smiled sweetly and everyone groaned in pain. If facing Erza was almost impossible, add Mirajane to the mix and it would be impossible.

“Enough whining.” The older man with brown hair said from the stage. “This is a path that all S-Class operative have gone down and we’d like to see what you guys are made of.”

“Who is that?” Juvia whispered to Lucy.

“Gildarts. He is very skilled. You probably heard of him at some point.” The blonde said and Juvia widened her eyes when she remembered exactly who he was, another frigging legend. It seemed that FT never ceased to amaze her.

“The chosen eight will take their partners with them and gather at Hargeon Port one week from now.” Makarov said. “That is all.”

Lucy grabbed Juvia’s hand and led them to where their friends were already searching for a table. They were all very excited to be chosen and were already planning on what to do next.

“Looks like this year is gonna be pretty tough as well.” Gray said, sitting on a booth after Lucy and Juvia sat next to him.

“I’m surprised you all are first-time challengers.” The blonde woman said.

“I’m burning now! I’m definitely gonna become S-class!” Natsu said from his seat on the booth.

“This looks like it might be trouble.” Wendy, the sweet girl she was, said from across the table from where Juvia was.
“Uh, Elfman! The road to S-class grows farther and farther.” Elfman whined – he was the brother of Mirajane and Lisanna and he was a bulky man, full of muscles and a scar from a corner to his eyes to under his ear.

“Everyone, do your best.” Lisanna grinned. “But you do know that this is more like a hike through the woods, to bond or whatever.”

“Oh yeah, has everyone chosen a partner already?” Lucy asked the pink-haired man next to her.

“I’m going alone.” Natsu said smugly.

“You can’t! It’s against the rules.” Lucy reminded him.

“Don’t care. I want people to know I can be badass all on my own.” The pink haired man shrugged. “I’ll have a word with pops to let me go alone.”

“I don’t mind.” Gray shrugged. “You’ll be in trouble when it comes to fighting.” He called a waitress and ordered some beer for everyone.

“I know you guys are my allies, but this is one thing I can’t back down on.” Natsu said and made everyone get up from the booth so he could leave. “I can’t stay here any longer! Training time!”

“Natsu, it’s still nighttime…” Lucy tried, but he was already gone and she sighed. “I swear to god he won’t sleep this week, will just train for this.” Lucy sat back down and with a small smile, she whispered: “Do your best, Natsu.”

Juvia, who had been quiet all that time, said quietly: “Um… Juvia wants to forfeit the exam.”

“Eh? Why?” Wendy asked next to her.

Of course the younger woman was surprised, it was a great opportunity for Juvia to pass on, especially if she might get a position as S-class. At FT! But what she really wanted was to fight alongside with Gray. They were good together.

“Because… I want to be…” She mumbled.

“What?” Gray’s attention was on the blunette’s and she blushed.

“Because… um… Juvia wants to…” She tried again.

Lucy leaned on and whispered in Gray’s ear: “She wants to become your partner.”

“Huh?” Gray asked and meanwhile Juvia felt the ugly green monster inside her bloom when she saw how close they were.

Noticing the hatred glare, Lucy raise her hands in surrender, showing the blunette she was not pawing his friend’s man.

“Sorry,” Gray said looking at Juvia “but I’ve already decided on my partner.”

The orange haired man Juvia saw earlier with Gray stepped closer the table. “Long time no see, everyone.” He had an accent, so Juvia doubted he was from Fiore. Once she looked at him, Juvia realized that he was a very handsome man.

“Loki?” Elfman was surprised.
“We made a promise last year that if one of us were picked, the other would be the partner.” Gray shrugged, then looked to his friend. “I’m counting on you.”

“Leave it to me.” The man called Loki smiled.

“Since when have these two been so buddy-buddy?” Lucy pouted.

Moving his attention from the newcomer back to Juvia. “This means you’ve got to fight me seriously. Let’s have a heated battle for once in a while.” By the way Gray looked at her, Juvia knew exactly what kind of battle he had in mind. Images of the last time they were together flashed through her mind: the way his lips trailed down her throat to her breasts while moving oh so perfectly, making her call his name over and over again.

Her face reddened and Gray was only able to hide his smirk because he raised his mug of beer to take a sip.

“I’ll team up with Juvia.” Lisanna said and the blunette looked at her direction.

“Are you serious, Lisanna?” Elfman asked, outraged.

“I want in this trip and Juvia has this cute look in her eyes right now.” The white haired woman chuckled. “It’s decided.” Without having too much to argue with, Juvia just nodded but promised to herself to keep an eye on Lisanna – she looked innocent, but she didn’t know Gray and Juvia were…. whatever they were and she could very much hit on him.

“Hold on, Lisanna!” Elfman exclaimed. “Who will be my partner, then?”

“Oh?” Lisanna snickered. “But there’s someone who’s been giving you a heated stare for a while now...” She trailed her gaze to the bar, where a beautify brunette was drinking a glass of wine and looking intently at where they were – especially at Elfman.

“It seems that she’s miffed at Fried choosing Bixlow as her partner.” Juvia chuckled at how terrified Elfman looked and watched in amusement as he timidly walked towards the woman. Lisanna chuckled and pulled Juvia to the dance floor and she followed her friend.

A couple of songs later, Lisanna looked over Juvia’s shoulder and smiled. She winked and took two steps back and turned away. Confused, Juvia turned around and saw the orange haired man who was going to be Gray’s partner and he was looking intently at her.

“Well, hello to you.” His smile was really beautiful, Juvia had to give him that and if Juvia hadn’t been… something with Gray, she would’ve loved to receive that smile.

“Hi.” Juvia smiled.

“Loki.” He offered his hand and Juvia took it.

“Juvia.” The shook hands.

He gave her his smolder. “I was on an op overseas for a few months and even though I’ve heard we’ve got a few new members,” he leaned in and whispered: “no one told be how pretty those members were.”

The blunette went on her the tip of her toes and whispered back to him: “Juvia will tell Gajeel you called him pretty.” Juvia winked and walked away, his laughter followed her.
“I like you!”

Juvia looked around, searching for Gray and when she spotted him talking with Erza, she walked right at him. “Excuse me.” Juvia told Erza. “I have to borrow him for a moment.”

“Sure.” The red haired woman nodded. “And congratulations to both of you.” For a second Juvia thought she was talking about them being whatever, but realized it had been about the nomination.

“Thank you.” Juvia smiled and waited until the other woman was out of ear shot before talking to Gray. “I think Loki-san just tried to hit on Juvia.”

“He certainly did.” Gray snorted and rolled his eyes. “Loki hits on any pretty girl. I’d be surprised if he hadn’t hit on you.” Juvia raised an eyebrow. “Look, he’s harmless. He’ll flirt with you a few times because that’s the way he is. But if it bothers you, I’ll talk to him.”

“It doesn’t exactly bother Juvia, it’s just….” Her cheeks reddened and she pointed to him and then herself.

“I’ll talk to him without letting him know what is going on.” Gray told her. “Don’t worry.” He was about to leave, but Juvia grabbed his hand and he halted.

“Oh, Cana-san and Lucy-san know.” Juvia bit her lower lip.

“What? How?”

“That day last week when we arrived at work together. Cana-san sensed it somehow – I swear that woman has superpowers – I don’t know.” Juvia explained. “The next thing Juvia knows, Lucy-san is with us in my office and we are discussing lingerie.” Gray frowned, trying to make sense of her words. “Juvia made them promise not to tell anyone.”

“In Lucy, I believe. Cana, though…” Gray raised an eyebrow. “Well, we’ll just have to trust her. No other choice.” He shrugged.

“Alright.” Juvia looked around briefly before tip toeing and kiss his lips quick. She watched as he walked away from her and sighed. She’d have to talk to Lisanna later about this trial.

#

There was an awkward silence between the three people as they walked home in the middle of the night. Gray had failed to mention to Juvia that Loki was going to spend a few days at his apartment, which meant that it they wanted to keep it a secret, they wouldn’t be able to be together.

Sad, but necessary.

“So, um…” Juvia mumbled when they reached their street. “Good-night, then. Nice meeting you, Loki-san.”

The orange haired man rolled his eyes. “Really? You two are going to pretend?”

Juvia saw Gray’s body tense. “What do you mean?”

“Please. I hit on her and two minutes later you come and talk to me about it and asked me to knock it off? I don’t believe it was a coincidence.” Loki smirked. “Plus, I saw that kiss you tried to hide. Don’t worry, I think it was just me.”

“You can’t tell people.” Gray said, his voice hard. “We work together, it wouldn’t…”
“Don’t worry, bro.” Loki chuckled. “I don’t care and no one else would if they knew you two are dating.”

“We are not dating.” Gray snarled and Juvia tried her best to hide the hurt. “We’re just… this is…”

“Not my business.” Loki supplied. “I’ll tell no one. Go enjoy yourselves. I’ll be in your spare bedroom, you gave me the keys. Have fun, at least one of us is getting laid tonight.” He winked at Juvia, who blushed hard. “Good night for you.”

Once Loki was inside of the building, Gray turned around to look at her. “Well, another person added to the list of who knows.” He sighed. “We need to keep it at that.”

“Alright.” Juvia nodded and grabbed his hand. “Want to come up and have fun so at least one of you get laid tonight?” She giggled when he nodded and pulled him towards her building.

#

“It’s snowing.” Juvia commented, looking at the window.

“Winter is finally here, huh?” Gray stretched his body and got comfortable on Juvia’s bed. The blunette pulled a blanket over them and scoot over next to him to get his body heat.

“So, what exactly happens during these trials?” Juvia asked, her head on top Gray’s chest after they had sex, his hand caressing her back without even realizing he was doing that and Juvia all but purred with the action. “We fight each other?”

“I guess. It’s my first time as well.” Gray answered her. “What I heard is that our skills will be tested, our teamwork or whatever. But this year we have do a vacancy because of Laxus’ leaving.” He looked down at her and smiled. “You made it in your first year. Not bad.”

She smiled back at him. “Is that why you were getting all types of jobs?”

“Yeah. Wouldn’t it be amazing to become S-class? To work upstairs?” Gray grinned. “Everyone would know how good we are.”

“Juvia likes where she is right now.” Juvia said, truthfully. “I’ll go and I’ll try, but… Juvia won’t win but she’ll try.”

“Don’t say that. You could win.” Gray told her. “You could win if I were taken down.” She raised her head from his chest.

“Excuse me?”

“That first time we met I did manage to shoot you.” He looked at her pointedly. “I just assume that I could do it again.”

“You shouldn’t assume things, you know?” Juvia pouted. “Juvia was in an emotional rollercoaster when we met. She could take you on.”

Gray raised an eyebrow, not entirely believing her. “Oh, really?”

Juvia gasped and sat on the bed. “Yes.” She narrowed her eyes. “You know how good Juvia is by now.”

“Not as good as me.” Gray grinned when he saw her getting all riled up. Juvia tried to get up from the bed but he put an arm around her waist and didn’t let her get up and brought her back to the bed.
“Stop it, you know I’m kidding.”

“No, you are not.” She huffed.

“I am.” Gray kissed her shoulder and down to her neck and she sighed when his hand started to go its way up to fondle her breasts. “If we are being truthful here, you are currently my enemy again and right now you are holding me against my will.”

“What?” Juvia tried to process the words, but his hands were making her forget what they were talking about.

“I should be focusing on getting ready for the trial.” He whispered on her ear and Juvia had to bit down her lower lip when she felt that he was hardening once again, she could feel it between her ass cheeks and he was slowly grinding his hips on hers. “Instead, I’m fraternizing with the enemy.”

“You don’t seem too oppose to it.” Juvia gasped and reached behind him, grabbing his hair.

“Well, you are distracting me.” Gray nibbled her ear and Juvia chuckled. “We can’t do this during this week. We need to focus.”

“And Juvia makes you lose focus?”

“Maybe.”

“Oh, so if we do fight each other, all Juvia has to do is take off her clothes and you’ll get distracted?”

It was Gray’s turn to chuckle. “It sure would freak Loki and Lisanna out. Well, Loki would ogle you. And it would be an interesting fight.” He released her for a moment before pushing Juvia to her back and lying on top of her. “Tonight is the last until after the trial. Get it?” Juvia pouted and Gray kissed her. “After that…” Gray raised a little bit and looked down to her body. “We’ll take a couple of days to make it up for it.”

“Sounds like a plan.” Juvia pulled him down and kissed him. “Let’s make it count tonight.”

#

During the week that followed, Juvia and Lisanna spent a lot of time together trying to get in sync and Juvia found herself having fun with the white haired woman; she was very nice and Mirajane had taught her a lot about how to defend herself, so all Juvia needed to do was put her back in shape.

Gray maintained his promise and during the week before the trial, they only saw each other when their friends were gathered and their only intimacy was when they were going back home and one of them couldn’t take anymore and just grabbed the other for a kiss.

It was usually Juvia’s doing, but Gray didn’t complain about it.

Once the week was over, at break of dawn Juvia left her dog with Alzack and Viska, whom offered to take Snowball in for a few days to see how their daughter Asuka would act with a pet as Viska loved animals but hadn’t been able to have one ever since she got pregnant. Now with 4 years of age, the couple thought that it was time to see if the girl would adapt with an animal at home. Juvia was certain that Asuka became enchanted by Snowball by the way she shrieked when the puppy came out of its carrier and the next thing the grown-ups knew, the dog was running around the house while the child follow, giggling.

Juvia took a cab, picked up Lisanna and both went to the Hargeon Port per instruction and met the
other contestants with teasing remarks about winners and losers, but everyone was in high spirits. Once Makarov arrived, they got into the ship.

Two hours later, half of the contestants had already taken off the heavy coats and an hour after that, everyone was on their bathing suits and sweating.

“Hot! It should be winter now, why…” Lucy whined, lying on a chair wearing a bikini with tiny hearts. When Cana was chosen, she asked Lucy to be her partner and the blonde accepted immediately. “I think I’m gonna melt.”

Aside from Natsu, Gray and Juvia, the other contestants were Elfman – Mirajane’s brother – who took Evergreen as a partner; Cana who brought along Lucy; Fried Justine – the man who made Juvia and Cana ‘fight each other’ a few months ago – and he chose Bixlow as a partner; Levy McGarden – the girl Gajeel assaulted before they joined FT and some kind of genius with computers – who brought, weirdly enough, Gajeel as a partner (Juvia needed to talk to her friend what that was about); and Mest – a man Juvia didn’t know much about because he was always going undercover somewhere – and his partner was Wendy, the sweet med student.

There were people from every department, so Juvia thought things wouldn’t be too harsh, right?

“Aren’t you hot in that, Juvia?” Lisanna asked holding a cold drink in her hand and already wearing a swimsuit. The blunette was still wearing her dark blue coat and while everyone else seemed to be melting, she was fine. Changes in the climate rarely bothered her, her uncle had trained her so.

“No.” Juvia said to her partner. “But if I had to say…” She looked to where Gray was sprawled over a chair, sweating and only wearing swim trunks, with hungry eyes. “Gray-sama’s body looks hot.”

Lisanna chuckled, fully aware of her friend’s crush on the man, but naïve about their secret meetings. “Girlfriend, you so need to get laid.”

’S0 bad.’ Juvia whined inside her head, more than wishing the trial was over yet; she missed him.

The blunette saw Gray fan himself with a hand and behind him, Loki was helping Natsu not to go overboard while he threw up – Juvia had forgotten that Natsu became so sick while traveling.

The girls talked for a few more minutes before Loki said out loud: “I can see it!”

Everyone got up from their seats and went to take a look. Tenrou Island was large and with a respectable amount of vegetation and Juvia could even see a waterfall. It was a truly beautiful place.

“It’s said that Fairies used to live on this island.” Master said from the upper deck and everyone turned around to look at him. “The founder of our firm, Mavis Vermilion, was born in a village that was located here and it’s long gone. But her last request was to be buried here and in her honor, we come here every year to have some fun.” Makarov sighed. “I will now announce the details of the first exam.”

“The first exam?” Wendy asked, confused.

“It’s split up into levels every year.” Mest clarified to the girl.

“You see smoke rising up from that beach, right?” Makarov pointed and everyone looked to the direction and indeed could see what he meant. “First, head there. There are eight paths there and only one group can enter each path. Here’s what waits for you behind each path.” Master picked up a control and turned a TV behind him on. It was some kind of map with highlighted paths with numbers from one to eight and three of each had written ‘hard battle’ with the pictures of Gildarts,
Erza and Mirajane. There was a path leading to a ‘quiet rout’ and the four remaining, two paths met into ‘battle’ and then another two did the same. “Only the teams that get through this will clear the first exam!”

“In the ‘battle’ routes, two teams will meet up, and only the winning team will be able to proceed.” Makarov explained. “In the ‘hard battles’ are very difficult routes where you will have to defeat an S-rank operative in order to proceed. ‘Quiet’ is the route where you can proceed the exam without having to fight anyone.” Everyone seemed to enter into battle mode and they were analyzing the map. Juvia looked over to Lisanna and knew that their best shot was to get a ‘quiet route’, but the possibilities were slim. They had to avoid ‘hard battles’ at all costs. “Your goals in this first exam are ‘ability’ and ‘luck’!”

“Logically only a maximum of 6 teams can clear this exam.” Evergreen said.

“I-Impossible! Gildarts and Erza’s roads are off limits!” Elfman groaned.

“So, worst case scenario only three teams pass.” Levy sighed in defeat and Juvia saw Gajeel rest his elbow on the top of her head.

“Cool.”

Before anyone else could speak, Makarov said: “Now let’s begin! Exam start!”

Juvia looked around in confusion and saw that everyone else seemed to not understand as well. “Aren’t we… still on the ocean?” Loki asked and his only answer was Makarov’s grin.

Everyone started to move at once. Lisanna called Juvia and both went to see how further away from the island they still were – during their week training together, they discovered that they had swimming in common: both were very good at it – and Juvia calculated that it was not a safe distance to swim yet. “Five minutes and we can go.” The blunette told her partner.

Meanwhile, Fried and Bixlow were already lowering one of the emergency boats of the ship and Juvia cussed herself for not thinking about that.

“Hey Gramps!” Gray called. “Is that really fair?”

“Well, it’s not like this is a race.” Makarov shrugged.

Just like her friends, Evergreen was doing the same with Elfman’s help. “I’ve known Fried for a long time, you see.” She winked. “I knew he’d do that.”

“So long, losers!” Gajeel said from behind the ship, where there was a jet-ski. Levy sat behind him with her arms around his torso as they took off.

“Where the fuck did he find that?” Cana complained.

“You didn’t look at your surroundings.” Makarov smirked. “They did. I couldn’t start a trial in the middle of the ocean without means to get to dry land, could I?”

Juvia nodded in agreement, it made sense. She grabbed her backpack – thankfully she bought one that was water resistant – and took off her coat, shirt and pants so she could stand only in her swimsuit. She put her clothes in the backpack and by the time she was done, they were much closer to shore. With a look at Lisanna’s direction, they nodded and jumped on the sea.
Juvia felt her whole body ache as she reaches for the refreshments over the table under the tent she was with Lisanna, Mirajane and Erza. The blunette and her partner were able to get first at shore but they ended up choosing a ‘hard battle’ route.

Their opponent had been Erza Scarlet.

Five minutes later, they were on the floor, unable to fight. To tell the truth, Juvia’s hoped of winning fell short when she saw whom she was fighting. She tried to get Erza’s attention the best she could so Lisanna couldn’t get hurt too much, but Erza had been too fast and Lisanna had some bruises, but nothing serious.

Juvia, though felt way too sore. Dear god, Erza was a monster. Juvia was great at hand-on-hand combat, but the red haired woman put her to shame. She really need some muscles relaxants after everything was done.

Mirajane was currently talking about how her brother bested her and Erza, who was cooking, was surprised.

“What? Elfman and Evergreen are getting married?” She asked.

“Is what they said to surprise me, and then hit me hard.” Mirajane said with a smile and a hand on her jaw – Lisanna had bandaged it a few minutes before.

“Wait a minute!” Erza pointed the spoon she was holding towards the white haired woman. “When’s the ceremony? And when did they become a couple?”

Juvia was surprised as well, one week before when they were choosing partners, Elfman didn’t seem to be that close to Evergreen.

“Mmm...” Mira seemed to think. “It was probably just a plan in order to shake me up. I still need more practice too, I guess.” She shrugged and Juvia hid a smile.

“Was it really a plan?” Erza pressed.

The psychiatrist chuckled. “I really don’t think there could be anything between them.” She stopped. “Yeah, I mean... if they got married and had a kid...” To everyone’s horror Mira’s expression became sour and she hid her face into her hands.

“Don’t cry, Mira.” Erza nodded lightly. “Depending on how you think about it, it could be cute.”

“Big bro and Evergreen, huh?” Lisanna, who was sitting next to Juvia, said. “They might actually go together.” Juvia heard the words but didn’t process them because with all that talk about children, she thought for a moment about what her child would like with Gray.

Maybe a little boy that looked exactly like him or a little girl with dark blue hair in Gray’s arms and her cheeks got hotter. She shouldn’t let her mind drift; they were barely friends with benefits, Juvia knew he had a long way to go to even think about reproducing. Plus, she never thought she’d be a mother.

“Oh yeah, where’s Fried and Bixlow?” Lisanna asked.

“They went back to the Guild with Gildarts.” Erza shrugged. “Boy are they hasty. They should have stayed to watch the end. More importantly, where did Mest and Wendy go?”

“They sure are late.” Mira looked outside the tent.
“Maybe they forgot where to meet us.” Lisanna offered.

Grabbing that opportunity, Juvia got up from the table. “How worrisome. Juvia will go look.” She was about to leave when Erza started to undo the knot of her apron.

“Then I’ll go too. Mira and Lisanna, you two stay here.”

‘Just when I was about to cheer Gray-sama on!’ Juvia thought in annoyance, but coaxed her expression to stay impassive.

#

A few minutes into their walk, they were deep into the woods and Juvia followed the other woman, hoping she knew where she was going. They were in a comfortable silence until Erza broke it.

“So, Juvia.” She asked and Juvia hummed to let her know she was listening. “When are you and Gray telling people about what’s going on between the two of you?” The blunette stopped walking and stared at Erza with wide eyes. Erza also stopped and turned around, a knowing smile on her lips. “Don’t look at me like that, anyone who knows Gray can see that he is happier. It took me a bit to work it out, but I saw you kiss him last week after the nomination. It was sweet, really.”

“It’s not...” Juvia tried. “We are...”

“It was about time that boy found someone. I know he is skittish with relationships, but everyone would enjoy the good news about you being together.”

“We are not.” Juvia tried to explain and Erza looked confused.

“What?” Erza frowned. “You are not dating?”

“Oh, no.” The blunette shook her head and her curls bounced. “We just... we sleep together. As friends.” Her cheeks grew hotter.

“Oh.” Erza’s cheeks pinked and Juvia thought that maybe she didn’t have much experience with the opposite sex, not with her history with Jellal. “I’m sorry I assumed you...”

“It’s fine. We are just having fun.” Juvia pushed her concerns away. “But could you please not tell anyone?” Erza nodded and cleared her throat, still blushing. “But if you ever need to talk...”

“Thank you.” Juvia said, truthfully. Erza turned around and they resumed their walk for about twenty minutes until they saw someone trip and fall. They ran towards the person and Juvia immediately recognized the blue hair.

“Levy?” Erza kneeled in front of the girl. She was all battered up, dirty.

“What happened? Those wounds...” For an awful moment, Juvia thought Gajeel broke his promise somehow. That he did it again.

“Erza... Juvia...” Levy looked so relieved it broke Juvia’s heart. “Someone attacked us. Two guys Gajeel is fighting them on his own but I don’t know how long he can take.” Erza and Juvia helped her up. “He has no guns. Please, help us.”

“Where is he?” Erza asked and Levy pointed the direction she came from. “Come on, lead us there.”
Levy found her footing again and ran in front of them, leading them.

A few minutes later, they finally arrived and there were three men on the ground, unmoving. “Gajeel!” Levy yelled and ran faster.

“What the...” Erza was surprised.

“Gajeel-kun.” Juvia’s eyes widened and she couldn’t believe that her friend looked that way bloody nose, his face was swelling and he was unconscious. Juvia could count in one hand the times she saw him that way and it scared her.

“Gajeel! Hang in there!” Levy ran to him. “Gajeel!”

One of the men on the floor laughed, but other than that didn’t move. “You’re already... finished.” He breathed. “The main force will arrive any moment now. People that no one can stand a chance are coming.” He coughed. “We call them the Seven Kin of Purgatory.”

“Seven Kin?” Juvia breathed while Levy cried over Gajeel’s unconscious body.

The man went quiet and Erza reached for the small bag she had on her. She took a flare and raised up. She grabbed a satellite phone and dialed. She waited a moment before she spoke, her voice all business: “This exam is being put temporarily on hold. Condition red! Enter battle formation!” She heard the answer and while she did that, Juvia helped Levy with pulling Gajeel up from the ground. “Understood, sir.” She finished the call.

“Erza-san, what do you plan to do now?” Juvia asked.

“For now, let’s look for Mest and Wendy. There’s a possibility that they can’t find camp and are wandered lost.

“I’ll take Gajeel to the camp.” Levy said and it was best; neither was fit to fight whichever enemy that was coming to get them.

Erza nodded to Levy. “Tell the situation to Mirajane, she’ll know what to do. Tell her everything.” The blunette walked slowly, trying her best to walk holding his weight – for a girl her size, she was quite strong. Once she was out of sight, Erza turned to the man on the ground. “Now, what your goal is?”

“Hmph. Like I’d cough up anything to you.” Erza was in no mood for playing around and just kicked the man on the stomach and he coughed a few times. When she was about to do it again, he raised his hands. “Zeref. Zeref is on this Island.”

Both Juvia and Erza gasped. “Impossible.” The red haired woman said.

“He is here.” The man’s smile was boarding on psychotic. “Master Hades said that he was resting here. Away from the world, meditating about how to make our world better.”

“I can’t believe this.” Erza whispered and then looked at the man. “This is FT’s Island. Are you trying to cause some kind of disorder? You are trespassing.”

“The army Master Hades is in direct command of will be here soon. I wouldn’t underestimate the Seven Kin of Purgatory if I were you.” Erza punched him on the face and he finally lost consciousness.

“Erza-san...” Juvia looked at the other woman. “What do we do? My guns are at my bag back in camping. And he is saying there will be at least seven more coming...”
“I...” She stopped and looked up, her forehead frowning in concentration and Juvia tried to know why when she heard it: helicopters. “What the hell...?” From between the high trees, they watched as five helicopters flown above them.

“Parachutes.” Juvia told Erza when she saw a man jump from the helicopter, followed by three more. The blunette looked to her friend. “Four men, they’ll most likely land at our five o’clock. What are your orders?” The red haired woman was Juvia’s superior and she’d have to wait.

Erza nodded. “Let’s get them.”

Juvia tried to make no noise as she followed the red haired woman and when she stopped, so did Juvia. She could hear men talking and Erza signalized Juvia to hide behind a tree. Just like Juvia said, there were four men with assault rifles, and by the way they behaved, ex-military.

Looking to where Erza was, Juvia saw her point to the men and then signalize they should take them down. Juvia nodded and, since she was closer, she’d go in first and Erza would have her back since she had a knife and was ready to throw it.

Quietly, Juvia snuck behind the men and once she was close enough, got one in a choke holder and when the others realized what was happening, they raised their guns but got distracted when one of them fell down with a knife on his leg, screaming in pain.

“What the fuck is going on?” One of the men pointed his guns to the general direction Erza was and the other pointed at Juvia. The man she was holding was losing consciousness and she needed to move fast if she wanted to avoid to get shot.

Juvia saw the opportunity when one of the men shot in Erza’s direction and the guy pointing the gun at her looked over his shoulder. She let the one she was holding fall on the ground, grabbed the rifle and before he even knew what happened, she shoved the back of the gun onto his nose and while he was confused, she turned the rifle around and shot him on the shoulder and the other on the back of his thigh – she tried to not kill them, just made them unable to fight.

“Clear.” She shouted while she kicked the guns away from the men.

Erza came from between the plants and she looked impressed. “Good job.” Juvia nodded, grabbed a rifle and tossed into the other woman’s direction. “Thanks.” She pointed the gun to one of the men moaning in pain on the ground. “What do you want?”

“Screw you.” He panted and before she could say anything else, they heard helicopters again and more people using parachutes. “Ha.” The man laughed. “You might try to stop us, but Master Hades wants Zeref and nothing will stop him. He needs to control this world.”

“In your dreams, sicko.” Juvia used her gun to knock the man down and checked their pockets. She found plastic handcuffs and restrained two while Erza did the other two.

“There are more falling east.” Erza told Juvia. “We need to take down most of them until help arrives.”

“Help?” Juvia asked, grabbing some ammo.

“Yes.” Erza was doing the same. “I called Gildarts and he’s returning. It’ll take him an hour or so to come back with Freed and Bixlow. I assume he called the Coast Guard, but it’s going to be a while until they arrive.”
“Goddammit.” Juvia curse under her breath.

“Everyone in this island is here because they can take care of themselves.” Erza told her friend. “They are out there doing whatever they can to survive and protect each other. Don’t worry.” Juvia thought of Gray, but shook her head. He would be fine; he could take care of himself and he had a partner. Their friends knew how to fight, knew how to survive. They would be okay. “Come on, Juvia.”

The blunette nodded and followed Erza through the woods.

#

They met the second group of men five minutes later and that time, bullets flew around, but taking the guys by surprise, they were in advantage until they heard another helicopter fly over the island and a few seconds later, an explosion.

Juvia, who was on her knee while shooting, looked over her shoulder at the direction of the sound and Erza yelled at her: “Concentrate on the enemy in front of you!”

With a final look of concern, she slipped her focus back to the guys in front of her.

“Clear.” Erza said after the men were down and they heard shots coming from another part of the island and they shared a look, but focused back on the current events.

“I’m out.” Juvia said when she checked her ammo.

“Me too.” Erza answered and they were about to step to where the men were lying down groaning to get more ammunition and when they stood up, someone shot and Juvia felt a burn on her arm and both women dove behind trees. “Damn it! I thought we got them all!”

“Juvia!” Erza asked, seeing Juvia hiss and grab her arm.

Juvia panted, trying to contain the pain and took her hand away from a moment to see the damage — it was way bloodier than she expected to be — and saw that if just a few inches to the side, it would’ve hit the bone. Thankfully it was through and through and slightly superficial, she’d just need stitches. It hurt like hell, though, but she could move her hands. She assumed no nerves were damaged and even if it were, they were more pressing problems there.

“I’m fine.” Juvia panted and tried to push the pain away, she’d have to ignore it. “Who is the shooter?”

Erza hesitated for a moment, her gaze lingering on Juvia’s wound before she looked up. “I can’t see whoever it is.”

“We need to get him, take him down.” Juvia said. “He saw me, not you. I can be bait while you go around to get him.”

“I think he knows there are two of us, but it’s worth a shot.” Erza nodded. “Are you okay?”

“Good enough.” The blunette assured. “Go. Juvia is without ammo, but she’ll make noise and walk around here to keep him occupied, you go.”

“Roger.”

Juvia left the rifle, as it was dead weight to her and she’d have more chance if she get one of the guns
the men dropped.

She made as much noise as she could while moving leaves, stepping on falling branches and once in a while she’d hear a gunshot close to where she was and a couple of minutes later, she heard the telltale signs of a fight and knew it was time to stop hiding. Juvia left her hiding place, ran between the unconscious men and grabbed a gun without stopping and when she arrived behind a big tree, she saw Erza fighting with a young woman with short pink hair and Juvia almost dropped the gun: the girl couldn’t be more than twenty.

The girl had some sort of stick in her hand and a gun on a holster around her waist. And she had a look on her face, a look Juvia saw in the mirror years before, when she was still in the military.

Erza was a few feet away from the young woman and raised a hand to Juvia when she raised her rifle, telling the blunette to stand down. The girl barely looked in Juvia’s direction by the corner of her eyes. “You’ll be 13th place.”

“Juvia, step down. I’ll take care of her.”

“Erza Scarlet… You’ll be 4th place.” The pink haired girl said.

“What are you ranking?” Erza asked.

“It’s the ranking for the order I’ve decided to kill you in.” The grin on her lips was scary.

“Ridiculous.” Erza snarled.

“This is important.” The pink haired was so fast that even Juvia saw it coming: she raised the stick and made a sound Juvia barely recognized as electricity and she felt it on her leg. Juvia had been tasered before, but nothing as powerful as that. Her whole muscles spasmed and she dropped her rifle. “13th is just trash, I’ll take care of it quickly.”

Juvia fell on the ground and she could hear Erza yelling something, but she was a little out of it. That was way too powerful to be a simple taser. Juvia started to make out the words while the women fought.

“..second place is Makarov.” The pink haired girl said. “But I think Hades-sama beat me to it.”

“Master is second place?” Erza asked.

“There’s someone who I’ve ranked far ahead of your Master. First place is Gray, Gray Fullbuster.”

“What? Why Gray?” Erza asked, but Juvia was already feeling angry.

“The man who killed Ultear’s mother. The man who hurt Ultear. The man who hurt my Ultear! I’ll never forgive him! I’m going to tear him apart!”

It felt as if a bolt of energy went through Juvia and she was suddenly getting up – the girl with pink hair had her back to her and she was pulling the gun towards Erza and Juvia saw for a moment panic in Erza’s expression.

Juvia jumped on the girl and grabbed the gun just as it shot, missing Erza by a few inches. The girl tried to punch Juvia and it barely hurt, and Juvia twisted the arm until the gun was dropped and the blunette pushed her away.

“Can’t forgive”? That’s my line.” Juvia said between gritted teeth. “Whose life did you say you
were after?”

Her hatred was probably coming out from her in waves because she heard the girl: “Wh-What’s with her? She’s only 13th.”

“H-he… calm down.” Erza muttered.

“Calm down?” Juvia never felt as angry in her life before. “This woman is after Gray-sama for her irrational needs. How could I possibly calm down? There’s no way I’ll forgive her!” Juvia strode towards the girl and punched her on the face and the pink haired woman took two steps back before Juvia did it again. She didn’t even realized had started to rain. “Erza-san, please leave her to me.” The blunette said while the girl was touching her jaw in surprise. “You need to hurry and find Wendy. And Gray-sama too.”

A second of silence and then Erza’s answer from behind her. “Understood. I’m gonna leave it to you, then.”

“4 will not escape.” The girl muttered and tried to go for Erza, but Juvia intervened and with each hit, Juvia hit back and once Erza was nowhere in sight, the girl pushed Juvia away so they could take a breath.

“It’s mysterious, isn’t it?” The girl asked but Juvia didn’t drop her guard. “That over this one person, Gray, one person can hate him and another could love him. Even with just the same person, there can be different ways to see them and feel about them.”

“It’s a mark of being an individual. That’s what it is to be human.” Juvia said.

“I’ve got good luck, to have killing Gray as my objective and to meet someone who has such strong feelings about him.” She reached for her satchel and took something that looked like a tablet. “For the sake of Ultear, I put my life on the line. Around this island, our men are putting on bombs and the last time I heard from them, they were fighting a four people: a man with orange hair, a blonde woman, a brunette and a man with dark hair. The only man with dark hair in this island that paired with a man with orange hair, is Gray Fullbuster. I know, I researched.” Juvia felt cold down her spine when the girl showed her the tablet. “And our men have a lot of explosive with them. I think that an explosion would kill him. It would make me happy. My Ultear would be happy.”

“What…” Juvia breathed.

The pink haired girl hunched over and grabbed a sharp piece of a broken branch and held it close to her neck. “I connected those bombs to my vital signs without other people knowing because I knew that I might not be able to kill him – he is bigger and stronger. But I made sure that even if he killed me, like he killed Ultear’s mother so... I have a plan B.” She looked down to her satchel. “The moment I die, all bombs will explode, so, he will die. And so will we.” Juvia’s eyes widened as she understood that inside that satchel, she had enough explosives to kill them both, explosives she intended to be for Gray. “I can just kill myself.”

“Stop it!” Juvia yelled.

“I do not fear death.” The girl said and raised the branch, fully prepared to put it in her neck, but Juvia was faster and grabbed her hand before she could kill herself. “Stop it! I have to do this! I could kill him! I could kill him!”

“There’s another option, all of us can live!” Juvia said while holding the struggling girl. “Although we may defeat our enemies, the people from FT would never take their lives!
She tried to fight away from Juvia’s grasp. “How incredibly childish! I’m going to kill Gray for the sake of Ultear.”

“Even you smile.” Juvia said when the girl calmed down a bit. “Even you have someone important to you. You talked about someone called Ultear? You seem to love this person and I bet he wouldn’t want you to die. Everyone Juvia loves is in this island. Every single person.” Against all odds, Juvia felt her eyes sting as they watered. “Live. You live. Juvia…. Juvia lives for the ones that she loved. You’ve got, too! If you have love in your life then you must keep on living!”

The girl’s body was relaxed. “Live?”

“Live.” Juvia nodded. “I’ve been on the job too, I know it’s hard, it’s difficult to find that someone, but when we do… Don’t let go. Don’t give up and it will be worth it.”

Before the girl could say anything else, Juvia felt the same jolt of electricity she felt a few minutes before and her body clenched. She didn’t even realize she’d let the girl go, just that whoever was behind her, choked her again once she fell on the ground and then three more times before she lost consciousness.

#

“Juvia!” She heard Gray’s voice and she frowned, her whole body ached and she could barely move anything. She heard a shot and she could feel her consciousness slowly returning. “Snap out of it. Come on, don’t do this to me now.”

“Gray-sama?” She muttered as she blinked a couple of times and sat that they were behind a huge fallen tree.

“Yes.” He sounded relieved and helped her to seat. “We need to act fast, they have Zeref.”

“What?” Juvia breathed and could feel that she would be sore for a couple of days, not to mention her bullet wound.

“I’m sorry, but I need to take care of Ultear and I need you to prevent them to take Zeref away.”

“Yes, of course.” Juvia tried to stand up, but fell back down when her legs gave in and Gray put an arm around her. She pushed him away. “If it’s Gray-sama’s orders, pain like this is nothing.” She winked and he frowned. “It’s fine.”

“If you are not up for it…” Juvia shut him up with a quick peck on the lips. “Do you have another gun?” He shook his head. “Let’s hope he doesn’t either. Which direction did he go?”

Gray pointed to their left, “He was unconscious, a girl with pink hair took him.” She nodded. “Go. I’ll cover you.”

#

“Hold on!” Juvia asked the girl with pink hair. She was a few meters in front of Juvia. In any other circumstance, Juvia would’ve catch on them before long, but she needed to lean on trees the whole way because her body seemed to hurt. She finally connected in her mind what was that made her feel that way: it was a cattle prod and it hurt like hell.

“What about all that stuff you said about love?” The girl yelled over her shoulder – she was also not moving fast because she was carrying an unconscious man; Zeref.
“I don’t want to argue with you!” Juvia yelled, holding onto another tree – her legs seemed to be jello.

A blonde man appeared in front of them and started to yell. “Meredy!”

“Zancrow?” Juvia heard the girl – Meredy, it appear to be her name – say in surprise.

“Just where were you planning on taking Zeref?” The blonde, Zancrow, yelled and Juvia looked at every action and noticed that he had a gun on his waist. “So, you were planning on betraying us along with Ultear after all? Well?!” Meredy muttered something Juvia couldn’t hear. “You are no longer part of Grimoire Heart!”

When the man, Zancrow as Meredy called him, came and started to badmouth Ultear to the girl, Juvia wanted him to just shut up because the girl obviously had a deep bond with the woman she assumed was the dark haired one she left fighting Gray-sama. And that man looked like he was quite strong and neither she nor Meredy were in condition of fighting. And he had the person both Juvia and Meredy were trying to get custody of.

The man, who created so many monsters through brain washing, brought misery for other people; he was alive.

Zancrow punched Meredy on the face and took the unconscious man away from the girl and started to walk away.

“Wait… Zeref is Ultear’s future!” Meredy stopped for a moment and said in a lower voice “My future.” Juvia was powerless. Her whole body hurt and she couldn’t do a thing without killing herself in the process. Her mind was racing; trying to think of some plan, any plan, but the blond man looked too strong.

“So naïve…” Zancrow smiled towards Meredy. “How long are you going to keep spouting that crap?!”

“Ultear promised…” Meredy whined, looking like a lost child, instead of the polite serious young woman Juvia met few hours before. “If I can make bring him to us, he will make the world better. A world where people are not killed… Like my parents were.”

“But the one who killed your parents was Ultear-san!” Zancrow seemed to enjoy himself very much saying this.

The look on Meredy’s face was of shock and incredulity. “That is… a lie…” Juvia heard her, but she seemed to be talking to herself than anyone else.

Juvia hated it. She hated the way the man from Grimoire Heart started to laugh like he was having the time of his life while a young girl’s heart was being ripped apart. The blunette wished she had her body fully functioning to take the grin off his face.

At that time, all they could hear were the laughs and the heavy rain. None of them realized that Zeref was awake until he spoke, barely a whisper: “Acnologia.”

“Ahn?” Zancrow looked to Zeref in confusion. From where Juvia was, she could see the abnormal eyes the black haired man had. She froze in fear with that look. “Eh?” It was all Zancrow was able to say before it happened.

Zeref took the gun from the holster on Zancrow’s waist and shot the blonde man on the chest three times and Juvia could see that he shot straight on the left chest; Zancrow was dead before he hit the
Meredy ran away, but Juvia had nowhere to go, her legs wouldn’t work, so, when Zeref pointed the gun towards her, all Juvia could do was to look back at him.

Juvia has been close to dying many times before, but at that moment, she was certain she was going to. Zeref’s eyes were dark and seemed bottomless while she stared at them. He was crazy. A hundred per cent insane.

She was going to die.

“If you survive, tell them to stop looking for me. I don’t want to go back.” Zeref said and Juvia heard him from above the rain.

“I-I’m not looking for you.” Juvia managed to say even if her insides were almost frozen with fear. Damn it, she was shaking. “I’m from FT. We had no idea you…”

“FT?” Zeref frowned for a moment and his face softened a bit, but not enough to make Juvia fear-free. “Well, then. Sorry for the mess.” Juvia watched as he walked in her direction and her whole body froze even more. “But I can’t let you see where I go.”

“What…” Juvia’s last memory was his fist hitting her jaw and her head hitting the ground so hard, she lost consciousness.

When Juvia woke up, the sun was almost down and there was no more rain. And she had to take a moment to remember where she was and why all her body hurt, why the back of her head hurt, her arm, her jaw and legs.

She sat down so fast her, she felt dizzy and saw black dots in front of her eyes. For a moment she thought she was going to throw up, but held it together.

Juvia needed to find her friends, she needed to tell them Zeref was armed and killing people. She looked to the dead blonde man a few meters from her and gulped. That was almost her.

After she worked hard to get up, she took a moment to take deep breaths and pushed through the soreness and pain. She started to walk – probably for fifteen minutes – until she heard voices, voices she recognized, thank god.

Soon, she finally arrived where her friends were and apparently, everyone was there and seemed fine. She recognized Gray and sighed in relief that he was fine.

“Hey… you… guys!” Juvia said weakly.

Gray turned around but Erza spoke first. “Juvia!”

“You’re okay?” Apparently Gray’s voice was the medicine she needed; she managed to talk louder.

“Juvia is so sorry…” She cried. Actually she was genuinely embarrassed about it. Gray sent her on a mission and she failed it. “Juvia let Zeref get away…” Gray went to her side and put an arm around her waist and she leaned on him, feeling much better. “Gray-sama, please, punish me! Give it to me however you like…” She whined, trying to make the situation lighter.

Erza shook her head with a small smile.
“I… I don’t have those kinds of hobbies!” Gray’s cheeks reddened.

“But I do!” Their friends chuckled and dismissed them, thankfully: she didn’t want an audience to tell what happened. Gray raised her arm to put it around his shoulder when she hissed in pain and he froze.

“What the hell?” Taking a better look, he saw the earlier bullet wound and his eyes widened.

“I forgot about that!” Erza was also by her side. “Wendy!” She called over her shoulder.

“I’m fine.” Juvia tried to say, but Gray already scooped her from the ground bridal style and walked towards to a makeshift tent. “No, I’m fine, you don’t have to…”

“Shut up.” Gray’s jaw was set. “You can’t even walk right, can you? Don’t lie to me.”

Juvia looked down in shame. “No. I’m sorry.”

“Stop apologizing.” He barked and Juvia went silence; his embrace on her felt good, but he was mad at her and she didn’t like that a bit. Once they were inside the tent, Gray put her down on a gurney.

“Wendy, Juvia needs you!”

“Gray-sama…” Juvia tried to say, but shut her mouth when he gave her a look. She lied down and moaned when her head hit the soft place – even there, her head hurt. She would have a nasty bump if not already.

“You hit your head?” Gray asked and put a hand on the back of her head. “Damn, Juvia.” When he draw his hand, there was some blood on his fingers. “What the hell happened?”

Thankfully, Wendy arrived and the first thing she looked was the blunette’s nasty cut on the back of her skull and told her that when they were back in Magnolia, she’d need a brain scan just to make sure she didn’t have a nastier concussion. When the young doctor asked what else she needed checked, Gray told her that Juvia had something on her arm and did not leave when Wendy had to take off Juvia’s shirt even when Wendy asked him to.

His only answer was that he was not going anywhere and Juvia appreciated that, even though she didn’t want him to see how battered up she was.

Gray’s eyes were stormy when he saw the bullet hole on her arm, the burn marks on her back, the purpling marks on her face. And when she told them that she wasn’t able to walk properly because of a cattle prod, he almost went out the tent.

After Wendy stitched the wounds from her arm and head, Gray went to grab Juvia’s bag with clean clothes while the doctor bandaged her legs.

“Tell me what happened.” Gray said when Wendy left and he was helping her put her clothes back on.

“You never helped Juvia put her clothes back on. Only take them off.” She tried to laugh. “And you shouldn’t be here, they will notice.”

“Screw that.” Gray kneeled in front of her when he finished helping her with her jacket. “I really don’t care about that right now, Juvia. What I do care about is you telling me what that bastard did to you, because I know he did something, Juvia. Some of that, it was from Ultear and Meredy – we’ll talk about it later – but Zeref… I can see it in your eyes.”
Juvia bit her lower lip and slowly told him about how Zeref killed a man and how terrified she was to be in his presence. “He was going to shoot me. Until I told him that I worked with FT, he was going to shoot me like he did that man. I would be dead right now if I hadn’t spoken.” She hated it but she was shaking and tearing up a bit.

“Fuck.” Gray whispered. He sat beside her at the gurney and put an arm around her and she cuddled up to him, breathing in his scent and enjoying his warmth. “But you are not dead. You are here. You are here.” It seemed as if he was whispering more to himself than to her. “You are here.”

“Can we go home?” Juvia whispered. “I’m so tired.”

“You can’t sleep, Wendy said you have a concussion. I need to keep you up all night.”

Juvia chuckled. “You already do that.” Some tension seemed to leave his body as he laughed.

“Sorry, but this time it won’t be by my usual ways.”

“Pity.” Juvia looked up and Gray kissed her gently. “Can we go outside?”

“Yeah.” Gray nodded, reached for the crutches and helped her up, walking slowly next to her. “Oh, the test is cancelled, by the way. Laxus is here, back at the firm and with all the crap that happened today.”

“Makes sense.” Gray helped Juvia sit down on a bench and sat next to her. “When will we leave?”

“Gildarts said that in an hour the Coast Guard will be here and we can straight some things up.”

“Oh, god. That will take all night long.” Juvia moaned and rested her head on his shoulder.

“Sorry.” Gray sighed and they stayed in silent, listening to their friends when Levy, who was using headphones and with a laptop in front of her, got up and gasped.

“Shit!” She said.

“Wow, bookworm can swear!” Gajeel laughed.

“You, shut up.” Levy told him and then turned to where Master Makarov was. “Master, I heard at the frequency radio I’m hacking and I heard something about dropping a gun here, at the Island.” Everyone began talking at the same time. “Look, they are two minutes away. What do we do, Master?”

They looked at the old man, who seemed to think for a few moments. “We leave. Take nothing unnecessary, just go to where our boat is. Right now.”

Everyone began to move and Juvia got up with difficulty and, with her crutches, she tried to walk faster, but couldn’t. She was clearly the last one on the line – while everyone ran, she walked slowly.

Suddenly, she felt someone lift her up and put her over his shoulders as she gasped. She recognized Gray. “Gray-sama… I’ll only slow you down.”

“Shut up.” Gray snarled as he ran and caught up with their friends.

“Shit, look!” Gajeel yelled, but Juvia couldn’t see because her back was to where the others were. “A fucking heli!”

“Faster! Everyone!” Mirajane screamed and Juvia saw dirt change into sand as they reached the
beach. The helicopter was over them and just when they were running over the docks, almost at the
boat, Juvia watched as the first bomb fell, right in the middle of the Island. The explosion was big,
but when the helicopter turned around and dropped another bomb closer to the beach and the hot
wave of air made many of FT members fall on the water, Gray and Juvia included.

The docks were already in a deep part of the beach so when Juvia fell on the water she couldn’t say
what was up or down, with her barely using her legs, she tried to use her arms to find the way up,
but everything was confused.

Just when air was turning into a problem and her arms were aching, Juvia felt someone grab her
hand and pull her up towards the surface. She coughed and took deep breaths. “Juvia!” Gray was
yelling at her, his ears were probably ringing just like hers. “Hold on to me, don’t let go!”

“We need to get the others.” Juvia looked around and saw more people on the water.

“Listen to me.” He yelled. “Everyone is helping each other, and it happens that I’m helping you.”

“But…” She tried.

“You can’t swim like this.” Gray told her. “Just don’t let go of me and we’ll help whoever we can,
but don’t let go.” Juvia nodded and Gray turned around so she could wrap her arms around his neck
as he swam net to whomever fell on the water. “Is everyone accounted for?” He looked up to where
Mirajane and Erza were, at the docks, helping Levy up.

“Yes!” The psychiatrist said.

“The helicopter seems to be gone as well.” Erza said and offered her hand to Wendy, whom Natsu
was helping up.

“Thank fucking god!” The pink haired man said. “I saw the name on that heli… who the hell names
a helicopter ‘Acnologia’?”

Gray and Natsu helped Juvia up while Erza pulled her up and soon everyone was on the boat,
blankets around the people who were on the water and Gray shared one with Juvia – he sat down
and she sat between his legs, not at all concerned about people seeing them.

Juvia was shaking, more because of what happened than the cold water. “You are here.” Gray
whispered into her ear and she put a hand over where his were resting on her stomach.

Everyone stayed in silence, watching the island they were supposed to have fun in, burn, until two
hours later, when the Coast Guard appeared.

It would be one hell of a night.
So, here it is. Sorry it took me awhile to write this chapter. Do you know when you want to write the chapter after the one you actually need to write? Well, this one was the ‘rejected’ one. I want to write the next one sooo bad. Do you know why? Lyon! Yessssss, he’s coming and there will be some drama and I just need some drama in this story LOL

Anyway, I hope I didn’t disappointed. :)
For a week past the incident regarding the island, FT was closed so everyone could heal properly and Juvia spent most of her time tending to Gray's injury (she was very mad at him once she found out he had deep cuts on his hip – that Wendy had taken a look – and carried her out of the island anyway). The rest of the time, she tried to spend with her dog because puppies made her happy.

At night, Gray and Juvia would go to Frank's to have dinner and more times than not, they'd go up to either hers or his apartment and in those moments Juvia would forget, but once she was alone for the rest of the night, she'd remember about a man with dark hair and eyes that screamed crazy.

Juvia didn't know why Zeref affected her so much. She'd been on the brink of death before, she'd seen the people who wanted her dead, but none of them scared her as much as that man did.

Resuming their previous lives was a bit difficult, but the moment they stepped inside FT once more, things became easier.

The big surprise was finding out that Gildarts turned out to be Cana's father and the main reason she joined the army was to find him. It annoyed the crap out of Cana that he didn't seem to leave her alone once she told him about it, but Juvia could see that her friend secretly loved all the attention.

A week after returning to work, Juvia was surprised to enter her office and saw Laxus seated across her table, seeming to be waiting for her. Juvia looked over her shoulder and saw that Cana was not on her station and frowned.

"Erm… Laxus-san?" Juvia said with caution, she didn't know him very well and had no idea why he would be in her office.

Hearing her voice, the handsome blonde man looked over his shoulder and got up from the chair he was seating on. He was a big man, there was no denying it: large shoulders, very muscular. His eyes were dark blue and there was a scar in a shape of lightening from his forehead to under his right eye and down his cheek, which only enhanced his rough beauty.

"Juvia." He said as a greeting.

"This is very unusual; for you to come here, I mean." Juvia stepped further into her office, going to stand behind her desk. "Can Juvia help you with anything?"

"Yes, actually." Laxus said and sat down when Juvia motioned for him to do so and she did the same. "As you know, all of us need to have these… sessions with Mirajane." He said in disgust and it showed how much he hated it and Juvia nodded in understanding. "Three days ago, she gave me-

"Homework." Both said together and Juvia giggled.
"Yes, she likes to do that." Juvia smiled to him. "She made me get a pet."

"What she is making me do is a little more than that." Laxus explained to her. "She says that I should make amends with the people I hurt and for the past three days I've doing exactly that."

Juvia frowned. "Okay?"

"Well, it is your turn." The blonde man said and Juvia seemed more confused. "A couple of months ago, when I… did what I did in here, you got hurt because of it." He stopped talking for a few moments. "I'd like to say that I am sorry for that."

"Oh, you don't have to-"

"I do." Laxus cut her off. "I was not in my right mind and being alone during the past three months taught me that. It's not easy for me to say these words, so, accept them."

"Of course." Juvia smiled softly. "Juvia would never refuse to accept an apology from someone who has turned their lives around. She wasn't exactly a girl scout and when she needed a place to stay, your grandfather took me in, gave me a second chance. Trust me, no hard feelings. Rest assured."

"Thank you." Laxus nodded. "I heard of what you did that day and I was impressed." When Juvia questioned why, he kept talking. "You made yourself unable to fight so you couldn't hurt a friend. No one else thought of that even when they've been fighting side by side for years, while you, who had been working here for about a month, did." He inclined his head in a sign of respect. "Well, I must leave now. I've had this conversation with nearly everyone that I have to, but I'm leaving the worst ones to the end: Natsu, Gajeel and Cana." Juvia's eyebrows rose in question. "Natsu will want to fight again and so will Gajeel from what I gathered. Cana is just a bitch to apologize to."

"Great way to start, asshole." They heard from the door and when Juvia looked up, Cana was there, arms crossed under her breasts and an unpleasant expression on her face.

"Well, bitching about me saying you are a bitch to apologize to, makes my point." Laxus got up from his chair.

"Don't try to pretend to be smart now." She pointed at him, narrowed her eyes and when she turned around, her wavy hair flew as she walked away and with a final look at Juvia's direction, Laxus left her office.

Juvia blinked a few times, trying to understand what happened, but shrugged it off, knowing that she was the new girl there and wouldn't understand, so, she went to her computer and started to do some research.

Minutes later, when she needed Cana to get a number of a client, Juvia noticed that her secretary was not in her station. The blunette looked across the hall and saw that Lucy was not there either and sighed. Noticing Gray's office door open, she walked over and knocked on the threshold. He was typing a message on his phone and, once he looked up and saw her, his shoulders, which were tense, relaxed a bit and he lost his frown.

"Hey. What's up?"

"Looking for Cana-san." Juvia leaned on the threshold and crossed her arms. "Laxus-san came over and apologized for what happened a few months ago and was about to go apologize to her, but she heard him say that she was a bitch to apologize to. Cana refused to hear it and he followed her. But that was" she looked at her wrist, to her watch "twenty minutes ago. She is probably yelling at him somewhere."
Gray chuckled. "Nah. Laxus has only a bit of patience for that. They are probably screwing in the bathroom."

"What?" Juvia gasped, taking a few steps inside the room.

"You didn't know? They have a crazy thing going on: they fight and then fuck." Gray snorted. "It's twisted, but works for them, I guess."

"That's why she said she liked her men blonder." The blunette said, still in shock. "So, that's whom she was talking about: Laxus-san. At least now Juvia has someone to tease her with, it was getting rather boring Cana doing all the teasing." She chuckled and put her hands on his desk. "I guess I'll have to find the client's number on her desk, then. God knows she needs her own fun so she'll get distracted from what we are doing." Gray nodded and his scowl returned, making Juvia frown. "What's wrong?"

Gray sighed. "My brother is telling me he will be coming to visit me for a few days next week."

"That's good. Isn't it?" Juvia asked.

"Maybe. I don't know." He shrugged. "He is a troublemaker."

She frowned. "You told me he turned his life around, that he is in the CIA."

"Yeah, but this time I have this weird feeling."

"Everything will be fine, you'll see." Juvia looked over her shoulder and seeing no one out the door, she leaned over the table and kissed Gray's lips. "See you later."

#

Juvia stretched her arms and got up from her chair, her body was unpleasantly sore; she had been typing reports from her past missions the whole afternoon and she was in dire need of a hot bath and her wonderful big comfy bed. Since she had a night planned on going to Gray's apartment, she needed to tell him she was going home a little early and if he wanted to, he could come by.

She grabbed her purse and told Cana she was going home a little early; the secretary grinned and told her she would go home as well and Juvia chuckled with how excited Cana was with the possibility of going out of work early.

Noticing Lucy's desk was empty and Gray's office's door was open, Juvia felt her phone vibrate and walked in his office without looking up, searching for it in her purse. "Gray-sama, Juvia is going home early, but it's fine if you want to come by later."

"Oh, my little brother got himself a girlfriend?" Listening to the unknown voice, Juvia looked up and saw that Gray wasn't alone in his office. The stranger had white hair; he was sitting on the chair in front of Gray's desk.

"She's not my girlfriend." Gray said and got up from his place behind his desk and Juvia wondered if she kept the hurt away from her expression, after all, even if they had something going on, they were not girlfriend and boyfriend.

The unknown man looked Juvia up and down and grinned while getting up. "Well, hello there, then. Lyon Vastia." The man said and offered his hand; – Juvia couldn't help but to think that he was rather charming with his beautiful smile, deep green eyes. He was a very handsome man, actually. "I didn't catch your name." He lingered.
The blunette blinked a couple of times, realizing she had not introduced herself. "I'm sorry." She took his hand. "Juvia Lockser, nice to meet you."

"Absolutely charmed." He smiled, brought her hand to his lips, kissed the back and Juvia was certain she was blushing – who the hell acted that way? That traitor's heart of hers should keep itself in check and had no business beating faster.

After Lyon let go of her hand, Juvia glanced at Gray's direction and saw that he was walking around the table and he had a frown on – Juvia wondered why. He put himself between them and told Juvia: "I just texted you. I mixed the dates, it turned out that my brother arrived a day before I thought he would."

"Oh, you are Gray-sama's brother!" Juvia looked over Gray's shoulders and grinned. "Juvia heard about you."

"Don't believe anything he says. I was a great kid." Lyon grinned back. "On the other hand, I have wonderful stories to tell about how much of a brat he was."

When Juvia giggled, Gray groaned and turned to his brother. "Shut up. Go wait in the hall and I'll be out in a moment."

"Alright, alright, don't get your panties in a bunch." Lyon rolled his eyes and grabbed his coat from its place on Gray's couch. "See you, Juvia-chan." He winked and Juvia smiled his way over her shoulder.

"He is nice." Juvia returned her gaze to Gray and was surprised to see him looking at her with his eyes narrowed and she frowned. "What is it?"

"Nothing." Gray said but she didn't believe him. "I have to cancel tonight, as you can see my pain-in-the-ass brother is here and he likes to drag me to bars."

"Go be with him." Juvia told him, putting her hands on his chest. "Juvia came here to tell you that she was going home to rest for a bit before you come over."

"What happened?" He frowned.

"Juvia had to do paperwork all day long." Gray made a disgusted face and Juvia smiled. "Exactly. So, go enjoy your bother."

"'Enjoy' is a bit of a stretch here." Gray groaned. "I'll stand him at best. He always fights with me to see who's best."

"Well, don't fall for it, then." Juvia shrugged.

"Yeah, yeah, I'll try." Gray looked over her shoulder, towards the door and when he saw no one, he kissed her lips. "See you tomorrow."

#

The next day Juvia was in her office when Cana announced she had a walk-in. The blunette frowned in confusion when she saw the smirk on the other woman's lips but asked for whoever it was to get in.

To say she was surprised to see Gray's brother was an understatement.
"Ly-Lyon-sama?"

"I'm glad you remembered my name, Juvia-chan." He smiled to her and then to Cana as she left the room and closed the door behind her. "How are you today?"

"Fine, thank you." She motioned towards the chair and he waited her to sit first before he did the same. "What can I help you with?"

"I'd like to hire you." Lyon smiled.

"Oh?"

"You see, there's this computer I need to break into – totally sanctioned by the CIA, don't worry – and tonight we should have the perfect opportunity." Lyon told her and Juvia narrowed her eyes.

"From what Juvia heard, you are more than capable to get it."

"Oh, I am." He agreed. "But this opportunity I talk about is an invitation my people at the Agency got and I need a plus one."

"Your brother surely would…"

"…whine about it all the time and tell me I could do it on my own. No, thank you. Plus, I'd like to blend in, not be the weird guy who brings his brother to events that are clear to be enjoyed by couples."

Juvia thought about it for a moment. "Why me? You just met me briefly yesterday. How do you know it is Juvia you want?"

Lyon leaned and rested his elbows on his thighs. "My brother gets chatty when he gets drunk and last night he told me about some of the things you did. I must say I am impressed."

"He talked about Juvia?" She asked, finding it very strange that Gray brought her up.

"To be honest, I asked." Lyon grinned and Juvia rolled her eyes in fake annoyance. He took a flash drive from his pocket and offered her. "Want in? It will have great food, great music and my wonderful company, all paid by the government."

"What do you get out of it?"

"A good partner to get what I need and a beautiful woman in my arm that will make everyone feel jealous." The white haired man told her, charmingly and even if Juvia did feel flattered, she hesitated, thinking about Gray and if it would be wise for her to take that case. She had… something going on with him and didn't want to mess it up. And, as if reading her thoughts, Lyon kept talking. "I… I asked Gray if you were his girlfriend and he said again that you weren't."

She took a breath. "He is right." As much it hurt to admit, it was the truth.

"Then, my offer stands." Lyon offered her the flash drive. "If you don't want to come with me, it's fine. Just take a look at the layout of where the party will be held and help me figure out how to get in."

Juvia bit her lower lip and nodded. But she would not go with him.

No way.
Juvia put the flash drive in her purse without anyone noticing and smiled to the women around the ballroom while she walked towards where Lyon was, holding two glasses of champagne, and with three other couples.

"Darling, there you are!" He said with a huge smile and handing her a glass. "I thought you got lost."

"You thought right." Juvia accepted the glass. "This place is so big I lost my way back from the bathroom."

"Poor thing," Lyon put an arm around her waist, pulling her to his side and kissing her cheek. "Did you get it?" He said in a low voice, his hot breath tingling her cheek.

"Of course." Juvia whispered and then back to the couples around them. "I am just so bad at memorizing where I'm going." She used her best airheaded tone and the men gave her nods and then resumed looking at her chest. Her light blue dress was especially tight, short and showing as much cleavage she could: it was better for them to look at her body and forget all about everything else.

"Wanna dance?" Lyon asked her.

"Of course." She said good-bye to the people they met just that evening and put their glasses on one of the waiter's trays and went to the dance floor. Lyon pulled her close with a hand on her lower back while his other one grabbed hers as they started to sway to the music. Juvia put a hand on his shoulder. "It was easy to get it."

"I am not surprised you thought it was easy." Lyon told her and she looked into his eyes. "I looked for you in the database we have and... I need to say that you have an incredible record."

"I do, don't I?" She grinned.

"And you are proud of it."

"Juvia didn't work this hard to not acknowledge it." She shrugged.

"A girl after my heart." Lyon chuckled and Juvia liked the sound, it made her feel good. They danced for a minute longer and he spoke again. "Now that we have it, we could go back." Juvia nodded.

Lyon opened the door of the cab and Juvia got out after he offered his hand so she could exit it, commenting on the fact that she lived across his brother's building, earning a shrug and a smile from her. He told the cabbie to wait and walked her to the front door of her building. He took her hand close to his mouth and kissed it – apparently he liked to do that and he got no complaints from Juvia: it was rather charming.

"Thank you for the great night. And for the help."

"You could've done it yourself." Juvia smiled. "Or with help from the Agency."

"I could have," He granted her that. "But then I would've been deprived of your lovely self this whole night."

She smiled, but it faded after a moment and she looked at him. "Why?" He looked confused. "You
met me one time and you just… I don't understand; you could've asked your brother for help. And don't talk about him whining about it because I know he wouldn't. He'd help."

"Have you ever felt the moment you met someone and you knew that person would be a big part of your life?" Lyon asked, looking into her eyes. "Because I swear it was what I felt when I saw you. I don't know why, I don't understand it, but I felt that."

*Of course* Juvia knew. She felt the same way when she met Gray. They were shooting at each other, in opposite sides, but even then, she just knew there was something pulling her to him.

And now, Lyon did as well.

"Juvia knows how it feels." She told him and Lyon brought her closer, their bodies touching just like they did when they were dancing an hour before. He was even more handsome up close, his eyes so intense and focused on hers; his gaze went to her lips for a moment before he looked back into her eyes. Juvia knew he wanted to kiss her and if her heart were empty, she would've liked that. If she hadn't Gray, she would kiss Lyon. But she did have Gray – better yet: he had her. "I'm sorry." She whispered and Lyon frowned. "I- Gray-sama and I, we…” She couldn't finish the sentence because the next second, Lyon was being pulled away from her.

She recognized Gray's back as he punched his brother right on the jaw. Lyon took a few steps back, a hand on his face. "What the fuck, Gray!? That fucking hurts!"

"You can't keep your paws to yourself, can you?" Gray snarled as he reached for his brother, grabbed him by the shirt and punched him again. "Don't take what is mine!"

Finally the shock worn off a bit and Juvia ran to where the men were. She tried to make Gray let go of Lyon, but he gave his brother another swing before Juvia grabbed his fist.

"Gray-sama!" Juvia said. "Let him go!" When he didn't, Juvia tried once again. "Gray-sama, please!" Gray gritted his teeth and let his brother go by shoving him away. Juvia went to where Lyon was spitting blood on the ground and touched his face; he would have some ugly bruises in the morning.

"Hey!" The cabbie came out of the car, cellphone in hand. "Should I call the cops?"

"No, it's fine." Lyon said to him. "This idiot is my brother and he still has to learn how to share." He yelled the last part.

Gray made move to try to grab his brother once again, but Juvia saw that and put herself between them.

"No, no, no, no." Juvia said, putting a hand on his chest, pushing him away. "Stop it, right now!"

Gray's anger found another target quickly when he looked at her. "What the fuck were you doing with him and making out like that?" He asked her.

"What? We were not-" Juvia tried, but Lyon cut him off.

"Don't you have eyes, Gray?" The white haired man said loud enough. "I was getting to that when you interrupted us. Awful timing, bro." Juvia almost turned around to look at Lyon in exasperation – that was not the time.

Men and their pissing contest.
Gray almost went by Juvia, but she shoved him back – making him take back a few steps. "Stop it. If you continue to try to beat him, people will call the police and I'd like to see you explaining this to them." Gray's eyes were still on Lyon's figure. "Let's go up your apartment so Juvia can explain it all to you. Please."

"Fine." Gray snarled and turned around, walking towards his building.

"Okay." Lyon took two steps when Juvia blocked his way. "Juvia-chan?"

"If you go up there now, he's going to punch you again."

"And I'll punch him right back." He tried again, she didn't let him and Lyon huffed in frustration. "He is angry. I don't want to leave you alone with him while he's…"

"Juvia can handle him." She reassured him.

"Juvia!" Gray called from the door of his building.

"Go." The blunette told Lyon and he didn't look like he would leave anytime soon. "You two can talk later, when neither is throwing punches."

"Juvia, now!"

"Juvia…" Lyon sounded hesitant.

"Don't worry. He won't hurt me."

How wrong she was.

#

Gray practically kicked his door open as he entered his apartment and Juvia closed it behind her when she got in. He was restless and the whole ride up in the elevator, she could feel waves of anger coming out of him.

The moment she closed the door, he stopped in the middle of his living room, turned around and all but yelled: "What the fuck were you doing with him?"

"We were out doing a job." Juvia answered, calm.

"A job?" Gray sounded incredulous.

"Yes. He hired me to help getting some information from inside a building."

"And you fell for that?" He asked. "He could've gotten the information by himself, I bet. Or asked someone else to."

"He could have. But he asked for Juvia's help."

Gray took a few steps towards her. "And you said yes? Why?"

"Because he is a client, he is your brother, I wanted an evening out. You pick." Juvia was getting a headache. "I'm sorry you got upset I stole your brother for today, next time Juvia will try harder to make him go to you and no one else. He is your client, or whatever." She sighed.

"What?" Gray blinked a couple of times, still clearly irritated but confused. "You… you have no idea
what's going on. Do you?" Juvia frowned and then he saw his whole demeanor change and his eyes darken. "You don't. You don't know why I am angry."

"You are angry at your brother for seeking help with someone else." She told him, her voice quieter than before and she watched as he took a few steps towards her, slowly and suddenly she wasn't feeling so secure about her reasoning. "Right?"

"No." He practically growled in frustration. "Perhaps you haven't noticed yet, but I don't like when people take what is mine. Tonight I'll make sure you understand that." Gray grabbed her by the waist, a hand on the back of her neck and just like that, he kissed her and Juvia just surrender to him.

Gray didn't stop kissing her until they reached his bedroom – Juvia's head was spinning with how rough he was being that night, kissing her like she could vanish at any second and not letting her get a straight thought.

He reached behind her, lowered the zipper of her dress and pulled it down, stopping kiss her just long enough to pull it after her hips and let it pool on her feet. Gray also pulled down her panties and once it was next to the forgotten dress, he kissed her stomach and up between her breasts and again her lips. She was never so thankful to don't need a bra to wear that dress before.

Putting her down on his bed, Gray lied on top of her – still fully clothed – kissing her lips, then trailed down to her jaw, neck and finally his lips were on her breasts and Juvia moaned when he sucked on a nipple at the same time he pushed her legs open and settled there. He touched her between the legs and she gasped when he slipped a finger inside and then a second, she put her arms around his shoulders and tried to bite down a moan when he started to move them inside her; they had done that enough times so he knew exactly where to touch her.

Gray looked up to her and the heated look in his eyes made her bit her lower lip as heat pooled in her lower stomach and he kissed his way down and Juvia could barely breathe when he kissed her inner thigh and the moment his mouth touched her clit, Juvia let out a tiny scream before she put her hands on his hair and just felt.

It seemed Gray was more enthusiastic than ever – the way his fingers worked inside her, his tongue circling and sucking her clit, his hands keeping her open to him – and in a matter of minutes, Juvia was almost there, she could feel the beginnings of her orgasm, she was so close she could taste it, but just then Gray stopped and he was gone from her.

Juvia whined in frustration, he just left her there and when she opened her eyes, she saw Gray was taking off his shirt and unbuckle his pants. Her annoyance dampened a bit seeing him undress himself, knowing what was coming.

Naked, then, Gray returned to be on top of her, kissing her lips and Juvia could taste herself in his tongue and when he settled between her legs, she thought he would finally get on to it – she could feel his erection on her thigh. Juvia slid a hand between them, but before she could reach his shaft, Gray grabbed her hand and pinned it over her head.

She looked at him in confusion but Gray's expression was still as angry as before they started getting intimate.

"Gray-sama?" She whispered, confused and deeply aroused.

"Do you understand it yet?" Gray hissed and Juvia frowned. "You don't." He groaned and kissed
her once again, more forcefully than before. He put a hand between her legs once more and the spark of arousal returned in a full blow, making her moan into his mouth. One of her arms was still pinned over her head while she tried to put the other around his shoulders while he made her feel like her whole body was burning. "I need you to understand."

Juvia whined when he curled a finger inside her just the right way. "Understand what?" He growled once again moved faster until her mind was spinning and she was in a verge of an orgasm once again and just when she thought she was going to get release, he stopped. "No." She whined. "No, no, no."

"You can't go out with Lyon." Gray told her, grabbing her arm together with her other one above her head. "You just can't." He kissed her deeply and then buried his face between her breasts, he kissed each breast and pinched one of her nipples with the hand that had been between Juvia's legs a few moments ago and the blunette saw that his fingers were coated with her arousal. When Gray put his mouth over it and sucked, it made her quiver with want and it went right into her center at the same time he put his hand back there. All she wanted was him.

"Gray-sama, please." Juvia begged him, moving her hips, trying to find the release he had been denying her.

"Do you understand it yet?" Gray asked and Juvia was finding hard to comprehend he was saying.

"I don't…" She whined and almost yelled in frustration when he stopped once again. "Oh my god, Gray-sama. Don't do this to me." Juvia's eyes watered – it hurt to be left on the verge and then stopping. She was so needy it hurt her – Juvia couldn't even get her arms free to touch herself and take the edge of. "I don't know what I did, but I'm sorry. Please."

Gray looked absolutely possessed in anger as he let go of her wrists, his hand tangling itself on her hair and he pulled it back. Juvia looked into his dark eyes and saw want for her and something else she couldn't put her finger on.

"What you did was piss me off." Gray pushed her legs wider and his erection pressed against her entrance and she felt relief he was getting in her. "Going out with my brother, Juvia? Really?" He asked, pushing in just a little inside her and then pulling back out, and Juvia put her arms around him, whimpering when he repeated the movement a moment later. "Never do that again, do you understand me?"

"Yes." Juvia nodded, sliding her arms down to his lower back, trying to make him finally slide all the way in. "Just please…"

Gray still didn't let go of her hair and held it tighter, the pain going straight to Juvia's lower stomach as pleasure. "Look at me." Juvia's eyelids were heavy, but she managed to look at him as he said: "You are mine." The moment the words came out from his mouth, Gray slid inside her with one strong thrust that made Juvia's eyes roll to the back of her head.

"Gray-sama." She moaned in relief and want at the same time when he started to move and it was overwhelming her how crazy he was making her feel. Juvia hung on him, Gray was panting on top of her, moving fast and hitting all the right places and when Juvia could feel her orgasm approaching again, he pulled it out from her and that time, Juvia begged him, tears in her eyes. "Gray-sama, please, please. Oh, god, please."

His answer was to spin her around on the bed, Juvia let him do it, but all she could think was that she really needed to come or she wouldn't survive. Juvia felt Gray put his hands on her hips and made her get on her knees, her upper body still on the mattress as he separated her legs to his liking.
Once she was positioned the way he wanted, he slipped inside her once more and in that position, he seemed to get so much deeper, he seemed so much bigger and it overwhelmed her for a second. When he started moving, her breathing stopped for a second, sensations in override.

Gray covered her body, grabbed her arms and pinned them over her head, his hips snapping on hers, his chest on her back and he whispered in her ear: "You are mine." Juvia grabbed the bedding with the little, trying to ground herself, eyes closed, hoping that this time he wouldn't stop because she wasn't sure she would survive.

"Please don't stop." Juvia could feel it again, the building up of an orgasm. She could feel tears fall in frustration, in desire, she didn't know. "Don't stop."

"Tell me you are mine." Gray panted in her ear while he slid a hand under her body and touched her clit and Juvia whined with the light touch – she needed more. "Say it."

"I-" She tried, but let out a moan then Gray snapped his hips on hers a little harder. "Oh, god. I'm yours. Yes, I'm yours. Please, Gray-sama. Please let me-" She couldn't finish the words because Gray pinched her clit and that was what sent her blessedly over the edge with a scream.

She was still on a high from her orgasm when she realized Gray kept moving and her body was responded to it even if she was sensitive, because she felt the boiling on her lower stomach once again, especially with Gray playing with her while moving inside her.

"You are mine." He growled in her ear and all she could do was whimper and feel. "Not his, mine. All mine."

"Yes." She managed to say between taking deep breaths – her whole body was buzzing, needy and in desperate search for another release. "Yes."

Gray's touch on her clit got rougher and she couldn't take it anymore and came one more time, this time more quietly, but just as intense as the first. In the back of her mind, she felt Gray move two more times before he stilled and Juvia felt him empty himself inside her.

His weight was on top of her, she was trapped between him and the bed, but she didn't mind too much because her whole body was limp, all her nerves were swimming in pleasure and her brain wasn't registering much beyond that.

Even after feeling him loose his hold on her wrists, Juvia just didn't move, but felt him get off her and fall on the bed next to her. Her whole body was sated, but the moment her mind started to work, her heart got heavy.

#

Juvia got up from the bed and she could feel his eyes on her while she grabbed her dress and underwear from the floor. She went to the bathroom and heard him call her name in confusion before she locked herself inside.

Taking a deep breath, Juvia tried to control her emotions. She understood why Gray had acted that way: he was trying to make a point to Lyon that Juvia was off-limits, that she was his but it hurt her the way he did that. She cleaned herself the best she could between her legs and put her clothes back on before she stepped outside and found Gray on his underwear in the middle of the bedroom, looking in her direction.

Their eyes met for a second before she looked away and walked out the bedroom.
"Juvia?" She heard him call her but she didn't stop. The blunette saw her purse on the floor next to the couch and grabbed it. He stepped in front of her and when she tried to walk around him, he blocked her way. "Juvia? What are you doing?"

"Leaving." She didn't look up to him when she hissed her answer and tried to leave but he didn't let her.

"Something's wrong." Gray said and Juvia could feel her eyes water up. "What the…? Are you crying?" He sounded confused and terrified with seeing her cry. "Juvia, tell me what's wrong."

Juvia finally looked up, feeling angry. "What's wrong? What's wrong is you fucking me to get back at your brother."

He looked taken aback. "What? What are you talking about?"

"We always had fun when we are together. Always. We've been having sex for a while now and we had our fun." Juvia pointed to his bedroom. "But what happened in that bedroom tonight was not fun. It was intense, explosive? It was. We were in there together, but that was between you and your feud with your brother and had very little to do with me." She took a deep breath.

It took a moment for Gray to answer, but he also seemed to get angry. "How is that any different from what happened between you and that woman at the club?" When Juvia frowned in question, he cleared up. "At Lucy's birthday party."

Once she understood his words, she looked at him in disbelief. "First of all, she wasn't my sister and second, I didn't punch her in the face." The urge certainly had been there, but she didn't act on it. "If you think that what happened inside your bedroom tonight was the same thing we did back then, then either you or I have been reading the mood very wrongly and this time Juvia doesn't believe she is the one to fault here."

"How is that my fault?" Gray accused her. "You are the one who went out with him tonight and you two looked very cozy before I arrived."

"And if you had waited three more seconds, you would've seen Juvia push him away; I was about to explain to him that nothing could happen." Juvia said. "And you kept saying Juvia is not your girlfriend, so when your brother asked for my help, he didn't know he was doing something he shouldn't have."

"That's because-" Gray started, but she didn't let him finish.

"Juvia is not your girlfriend. Yes, I know, you don't let anyone forget it." She said, bitter, and her eyes watered even more. "I have feelings, you know that? I can live with my own crazy expectations because I know that they are crazy, but you cannot say I am not your girlfriend and act like a jealous boyfriend a day later. I am fine being your friend, I am fine having sex with you, I am fine living in this crazy limbo you have us in, but don't you dare put my hopes up and then take them back down. It's mean, it's cruel, and I don't deserve it."

Gray finally seemed to understand what she was talking about and he could see his anger go away and his eyes soften. "Juvia…" He tried to reach to her, but Juvia shook her head and he stopped a few steps away from her.

"You did all that so you made sure you won when you could've just asked and Juvia would've told you that she only wants you, that you never had to worry." Her lower lip tremble as she tried to hold back her tears, but it was in vain. "Instead…" She tried to dry a tear that fell and hide it from him.
"Well, congratulations, you won. Must feel good." Juvia took a few steps towards the door, but remembered she had another thing to add. "Do you even realize we didn't use a condom tonight with the whole ordeal that happened?"

Gray turned around in her direction; his eyes went huge and he paled. "Fuck. I always wear condoms."

"Well, you forgot tonight and so did Juvia." She told him. "Don't worry, Juvia's has a birth control implant and is clean."

"I- Yeah, me too."

"Do you know what was the saddest part of everything that happened tonight?" When Gray didn't move, she kept speaking either way. "You said that I'm yours, but you didn't realize one thing." He finally looked at her. "Possession comes both ways and if I am yours, then you are mine and that is not true. Never has been." Without looking back, Juvia got out from his apartment, and the moment she was alone in the elevator, she cried.

#

As expected, Juvia barely slept that night. She ignored Lyon's texts asking her if she was okay, choosing instead, when morning came, to get dressed and get to work earlier to occupy her mind.

Two hours later, when Cana arrived and told her the usual 'good-morning', Juvia had been half-way through everything that needed to be done that day. What do you know? Getting her heart broken actually made her work better.

She was so absorbed into her work that she didn't even noticed when Cana announced Lyon was there to see her, she didn't hear. The blunette almost jumped when she felt a hand on top of hers while she was typing a report.

"Lyon-sama?" Juvia put a hand over her chest and looking at the white haired man's figure. "You scared me."

"I'm sorry."

"Sorry." Juvia passed a hand through her hair. "Juvia's phone is on silent mode."

Lyon nodded and looked at her carefully. "I just wanted to make sure you are okay."

Juvia finally focused on his face and saw the purple bruises his encounter with Gray the night before had left him with and she felt guilty. "If Juvia's okay? You are the one with bruises on your face. I'm so sorry you got mixed up in this." She leaned over her desk and touched his jaw, trying to inspection his injuries.

"These?" Lyon shrugged it off. "You should've seen us a few years ago when we went all out. Broken bones, bloody noses. These wounds are nothing compared to that."

"I'm sorry." Juvia stopped touching his face and looked down in shame.

"Hey, don't worry about this, Juvia-chan. It's fine, I swear. Brothers fight all the time and Gray and I were at it at the smallest opportunity." Lyon assured her. "We'll be fine. What I am more interested in, is what happened between you two after I left." When Juvia looked away from his eyes, it seemed as if he knew exactly what had gone down. "You two fought."
"Yes." She said after a moment's hesitation and decided it was better to leave the sex out of the conversation. "But it was about something that it needed to be talked about even if you weren't here,"

"Damn it." Lyon said. "I'm sorry, when I came here I thought you two had nothing going on and I never thought he would so jealous."

"Me neither." She sighed. "Juvia didn't even knew he cared that much." When she saw Lyon's frown, she clarified. "A couple of months ago, a friend of ours hit on Juvia and when she told Gray-sama, he just shrugged it off, saying he did that to every girl. I... I just never thought he'd care. And to be honest, up until we went up to his apartment, Juvia thought he was angry because Juvia stole you as a client."

Lyon was clearly surprised. "What the hell kind of relationship you two have?"

Juvia laughed with no humor. "You don't want to know." They stayed in silence for a couple of moments. "Don't worry. We will figure things out one way or the other. It's fine." Juvia dried a tear that threatened to fall. "We are still friends." She guessed.

"Look, Juvia-chan." Lyon said and the blunette looked up to him. "What I was telling you last night about feeling you would be a part of my life, it didn't go away. I liked spending time with you last night, you are an amazing woman, but perhaps I felt that way because I sensed there was something going on between you and my brother."

"I don't even know if there's something still going on between us." Juvia tried to blink away her tears. "But it's fine."

"It's not fine." Lyon started, but a knock on Juvia's doorway made him stop and turn around.

Juvia looked up and saw her friend and partner in there. "Sorry to interrupt, but we have a mission, Juvia." Gajeel said and nodded towards the white haired man. "Hey."

"Gajeel-kun, this is Lyon-sama, Gray-sama's brother." Juvia got up from her chair. "Lyon-sama, this is Juvia's partner, Gajeel-kun." The men shook hands and exchanged niceties (if Gajeel's grunting could be considered that). "I'm sorry, Lyon-sama, but..."

"Yeah, yeah. Don't worry." He nodded and stepped closer to her. "I'll be in town for a couple of days. Take your phone of the silent mode and call me back, please? I would like to take you to lunch." She opened her mouth to say something, but he cut her off. "Completely innocent, I swear."

"Alright." Juvia offered him a small smile and when he stepped closer to her and gave her a quick hug, she accepted it and waved him good-bye when he left her office. When she turned around to look at her partner, Gajeel had his arms crossed over his chest and was frowning her way. "What?"

"Your eyes are red. You were about to cry. What is going on?" He narrowed his eyes.

"It's nothing."

"Your boyfriend's being a pain in the ass to everyone the whole morning, then his brother is here with bruises all over his face and you look..."

"He's not Juvia's boyfriend." Juvia said, going to grab her purse and log off her computer.

"The fact that you are saying those words in a serious tone give me one hundred per cent certainty something is wrong."
"Nothing's wrong." Gajeel didn't seem convinced at all. "Come on. You said something about a mission?"

#

Juvia grabbed her phone and searched for the number and called it while Gajeel sat next to her in the cab and she prayed the call would go through and when it did, she almost sighed in relief.

"Mira-san?" Juvia asked, looking at her catatonic friend next to her.

"Juvia?"

"Yes." The blunette said, almost in tears. "I'm sorry, but Gajeel-kun is in some state of shock and I don't know what to do."

"What happened? Tell me exactly what happened."

"We are in this mission and we had two targets, but there was a third we didn't know about and he got a few punches on me before I took him down. Gajeel-kun arrived, saw it and just… froze." Juvia told the therapist while watching her friend, who just looked ahead, almost without blinking.

"Does it look like at all how you looked the day of the incident?" Mirajane asked and Juvia looked down to herself, her shirt had a bit of blood that came from her nose and she hadn't cleaned up.

"Uh… maybe? There's a bruise on Juvia's cheek – the wrong one, though. Oh, I think my nose is broken as well, it's bleeding."

"Is this the first time he's seen you hurt this way? With blood?"

"Since what happened? Yes."

"Damn it." Juvia was surprised to hear Mira cuss. "I think seeing you hurt triggered his memory of that night and he's reliving in his head what happened."

That was not good. At all. "What does Juvia need do?" The blunette asked, nervous.

"Where are you?" Juvia looked outside the cab's window and gave Mira the address. "You are closer to his apartment, but I'm afraid it would just give him more bad memories. Go to FT and bring him to his office. I think you'll arrive there faster than I will."

"Okay." Juvia told the driver FT's address. "What do I do when we get there?"

"Whatever blood you might have on you, clean it off. I'll be there soon."

"Thank you, Mira-san."

#

Juvia paid the cabbie and refused his help, Gajeel walked as if in a stupor while Juvia had her arms around his waist. It was a little after hours and most of the workers were already gone. They rode the elevator in silence and Juvia's heart ached for her friend. If she hadn't been so stupid, if she had seen the man…

The door of their floor opened and she lead him towards his office – Cana and Lucy seemed to be already gone home, thankfully – and once she put him on the couch of his office, she sat by his side for a moment.
"Gajeel-kun, Juvia will be back in a moment, okay? Just a couple of minutes and I'll be back." She got no answer, other than a blink while he stared at the wall in front of him.

Hesitating for a moment, she left and went to her office, which was next to his (she left both doors open so she could hear if something happened), and started to look for something to wear, her shirt was a bit bloodied and she needed to cover that cut on her cheek as well.

"Juvia?" The blunter jumped when she heard Gray's voice inside her office and when she turned around, his eyes widened. "What happened to you?" She should be a mess if he got that reaction.

"Juvia is fine." The blunette turned back around and fumbled on the small suitcase she left there in case she needed, but she hadn't put new clothes since the last time she needed them. "Dammit!" She threw a pair of pants down.

"Juvia." Gray turned her around. "What do you need?"

"You don't have to…"

"Just tell me what you need." He let go of her and waited for an answer.

She hesitated for a moment. "Something clean to wear. Gajeel-kun can't see this." She pointed at her shirt and Gray nodded.

He took off his coat and offered it to her. "I think it will be enough."

Juvia nodded and didn't hesitate to reach for her shirt and take it off, standing only in her dark blue bra – no point in being modest, he had more than just seen her whole body. With her shirt, she tried to clean the dried blood of her face, but gave up and just took Gray's coat and put it on.

"Thank you." She said and went to her desk, opened a drawer and took a bottle of water. She opened, poured a bit on her hand and tried to clean her face – she hissed when it made contact with the cut on her cheekbone, but pushed through it. She looked at Gray. "How does it look?"

"No more blood, but you need to have that" she pointed to her cheek "looked at. And the bruises on your torso."

"Not now." She meant to leave, but Gray grabbed her wrist. "What?"

"What is going on?"

"Not now. Gajeel-kun needs me." Juvia pulled her arm away from his grasp. "He's in his office." She left her office just in time to see Mirajane getting out of the elevator. "Oh, Mira-san! Thank you for coming."

"Of course."

"I was working late when I heard them, decided to see if I could help." He told the therapist. "What can I do?"

"Just… stay in the room with us. Gajeel never been triggered before," Mira looked at Juvia's direction "and we don't know what he might do."

"What are you talking about?" Gray frowned, but Juvia just grabbed the white haired woman's hand and lead her to where her friend was.
The three of them entered the office and Gajeel hadn't moved ever since she left him there. The blunette sat by his side, while Mirajane, on the coffee table in front of them. Gray stayed a few feet away from them, staring at what was going on.

"Gajeel." Mira said, her tone of voice very calm. "Gajeel, do you know where you are?" No answer, not even a movement. "Gajeel? Can you hear me?"

Nothing.

"Maybe would be better if we took him to a hospital?" Juvia asked Mirajane and saw that Gajeel tilted his head slightly her way.

"Oh, he is listening to you." Mirajane looked at Juvia. "Talk to him. Maybe he will listen to you." Juvia's eyes widened. "Just ground him, make sure he knows where he is and who we are." She hesitated for a moment, but nodded.

Remembering Mira's first question, Juvia put one of Gajeel's hands between hers. "Gajeel-kun. It's Juvia. Do you know where you are?"

A long moment passed before he whispered an answer, still looking far away. "You were hurt. There was blood on your face."

"Yes." Juvia nodded.

"So… we are at… my apartment?" He asked, confused, and frowned.

"No. Not this time." Juvia shook her head and touched his face, trying to bring his gaze to her. "Look again, Gajeel-kun. Where are you?"

He blinked two times and looked around. After a moment, he said: "My office?"

"Yes." Juvia smiled. "Your office." Mira nodded, urging Juvia to keep talking. "Do you remember what happened today? Why Juvia was hurt today?"

Gajeel frowned again. "I hurt you. Your face… it had blood."

"You didn't hurt me today, Gajeel-kun." Juvia shook her head. "We were in a mission, remember?"

"No." He shook his head. "You flushed it, I got mad."

"No. That was months ago." Juvia cupped his face. "Today we were in a mission, there was a man we didn't know about. We got jumped. This wasn't your fault. It never were, not now and not then." Her eyes watered.

"It… wasn't my fault?" Gajeel asked.

"No." Juvia assured him. "Do you know them?" The blunette pointed to the other people in the office.

He seemed to think a bit. "Mirajane and… Gray?" Both nodded and Gajeel relaxed a bit. "I… I think I remember now." "Oh, thank god." Juvia sighed and hugged her friend. "You scared me, stupid man." Gajeel hesitated, but put his own arms around her.

"I don't remember everything that happened." Gajeel said, looking at Mirajane.
"It's fine, we will talk about it tomorrow. You should rest, I am sure you are deadly tired."

"Yeah." Gajeel nodded.

"Juvia will go with you." He looked as if he would protest, but she was faster than him. "You don't have a say in the matter." Gajeel shut up and got up from the couch, Juvia following next.

"Sorry that you had to come here." He told Mira, who waved him off. When he looked at Gray, he frowned.

"I was already here." Gray shrugged.

Juvia let go of Gajeel and while he talked with Mirajane, she stepped closer to Gray, who just watched her, his arms crossed over his chest. "Juvia will return your coat tomorrow."

"There's no need to rush." He told her.

"There is because we need to talk." Juvia said and Gray's body tensed and he looked guilty.

"We do." He nodded and then he tilted his head in Gajeel' direction. "And about that."

"Not my story to tell." She offered him a small smile, remembering about the answer she gave him when she joined FT and by the way his eyes lit up, he remembered that. "Juvia will go to your apartment before you leave for work. Is it okay?" He nodded and Juvia said her good-byes, leaving with her friend.

#

The moment she woke up, Juvia didn't recognize where she was until she saw a black cat with a nasty scar on its face sleeping on a chair on the corner of the room. It was Gajeel's cat.

The events of the previous day returned to her and she remembered she spent the night at her friend's apartment.

"I screwed up yesterday, didn't I?" Gajeel's voice came from behind her and Juvia turned around on the bed, they had shared his king-sized bed for the night. Juvia sighed when she saw Gajeel, shirtless, looking at the ceiling, his face in a frown. "I froze."

"You didn't screw up." Juvia said to her friend. "What happened to you was traumatizing and no one expects you to just let it go."

"You could've died because I froze." Juvia said to her friend. "What happened to you was traumatizing and no one expects you to just let it go."

"But Juvia didn't die." She told him and sat on the bed, looking over her shoulder at him. "Juvia froze when Zeref tried to kill her and if she sees her again, she'll probably freeze one more time. It's what it makes us humans: emotions, feelings."

"I don't ever want to be the way I was again. I also don't want to freeze again."

"Juvia knows." She got up from the bed. "Now come on up. Juvia will fix us some breakfast and then she'll take you to see Mirajane-san."

"Yeah, yeah." Gajeel groaned, but got up either way. "Hey, Juvia?" Juvia hummed to let him know she was listening. "Levy… Levy kissed me." Juvia gasped and smiled. "Don't. Remember that I can't." Her expression fell. "What should I do?"
"Do you like her?" Juvia asked and the blush on his cheeks made the answer pretty clear. "Well… you should tell her why you can't right now. Tell her the truth and Juvia is certain she will understand."

"I don't want her to have an even worse impression of me." Gajeel mumbled.

"She won't." Juvia walked over to where Gajeel sat on the edge of the bed. "She knows the true you now, she won't judge." Gajeel shrugged and she knew the subject was dropped, so, she changed it when his black cat jumped on the bed and meowed at her. She picked it up and petted him. "You know, name a male cat Lily is weird."

"Well, I named him Panther at first." Gajeel said, getting up from the bed and stretching his arms. "But the name was too badass for him and when I got him, he was a bit of an asshole. I didn't want him to feel even more superior than cats already feel, so I started to call him Lily to even out."

"So… Panther Lily?"

"Panther Lily." Gajeel nodded. "Was that breakfast thing real or you were using that just to ruse me?"

#

The moment Gray opened his front door that morning, Juvia felt her heart beat faster. That was it, the point of no return. That conversation would make them either stop seeing each other or… Juvia didn't dare to hope.

"Good morning." Juvia said, shyly.

"Morning." Gray said, looking at her and then stepped out of the way. "Come in."

"Thank you." Juvia entered the apartment and waited for him to close the door before stepping forward – god, it was so awkward to stand in the same place she had felt so welcome a couple of days before. The blunette offered him his coat (Gajeel let her borrow a shirt from him). "If you want to, Juvia can clean it if you-

"It's fine." He took it from her hands and didn't even look at it when he threw it on his couch. "We need to talk about what happened two nights ago."

"Yes. That's why Juvia is here." She sighed. "I came here to apologize."

"Apologize?" Gray was clearly exasperated. "Why?"

"Juvia shouldn't have said those things to you." Juvia passed a hand through her hair. "She got emotional and said things she shouldn't have said. Juvia knew what she got herself into when we started this and I shouldn't have… asked for more. I'm sorry."

"No, don't apologize." Gray shook his head. "You were right. I… I did use you that night to win some stupid thing I have going on with my brother and it wasn't right. Like you said, we always had fun, but not that night. I am the one who is sorry, you don't deserve to be treated that way and it disgusts me that I was the one who did that." He looked at her. "I won't do that again."

Juvia stepped closer to him and put a hand on his cheek. "Can we agree that both of us act a bit harsh that day? Juvia really didn't think you would mind her taking a mission with Lyon-sama."

"You went out on a date with him." He 'corrected' her.
"It wasn't a date. It was work."

"It was a date, Juvia." Gray snapped and then took a deep breath. "Sorry. But if it weren't a date for you, it was for him, I am certain."

She waved him off. "The point is, if Juvia had known you'd be that upset, she would've said no. But you never gave Juvia any sign that going out with someone else would make you unhappy."

Gray looked at her for a long moment. "That is true. Our first agreement never mentioned anything about seeing other people and that was my fault." He sighed. "I'm sorry, but that agreement does not work for me anymore."

Juvia felt her eyes sting and her throat almost close with his words: that was it. She could feel her heart break and she tried her best to hide it – she could cry at home. For a day. Or a week. Maybe a month.

"Alright then." She managed to speak. "Well, it was fun while it lasted." Juvia offered him a sad smile and gave two steps towards the door when she felt him grab her wrists.

"Where the hell do you think you're going?"

Juvia frowned at him. "Home. You said our agreement doesn't work for you anymore, Juvia just assumed it was time for her to leave."

He looked at her in exasperation. "What I meant was that our old agreement doesn't work anymore. We need a new one."

Hope filled her heart. "A new one?"

"Yes."

"Oh." She was surprised and extremely happy that they could be together in some way. "How would this new agreement work?"

Gray pulled her towards the couch and made her sit down before he sat next to her. "Well. First we would be exclusive. It would avoid situations like the one that happened to Lyon."

"Agreed." Juvia nodded – exclusivity went both ways, it meant that he would be just hers and that was an offer she couldn't say no to. "With the condition we go out together once a week."

"What? No way." Gray snorted. "Once every two months."

"Once a month." Juvia counter offered, knowing that he would have never agreed with the first offer anyway – she was fine with once a month. "And it can't be to Frank's."

Gray narrowed his eyes and seemed to think about it. "Fine, but I choose when."

"Deal." Juvia nodded. "Any other terms?"

"Don't call me your boyfriend, it's childish." He told her. "We are… partners. Like we always were." Juvia wanted to smile at him, because their 'new agreement' sounded a lot like they were dating and he was too pig headed to admit it.

"Can people know?" Juvia asked.

"I think everyone already know something is going on." Gray groaned in annoyance. "I mean, Erza
talked to me about it yesterday, for god's sake."

"She did?" Juvia was surprised.

"Yeah. I… I was in a bad mood yesterday and she pulled me aside for a talk." He made a face. "It was very uncomfortable." Juvia giggled and they stayed in silence for a moment before their eyes met. "Are we okay?"

Juvia leaned and kissed his lips lightly. "Yes. I guess we will learn as we go; what to do and what not do. This… partners thing is news to Juvia."

"And to me." Gray put an arm around her shoulders. "So, what's the deal between you and Gajeel?" Juvia looked at him and smiled. Gray sighed. "Yeah, yeah, yeah, not your story to tell. You are so weird." She kissed him once again and rest her head on his shoulder.

"You know…" The blunette said, grabbing a bit of his shirt. "Having you boss Juvia around in the bedroom was very hot."

"Was it now?" Gray asked and looked down at her with one eyebrow raised.

"Yes. And Juvia bets that it would be even better if there were only you and me in there, without your brother between us."

"Any sex without Lyon is already a win." Gray snorted and Juvia giggled. He leaned in and kissed her. "But I can be bossy again, if you really liked that."

"Juvia did." She smiled. "But maybe in a couple of days, Juvia is really sore from yesterday and having you teasing her that much again wouldn't be very fun for me."

Gray grinned. "I think this new agreement might be even better than the last one."

Chapter End Notes

So, yeah. Sorry if it wasn't what you thought it would be. Plus, a bit more of Gajeel. Can you guess what went down? ~wink wink~ Next chapter we will cover the three months before the GMG and I can promise a little of romance in there. ;)
A day after they had made their new agreement, when Juvia was no longer sore from her last mission, Gray had waited for her when he had finished his paperwork and then walked with her to her apartment, where he proceeded to apologize for his actions a few days before.

His way of apologizing, though, almost made Juvia faint.

Juvia was on her bed, the only thing covering her was a thin sheet while she lied down on her stomach, absolutely spent in the best way possible. If the night of their disagreement Gray tortured her about sending her close to the edge but not let her get there until he said so, his way to ask for forgiveness was to go down on her and make her come so many times she begged him to stop or she would die.

Gray didn’t listen to her, telling she still had one more in her and the next thing she knew, Gray slid inside her and Juvia could feel herself respond to him, wrap her arms around his shoulders and even when she was spent, she asked for him to never stop. That time, he came with her and Juvia could’ve sworn she had lost consciousness for a moment, because her next memory was of him chuckling when he pulled her next to him and she rested her head on his chest.

He caressed her back for a while until he announced he was hungry and he would be right back; Gray got up from the bed stark naked and left Juvia lying there. She couldn’t move just yet, her head floating with happy hormones and she was afraid if she moved, she’d woke up because that had to be a dream.

“Got this chocolate cake.” Gray announced when he returned to the bedroom, closing the door behind him, knowing how Juvia wouldn’t want Snowball to come in and see the many ways Gray intended to have with its owner.

“Cake is good.” Juvia mumbled and finally turned so she was on her back. Gray was looking at her with an eyebrow raised and if Juvia had the strength she would’ve rolled her eyes at the obvious male pride in his stare: he had made her absolutely powerless to do much. Men.

Gray sat next to her and with a groan, Juvia moved the pillows so she had support to stay seated; he offered her a piece of cake and she gladly ate it. That had to be the most delicious cake she’s ever eaten. Erza had told her she wouldn’t regret it going to the pastry place she got her cakes from, and she had been right.

“Yeah, I’m getting kind of jealous here that this cake is making you moan more than I can.” Gray said and only then she realized she had let out a loud sound of pleasure when she tasted it. With a smile, Juvia took the plate with the cake and the tiny fork he had brought. The blunette took a piece and raised into Gray’s mouth and when he tasted it, his eyebrows rose up. “Okay, got it. This cake is pretty good.” Juvia giggled and offered another piece. “Not too sweet, just as I like it.”
“That exclusive thing? Probably not going to work.” She ate another bite. “Juvia is certainly going to cheat on you with this cake often. And if she ever meets whoever makes this, well… it was fun while it lasted between us.” She shrugged and Gray snorted. “You know, now that we have this new agreement between us, we should talk about important things from our past.”

“What important things?” Gray frowned.

The blunette seemed to think for a moment. “Okay, I got it! First kiss.” Juvia asked, taking a piece of the cake with the small fork before offering it to him. He ate it and she got a piece for herself.

“Julie Spencer, second grade.”

Juvia laughed and slapped his forearm. “Don’t joke.”

“I am not.” Gray grinned. “You remind me of her, actually. Grabbed me during free time by the jungle gym, kissed me right on the lips and just announced she was my girlfriend. She followed me around all school year.” She giggled – in a way, this Julie was just like her. “Sarah Fletcher, I was thirteen. We were out at a birthday of one of my classmates, I had a crush on her, she had one on me… Next thing I knew, we were kissing behind the house. It was very… wet.” Juvia laughed. “You?”

“Gary Surge. Juvia was seventeen.” She shrugged and ate another piece of cake.

He looked at her in surprise. “You had your first kiss at seventeen?”

“It wasn’t even a proper kiss, he was just as nervous as I was. It was more of a peck, really.” She offered him a piece of cake and he took it, but still looked at her in confusion. “Juvia was always moving from town to town, making friends was hard and boyfriends? Even worse. I wore very large clothes, hiding my figure so boys were never really attracted to me. I had this lab partner, Gary, and he was an outcast too: geeky, worn just as much clothes as did Juvia, not really a looker. We decided to not leave high school without having never kissed anyone.”

“You decided to kiss each other?”

“Yeah. But he panicked. He had a crush on me and I never knew, so…” Juvia shrugged. “At least we got that peck on the lips.”

Gray seemed to think about that for a bit. “Why is that you wore those large clothes?” He asked. “If you hadn’t… trust me, boys would’ve been all over you.”

She laughed. “Juvia was raised by her uncle. He was in the military, never got married, never had children. The day Juvia had her first period, it was at school and a teacher had to tell me what was happening. Uncle was not happy to pick me up early and when he heard why, he went so red.” Juvia chuckled and fed Gray another piece of cake. “After that, my body started to develop the curves of my hips, breasts… When I told him I needed a bra… he became an even brighter red. Gave me money to buy a few, but told me that boys would look now and Juvia had to be careful. He went to buy clothes with me and all of them were very baggy.” She took a piece of the cake herself.

“He didn’t know what to do with a girl, so he tried to hide the fact that you were one.” Juvia nodded. “By high school, you got used to it.”

“Only when I was eighteen and joined the army, Juvia met a few other females and they taught me how to dress, and put some make-up on. It was not the latest fashion, but Juvia came to realize that men turn useless when a pretty girl wears a shirt a little too tight on the chest or a dress that is too short.”
“I certainly can’t complain about how things turned out.” Gray looked pointedly at the thin sheet over her form. Juvia smiled and kissed his lips.

“First time.” She asked, trying to divide in equal parts the reminiscences of the fabulous cake.

“It was actually Julie Spencer.” Gray chuckled when Juvia looked up in question. “We were in different Middle Schools, but at High School, we were at the same class and that time I was the one with a crush on her. She wouldn’t give me the light of the day, but I was pretty convincing even if she was playing hard to get.” Juvia raised an eyebrow. “She was my first girlfriend and a couple of months later, we had our first times. I was sixteen and those were the best two minutes of my life.” Juvia laughed and offered him his last piece of cake and while he chewed, he raised his chin for her to tell him her story.

“Juvia was nineteen, it was with her first boyfriend.” She frowned. “He turned out to just pretend to like me because Juvia was better than him in everything when we were recruits and wanted Juvia to slow down so he could be better. The actual sex was very… disappointing. And it kept being more of a chore than anything else until we broke up.” She ate the last piece of the delicious cake. “It got better once Juvia’s heart wasn’t broken any longer and she decided to think rationally about her sexuality.”

“That’s a crappy first time story.” Gray frowned. “At least Julie knew I really cared for her and… well, we got better after that.”

She shrugged. “Juvia has never been someone’s Julie, I guess.” She put the plate on her bedside table and stretched her arms, feeling much more like herself other than just a puddle of happy hormones. “But it’s fine. She very much prefers to be Gray-sama’s Juvia.” She offered him a big smile. Gray stared at her for a moment, some kind of sentiment she couldn’t identify passed his eyes and then he groaned.

“Dammit, Juvia.” He pulled the sheet away from her body and she gasped in surprise, but was interrupted by him leaning down and kissing her, possessively.

Well, she sure could get used to those kisses of his.

#

A month after their new agreement was made official, at the middle of the afternoon Cana entered Juvia’s office, a grim expression on her face; she told her boss that Lucy got the news about her father passing away; Natsu was taking his girlfriend home and then to her hometown to prepare for the funeral.

Juvia nodded, feeling bad for her friend – she knew how it was to lose a parent and just a few months back Lucy returned to speak with her father passing away; Natsu was taking his girlfriend home and then to her hometown to prepare for the funeral.

When she was ready to go to sleep, she received a text from Gray.

From: Gray-sama

22:23: Wanna a ride tomorrow?

To: Gray-sama
22:23: Yes.

From: Gray-sama

22:24: 7 a.m. good for you?

To: Gray-sama


From: Gray-sama

22:24: Are you okay?

To: Gray-sama

22:25: None of this is okay.

From: Gray-sama

22:25: I know.

22:26: But she’s going to be alright. Natsu’s with her and so is Levy. It’ll take some time, but she’ll be alright eventually.

To: Gray-sama


#

The next morning, Juvia exited her building and Gray was already there, leaning on his bike, the two helmets in his hands. He was wearing a thick coat and when he saw her, he put the helmets over the bike’s seat and met her halfway.

“Hey.”

“Good morning.” Juvia tip toed and gave him a peck on the lips and wrapped her arms around his middle, she also had a thick coat covering her, knowing they would spend a couple of hours traveling to Lucy’s hometown on his bike and it was going to be really cold.

“Good morning.” He kissed her again, that time deeper. “Ready to hit the road?”

“Yes.” Juvia stepped away from him and Gray offered her a helmet.

An hour into their trip, Juvia was holding Gray’s waist as he drove the bike and she watched the beautiful landscape between there and Lucy’s hometown when something caught her attention and she forgot how to breathe for a second.

“Gray-sama!” Juvia told him through the microphone inside the helmet. “Stop!”

“What?” He answered, confused.

“Stop the bike, please!”
“What the hell-”

“Gray-sama, please.” It might’ve been the despair in her voice or how it was shaking because of her unshed tears that made him decide to stop, but Juvia didn’t care which.

The moment he stopped, she got off the bike, took off the helmet, placing it on the seat and ran to where a large field with yellow flowers were. A few moments later, a very confused Gray was by her side.

“This is…” She smiled through her tears. “This is a field of buttercups. Oh, it’s been so long since I’ve seen one.” Juvia looked at him and chuckled when saw him frown as if she were crazy and maybe she was a little bit. “These are Juvia’s favorite flowers.” She looked back at the field and she started to cry harder. Gray put his arms around her.

“Juvia?” He was panicking.

“I’m sorry, Juvia just remembered her parents.” She whispered. “It’s such a wonderful coincidence to see this today.” Gray said nothing, just held her as she sobbed. After a few moments, Juvia succeeded on control herself and took a deep breath. She got away from his embrace, but stood not too far. “Sorry.”

“It’s alright.” Gray said softly. “Wanna tell me why you asked me to stop my bike and then ran to the middle of a field full of flowers? Not judging, but I’m curious.”

Juvia smiled sadly at him. “Did Juvia ever tell you how her parents died?”

“Car accident.”

She nodded. “I was in the car with them. They died at the crash, while I didn’t have a scratch on me. This is some of the things survivors wonder for years after: ‘How am I alive while everyone else is dead?’” Gray took a step closer to her and put a hand on her lower back, she could feel it even through the layer of clothing. “A week before that, my dad found this field of buttercups when we were driving home after visiting my uncle. He stopped the car and we made a day out of it.” Her smile was sad when she looked at Gray. “I remember the yellow flowers, my father running after me while my mother recorded it with a camera. She was so beautiful. I got my hair from her, eyes from my dad, but if Juvia shows to you a picture of her, we could’ve been twins.” She teared up a bit.

“That afternoon between the buttercups is the last happy memory I have from them. The next is about the car crash.” She shuddered and that time Gray put an arm around her and she sighed in contentment.

“Dad was a botanic, that’s why he was so fascinated with the flowers. Mother… she was a meteorologist and the story about how they met is so ridiculously romantic I wonder if it was true.” Juvia chuckled. “She told me that she found my father in the middle of one of the worse storms she’s ever witnessed: he was trying to secure some kind of rare plant and she saw him looking utterly ridiculous in the middle of the woods, trying to shield a stupid plant while soaked to the bone. Mother actually had to pull him away just before a lightening hit a tree and fell where he stood before. He said he fell in love with her the moment she fell on top of him.”

“That’s an interesting first meeting.” Gray pulled her down to the ground and settled her between his legs, her back on his chest. “What happened then?”

“Dad followed her expeditions, annoyed the hell out of her until she cave in and went out with him.”

Gray chuckled. “Ah, so that’s where you got it from?”
“Stop it.” She slapped his thigh. “Four years later, they got married and two years after that… Juvia.”
The blunette put a hand over his, that was resting on her stomach. “She named me that way because
in some language or another, it means ‘rain’ and that’s how they met, it was raining when I was born
too. To my mother, rain brought her happiness, it was what she loved. I did too, once.” She squeezed
his hand. “We would go out in the rain when I was little and have fun. But that day they died… it
was raining so hard the car that hit us lost control and…” She took a deep breath trying to contain her
tears. “I have hated when it rains ever since then.

“When Juvia moved in with her uncle, he lived at a base near the west; it rained every day and inside
my head I relived that day over and over again. Juvia was miserable for weeks.” She reached for one
of the flowers. “But then, one day, a girl who took care of our house brought a bouquet with flowers
and as it happened, they were buttercups. For the first time ever since my parents died, I smiled
because I remembered when we were together.” Juvia tried to dry her tears, but it was in vain as they
kept falling. “That’s when I promised myself that no matter how sad I get, when I see a buttercup, I’ll
let myself be overwhelmed with happy memories.

“And this field looks just like the one Juvia was with her parents so many years ago. I still remember
the way my mother held me – the warmth of her body, how my father threw me up in the air and
cought me, how we made a crown of flowers before we left and made mom wear it until we got
home. I remember all that and right now I am trying to be happy, but I am missing them too much.”
She cried and felt Gray’s arms around her get tighter.

“Of course you are.” He rested his chin on her shoulder. “A friend of ours just lost her father and you
were just hit with a heavy childhood memory that is both good and bad; it made you remember what
happened to you. It’s overwhelming.” Gray held her a bit before speaking again. “I love snow days.
Always have ever since I was a boy. When my parents died, it was snowing. When my foster mother
dies, it was also snowing. Depending on how my day is going, I can get happy or not about seeing it
is snowing. It’s natural that sometimes the things you love the most, are also the ones that hurts you
almost beyond repair.”

“Do you ever think how different your life would’ve been if your parents have lived?” Juvia asked
him in a whisper after a while.

“All the time.” Gray sighed. “You?”

“A lot.” She admits. “We can’t change the past and we can’t live of ‘what ifs’, but we can’t help it
but wonder.” They stayed in quiet for a few moments when Juvia decided to talk. “My Dad
would’ve like you, you know?” Juvia looked over her shoulder, to him, with a small smile. “His
family was from military and he was quite a shooter. Always made Uncle annoyed because even
eough he was just a biologist, his aim was much better than Uncle’s.”

Gray laughed. “And my mother would’ve liked you. She was also from a military family and even
eough she became a nurse, she knew her ways around guns and she broke a few noses in her time.
My father’s included.”

“Did she?” Juvia laughed.

“Oh yes. He loved to tell people about that story; apparently, she did it on their first date and then
fixed it.” Gray smiled. “I think your buttercups are working, even I am thinking happy memories.”

Juvia offered him a small smile. “Too bad we don’t see them everywhere. It would make life so
much better if every now and then we forced ourselves to think happy memories, even when we
think we have none. Everyone has a happy memory.”
“Well, I think I’ll steal your idea.” She frowned at his words. “When it starts to snow and I feel I’m about to be sad, I’ll remember the snowball fights I had with my family, or when we built snowmen.”

“Let the good outweigh the bad.” Juvia kissed his cheek and then dried her own. “We should go or we are going to be late.”

“There’s no rush. We’ll be there in half an hour.” Gray told her. “I quite like this good memories thing, let’s enjoy it.” She relaxed in his arms and they stayed in silence for a few minutes. “So this is what makes you happy, huh? Guns and flowers?”

“Not any flower.” She corrected him.

He snorted. “Buttercups.”

“Exactly.”

“Guns and buttercups, huh? Most women prefer roses and chocolates.”

“Juvia will never be that predictable.” Juvia looked over her shoulder and offered him a light kiss on the mouth. She didn’t tell him, but for the past few months, another thing was added to the list of what made her happy: Gray Fullbuster, and that moment on the field made her even more certain that she loved him.

#

Jude Heartfilia’s funeral was an ordeal for close friends and the people who worked at their house and were almost family. When it was time for Lucy to speak, she had choked a few words, but gave the most beautiful speech and there wasn’t a dry eye by the end of it. The blonde had to stay at her hometown to deal with inheritance and Natsu refused to leave his girlfriend’s side, so, they stayed there.

Meanwhile, Gray teamed up with whomever needed assistance and a couple of times with Juvia and Gajeel, but all missions were easy enough.

After Lucy came back to FT, things went back to normal and the busy schedule was driving them all exhausted. Juvia had been so tired that she even didn’t care that their first ‘date night’, Gray had to rain check it because he wouldn’t arrive in time and as much Juvia wanted to go out with him, she was so tired all she did when she got home was to take a hot bath and go to sleep. By the time Gray was in Magnolia, Juvia was on her period and both decided to postpone the outing because Juvia knew she would want to jump him as soon as possible after the date but that was a no go at the moment.

Gray didn’t seem at all bothered by the fact that she was not going to offer him sex that week; when she told him, Gray just shrugged, got in her apartment with the take-out food he bought, sat on her couch and looked for a suitable action movie on her TV they could argue about what could be real or not and told her to sit by his side.

Juvia didn’t tell him, but she considered that to be their first date.

A few days after that, the women were having an all-girls dinner and Lucy said she received an invitation from her godmother, a woman who had been friends with Lucy’s mother for years, to go to her resort south of Magnolia and she didn’t want to go there alone with Natsu, otherwise her godmother would embarrass her.
Cana apologized, telling her she already had plans with Mirajane for months that weekend, to which the white haired woman and Lisanna nodded. Erza was the first to agreed, telling Lucy she loved to go to the beach, and it was hard to miss the sparkle in her eyes. Levy agreed to go, she needed a few days away from computers and she would talk to her friends, they also needed some fresh air. Wendy eagerly agreed as well. Juvia searched images of the beach and the resort and saw how beautiful it all was and also agreed, saying she would talk if Gray would want to go as well.

Convincing Gray to a weekend away was so easy it surprised her and when she told him that, he just shrugged and said: “After all that happened these past year, we need two days of lazing around on a beach.”

Well, Juvia couldn’t deny that, so she grabbed her phone to make their reservations.

Once she was off the phone, she found him looking at her with a frown on his face. She asked what the problem was and he answered: “You… you booked just one room for you and I.”

“Yes?”

He scratched behind his ear, so she knew he wasn’t comfortable talking about the subject. “We don’t do that.” She raised an eyebrow in question. “Sleep with each other. The only night you spent here was when I was sick.”

“The first time we had sex, you expected me to stay.” She pointed out.

“Because it was a one night stand thing, then. Now…”

The blunette sighed; it was true, they hadn’t spent nights at each other’s apartments because somehow in his mind it would make whatever they were, real. She lost count of how many times she went to her apartment at two or three in the morning and Gray did the same after they were done, parting with a kiss. It was an unsaid agreement between them and they never talked about it until that moment.

“Gray-sama, it’s going to be two nights at a hotel miles away from here.” Juvia reasoned with him. “Everyone going in this trip knows about us, we will most likely use it just to sleep and spend all our days out at the beach. It’s cheaper to share a room other than two, especially when we both know you are going to mine.” Juvia looked at him pointedly, her period would be finished just in time for the trip and she was certain he was counting the days to be allowed to have sex with her again. “It’ll be easier to both of us if we share the room.” She shrugged and stepped closer to him, putting her hands on his chest. “Imagine how nice it’s going to be if Juvia’s allowed to step in the bathroom and have a shower with you.” She roamed her hand down to the growing bulge on his pants. “Wake up to a very naked me just within your reach.” She kissed his lips slowly and soon he was so wrapped up around it that Juvia easily pushed him towards his couch, where he fell seated and she straddled him a moment later. “Can you imagine?”

“Uh huh.” He nodded, closing his eyes when Juvia rotated her hips above his just the right way. “I can imagine.” Juvia smiled and kissed him.

“One room it is?” Her fingers unfastened the zipper of his pants.

Gray groaned in relief, it’s been days since her hands were on him that way. “Fine.”

The Celestial Spirit World Hotel was as stunning in person as it had been online. Beautiful crystal water at the beach, white sand, people having fun and everyone seemed really nice. Since the sun
was already setting when they arrived, the group decided to go early to the beach the next day, choosing to settle in at their rooms before having dinner at the restaurant later.

Juvia was impressed by how beautiful their room looked, a large comfortable bed, a beautiful bathroom and the room even had a balcony. She started to unpack her bag while Gray just threw himself on the bed and watched her movements.

“It’s two days. Why do you need so much crap?” He kicked off his shoes and lost his shirt.

“Because Juvia doesn’t know where we will be doing and she might need different clothes.” She shrugged. “And it’s not that much. Did you see Erza-san’s suitcase?”

Gray chuckled. “It seems like she’s starting a new life here, huh?”

“At least Juvia knows if she needs to borrow some clothes, Erza-san has it. We are roughly the same size.” Juvia shrugged and finished her unpacking, putting her small luggage inside the closet as well. “All done.”

“I’m not unpacking mine.” Gray said from the bed, playing some game on his phone. “I’ll just get what I need it from inside and it’s all good.”

“Alright.” Juvia went to lie on the bed with him, after all they were tired from traveling two hours by plane. The blunette grabbed her own phone to send some texts to Cana. “We should take a shower and meet them downstairs.”

“In a moment.” Gray stretched his body and put the phone away before he rolled to be on top of Juvia, grabbing her phone and putting away from her grasp.

“Gray-sama! Juvia was texting Cana-san abou-” Her next words were cut by his mouth on her, her focus solely on the way he kisses: like he wanted to brand her.

“It’s over, right?” Gray asked when their lips parted and she frowned in confusion. “Your period. Is it over? Can we have sex tonight?”

“Hell yes.” She breathed, pulling him down for another hungry kiss. Gray shoved her summer dress up, parted her legs and settle his hips there, moving it so the seam of his jeans’ zipper stimulated her clit with only her underwear as a barrier. “We should be getting ready to have dinner.” She moaned, still not releasing him.

“In a few minutes.” Gray said between kisses and then kissing his way down to her throat while one of his hands grabbed her ass and the other found its way between them, right on her sex and she should feel embarrassed how wet she already was, but Gray’s moan of approval when he felt her slickness there made her feel hot all over. “I missed touching you like this.” He easily slid a finger inside her and Juvia bit her lip to prevent herself from crying out when he added another. Gray chuckled. “Missed those sounds as well.”

“It was just for five days, Gray-sama.” Juvia managed to say even when he started to move inside her, looking for the place he knew she would cry out for him.

“Five days too long.” He snarled and his hand left her ass to pull down the front of her dress so he could have access to her breasts and a second later, he was sucking one of her nipples on his mouth and Juvia just gave up on being quiet, especially since he touched the spot inside her that made her hips bulk up to his hand to find more friction and then his thumb was touching her clit and she almost screamed.
Juvia just needed a few more moments to come, she knew it. The blunette had her hands on Gray’s shoulders, almost clawing him. Just when she was about to orgasm, Gray stopped his movements and got off of her.

“Wha-?” Juvia asked in a daze and saw Gray standing next to the bed, grinning down at her.

“We need to get ready to have dinner with our friends.” He said, grabbing a towel and walking towards the bathroom, leaving Juvia confused and very horny. The door to the bathroom closed and Juvia huffed in annoyance, she desperately needed to come or she would burst. Seeing that Gray was not going to finish her off, Juvia slowly slid her hand underneath her panties and just when she was about to start, Gray opened the door and looked at her with a smirk on his lips. “And you are forbidden to finish it on your own. I’ll know if you do, Juvia.” He looked pointedly at the hand between her legs until she removed it with a sound of indignation. Only then he returned to the bathroom.

Juvia grabbed a fluffy pillow, put it on her face and yelled in frustration.

She was really grumpy when Gray came out the bathroom with his wet wonderful body and a towel wrapped around his waist. Juvia just grabbed her clothes and went to the bathroom. For a moment, she thought about getting herself off but Gray would see in her eyes and would make a whole thing out of it, so, even if she was horny as hell, she would behave herself. Just a bit.

When she came out of the bathroom, Gray was already dressed to go to dinner and Juvia just told him she needed a minute to put her make-up on. He nodded and his eyes focused on the rather small strapless dress she chose for the evening – light blue and tight just on the right places. Juvia decided to just put some lipstick on and just a bit of eye shadow.

“How does Juvia look?” She asked him and Gray got up from the bed, pulling her for a hot kiss. “Oh.” Juvia gulped. “She’ll take that as a ’you look good’.” Gray chuckled.

“Shall we go? I’m actually quite hungry.”

Once they arrived at the restaurant, they saw that Levy, Wendy and Erza were already there with Droy and Jet, whom Levy brought along. A few minutes later, Lucy and Natsu arrived and by the way Natsu’s smile was very wide and Lucy was blushing, it was very clear why they were late.

“Lucky them.” Gray whispered to Juvia.

“You are the one who stopped.” She whispered back and he shrugged, but there was a small smile on his lips and Juvia decided to use the card she had under her sleeve. Gray reached for his glass of water and was taking a sip when Juvia grabbed a menu, opened and told him casually in a whisper. “Juvia is not wearing underwear.”

Gray started to cough and the blunette almost laughed when Droy hit him on the back until he was breathing again. Everyone went back to their conversations and Gray glared at Juvia.

“That’s playing dirty.”

“You started it.” Juvia shrugged, still reading the menu, but one of her hands went to rest on his thigh and it was quickly making its way up to his crotch. Juvia smirked when she heard him cover a moan with a cough.
That was going to be an interesting dinner.

#

By the end of the dinner, Gray was sitting uncomfortably and so was Juvia, all that teasing was going to make them burst any second, but they were trapped with their friends; after all, they were there to support Lucy, not that it stopped her and Natsu to most likely go at it like bunnies earlier.

Lucky Lucy.

“My godmother is coming here tomorrow. She got caught up in some business, but she’ll be here and asked us to meet her at the Blue Room tomorrow night.” Lucy told her friends after everyone had finished eating. “So I was thinking we could go enjoy the beach tomorrow after breakfast. Let’s say… 10 is good for everyone?” There was a humming in agreement around the table. “Great! Should we get dessert?”

Juvia looked in panic to Gray, who just had the same expression on his face and they both knew they were not going to survive dessert.

“You know what?” Gray said, putting his napkin on the table. “I’m full and very tired, I had just arrived from a mission when we got the plane and I am quite tired. And hurt.” Gray got up. “The food was great, but I really need to go.”

“Oh, okay.” Their friends frowned and Juvia got up as well.

“Juvia is going too… Because… Yes.” She was sure blushing when Gray grabbed her hand to leave. “Tomorrow at 10. Bye. Good night.”

Juvia should’ve feel shame because it was clear that they were trying to leave to go to their room and enjoy their privacy, but she didn’t care, especially when they got inside the elevator and Gray started to kiss her just the way he knew made her knees weak.

“God, I thought this dinner was never going to end.” He said between kisses. “And you teasing me was not fun at all.”

“You started it.” She reminded him once again, her hands on his hair, bringing his face closer to hers. A ding made them aware they arrived at their floor and Gray pulled her by the hand out the elevator and towards their room – she needed to remind herself not to say anything about him holding her hand or he could stop, it was one if the few times he showed affection in public.

He struggled for a moment with the keycard, but once he opened the door, he pulled her inside and to his chest, stealing a kiss, promising one hell of a time that night.

And she believed him.

#

“Fuck, you were not kidding.” Gray said as soon as he pulled Juvia’s dress away from her, she helped him by raising her arms and he stared at her naked body with his eyes dark in desire. She was straddling him and pulling his shirt from inside his pants to just undress him as well. “You were not wearing underwear at dinner.” He touched her hips and grabbed the softness of her ass while she tried to undo the buttons of his shirt.

“Gray-sama.” Juvia whined. “If you don’t undress in thirty seconds Juvia will just unzip your pants and have you like this.” Gray’s eyes became even darker, if that was possible and he groaned.
“Now that’s an incredible idea, Juvia.” He put a hand between her legs and found her already wet – she had been that way throughout dinner – and she sighed when he mimicked the movements he had touched her with earlier that day. She forgot to try and undress him, just grabbed his shirt and moved her hips, matching his thrusts with his fingers.

“Oh, Gray-sama.” She put her hands on his face and brought him closer so she could kiss him, her hips moving faster as she chased her release. “I’m so close.” She whispered and Gray moaned, picking up his pace with his fingers and she followed his lead, touching her clit with his thumb and Juvia could feel her orgasm coming, but Gray stopped his hands and Juvia cried out in frustration. “Not again, please.” She whined.

“I need you to come around me.” Gray said between gritted teeth and started to undo his pants to free himself and Juvia raised herself a little bit and helped him lower his zipper and then lower his underwear just enough to free his erection. He sighed in relief when she fisted him, up and down two times, but a moment later he told her to stop.

He put his hands on her hips and pulled her down, sheathing himself inside her with one single movement, making both moan in pleasure. Juvia wrapped her arms around his shoulders and kissed his lips while Gray touched her clit between them, to which she gasped.

“Come.” Gray said, his lips hovering hers and Juvia just followed his orders when he lowered his face to her chest, moving up and down, his finger touching her clit in strong strokes and tongue sucking a nipple just the way she loved it. Not too long after, Juvia was moaning louder, her release just around the corner and when Gray pinched her clit tight and bit the side of her breast, it was all too much and Juvia screamed out her orgasm.

Her body tightened and Gray kept her moving on him with his arms on her hips, letting her ride the wave off and also keeping her excited.

“Fuck.” Gray breathed when Juvia rested her forehead on his shoulders, tired and blessedly full of amazing sensations. She could feel, though, Gray inside her still hard.

“Gray-sama.” She whispered, her inner muscles still clenching around him. “You didn’t…”

“I will.” He said between gritted teeth. “Just let me catch my breath here.” Juvia finally managed to take off his shirt but to take off everything else, he would need to get out of her and a better idea was for her to just ride him that way. She didn’t realized she had said it out loud until he laughed. “Maybe tomorrow I’ll let you do that again, but I’ve been thinking all week about a position I want to take you.” Her insides clenched around him with the thought and he moaned. “Damn it, Juvia.”

He raised her enough to exit her, earning a protest sound from her and gently put her on the bed. Juvia lied on the bed, watching as Gray kicked his shoes away and then pushed down his pants and underwear.

Juvia licked her lips looking at his magnificent body, his cock hard and coated with her juices and just like that, Juvia’s body was on fire all over again. A moment later Gray covered her body with his, kissing her and touching everywhere he could.

“Stay lying down.” He told her and she nodded. Gray kneeled in front of her and opened her legs, staring at her sex for a moment before he moved to straddle her left leg and pull her right up to his shoulder, a hand securing it while his other used the bed to steady himself. Juvia could feel her body grow hot and when he slowly slid in her in that angle, she let out a loud gasp.

“Oh, fuck.” She whispered, closing her eyes and feeling him stretch her muscles, touching her places
she never knew existed inside her.

Once he was fully sheathed inside her, Gray started to move slowly and Juvia felt him kiss her leg before asking: “Are you okay?”

“Yes!” Juvia moaned. “Harder.” The next thing Juvia knew was the wave of pleasure with each stroke he made, touching exactly the g-spot inside her with each movement. Juvia knew she was being loud, but she didn’t care, not when Gray was making her feel that way. “Gray-sama.” She moaned. “Just fuck me.” She never said that when they were together, usually he was the one muttering cuss words while she moaned and hearing her say those words must’ve pleased him, because he started to do exactly what she asked for.

“Open your eyes.” Gray told her and Juvia did as asked and seeing him that way, eyes dark, hair glued on his forehead and looking at her as if she was the most beautiful thing he has ever seen made her almost come. “Touch yourself.”

Her hands, that had been fisting the bed linens, quickly made their way to her breast and the other to her clit. “Gray-sama.” Juvia whined. “I’m gonna…”

“No yet.” He snapped at her and she moaned in complain. His movements became more erratic and so did the way she touched herself. She pleaded him to let her come, but he would just say ‘not yet’ and when she was about to tell him she couldn’t hold it anymore, he finally gave her his consent. “Come now.”

And she did, screaming like never before while pleasure hit her whole body, her toes curled and her vision turned white. Good god, could she die from an orgasm? Maybe she could. Maybe that was it.

Juvia remembered flashes: Gray lowering her leg after exiting her, Gray lying next to her breathing hard. She must’ve drifted off for a moment; she opened her eyes and Gray had a warm towel between her legs, cleaning her.

“Are you okay?” Gray asked with a chuckle.

“Hm.” Juvia hummed in agreement and looked at the towel. “Thanks.”

“Sure.” A few moments later he was finished, threw the towel away and went to lie next to her, putting his arms around her frame. He kissed the back of her neck an put his arms just under her breasts.

“Nope, not gonna happen.” Juvia mumbled. “Keep your hands on the stomach area and that’s it. Juvia doesn’t think she can go again right now.”

Gray laughed. “Don’t worry, I need a little more time too. I thought I was going to have a heart attack with how hard I came. I’m still weak.”

Juvia giggled, feeling sleepy. “That would be priceless: we survived the army, wars and bombs just to die having an orgasm.”

“If I could choose my way to go…” Gray said and she smiled. “Sleep.”

“Hmmm, you too.”

Gray’s skittishness about sharing one room during the trip was over quickly when in the morning
Gray slid inside her from behind and they lazily made love before sharing a shower and then put on their bathing suits so they could go and have breakfast with their friends.

After they ate, they decided to go to the beach and enjoy the sunny day. Juvia grabbed a book and stayed under one of the umbrella the entire time while the girls decided to sunbathe for a while, the boys went swimming and then building sand castles.

They had lunch at one of the kiosks next to the beach, delicious sea food and then the boys decided they wanted to get tanned as well. When Lucy and Levy asked Juvia to go to the water with them, she accepted, noticing the sun was much cooler then.

The girls talked for a while about their jobs, Lucy making a perfect impression of Gray and Natsu when they were grumpy that made the three of them laugh. When Levy did the same, but imitating Gajeel, their laughter was even louder.

“What are you three laughing about?” Natsu said getting closer to them and only then they noticed both him and Gray were swimming their direction.

“Nothing, Natsu-san.” Juvia smiled to the pink haired man and then to Gray when he swam to stay behind her, an arm over her stomach bringing her closer to his chest.

“I’m going back to stay with Erza and Meredy.” Levy told them.

“Levy, don’t-” Lucy tried – Juvia noticed Natsu had done almost exactly what Gray did when he got closer to his girlfriend.

The petite blunette chuckled. “I don’t want to be the fifth wheel.” She looked at them pointedly and started to swim back to shore. Natsu kissed Lucy’s neck, and she blushed before the pink haired man pull her farther away from where Gray and Juvia were.

Gray turned Juvia to face him and saw her frowning. “What is it?”

“Gajeel-kun needs to talk to her about why he’s not doing anything about them.” Juvia said.

“And why is that?” Juvia gave him a pointed look. “I should know better than ask by now, shouldn’t I?” He sighed and Juvia giggled, putting her arms around his neck.

“You should.” She kissed his lips. “Having fun?”

“Hm, yes.” Gray put his hands under her thighs and lifted her so she could wrap her legs around his waist under water. “Getting better and better. I noticed you didn’t sunbathe with the girls. Why is that?”

Juvia pouted adorably. “Juvia doesn’t get tanned. Her skin is so fair that it just turns red and burns when she’s at the beach. It sucks. Juvia wishes she could get tanned. You can.” She touched his skin – it has always been darker than hers and it had darkened a bit more with his day playing around the beach and he looked even better. “You look so handsome tanned like this.”

He must’ve noticed by the way she looked at him how hot she thought he was because he brought her even closer to his body and whispered in her ear: “Stop looking at me this way or I’ll take you right here.”

Even though her whole body woke up with his words, she pushed him away a bit. “Oh no, you won’t. Sex on the beach might be hot and romantic or whatever, but it’s full of sand and nasty bacteria that can go inside me and give Juvia an infection. A very uncomfortable infection. So, no
thank you.”

Gray rolled his eyes. “A ‘no’ would suffice.”

“We have a very comfortable bed that we made sure can support us during sex.” She smiled. “We can use that later tonight.”

“Count on it.” He kissed her. “Wait, why tonight? We are heading to the hotel in a few minutes.”

“Because we are going to take a very well deserved nap.” Juvia told him. “You are tired too, don’t deny. And later we’ll have to meet Lucy-san’s godmother. Better keep our strength.”

“Fine.”

They stayed together, talking about what they would do later on, enjoying the warm water around them and kissing each other. When Juvia told him it was time to go back to the hotel, Gray nodded and let her go as they started to walk towards the beach. Juvia spotted Natsu and Lucy not that far away from where they were and she had an idea when she saw the blonde’s blush.

“You can thank me later.” Juvia told Gray (who looked confused) and then the blunette said, loud, to the other couple: “Lucy-san, don’t do it. Juvia will explain about it later.” By the way Lucy blushed she understood exactly what Juvia was referring to and pushed Natsu away slightly.

“Juvia, I swear to god I’ll cock block you with Gray soon!” Natsu yelled at the blunette.

Gray threw his head back and laughed out loud, pulling Juvia for a kiss. “Beside the sex this morning, this was the best thing that happened all day long. Best girlfriend ever.” Gray kissed her again, still laughing and when they were apart, he still held her hand.

He missed the big smile on her face, or if he noticed, he thought it was because of the stunt she just pulled, but the truth was that her heart was beating faster inside her chest and her stomach was filled with butterflies. He had just called her his ‘girlfriend’ without even realize.

Damn it, she loved him so much.

#

“Really, Gray-sama?” Juvia complained when she left the bathroom and found out Gray had lowered the air conditioner so much it felt like they were still in Magnolia in the middle of the winter and all she was wearing was a thin lingerie. “It’s so cold.”

“I was born somewhere cold.” Gray shrugged, already underneath the blankets, waiting for her so they could take a nap.

“It’s always your excuse.” Juvia combed her wet hair and went to the bed, hiding herself underneath the covers and sliding to be closer to Gray and rob his warmth. “This room is freezing.”

“It’s not.”

“It is.” She complained.

“It was like this last night.” Gray told her.

“Well, last night we were rather busy touching each other and then screwing to notice.” Juvia hid her face on his chest.
“True.” He chuckled. “This is nice, sleeping together.” The blunette hummed in agreement, but more worried to put her arms around him. They stayed in silence for a few moments. “Juvia?”

“Hm?” Juvia asked, blessedly warm with her whole body underneath the covers.

“Why you never stayed at my place when we are together?” He asked and Juvia frowned.

“What?” She pushed the covers away from her to look at him. “You were the one making a big deal out of it when Juvia booked just one room for us.”

“Because it’s something we don’t do.” He told her. “You always leave when we are done and I just do the same.”

Juvia sat on the bed and he did the same. “You’ve been leaving my apartment because Juvia does the same when she is at yours?” He nodded.

“It didn’t bothered me at first because I didn’t know it could be nice, I don’t do this crap.” He explained and Juvia nodded in understanding. “But yesterday was nice, and this morning. And now.” She could see his cheeks get pinker. “I… I talked to Mira about it and she told me to see if I would enjoy this weekend to see if I wanted that with you. She gave me a homework in case it was.”

Juvia put a hand on his thigh. “Gray-sama, Juvia doesn’t want you to do this because of some homework Mira-san gave you.”

“It’s not.” Gray pushed her concerns away. “She said to take my time and only do it if I feel comfortable with it. And… I do.” His face had an expression of confusion. “I like it when it’s you and me at one of our places. And I liked sleeping next to you.”

Juvia’s heart was beating so fast she thought she might have a heart attack. “You will have to say the words, Gray-sama.” He made a disgusted face. “But only if you are prepared to, Juvia doesn’t want to…”

“No, it’s fine. I can do it. I… I am just not used to having to do this. I’ve never had what we have.” He explained it to her and both stayed in silence for a few moments while he figured out what he wanted to say. “Juvia.” He looked at her. “When we return to Magnolia, would you” he stopped and the blunette waited with patience “like to stay the night when we are at my apartment?”

Her smile was so wide her cheeks hurt. She cupped his cheeks and kissed his lips. “Of course. And you can stay in mine as long as you want.”

Gray let out a breath. “This was harder than I thought it was going to be.” He frowned. “It’s hard to me to, and I quote Mirajane here, speak about my feelings and needs, unquote.”


“And uh… Take the invitation whenever you are there, don’t make me say it every time. I’ll tell you if I don’t want you there. Deal?”

Juvia laughed. “Deal.” She smiled and saw his body relax and suddenly an idea popped in her head. “Lie down.” She said and Gray gladly obeyed and by the way he opened his arms, he expected her to lie there – and it would’ve been a terrific idea if she didn’t have another idea in her mind.

She smiled and kissed his lips, then trailed down to his neck, chest, his six-pack and navel. When she was pulling down his boxers, Gray asked what she was doing. Juvia just smiled and said: “Rewarding you for being brave enough to ask for what you wanted.”
The Blue Room was a magnificent place and it was all decorated so the roof looked like a starry sky. Lucy squealed in happiness when she saw many of her friends were there, many of which knew her mother. The blonde woman introduced everyone but one of the most impressive ones was Lucy’s godmother, Aquarius.

She had long straight blue hair and seemed to be around forty, a few years younger than Lucy’s mother would’ve been if still alive, but according to Lucy, they were thick as thieves.

“Look at you, little girl!” Aquarius said, poking at Lucy’s side. “You are way too thin. Layla would’ve killed you if she were here. Come on, let’s eat. My husband is making you a plate. You better eat it.”

Juvia looked at the interaction with curiosity, Aquarius seemed to be one for tough love and Lucy seemed used to it. Juvia saw Gray a bit further away talking with Loke (Lucy invited him as well and apparently he was nearby because he had something going on with the sweet girl named Aries. Huh. Who knew?), Levy was talking to a man who looked a librarian, Wendy seemed in deep conversation with a man with a weird moustache and both Natsu and Erza were by the buffet, eating.

Feeling a bit like a fish out of the water, Juvia went to sit down to watch the part, glad everyone was having fun. A few moments later, she heard the chair in front of her get dragged and Aquarius was seated across her from the table.

“So. You are the girl who kidnapped Lucy.”

“Erm…” Juvia felt her cheeks get warm – it had been so long since that happened she didn’t even thought about it anymore.

“I know it was Jude’s idea, he could be an ass when he wanted to.” Aquarius shrugged. “Especially after Layla died. Lucy also told me what happened concerning a certain tower.” She smiled. “You are good people. I am a good judge of character, almost never wrong. It’s good Lucy have friends like you.”

“Thanks.” Juvia nodded.

“So… You get a man yet?” Aquarius’ blunt question made Juvia stutter.

“Er… Well…”

Thinking the answer was ‘no’, the older woman tsc in disapproval. “That’s no good. At that rate you’ll end up like Lucy.” Juvia saw Lucy going their way, but when she heard the question, she stopped and turned away.

“But she does have a man.”

“What?!” Aquarius asked, surprised. “Who?” When Juvia told her it was Natsu, Aquarius groaned. “Really? The baboon with the pink hair? Well, she could do better, but the heart wants what the heart wants.” She found Natsu between the people and he was looking at Lucy with adoration in his eyes. “And the boy is clearly over heels for her. I’ll just give her grief for not telling me, then.” Aquarius winked and Juvia laughed, putting a hand in front of her mouth. “So, which one is yours?”

“The one with black hair.” She tried to find Gray and when she did, her heart almost stopped and an ugly feeling blossomed inside her chest. Gray was next to Lucy, laughing at something she said and then he put a hand on the blonde’s head and messed her hair, still laughing.
She hadn’t felt that jealous for a long time and she hated it, especially when Lucy was also a dear friend, but she just couldn’t help herself.

“Oh, he is cute.” Aquarius smiled. “Nice.” She gave Juvia a thumbs up and then caught her husband between the guests. “I’ll be right back.”

Juvia spent the rest of the party talking with some of the other guests, but every time her eyes met Gray’s, she quickly moved it away and she was sure he would ask her what that was about later.

Once everyone was saying their good-byes and promising to spent the Sunday at the beach again, they said their good-nights and took the elevator back to their floor. Gray was looking at her strangely the whole ride and only when they arrived at their room, he asked what was wrong.

“It’s silly. You are going to laugh about it.” Juvia mumbled.

“Try me.” Gray raised an eyebrow and waited for her to keep talking.

“Juvia…” She sighed – she didn’t want to tell him, but he had made an effort that day asking her to stay the night with him, she could tell him what bothered her. “Juvia didn’t like the way you were all buddy-buddy with Lucy, messing her hair.” Her blue eyes were down, she didn’t want to look at him.

It took him a second, but he started to laugh and Juvia’s eyes watered as she pushed her way out of the bathroom.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry.” Gray was trying to stop his laughter.

“I knew you were going to laugh.” Juvia wanted to cry, but held it together while she grabbed her lingerie so she could get ready for bed.

“I know and I’m sorry.” Gray reached for her waist and spun her around. Only when he saw the unshed tears in her eyes, he stopped laughing altogether, sobering immediately. “Juvia, Lucy is my friend and we do friendly things. I mess with her, I hug her, I play with her but all of that because she is my friend. When I met her, I thought she was pretty and I might’ve tried something if I hadn’t seen she was enamored with Natsu from day one. But that was two years ago and I swear I want nothing but her friendship, not an affair.” Juvia looked at him. “Okay?” The blunette nodded and Gray kissed her before let go of her, sitting on the bed to remove his shoes while Juvia took off her clothes to put her nightwear. “I mean, how would that even work?” Juvia looked at him in confusion.

“I mean, when would we have the time to have that affair?” He asked. “Not at work, her boyfriend is at the office next to mine and yours is across it. When I am at missions, I am with her boyfriend, so, no there.” Juvia groaned. “Maybe after I am with you and leave your apartment at three a.m. I meet with her after she ditches Natsu, who sleeps next to her?” Juvia threw her shirt at him. “No, I’m serious! If you think I have the time to have an affair with Lucy I am seriously underestimating my time!”

Juvia laughed when she passed by him and he pulled her to sit on his lap. “Okay, Juvia got your point.”

“Good.” He smiled. “Now… What do you think about taking a shower together to save water for
our planet?"

“Best idea you had all day.”

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was going to be a lot bigger, but I needed to stop here or it would end up being 20k long. I promised the Games the next chapter, but I still have some stuff to write before that. Oh, next chapter we’re going to discover what happened between Gajeel and Juvia all those months ago.

I hope you enjoyed the chapter!
Gray's first night sleeping at Juvia's apartment was a big step to him and to their relationship, so Juvia tried her best to make him feel comfortable and just like he had been at the hotel, he only came to bed in his underwear and it quickly escalated to them taking all of their clothes and enjoy each other.

Maybe somewhere inside his mind, they would have to be intimate first so he could have a 'reason' to stay – but Juvia had to change that, there would be days they wouldn't have sex before sleeping and Gray needed to understand that.

After a couple of weeks into the new sleeping arrangements, Juvia noticed Gray had yet another reason to want her before falling asleep: he had nightmares. She noticed a pattern that when Gray arrived too tired from missions, he just passed out and didn't dream, when they had a round or two of sex, he also didn't get them, but other days…

Juvia noticed he had three types of nightmares: the ones he only talked during his sleep and had a small frown on his face; the second type was when he would pull her towards him and put his arms around her tightly and whimpering a little (he usually calmed down when Juvia talked to him in whispers that everyone was fine and he was safe) and the third type was the rarer, but harsher. Whenever she realized he was having the worst nightmares, she just got up from the bed and waited until he calmed down – Gray would thrash around, his whole body would tighten and he kicked some unknown enemy, all the while whimpering in pain. Juvia hated those, knowing she could do nothing to help him but to take everything he could hurt himself with out of reach.

When he was done, Juvia returned to the bed and carefully lied next to him, trying not to do any sudden movements, but all the times he seemed to feel it was her and decided to take advantage of it – his head between her breasts, half of his body on top of hers, a leg over hers and his arms wrapped around her waist. After that, he'd sleep the rest of the night.

The blunette assumed she had her own fair share of nightmares as well and Gray must had his own ways of calming her down, but they never talked about it. Things were good the way they were.

Until it happened.

Natsu and Gray were out for a job and were coming back to Magnolia that night and since it was date night for the pink haired man and Lucy, Juvia asked if the blonde would mind going on a double date. Both men whined about it, but the girls thought it was going to be fun, so they had little choice.

"We're are arriving at the restaurant." Gray said from the other side of the phone call. "Don't take too long, I've been with Natsu for forty-eight hours. We are close to killing each other."

Juvia smiled and started to gather her things to leave, the restaurant was close enough they could be there in five minutes. "Please, don't kill each other. Lucy-san would be devastated and so would
"No promises." Gray snorted and Juvia could hear Natsu's voice on the background. "Yeah, I'll ask her. Juvia, Natsu is trying Lucy's phone but she's not picking up."

"It's probably on silent mode, Juvia saw her half an hour ago. She was finishing some paperwork until you guys arrived, everyone else left so it is pretty quiet in here. Juvia will fetch her and we will be at the restaurant in five minutes. Go inside or we will lose the reservations."

"I'll tell him. See you in a bit." Gray finished the call and Juvia put her phone inside her purse and after she turned off the lights of her office, she noticed Lucy's desk was empty. Seeing Natsu's office light on, Juvia just assumed the blonde was there. She knocked on the door and when she got no answer, the blunette frowned and did it again.

She heard a muffled noise and her gut twisted in warning. Something wasn't right.

Juvia opened the door and what she saw, made her whole body freeze: Lucy was sitting on Natsu's chair, her arms taped on the chair's arms, another tape over her mouth. What made Juvia worry, though, was the vest the blonde had on: with wires all over and two grayish large squares Juvia was most certainly were C-4 and a timer.

Her hand went immediately to her purse, where she got her handgun, her training kicking in. She checked the office and turned to check outside for a second, but it was empty.

With her back still to the blonde, Juvia asked: "Lucy-san, is there anyone here that you know of?" She looked over her shoulder, just to see her friend shook her head 'no'. Juvia nodded and walked closer to her, slowly. She looked the vest – she was no expert on bombs, but that one seemed very complicated – and a moment later, she took off the tape above Lucy's lips gently.

"Juvia, you have to leave." Lucy was crying. "They said this would go off by seven thirty if Natsu didn't get here." She sobbed and Juvia's heart stopped for a moment when she saw the small timer blinking red: they only had five minutes.

"Who?"

"I... I don't know them. One had blonde hair and another black, I don't know!" Lucy cried. "Please, you have to leave before this explodes."

Ignoring Lucy, Juvia grabbed her phone and called Levy, knowing that only one phone call was enough since Gajeel was also in the floor below, waiting for his geeky-almost-sort-of-girlfriend finish her job.

"Hello!" Levy's sweet voice echoed, but Juvia lost no time.

"Levy-san, I need you to lock down the fourth floor right now." Juvia said, while looking inside the desk's drawers. She found scissors and immediately started to cut the tape on Lucy's arms. "No questions, just do it."

"Levy-san! This is a code red." Juvia almost barked on the phone, meanwhile finishing with the blondes arms and kneeling to free her legs. "And I am telling you to lock the floor until I call you back or Makarov-sama gives you the order, do you understand me?"

"I... Yes. I'm doing that right now."
"Good. Now give the phone to Gajeel." Juvia's tone left no room for argument, especially if she was handling a crisis at a moment – a hundred thoughts going through her mind.

"Juvia?" She heard Gajeel's voice. "What the fuck is hap-

"Gajeel-kun, there's a bomb here on the fourth floor-

"There's a what?"

"Listen, Levy-san is locking down the floor" as soon as she spoke the words, she heard the soft alarm and the automatic locks "and now you need to take everyone out of the building, whoever is still here."

"Juvia…"

"Now! Juvia is dealing with it."

"Fuck, Juvia. You better not get blown up!" He snarled and finalized the call.

Juvia looked up and Lucy was still looking at her, her brown eyes wide and scared. Softly, she kneeled in front of her once again. "Okay, Lucy-san, we will find a way to get you out of this."

"Why did you lock the floor?" She asked, trying to hold back her tears. "Now you can't leave."

"Juvia doesn't want to leave." She looked under the chair, got up and looked at its back before pushing Lucy a bit to look at the back of the vest and was relieved there was nothing else there. "Juvia just needs to call Natsu-san and he will know what to do. Now, get up."

"But I…"

"Come on." Juvia pushed her up and slowly Lucy found her footing. "We need to go to my office."

Lucy looked confused. "Why?" Juvia didn't answer as they walked towards the door while Juvia grabbed her phone, took a picture of the vest and called Natsu. "Juvia, why do we need to go to your office?"

The blunette looked at Lucy and decided to tell her the truth. "Natsu-san's office is at the middle of the building. If the bomb explodes, the whole building can fall down and people can get hurt. Mine is at its corner and the damage won't be nearly as bad." Lucy paled, gulped and nodded. They were still walking slowly towards the blunette's office when Natsu answered his phone. "Natsu-san! We have a situation here."

"Situation?" The pink haired man asked, confused and Juvia could hear Gray's voice asking what was happening.

"Juvia will send you a picture of a bomb and she needs you to talk her through how to disarm it."

"What? What bomb? Where are you?" She heard him say, but was too busy sending him the picture she took.

"Juvia just sent you the photograph, look at it." The blunette said and by the way he was quiet, Natsu was probably looking at the picture. They arrived at Juvia's office when Natsu finally talked again.

"That's… Lucy has a sweater just like this one. Oh god, is she the one with that vest?" His voice was full of panic.
"Yes. You need to tell me how to-"

"I'm coming!" The call ended and Juvia cussed, immediately calling Gray.

"Juvia, what the fuck-"

"Stop him! Right now!" Juvia yelled on her phone and Lucy whimpered – she was supposed to keep her cool, but she had to save her friend and everyone else in that building; keeping together was going to be a little difficult.

"Fuck!" Gray cussed and Juvia could hear both man fighting on the background and she just wished they would stop already and focus on the problem. She glanced at the timer. 2:18. Damn it.

"What?"

"Natsu, we have two minutes to disarm that bomb and you will not arrive here in time." Juvia yelled on her phone. "What you need to do is to stop, think and let me help because if you don't, we will most certainly die. Stop running and start thinking on how we are going to do this!" She breathed. "Now, are you gonna help or not?"

She heard him breathing hard for a second, probably fighting his instinct to go running to his girlfriend, but apparently thought it better. "Okay." He cleared his throat and put it on speaker, probably to look at the picture she sent him. "Does it have any wires on the back of the vest?"

Juvia sighed in relief he was helping. "No, Juvia looked. The device is on the front and that's all."

"See the locker on the left? Don't touch it or it will go off."

"But the wires are coming from it!" Juvia kneeled in front of Lucy, who had her eyes closed. "Yellow, red, blue, orange and black."

"I know." Natsu's voice was tight. "You need to cut them as close to the locker as you can, without touching it, in an specific order and you can't take more than 2 seconds to cut the next one."

"Great." Juvia sighed and put her phone on speaker. She gave it to Lucy. "You are on speaker. Juvia is getting the scissors, Just a second."

"Lucy?"

"Natsu!" Lucy tried not to sob. "You know I love you, right?"

"Stop talking like this, Juvia is doing whatever she can to help you out. After that we can go have that date."

"Can I just say that this was not what we had in mind when you two wanted to have a double date?" Gray's voice came from the phone and even if he was trying to joke, Juvia knew him enough to notice that underneath that, he was scared. Juvia felt her heart race, and her resolve to get out of this alive doubled it.

Lucy chuckled and dried her tears, looking a bit stronger. "Don't make me laugh, Juvia just got the scissors."

"Natsu-san, what is the order of the wires?"

"Orange, red, black, yellow and blue." The pink haired man said two more times and Juvia did the same just to make sure she got it right.
There were only 0:47 seconds to go, so Juvia took a deep breath, looked to her friend and when Lucy nodded, Juvia said: "Starting right now." She thought about it and decided to speak again. "Gray-sama…"

"Stop. Just do it, Juvia."

Juvia took a deep breath and started.

The moment she cut the last one, the timer stopped at 0:33 and she let out a breath and so did Lucy. Juvia let the scissors fall to the floor and she noticed her hand was shaking.

"Someone say something!" Natsu yelled from the phone.

Seeing that Lucy was just as shaky as she was, Juvia reached for the phone and, with a breathless voice, she said: "The timer stopped." They could hear both men sigh in relief. "Can- Can Juvia take the vest off Lucy-san now?"

"Yes." Natsu told her, obviously running now that he was allowed to again. "Gently and put it away as carefully as you can. We don't know what could set it off. Leave the room, go as far away as you can from it."

"Alright." Juvia nodded and got up from the floor, putting the phone on the desk. Lucy was just as nervous to get out as Juvia was to see her friend free. Carefully, Juvia unclasped the sides of the vest and rose it so Lucy could slip her arms away and then she was finally free. "The vest is off Lucy." Juvia said, as if informing a superior officer of her progress. "Juvia is putting it on her desk."

"Gently!" Gray's voice came from her phone, and by the way he was breathless, he was running alongside with Natsu.

Very carefully, she put the vest down, grabbed her phone and one of Lucy's hands to pull her away from the office. "It's in my office, we are going to Gray-sama's." The blunette informed on the phone, knowing Lucy would probably feel slightly better if they didn't have to go to where this whole thing started.

"No! Get out of the fucking building!" Natsu said.

"We can't." Lucy's voice was gentle. "Juvia ordered Levy-chan to lock the floor and only her or Master can unlock it."

"What?" He was outraged.

"It's procedure." Juvia explained. "When the bomb squad arrives, Juvia will suspend the order."

"Goddammit!" Natsu said.

"We are fine, Natsu." Lucy took the phone from Juvia. "I am fine"

"Lucy…"

"Just wait a few more minutes. Then we will come down." The blonde said, love clear in her eyes. "I am fine, okay?" She said it again.

He took a breath and seemed to calm down. "We are almost at FT and I am hearing sirens. See you in a bit."

"Juvia, do you want to…?" Lucy asked the blunette, but she just shook her head and sat on Gray's
couch. "I'm hanging up." They said their goodbyes and finished the phone call. Lucy, then, sat next to Juvia. "Thank you for not leaving me."

The blunette smiled. "We are friends; Juvia was exactly where she wanted to be."

Lucy nodded and grabbed Juvia's hand, twining their fingers and resting her head on Juvia's shoulder while Juvia rested hers on top of Lucy's. They were fine and it was all that mattered.

#

The moment the floor was unlocked, about five men from the bomb squad came through the emergency stairwell door and Juvia quickly told them where the vest was and what happened. They thanked her and asked both women to leave the building and to tell their story to the policemen downstairs.

Juvia grabbed Lucy's hand and both went down the stairs with one of the men escorting them until they were out the FT building. A lot of their friends were already in there behind a tape the police used to prevent people from coming in, but Juvia just wanted Gray's arms around her and when she spotted him next to Natsu, she sighed in relief.

Lucy let go of her hand and ran to her boyfriend, who just slipped under the tape even when the policemen protested and hugged she was close enough, hiding his face on the crook of her neck. Gray did the same and waited for Juvia, who walked slightly slower than the blonde. Once she was in front of Gray, the blunette put a hand over his chest and felt how much faster his heart was beating.

"Some double date, huh?" He asked with a tired sigh.

"Next time we should grab Caramades Franks and go home." Juvia suggested.

"Amen to that." Gray snorted and put a hand on her cheek. "Are you okay?"

"Yes." She smiled, putting her hand on top of his. "Juvia just feels guilty. Those guys were in the building and she didn't have a clue about what they were doing to Lucy-san."

"Juvia." The couple heard Lucy's voice and turned to the direction of it. "It's fine, we were supposed to be safe in our headquarters, there was no way you would think something was wrong." She seemed shaken up, but otherwise fine. "If you were not there, I'd be dead now. Thank you for staying with me."

Juvia was about to answer, but two policemen asked the women to give their statement, so they stepped away from their significant other and followed.

An hour later, the bomb squad had retrieved the vest and taken away as evidence and even though the place was clear, the police would still be there for a long while to gather any evidence the perps could've left. It was unlikely, since they went in and out without anyone noticing, but Levy – after making sure her friends were fine – was going through all their footage from the security cameras trying to figure out how and who got in there.

Master Makarov, who arrived a bit after the police did, said he would be with the detectives and ordered everyone else to go home, especially Lucy and Juvia, giving express orders that neither woman was to appear at work for a couple of days; they had a scare that day and needed to process it.

It was almost midnight when Juvia and Gray arrived at her apartment, both exhausted physically and
emotionally. The moment the door closed they ignored the excited dog barking around them, Gray put his arms around her from behind her, tightened it for a moment, his forehead on her shoulder. Juvia sighed and raised her arm so she could put her hand on his hair.

"Juvia is fine." She whispered putting an arm above the one he had over her stomach. "The bomb didn't go off."

"It was going to." He whispered just like she did. "I heard the squad saying that much C4 could easily blow the whole floor."

"But it didn't." Juvia turned around in his arms so she could look at him. "Lucy-san is fine and so is Juvia. Nothing happen."

"I know." He nodded and they stared at each other for a few seconds before he let her go. "Let's take a shower and go to sleep. Go first, I'll feed Snowball; you go ahead and I'll be with you in a minute."

"Thank you." Juvia tip toed and kissed his lips before she petted her dog for a moment, leaving a second later and going straight to the bathroom, shredding her clothes off and stepping under the hot spray of water.

A few minutes later, she felt Gray's arms around her and when she turned to face him, the look in his eyes made her heart beat faster. She put her arms around his shoulders and kissed him. When the kiss was finished, they looked at each other and Gray leaned in, kissing her once again, much hungrier that time.

The first time they had sex in the shower, it was because they were hot and bothered by each other, but that night, it felt very different by the way they moved, caress and called each other.

Once they were done, they finally finished their shower and went to bed, Juvia grabbed one of Gray's shirts and put it on before joining him on her bed.

#

She felt panic rise inside her, everyone was going to die if she didn't kill Zeref first. Zeref, with those dark eyes, expressionless like a shark and with the instinct to destroy everything. She had just seen Gray die, she couldn't let him live.

A hand grabbed her shoulder and he was fast in retrieving her gun, rolling on top of the assailant.

"Juvia." She knew that voice, but it was so far away. "Juvia, I need you to wake up now." The blunette frowned. "Juvia? Come on."

Juvia blinked, the fog of sleep leaving her and when she realized what she was doing, her whole body froze. She was sitting on top of Gray, pointing her handgun directly at his forehead, the safety off. She was ready to shoot him.

Gray had his eyes wide with shock, hands on her thighs and he was speaking with her with a calming tone. "Juvia? It's me, Gray."

"Gray-sama?" She whispered and she could see him sigh in relief that she was awake. Juvia put the gun on the bed and got up, eyes burning with unshed tears. "Oh my god. I almost shot you."

"Juvia..." Gray got up as well and when he tried to take a step towards her, she took a few back. "Juvia, come on-" He tried once again, but she just walked away from him, shaking her head, eyes wide and shaking. "Juv-"
"Stay away from me!" The blunette yelled and ran to the bathroom, locking the door the moment she was inside, shaking so much she almost couldn't lock it.

She saw the knob turn and Gray knocked. "Juvia, come on. Open up." She stayed in silence, tears falling, memories of her latest nightmare and she pointing the gun at the man she loved. What had she done? "Juvia? Please, open the door." Even though he couldn't see her, he shook her head and cried harder. "It was not your fault." She heard him and sobbed, sliding down to the tile floor. "Please." He sounded so honest it broke Juvia's heart, but she couldn't face him, not now not ever.

They stayed in silence for a while, then she heard him sigh and the sound of steps as he went away. Juvia put her legs close to her chest and hid her face as she cried. She didn't know how long it passed when she heard him knock softly on the door once again.

"Juvia? Can you unlock the door?" She heard him. "I promise you I won't get in, but it would make me feel better if you unlocked the door." Juvia bit her lower lip and looked to the door. "Please? For me?"

The blunette got up and looked at the door. "You won't open it?" She asked, her voice hoarse because of all the crying. "Promise?"

He sighed in relief for hearing her voice. "I promise." She hesitated for a moment, but unlocked the door and put a hand over the knob just in case Gray tried to open it, but he didn't. "Thank you." He said and Juvia gulped, trying to dry her face, but the tears didn't seem to stop. "I'll be here when you want to come out."

Juvia started to cry all over again; he was being so understanding with her; how did she get that lucky? And she almost shot him. She put a hand on the door, wishing she could touch him instead. Crying, she went to sit on the same spot on the floor, her mind was a mess: she needed Gray to leave, but at the same time, he was all she wanted.

The events of the morning replayed inside her mind over and over again, seeing the eyes of the man she loved wide because she was pointing a gun at him. She was thinking so hard, she didn't even notice the time passing; she was startled when she heard a loud knock on the door.

"Juvia? Can I come in?" She heard and couldn't believe her ears.

"Gajeel-kun?"

"Yeah. Can I come in?" He asked again and Juvia said he could. The moment he entered the bathroom, Juvia suddenly felt even worse – now she was worrying her best friend too. Great. "Well, you look like shit." Gajeel said, a pierced eyebrow raised ad Juvia couldn't help but to snort; he was right, after all. There she was, wearing an oversized shirt of Gray's, her hair was a mess and her face was red because of her crying. "I heard you were having a tough morning."

Juvia snorted again and dried her cheeks. "You could say that."

"Gray told me what happened. He is out, taking your dog for a walk so you and I can have a little chat." Gajeel walked towards her and sat next to her, their shoulders touching. He was wearing his usual black jeans pants and sleeveless black shirt, showing the scars on his forearm. "What was the nightmare about?"

Juvia took a deep breath. "Zeref. He had strapped a bomb on Gray-sama. It went off, he died." She whimpered. "I just grabbed my gun and wanted to kill him. It hurt so much." Juvia cried. "Even as Juvia held him down, he kept saying he wouldn't stop until everyone was dead. I was about to kill
him when I woke up."

"You had your gun pointed at Fullbuster instead." Gajeel completed the thought and she nodded, hiding her face on her hands.

"Juvia can't face him. I almost killed him." Her whispered came out just as terrified as she felt. "Juvia needs to leave."

"That's is pretty cynical of you." Juvia frowned and looked at him in confusion until she cleared up what he meant. "I almost killed you and you annoyed the shit out of me when I tried to get rid of you."

"That is a completely different situation." Juvia argued. "It wasn't your fault Jose got you addicted to heroin."

"So, who should I blame for what I did? You for flushing it down the toilet? Because I am pretty sure you were trying to help me when you did that." Gajeel raised an eyebrow. "It was Jose's fault I got addicted?"

"He gave it to you." She pointed out.

"And I accepted it." Gajeel shrugged. "I could've said no each time he gave it to me, but I didn't. The result of that was me being a bastard who kidnapped Lucy and Levy, smacked them around all because I knew Jose would give me what I needed. The heroin he gave me was purer, different than the regular stuff you get in any corner, I know, I tried it." Juvia looked at him. "When you told me you wanted to move, start fresh… I liked the idea. All I wanted was to finish the supply I found at Jose's place before the feds arrived and then I thought I would be fine. I thought I could stop any time I wanted.

"But then, you found it and threw it away. To tell you the truth, Juvia, I don't remember much about that night, everything is a blur. Somehow, though, I snapped back to myself and there you were, on my bathroom floor, face all bloodied and barely breathing. I thought I killed you." Gajeel looked away from her. "A part of me that I thought was dead, took over. I took you to the Hospital, told the doctors you had been mugged. And I waited. As far as I knew, you were dead and I was just waiting to get arrested. When the doctor came back and told me you were alive… I almost fainted with relief, but when he told me you wanted to talk to me… I was afraid." Juvia looked at him in surprise. "Do you know why I went to see you? Because I thought you were going to call me names and have me arrested. I deserved it.

"But when I got into your room, half of your face bandaged, the other purple because of my fists, arm in a sling… I was glad you were going to send me to jail. I was a monster, I hit you, I almost killed you. Do you remember what you told me?" Gajeel snorted. "You told me you would forgive me if I got into rehab, because you knew the person who hit you was not me."

"I remember that." At the time, she had been buzzed with painkillers, but she remembered his expression of disbelief. "You looked so surprised…"

"At that time I could count in one hand the people in my whole life who had been kind to me. And you were one of them." Gajeel bumped his shoulders on hers and Juvia offered him a small smile. "I asked why…"

"And Juvia answered 'because that's what friends do'." The blunette finished the sentence.

"Yeah. So, I left there and went to the clinic." Gajeel shrugged. "The withdraw was the worst thing
that has ever happened to me. Except being notified every week for three months that you was there
to visit me." He looked at her again. "I always said that I didn't want to see you, because I didn't
want you to see me. I was ashamed of what I did."

"You shouldn't be, you searched for treatment, you were gradually getting better."

"I know that now. Back then, seeing you would just bring back memories of me beating you. I hated
to be that person, out of control like a rabid animal." Gajeel pointed to the bathroom door.
"Fullbuster is going to be you in this situation. When he called me, he wasn't scared of you: he was
scared for you. Just like you didn't give up when I was in rehab, he is not going to run away because
you had a nightmare and pointed a gun at him to protect yourself."

"He should." Juvia muttered. "What if it happens again?"

"Oh, I'm sure it will. But I don't think that this is what is going to scare him away. I have a hunch he
prefers to deal with guns on his face rather than feelings." Gajeel shrugged. "You need to talk to him,
Juvia. Remember the day I came out of rehab? You were waiting in front of the building, majorly
pissed at me for not saying yes for you to visit me? That slap still hurts sometimes."

"It doesn't." Juvia said, softly. "What if he decides he doesn't want to wake up every now and then
with a gun on his face?"

Gajeel snorted. "Then I'd said he chose the wrong profession. I can't count how many times that
happened to me."

"Did you tell Levy-san about this yet? That because of the program you haven't made a move on her
yet?" Juvia asked, gently. It was advisable for recovering addicted not to start relationships until after
a year they started. "Otherwise she's probably getting crazy about your mixed signals."

"I did."

"And?" She pressed.

"I still have two months to go before we can… do anything." Gajeel muttered. "By the time the year
is done, I'll probably be dead. Now that she knows, she is more understanding, yes, but now she
knows for sure what I intend to do to her when the time comes and-"

"Alright, stop it right there. The last thing I want to hear is about your weird sex life. As far as I
know, you will play cards with her and I won't believe anything else."

Feeling slightly better, the two friends remained talking for a few more minutes before they heard the
front door open. Juvia grabbed her friend's forearm, eyes wide in panic.

"Juvia can't speak with him right now."

"Juv-"

"I will, but not now." She pleaded. "Tell him to go to work, we can talk later. Juvia needs to think
and if he stays here, she can't."

Gajeel looked her in the eyes, probably looking for something; he probably found nothing because
he just nodded and got up. "I'll talk to him." He hesitated. "Are we good?"

"Always." She forced a smile. "Juvia just needs some time."
"If you disappear, I'll kill you get it?" He narrowed his red eyes.

"Got it." Gajeel sighed and left the bathroom, closing the door behind him while Juvia stayed at the same spot on the floor, waiting.

She could hear muffled conversation and a minute later, a soft knock on the door made her heart jump. "Juvia? Gajeel talked to me and he said you want me to go to work? I think we should talk."

"Later." The blunette said loud enough for him to hear from outside. "Please."

She heard a sigh and then a couple of seconds of silence. "Okay. I'll go, but we are talking about this when I come back, do you understand me?" When she didn't reply, he pushed for an answer. "Juvia?"

"Okay."

"Call me if you need anything." Without waiting for an answer, she heard his footsteps get further and further away and then the front door closing. Juvia sighed in relief and finally started to put her thoughts in order.

#

It was a little after six when Juvia heard the sound of keys and then the front door opening. She walked from the bedroom to the living room just in time to see Gray coming in. He stopped when he noticed her and she bit her lower lip when she saw him. She had thought a lot about what to say to him, but actually seeing him made her feel even more nervous.

"Hi." She whispered.

"Hey." Gray put his keys on the counter and took a few steps towards her, but she put her hand up to make him stop and he did, with a sigh. "Juvia…"

"Let me speak first." She pleaded and he nodded. "I'm sorry about this morning. Juvia was having a nightmare and… I have no idea why I pointed that gun at you, the nightmare was about you so it makes no sense to pull that gun at you and-" Her eyes started to water.

"Whoa, whoa, calm down." Gray finally stepped closer to her and put his hands on her shoulders. "Juvia, of course I knew you were having a nightmare. You didn't pull your gun at me just for the kicks and giggles."

Her lower lip trembled. "You have nightmares too and you never did that to me."

He sighed. "Tell me what do you do when I have a nightmare?" She looked at him in question, but he just repeated the question.

"Y-you calm down when Juvia speaks to you, most of the time. But when you move too much, Juvia gets up from the bed."

Gray nodded in agreement. "I do the same thing with talking to you when you have your nightmares and until yesterday it was effective. Do you know what I did wrong? I grabbed your shoulder, I startled you and your instinct was to protect yourself. I should've known better and now I do." Gray lowered one of his hands to her hip and put the other one on her cheek. "We've been through a lot in the army and at FT and it gets to us. Of course we have nightmares, of course we can't control them."
"I'm sorry either way." Juvia leaned into his touch. "Juvia will speak to Mira-san about it."

"Good," Gray nodded and she put her arms around him. "And maybe we should consider putting the guns a little farther away from where we sleep. Just a thought." Juvia couldn't help it but to laugh and he did the same. "I guess that this morning makes us even: I shot you when we first met, you almost shot me this morning. I say we call it even."

"Me too." Juvia looked up to him

"You are going to be fine, okay?" Gray gave her a peck on the lips.

Juvia just held him tighter. *They* would be fine.

#

A few weeks after the incident, at Juvia's birthday, Gray surprised her by telling her they would be celebrating it at the fancy restaurant she's been hinting she wanted to go.

She got so excited about it she closed the door of his office and he would never see his desk the same way ever again after seeing her throw all of his stuff on the floor, hop on and pull him closer by the loops on his belt.

Gray was watching the news on her apartment the day of her birthday, waiting for her to finish to dress up when he heard her clear her throat to get his attention and when he looked over his shoulder from the couch, she was very satisfied to see his eyes widen at the sight.

For the night, she chose a black dress with a deep v neck, accentuating her cleavage and it was short enough anyone could see she had an amazing pair of legs, especially with the pair of silver high heels she chose. Her hair was in a loose bun, her bangs framing her face and her eyeshadow was dark, bringing out her azure eyes, while her lips were glossed with a light shade of pink.

By the way Gray looked at her, she achieved what she wanted to: make him feel pretty lucky to have her.

"How does Juvia look?" She asked when he got up from her couch.

Gray licked his lips. "On a scale of 0 to 10, how much do you want to go to that restaurant?"

Juvia chuckled. "11. Come on, it's Juvia's birthday! You know you are going to enjoy it when we get home and Juvia thank you for all your hard work today."

"Can I get an amen?" Gray said. "Plus, is there any chance of you wearing only the shoes later on?"

Juvia giggled.

"Come on or we'll lose the reservation." Juvia grabbed her silver hand purse and went towards the door.

"Wait, I didn't give you your gift." Gray told her and Juvia turned to look at him in question.

"Gray-sama, you don't need to give Juvia a gift. You already are doing more than Juvia hoped by taking her out."

He shrugged and took a rectangular box from the inside pocket of his suit and offered it to her. Confused, Juvia put down her purse and walked in his direction to grab the box. Juvia unwrapped it and the moment she opened the box, she was surprised to see a white gold necklace.
The best surprise, though, was the charm: a golden buttercup with five petals.

"What…?" She looked up to him, eyes wide.

He scratched the back of his neck, a gesture he usually did when nervous. "You said that you don't see buttercups too much and sometimes you forget to think about the good stuff in your life… Well, now whenever you have the necklace on, you can do that." She still hadn't said a word, making him even more nervous. "Look, I know it's tacky, but…"

"It's not tacky. Not at all." Juvia whispered. "This is the nicest thing someone ever gave it to me." Her eyes watered and she looked down to the necklace once again. "Could help Juvia put it on?" She gave him the box and he nodded. Juvia turned around and waited until he had clasped the necklace before she turned around, looking down to it, seeing it resting just above her breastbone. She smiled to him and threw her arms around him, kissing his lips. "Thank you."

"I'm glad you liked it." He sighed in relief and smiled. "Maybe I can convince you to have just the shoes and the necklace on later?"

"Gray-sama, you just got yourself the best night I can give you." Her eyes sparkled with happiness and Gray’s darkened slightly and for a moment, she thought about ditching the restaurant, but she thought better. "Come on. Juvia got all dress up and she wants to show herself off. And her beautiful necklace."

Gray followed her. "Juvia, just so you know, no one will be looking at the necklace, not when you have that dress on."

#

Later that night, Gray had his head on her chest, half of his body on top of hers while she caressed his back and his hair. She just couldn't stop smiling. As it turned out, her birthday surprise wasn't nearly finished: when she got to the restaurant, every one of her friends were there, waiting for her and when Cana and Lucy brought a big cake for her and the girls enveloped her in a hug and she needed to retouch her make-up. No one ever thrown her a birthday party for more than twenty-years and it meant a lot to her they had done it.

They had laughed, talked and she never had such a great birthday before. She thanked their friends so hard Gray had to physically pull her away from them.

Once they were back at her apartment, Juvia fulfilled her promise and just like Gray asked, she just worn her shoes and the beautiful new necklace he got her and thanked her somewhat-boyfriend for the greatest night ever.

"Gray-sama?"

"Huh?" He asked, almost falling asleep, but she just needed to tell him something first; she felt it was the right time.

"You know that Juvia's life had been rainy for so long that seeing the buttercups were the only times she remembered about the good things is life." He finally looked up to her, her blue eyes met his and she smiled. "Now, she doesn't need them anymore. All she needs to do is look around and see her friends and you." She touched his cheek and kept talking, softly. "You are my buttercup, Gray-sama. I love you." She saw his eyes widen, move himself up a bit off of her. After a moment, he tried to speak, but she didn't let him. "Don't. Juvia is not saying this to make you feel uncomfortable or obliged to say it back. Juvia is saying it because that's how she feels and you should know that I do."
He blinked a couple of times and nodded.

"Thank you." Gray rested his forehead on hers.

It wasn't as if he didn't know what to answer and thanked her. No, he was really thanking her for loving him, like he couldn't believe someone would.

When he moved away from her, Juvia saw something different in his eyes just before he leaned down and kissed her, slowly getting more and more heated by the second. That night something changed; they made love for the first time and Juvia couldn't think her life could get better.

Chapter End Notes

So, this was just what I couldn't add last chapter. It was a bit of a 'filler'. The next one we will come back to canon. ;) I hope this wasn't too cheesy.
AN: I’m so sorry about the lateness of this update, but I was highly blocked about how I was going to use the GMG in the story and you guys have no idea how hard it was to try to make things as believable as I could. You will also notice I skipped some parts because I just couldn’t fit them, but I tried to mention it as my prime focus is Gray and Juvia’s relationship. Other things will seem rushed because, well, they are. Too many important things happened during the arc and just some of them regarded Gruvia.

Anyway, thanks for understanding and I hope you enjoy the chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After Juvia’s admission about her feelings towards Gray, she would catch him looking at her with a pensive stare and something else she couldn’t put her finger on. Every time she caught him doing it, he was quick to look away and try to appear very busy. It became so frequent Juvia stopped noticing, choosing to just smile at him instead. It wasn’t as if she minded him watching her.

Two months after Juvia’s birthday, she arrived at FT after being away for almost a week in a mission and a day lazing around at her apartment, when Cana told her Makarov wanted to see her as soon as she arrived.

The blunette frowned at the request, but did as was told and rode the elevator to the top floor in search for their boss. During the time she spent going up, Juvia thought about all the bad things she had done the past few months and all of them were done during a mission and for a reason.

Well, most of them.

Once she arrived, Lisanna had smiled to her and told her to get in, they were waiting for her. It confused her even more, but the blunette followed her friend when she opened the door to Makarov’s office and told her to come in.

To say she was surprised to see who was there, was an understatement: Laxus was seated on the couch looking bored, Mirajane by his side as bubbly as always and Gajeel sat on the white haired woman’s other side, arms crossed over his chest

“Oh, Juvia-chan. Good, now we are only waiting for one.” Makarov said, earning Juvia’s attention, as she looked his way. He smiled kindly at her and pointed to a chair next to where the other three were and, dumbly, she went to sit.

“What… what is happening?” She asked and both Laxus and Gajeel shrugged while Mirajane just smiled knowingly.

“You’ll know in a bit. I’ll go get the last person.” Makarov went outside his office, leaving them alone.

A few moments later, Laxus said in a low voice: “I don’t know why the secrecy, but if the old man is
behind this and got all of us together, it’s going to be a pain in the ass.”

“Don’t speak like that.” Mirajane slapped his arm and pouted. “Master has a lot of good ideas.”

The moment Mirajane closed her mouth, Master returned to his office with someone right behind him, his face hidden behind some cloth, only the eyes were visible. Juvia could see none of the other three recognized the men by the way they also frowned.

Makarov closed the door and went to sit on his chair behind his desk, leaving the unknown man standing a few feet away. Master cleared his throat and looked to where his grandson and the others were. “What I am about to tell you, cannot leave this room until it is time.” He looked to the man. “Mystogan, you may take the scarf off now.” Juvia glanced to said man (Mystogan?) and the moment he took off the cloth away from his face, Juvia’s eyes widen as she recognized the blue hair and the tattoo on his face from a picture she had seen from his files.

“Jellal?” Juvia got up from her chair, feeling a bit hostile: after all, he had been helping Zeref less than a year before and it was a bit of his fault that awful man Vivaldas had drugged her. Plus, he had broken Erza’s heart. “What…? Weren’t you in jail?”

Seeing her reaction, both Gajeel and Laxus got up as well and seemed to recognize the name. Neither seemed too pleased with the revelation.

From her place on the couch, Mirajane said: “Alright, maybe he has some crazy ideas sometimes.”

#

It took a little convincing, but Makarov was able to make everyone sit down again and listen to him. Juvia dropped her guard a bit when Master vouched for Jellal – Mystogan – and make the blue haired man sit down farther away from the other four.

“For all purposes, Jellal escaped prison and his whereabouts are unknown, yes, but this is his twin brother.” Makarov said. “We have all the paperwork proving they were separated when they were born, they went to foster care and as far as everyone knows, he has nothing to do with Jellal Fernandes.” He looked to his grandson. “In fact, I believe Laxus and Mirajane remember when Mystogan here was one of the recruits who were with him when he joined the army.”

Laxus stared at his grandfather for long seconds, they were communicating without words. “Now that you mentioned, pops… He does look familiar. Doesn’t he, Mirajane?”

The white haired woman nodded and hummed in agreement. “I sure remember the blue hair.”

“Will that work?” Gajeel asked with no finesse.

“Everyone else who got in with them is dead. A bit of photo manipulation and we have the evidence Mystogan was there while Jellal was miles away.” Makarov said. “And our records show he has been working with us for the past two years.”

Juvia looked at Gajeel and they were the ones having a silent conversation that time. It wasn’t as if they had been doing nice things when they ran into Fairy Tail and if Master Makarov wanted to give Jellal a second chance, they trusted him.

“Yes, Juvia remembers seeing you when she started here. How long has it, Gajeel-kun?”

“Ten, eleven months?” Gajeel shrugged and looked towards the blue haired man. “It’s coming back to me too, seeing you there.”
The tension that was clearly all over Jellal, softened with the words from the four people in front of him and he let out a puff of air. “Thank you.” He was able to mutter.

“Now that all of our memories are back,” Makarov said pointedly with a thankfully smile “we acquired information about a small contest. This contest is for the King’s amusement; he likes action and he especially likes to see people competing about it. Usually is something small, just little groups for the money.” Everyone was paying attention to the old man’s story. “This year, it’s different. Lots of firms like ours are going, many skilled people are going there. People who would never lower themselves to just being an attraction to the King. And Jellal have told me that Zeref’s people are interested in that event. Maybe Zeref himself.”

Juvia grabbed the armrest tight remembering her meeting with Zeref and how it made her feel scared and hopeless.

“We are entering the contest. The teams are usually mixed with people from all the staff to make it, and I quote the king here, ’more fun to watch’, so” Makarov said “I already briefed Natsu, Gray, Erza, Wendy and Lucy. They will be our first team. The first three are the muscle, Wendy the medical support and Lucy the brain. Anyone who sees them will see just our contestants and even though I have faith in them, we can’t afford to something happen and we are not in the finals.” The old man took a moment to look at each person in the room. “That’s why I am sending a second group: the five of you.”

“Why us?” Juvia asked.

Makarov didn’t hesitate to answer. “Because even though we have some great people, you are the best. You complete the mission, no matter what and no matter the consequences, and this one is to go as further up in the competition as we can get.” He stayed in silence for a moment. “There’s another reason as well: I got word my… son is going to be there and I really need you to keep an eye on him.” Juvia bit her lower lip, knowing about the rocky history between all the Dreyar men; by the corner of her eye, she saw Laxus tense. "My son is… not a very good man and if he’s there, something is bound do come up.”

“What do you want us to do, Master?” Mirajane asked.

“Don’ tell anyone about the second team, please.” The old man said. “It would make me feel better if this came up as a surprise to everyone.” When the four people nodded, Makarov did the same. “Thank you. I will send the relevant files to your e-mails and more details about it.”

Taking it as a dismissal, the younger people got up from their places, leaving only Laxus – who was still staring fixed at his grandfather – and Makarov as they exited the room.

“Well, that’s fucked up.” Gajeel said once they were out.

“What’s fucked up?” Lisanna asked, coming their direction and her sister was quick to put a smile on her face.

“Nothing.” Mirajane met Lisanna halfway and put an arm around her shoulder. “Come on, Lisanna, you owe me lunch and I heard someone has a hot date tomorrow.”

“Mira-nee…” Lisanna whined, but let herself be taken away by her sister.

Juvia passed a hand through her hair and thought about what Makarov asked and how she was supposed to keep it from Gray – thank goodness he was supposed to leave for a mission the next day, she hated omitting things from him.
“Thank you.” She heard the whisper from her right and she saw ‘Mystogan’ with the scarf already covering his face, only his eyes could be seen and Juvia noticed he was looking down. “For… joining this crazy idea.”

“We weren’t always on the good side of things.” Gajeel shrugged. “But it is a crazy idea. You are wanted by, well, everyone.”

“We went farther with less.” Juvia reminded him gently and her friend snorted in agreement. She looked at Mystogan for a moment. “If you are honest about being Mystogan and leave what Jellal did, behind, this is the place for you to be. Just don’t break Erza’s heart again, or we will come after you.” She said, venom on her tone and he wisely took a step back, nodding in agreement. “Good.” The blunette smiled. “See you later.”

Juvia was eating ice cream while watching TV with Snowball on her lap when Gray used his key to get inside her apartment, making the dog jump from its owner’s lap to bark in excitement around the man, who bent over to take her from the floor for a moment, letting his duffel bag fall.

“Hey.” Juvia grinned when she saw him putting Snowball back down. “I thought you were going to stay at your place tonight.”

“I was, but then I realized a shirt I wanted to take was here so I decided to just spend the night.” He shrugged and sat by her side, putting an arm around her shoulder and kissing her lips. “Or am I not allowed to stay here? Expecting company?” He raised an eyebrow and she giggled.

“Oh yeah. My other boyfriends were supposed to come over so we could have a freaky orgy.” She told him in the most serious tone she could muster.

Gray snorted and took the ice-cream bucket away from her. “Please, you are such a jealous person you’d never go to an orgy. Or even have a threesome.” He ate a mouthful of ice cream, but her next words make him cough.

“Not if it was to share someone; myself is another matter entirely. Young Juvia had a wild phase after her broken heart.” She shrugged and got up from the couch, giving him a peck on the lips. “Now, which shirt was it? The one you were looking for.”

He looked a little dazed. “Uh… the light blue one with white stripes.” Juvia nodded and went to her bedroom, Gray following her, still looking confused. “And what do you mean wild phase?”

Juvia shrugged, going straight for her closet, where she had put the clothes Gray had forgotten there and she washed. “Juvia told you: after she got her heart broken, Juvia took charge of her sexuality.”

“Come on: the orgy or the threesome?” Gray asked.

“Wouldn’t you like to know?” She winked over her shoulder and smiled when he huffed in annoyance. Locating the shirt he was after, Juvia carefully took from the pile and turned around to show it to him. “Is this the one?”

“Yes, thanks.” He stood next to her and grabbed two more before they came out of the closet, Gray throwing them on her bed. “Now I’m all set.”

Juvia hummed in agreement, stepping next to him and putting her arms around his waist. She looked up to him, her chin propped on his chest. “You know, most of your clothes are here.”
“What? They are not.” He frowned.

“Uh, yes they are.” She told him. “When you were packing, you looked around and… how many shirts, pants and underwear did you see there?” Juvia could see his frown deepen. “Exactly, about eighty per cent are here.”

“I just… I thought they were at the laundry basket.”

“They were.” Juvia smirked. “My laundry basket, but a laundry basket nonetheless. I just wash them and leave them there,” she pointed to her closet “so you can get them home when you want to.” He cleared his throat. “I’ll take them back when I return from my mission.”

“Juvia doesn’t mind.” She tiptoed and kissed him. “It was just a piece of information about how much time you spend here.”

“Well, you do keep your fridge stocked all the time and you have a cute dog for me to play with.” Gray said playfully and she rolled her eyes, slapping his stomach playfully. “Plus, I kind of like it when you wear my shirts.” Juvia blinked and looked down at herself; she had forgotten she was wearing one of his shirts and suddenly her cheeks grew warmer.

“Uh…” She tried. “Sorry?”

“Don’t be.” Gray smiled, pulling her closer. “I do like it.” He kissed her lips and then a path down the neck while she giggled and he fumbled with the hem of the shirt to pull it away from her, she raised her arms to help him do it.

“What about the ‘no sex before missions’ rule?” Juvia asked as soon as he lied her down on the bed.

“I don’t even know why we have that rule.” Gray mouthed on her neck.

“You created that rule.” Juvia bit down a moan. “You said you needed focus.”

Gray let go of her long enough to take off his shirt. “I’m a very stupid man sometimes.” He kissed her again, but stopped to mutter a question: “Come on you have to tell me: orgy or threesome?” Juvia couldn’t help it but to laugh out loud before pulling him back on top of her.

#

A few weeks later, at Crocas, the Capital of The Fiore Kingdom, Juvia grabbed her suitcase and chose something nice to wear. It was the day before the Great Games and just like every other team, she was sharing the room with her four teammates and they also seem to be making plans of their own. After going in the bathroom and changing her jeans to a long white skirt with a dark blue shirt that showed a large portion of her cleavage, Juvia checked herself on the mirror once again before thinking the result was good enough. After saying good-bye to the remaining people there: Mystogan and Laxus, telling she was going to be back before 12, as ordered, she left in search of Gray.

She called Lucy to narrow down where Gray could’ve been, she went at the direction of the restaurant district, as the blonde told her Gray said he was hungry.

Finding him wasn’t as hard as she thought it would be as he was in the middle of the pavement – it seemed the whole street was closed up for cars and there were benches all over the way and he stood there, looking at some kind of map. Juvia smiled: she would surprise him.

“Gray-sama!” Juvia called and she watched in amusement as Gray looked around until he spotted
her, immediately smiling, leaving the map behind and stepping closer to her.

“Juvia… Why are you…?” He tried to ask, but she threw her arms around his shoulders and kissed him, while he put his own around her waist.

“Well, I came to cheer for everyone in the guild, of course.” She said and his answer was to hum in agreement. “Would you like to get something to eat?” She draw the lines of the X on his shirt with her finger. “Alone, with me.” Juvia kissed his cheek.

“If you let this be counted as this month’s date…” Gray smirked and she rolled her eyes with the predictable question – he asked it almost every time they went out and her answer was rarely positive, but that time she would make an exception: he would have a surprise the next day and not one he would like much. When Juvia nodded his smile widened. “If so, now that you mention it, I’m getting pretty hungry.”

“Well, in that case there’s some pretty good restaurants in this town.” They heard a familiar voice coming from behind them and they almost jumped away from each other.

“Lyon!” Gray let go of her in annoyance and Lyon used it to his advantage by putting an arm around Juvia’s shoulder and leading her away from the dark haired man.

“How about we go check out the aquarium?” Lyon was all smiles when he asked her that.

“Huh…? Err… Umm…” Juvia tried to form a sentence, but couldn’t, already predicting the fight between brothers that was about to break and sure enough, Gray’s angry voice could be heard.

“You bastard! What did I tell you about taking what’s mine?” Juvia felt Lyon’s arm being lifted from her shoulder and then she was being pulled back to Gray’s side.

“You’re going to be competing in the Games, right, Gray?” Lyon asked and Gray’s answer was a grunt while he put himself in front of Juvia. “Oh, well… We, of the Bureau, will be the ones winning.”

“Don’t forget we have Erza and she’s like a monster.” Gray all but growled.

“Why don’t we make a bet?” Lyon’s smirk was predatory – as much Juvia could see. “If we win, Juvia will come to work for us.”

Juvia’s eyes widened at the same time Gray said loudly: “What the hell?” But what surprised her, was his next question. “A-and if we win?”

“We’ll give Juvia back to you.” Lyon said simply.

“She was ours to begin with!” Gray was exasperated.

“This is a promise from man to man. Don’t forget it, Gray.”

The dark haired man groaned in exasperation. “What kind of bet is that supposed to be? Quit messing around.”

Juvia opened her mouth to object, but Lyon’s next words made her stop. “You afraid of losing?”

The whole atmosphere around them changed as Gray said, between gritted teeth: “What did you say?”

Deciding it was best to diffuse the mood before she had a repeat of the performance they made a few
months ago in front of her building, Juvia decided to intervene and put herself between them, pushing Gray away from his brother. “Gray-sama! Who is it you really want? Me or Lyon-sama? Tell me the truth.”

She felt as if she had just prevented a very big fight in the middle of the town as Gray’s shoulders lost its tension. “You have no idea what’s going on… do you?”

‘More than you do’ Juvia scoffed inside her mind.

Seeing both of them had calmed down, she gently suggested: “Well, since Lyon-sama is here with us, we should all go have something to eat. In peace.” She added when both men growled at each other. “Without fighting, please.”

Lyon was the first to break, smiling at her with a flirty smile. “Anything for you, Juvia-chan.”

“Fine.” Gray didn’t sound too thrilled with the development, but she knew he wouldn’t let her alone with his brother. Lyon mentioned a good restaurant near-by and walked a few steps in front of the couple when Gray whispered to her: “I take it back, don’t consider this a date. Never consider anything with him a date.”

“Deal.”

#

The dinner was filled with a heavy aura and the men were absolutely sulking for being at the same table, and Juvia was feeling uncomfortable. The minute they arrived at their booth, Gray sat in one side and Lyon on the other and Juvia didn’t even think when she sat next to Gray, but she did notice the ridiculous smirk of satisfaction Gray sent his brother.

‘How do men walk with all the testosterone dripping from them?’ The blunette thought.

“So, how’s work?” Juvia asked Lyon when their food arrived.

“Taking bad guys out, saving the country. You know the drill.” He winked and Juvia couldn’t help but to smile at his flirt.

“Yes we do, we have the same line of work.”

“Well, you get paid tons of money for those. I am a humble public employee.” He frowned lightly. “I shouldn’t say that if I am trying to get you to come to the Bureau.”

“Yeah, why are you so obsessed with that?” Gray asked his brother, eyes narrowed.

“The information she helped me get those months ago are still putting people behind bars. I told my boss about Juvia-chan here,” he smiled at her “and he looked over her file and was impressed. Asked me to try to steal you to us.”

Juvia felt pride dwell inside her; after all she didn’t work that hard her whole life to not be acknowledged for it. “Thank you, but FT is Juvia’s home now. She doesn’t want to leave any time soon.”

Lyon sighed. “Pity.”

“But” she said and both men looked at her in surprise “Juvia would be more than happy to be employed from time to time.”
“Now that sounds promising.” Lyon leaned over the table and smirked. “I’m sure we could work something out.”

“Good.” Juvia nodded and pretended not to notice Gray’s waves of anger coming from her side. “Now,” she said happily and trying to diffuse the tension “let’s eat, shall we?”

They arrived in front of the Honey Bone Inn, Gray had been quiet after they left the restaurant until Lyon said his goodbyes to the couple in front of the small building, promising Gray he would see him the next day and win – Juvia had to put herself between them otherwise they would go at it again. The blunette smiled and said good-bye to the white haired man.

Gray waited until Lyon was out of earshot before he turned to Juvia, not in his best mood. “Juvia…”

The blunette sighed, already prepared for his bad mood as he always did after a meeting with his brother. “Everything is the same now as it was two hours ago.” Juvia told him, putting her hands on his shoulders.

“You didn’t have to offer yourself to work with him.” Gray muttered, sulking.

“You know that we can’t afford to lose clients. And you didn’t have to make a bet.” She raised an eyebrow making him look down, guiltily.

“Sorry. He just knows how to tick me off when it comes to you. When it’s just us we are kind of friends, but he starts to pawing you and it makes me want to shoot him.”

Juvia snorted. “Well, welcome to jealousy-land. That’s pretty much what Juvia thinks when you are friendly with any woman.”

Gray grimaced. “That’s not a good feeling.” The blunette nodded and he kissed her. “Don’t worry, I’ll win.”

Oh, he had another thing coming if he thought he would win; not with the team she was in, he was not. “Sure.” She smiled and tilted her head towards the Inn. “Shall we come in?”

“Yes.” He looked to the watch on his wrist. “I need to go back to the room; we need to be there by 12.”

“Alright. Good luck tomorrow.” Juvia kissed him and both entered the Inn, hand in hand.

The room was actually very cozy with the five of them seated on their beds and while Mirajane hummed a song, the other four waited for midnight – it was weird enough the organizers made them return to their lodges at a determinate time, so they had a hunch something was going to happen.

The moment the clock turned to midnight, the five of them got up from their beds when an annoying voice with a ridiculous music came from speakers on the ceiling. “To all firms here for the Great Tournament! Good morning! In order to reduce the participating teams from 40 down to 8, we will now begin a ‘Preliminary Event’!” They looked at each other, eyebrows raised. “Every year, more and more firms come! That’s a sign this event was starting to be taken too lightly. This year, we’ve brought the number of final competing teams down to 8.” There was a knock on the door and, as the one closest to the door, Juvia went to answer it.
Outside their room, there were three men in dark suits and impassive expressions. “You will all now compete with each other! The goal is the event grounds, Domus Flau.”

“We are here to take you there.” One of the men in the suit said.

After a silent conversation between them, the participants nodded and stepped outside the bedroom, where the men handed them black hoods to put it over their heads.

“Really?” Gajeel asked, annoyed.

“It’s a rule, sir. You cannot see where we are going to take you.”

“Just put the damn thing,” Laxus said, putting his own hood over his head. “It’s going to be quicker that way and the sooner we finish this, the better.

Juvia put her on and after that she could identify when they went down the stairs of the Inn in complete silence until the cold wind from outside hit her and they were told they were about to enter a car and to not take the bag yet.

“Is everyone here?” Laxus asked once the door closed. When the answer was positive, they relaxed a bit more, but the ride was silent.

It took no longer than fifteen minutes for the annoying voice come up once again from the speakers in the car:

“The first 8 teams to make it will participate in the event. Feel free to use force, there are no restrictions besides fire guns. As long as you’re one of the first 8 teams to make it. But if all 5 of your members don’t make it there, you still lose. And… one more thing: we take no responsibility for anyone who loses their life in the labyrinth.”

“You may take off the hood.” A man said and when their eyes got used to the dim light, they saw a large wall and a small entrance, and a door ready to be closed.

“The Great Tournament’s Preliminary Event: Labyrinth has begun!” They heard from the speakers.

One by one they got out of the car and took in their surroundings: the suited men were everywhere alongside the long and tall wall. “I guess we have to get to the other side as the eight first.” Mirajane said and the others nodded their agreement. “Well, then. Shall we?” She clapped her hands in excitement, but it didn’t fool Juvia one bit: Mirajane had assessed the whole situation before Juvia could even wrap her mind around the fact they were going to be thrown in a maze.

Once they entered the maze, a heavy metal door closed behind them. “I assume we will run into some people here, so have your guards up.” Laxus said. “Try to memorize the way we are going so we won’t get lost.” When the other four nodded, they started to move as silently as they could and as the quietest one, Mirajane was ahead.

For the first ten minutes they just walked around until Mirajane raised her hand and closed it as a fist, making the others even more alert: there was another group on the corner and they were not being too silent.

“Five men, we should be able to take care of them without effort.” She said.

“Let’s do this.” Gajeel cracked his knuckles and stepped around the corners and the smile he offered the poor guys was absolutely evil. “Hello, fellas. Poor luck to have run into us.” Laxus and Jellal stepped behind Gajeel and Juvia could hear the other men shriek.
“Men.” Mirajane sighed while she leaned on the wall, watching their teammates beat the five other.

“Right?” Juvia sighed. “Wanna have a go at the next ones we find?”

“Oh yes.” Mirajane smiled.

They were back at their dorm by three a.m. as the second group to complete the task, their place was guaranteed. Everyone was in a good mood, after all they had a good excuse for being slightly more violent than normal and it was so familiar to all of them to have a crew and work with them.

After they cleaned up, they went to sleep, knowing the next day would be filled with surprises from all sides.

The next day, the same men from the night before were waiting for them outside their bedroom to escort them to where the first day’s contest would be held. Juvia saw they seemed to be going to a soccer stadium, which made sense: it would certainly be big enough to hold the Tournament.

The men in suits showed them what seemed to be a locker room and told them they would be going out in a few minutes, to get prepared.

“I hate being a circus attraction.” Gajeel mumbled. “Don’t get me wrong I love to kick some ass, but I don’t like this.”

“Yeah.” Laxus nodded. “But Gramps says we need to go to the end, that something’s wrong.”

“If Master says something is amiss, it is.” Mirajane said.

“It is.” Jellal told them. “I don’t know exactly what is going to happen, but something will.”

Juvia felt cold down her spine with the words but shook it off and that moment someone knocked on the door and they were led out, towards the field and told to wait on one of the entrances until their name was called.

Juvia saw that the stadium was almost full and people seemed to be cheering, as if the whole thing was normal. She remembered lessons at school when she was a little girl about a place where its rulers made people fight one against each other as Gladiators.

She could hear the commentators present themselves as Chapati Lola, Yazima-san and Jenny Realight – with the last name, Mirajane giggled and Juvia couldn’t ask why because the next moment they were presenting the eight winners, starting from the bottom.

“First off is the preliminary round’s 8th place. FT!” Juvia saw Natsu with his fist up, on his left side Lucy and Erza and on his right, Gray and… Elfman? Where was Wendy?

When the crowd started to boo them, everyone could see Natsu’s expression of disbelief and Gray’s annoyed stance. Juvia suddenly wanted to go out there and shut all of the viewers until she saw, on the second level of the bleachers, a big banner written “FT victory” and all the members of the firm, were there, clearly cheering.

“Awww!” Mirajane cooed while Juvia put a hand over her mouth to hide her laughter. Gajeel, though, couldn’t help it but to laugh out loud and it was obvious that behind his mask, Jellal was also smiling.
Laxus scoffed. “Stupid, the lot of them.”

Next, the commentators presented the rest of the winners: 7th place was Quatro Cerberus, a group of five men who seemed to have come up from a motorcycle club; 6th was Mermaid Heel, five women who Juvia thought they needed to be aware of. To their surprise, 5th place was Blue Pegasus, a firm FT had worked with and was in friendly terms with. 4th was the FBI group under the name of Lamia Scale and Lyon seemed very proud of himself for beating his brother (Ha, Juvia would see to that in a moment).

The moment the name of the 3rd place echoed in the stadium, Laxus, who was next to Juvia, let out a small growl, as the group was from RT, or Raven Tail: the firm of his father.

“There are just two more teams that made it through the preliminary round!” They heard the commentator say. “Here we go! The team who came in 2nd in the preliminaries is…” a pause; “Well, now, this is definitely unexpected! Could the flapping of their wings really carry them all the way here?” The five winced with the ridiculousness of the words, after all everyone knew the firm’s name was really Fairy Tail. “It’s the least-expected…. The unbelievable… FT B Team!”

The moment they stepped inside the stadium, people clapped and cheered, but their colleagues’ expressions were the better, none of them expected to see the five of them in another team.

Gray’s eyes were wide and in Juvia’s direction and she couldn’t help it but to smirk a bit and she even threw a lock of her hair behind, raising her chin a bit. She remembered the night of the announcement of the S-Class competition when he told her she couldn’t take him on. Well, they would see that, wouldn’t they?

The commentator Chapati and Yazima-san were explaining to the crowd about the rule that the same firm could enter two teams in the competition that year while Jenny argued if it would be fair when Natsu stepped out from the crowd and yelled: “Don’t give me that crap! I’m serious here!” Everyone just shut up with his outburst. The pink haired man turned to Gajeel. “I don’t care if we’re part of the same firm or not, if we’re fighting against each other, we fight with all our strength. Don’t you dare hold back! Any team we get matched against is an opponent! I’m not losing to anyone, you bastards!”

Gajeel smirked and leaned until he was face to face to Natsu and said: “Exactly what I was hoping for, Mr. 8th Place Preliminary.” Juvia had to hide a smile because of how red Natsu’s face became and she looked around to see how the others were doing.

Mirajane was speaking with her brother, Erza and Jellal were also exchanging words until Laxus approached them and put an arm around ‘Mystogan’s’ shoulder. Gray had his arms crossed over his chest, looking at Juvia with eyes narrowed (while she pretend not to notice) and listening to Lucy chatting. Juvia would so need to explain herself later.

“Now, for the last team that made it through the preliminary round… The strongest! The invincible! The complete Dominators! Sabertooth!”

The moment they stepped inside the stadium, Juvia had a bad feeling. The man with short blonde hair had his arms open, bathing on the cheers of the viewers, there was a dark haired man who glared at Gajeel who glared back at him, a woman with short white hair, a man with a long blonde hair and a weird hat while the last one had some wild green hair.

“That makes up all the teams that will be participating!” Chapati said. “The Grand Tournament has been unveiled!” On the big screen above one of the bleachers, there was a schedule going from ‘Day 01’ to ‘Day 05’, each of them saying ‘??? + battle’, which meant there would be a contest and a
battle every day and the first day’s contest would be called ‘hidden’. “For the contest part, you can select anyone from your group do participate. For the following battle part, the organizers will pair up cards selected from the fans’ votes. The battle part’s rules are simple. Each team will battle, like so the winning team will receive 10 points, the losing team will receive none. If it’s a draw, each team will receive 5 points. Let’s begin ‘Hidden!’ Each team will have 1 participant. After each submit their player, I’ll explain the rules.”

While the other groups chose their representatives, Lyon stepped away from the Lamia group saying he would do it and Juvia just knew Gray would offer himself and just as she predicted, he took a few steps away from Team A and said: “Let’s find out just what kind of Tournament this really is.”

The blunette was quick to offer herself; “If they are sending Gray-sama, then I’ll go too!”

“Hey!” Gajeel almost yelled. “If you lose on purpose, I’m gonna kick your ass!” Juvia just winked at her friend and hurried to go where the participants were gathered and weirdly enough the person who was supposed to be the mediator was wearing a ridiculous mask of a pumpkin. It made no sense at all, but, well, they had more pressing matters.

Juvia stood with Gray by her right and Lyon by her left. She leaned a bit towards Gray and said in a presumably low voice: “I’ve gotta tell you I’m sorry, but I don’t have any intent to lose here.”

He smirked and looked at her “I wouldn’t expect anything less.”

“Sorry,” Lyon said from her other side and the couple looked at his direction “but I’m gonna be going full force as well.” He looked at the blunette. “For Juvia.”

“Ahm…” Juvia could feel her cheeks warm up.

“Ignore him or you’ll catch his stupidity.” Gray rolled his eyes and at that moment, the man from Raven Tail, he was called Nullpudding, started to speak.

“Excuse me just a moment, please. We still haven’t been informed about what kind of contests we’re going to be taking part in today. In fact… All of the contests are being kept secret. But regardless of what it might be, having two comrades competing, FT has a huge advantage, right?”

“What?” Gray sounded so pissed off it took Juvia grabbing him by the wrist so he couldn’t go after the man – not that she didn’t want to see her Gray-sama kick his ass for his words, but they needed to stay until the end, according to Master.

“That’s just how it goes. The fact that two teams from the same firm made it all the way to the finals is nothing short of amazing.” Said the contestant from Sabertooth, the pretty boy with long hair (not that Juvia would ever tell a soul she thought he was pretty, Gray-sama was much better looking either way). “I guarantee that having two of you competing… ultimately will not be what you’d call advantageous.” The others seemed to agree with it and Nullpudding seemed pissed off.

Gray raised an eyebrow. “Impressive. So there’s something behind this Royal Prince Routine…”

Pretty Boy (Juvia vaguely remembered his name being Rufus) looked in their direction and well, he seemed even prettier up close. “Your comrades can also become your weaknesses.” He glanced quickly to where Juvia still held Gray’s hand from when she tried to prevent him from going after Nullpudding and released it the fastest she could, but Rufus had already seen it. “Taking hostages, targets to threaten, interrogating for information… There’s countless other ways your enemy can use them to create an advantageous situation.” He looked Gray in the eye. “You should remember that.”

Playing it light, Gray smirked. “How could I forget?”
The host with the pumpkin mask cleared his throat and told them to come closer. “Field open!” He said and just like that, men in suits came from all over and from far away started to pull ropes until a few minutes later the boards on the floor (none of them had given it a second thought) were up, forming a small maze of its own, and kind of big Juvia had to guess.

“What the…?” Gray looked around and Juvia just blinked in surprise, noting there were eight entrances.

Pumpkin Man opened a large chest, that was quite forgotten by the middle of where they were and inside there were eight different paintball guns. “These are fully loaded. The rules of hidden are simple: all of you will be ‘it’ and be looking for each other mutually. Find each other inside that maze. We are going to be following you with cameras: if contact is made with one of the paintballs, a point is added to the attacker and taken from the victim. Where it is hit doesn’t matter.”

Each of the eight got one gun, made sure it worked and Juvia noticed they had different colors, hers was pink and Gray’s was green.

“Choose an entrance, and go hide.” Pumpkin Man said and after a few moments, they were all in front of one. “Now go and hide! The game will start when you hear the gong! Go!”

Then, Juvia run inside the maze.

#

Juvia had found a cupboard to hide after the fiasco of the Hidden Contest. She didn’t know what happened, but it seemed everyone was targeting Gray or her and she got just 1 point for her team. Even Lucy had put a better fight than her and she wasn’t even trained! To tell the truth, the blonde shouldn’t even be participating, but she was stubborn.

When she met her team, once she gathered courage to face them, she apologized profoundly but all they did was to shrug and tell her she at least got a point while Mystogan was just a disaster (to which she noticed his face became red even under the mask).

They went to their room to change and Mirajane suggested for them to go to the Inn’s bar, where the rest of their firm certainly was and they agreed.

Of course, they were being their loud selves and Juvia felt a bit better, knowing they were fine losing that first day as long as they were together. Her mood had improved a bit until she heard Levy say “Huh? Lucy-chan and Gray didn’t come out?”

“That’s right… I don’t see them.” Jet pointed out.

“Well, after all, both of them lost like that…”

“It must be hard for them to show their faces.” Wakaba said.

With her imagination going wild, Juvia thought about Gray trying to comfort Lucy and the blonde taking advantage of her Gray-sama and throwing him on the bed, proclaiming her love for him.

“What’ll I do if something like that happens?” Juvia put her hands on her cheeks and her expression was of horror.

“Whatever you are thinking.” she heard Gray’s voice behind her and she turned to see him with Lucy by his side “no way it would happen.”
“As usual, quite the fertile imagination.” Lucy didn’t even seem surprised about Juvia’s thoughts and just went to talk to Levy. Gray asked Lisanna about Wendy and Charle before he sat on the booth next to Juvia, asking a beer to the passing barmaid.

“We talked about your jealousy regarding Lucy.” He whispered so she would be the only one to hear. “I thought you were over it.”

“Sorry.” Juvia looked down in shame. He put an arm on the top rail of her chair, not quite touching her but anyone who watched them knew they were most likely together and it warmed Juvia’s heart a bit.

“It’s fine. But we need to have a conversation about Team B.” He raised an eyebrow and Juvia couldn’t help but to giggle while she nodded.

“Deal.”

“Alright! Everyone’s gathered, now!” Makarov yelled and got up on top of a chair. “Listen up, brats! Today’s defeat is the seed for tomorrow’s victory! We’ll rise up and show them all, won’t we?” Everyone cheered. “We don’t know the meaning of giving up! Our goal is #1 in Fiore!”

It was FT needed to start a party.

#

During the next four days, both Teams of FT thrived and the audience seemed to be rooting for them more than at the beginning and they were going up on the ranks steadily, to everyone’s happiness. Master Makarov’s son, Ivan, had been arrested for tempering with the games and several more charges and the old man had been quite sad for a while, but his strength returned and he focused on the Tournament.

On the fourth day, though, during a contest Juvia was sure she could win, the woman from Sabertooth who had took the place of Yukino, Minerva, managed to take Juvia out of the game and then proceeded to pretty much torture Lucy until she was unconscious.

Of course Juvia felt so guilty she didn’t want to speak with anyone for a while, hating herself. It should’ve been her in there or she could at least done better protecting Lucy.

Rufus’ words from the first day echoed inside her mind: “There’s countless other ways your enemy can use them to create an advantageous situation.” And Minerva had done her best to piss off every member of FT.

The bitch.

After that, they had joined teams and Juvia was not one of the five going in at that afternoon: Erza, Laxus, Gajeel, Natsu and Gray were the ones chosen to represent FT and honestly, Juvia couldn’t see them losing.

The fight of Natsu and Gajeel versus Sting and Rogue was something no one would forget in a while: the four of them were magnificent fighters, but Natsu and Gajeel were in another level entirely.

Between that moment and the next day, Lucy had taken prisoner of the King’s Army under the accusation of treason, for trading some kind of information to a foreign army.

It was preposterous and ridiculous, of course and someone was clearly setting her up but the Guards
wouldn’t listen to anything until the Tournament was over, which meant they had to win the damn thing to get attention.

But of course, Natsu wasn’t taking lightly his girlfriend’s imprisonment and demanded they had a plan to rescue her. He didn’t care if they were going to commit treason themselves to take her from the prison, all he wanted was her back.

So, while Natsu, Wendy and Mirajane went to rescue Lucy, the team to perform the next day would be Juvia, Gray, Erza, Laxus and Gajeel.

It was a scary team, Juvia had to admit to herself they would look plenty intimidating, specially with how angry they were about Lucy’s imprisonment.

Good. Let them feat FT.

#

While Gajeel had been off somewhere to comfort Levy about her friend, Laxus and Erza were going through some details. Gray had excused himself a few minutes before, allegedly tired and when Juvia finished talking with Cana almost fifteen minutes later, she went to the bedroom she would share with the others that night – apparently the contestants had to spend the night in the same room every night.

Once she entered it and didn’t see Gray, she wondered if he had gone somewhere else until she saw light coming from the ensuite. Quietly, she went to take a peek.

Gray was relaxing on the bathtub, arms on its edges and head thrown back, just enjoying the warmth of the water and the quietness of their lodge and she couldn’t help it but to smile softly at the sight.

“Do you mind if Juvia joins you?” She said from the threshold of the bathroom; he opened his eyes and smiled.

“Best thing that would happen to me all day.” Gray said and watched as Juvia took off her clothes and just to be sure they wouldn’t be bothered, she locked the door before she stepped in the bathtub and gently lowered herself into the water and she moaned in happiness when she rested her body against Gray’s. The water was so warm and it reached her breasts so her whole body got warm. Gray kissed her temple, but other than that, just kept the same position for long minutes.

Juvia had her hands on his thighs and she caressed them mindlessly, thinking about the next day and what their plan was. She had an awful feeling dropping in her stomach she couldn’t shake off no matter what. She just knew something bad was going to happen and all of a sudden she wanted to cry.

Probably noting the shift of her mood, Gray put his arms around her waist and whispered in her ear: “What’s wrong? You are so tense.”

Juvia swallowed. “Tomorrow.” She managed to say.

“It’s going to be fine. We are going to win this and get Lucy back.”

“I know, I know.” She whispered but he didn’t believe her one bit, she could tell. “But I have this bad feeling…”

Gray sighed. “Juvia…”
The blunette maneuvered herself so she could straddle him and look him in the eyes and he seemed to enjoy the change a little too much by the way he looked at her body, but she ignored it. “Promise me you won’t do anything stupid.”

“I won’t do anything stupid.” Gray said mechanically already aiming to kiss her, but Juvia wasn’t having none of it. She cupped his face with her hands and he looked at her, confused.

“Promise me.”

“Juvia…”

“Please.” Her voice was so small she wasn’t sure he heard. She rested her forehead on his. “Please, don’t do anything stupid.” And against her best efforts, two tears fell from her eyes and Gray seemed alarmed.

“What the-? Juvia?” He sat straighter and Juvia just wrapped her arms around him and hid her face on the crook of his neck. “Juvia, come on. Talk to me. You are scaring me.”

“I have this bad feeling and I’m afraid of how much you want to beat Rufus.” She wasn’t crying per se, but her voice shook.

His arms were around her, then, one on her lower back and the other on her hair. He sighed and with his thumb, started to caress the skin of her lower back just like he knew she liked it. “Juvia, I have no intention of losing tomorrow, or get severely hurt or whatever. I will be careful and I won’t do anything stupid.”

Only then she stopped hiding her face and looked up at him. “Promise?”

“Yes.” He was the one cupping her face, then. “I promise.” She felt a bit of the tension she was feeling leave her body, but not enough for her body to relax. “We need to rest, especially you with all that is going through your mind, which I won’t even try to begin to understand.” She nodded and he kissed her on the mouth for a few moments before she got up and he followed her. “Let’s take a proper shower and go to bed.”

She hesitated, but, with a voice which sounded a lot like a whisper, she asked: “Can Juvia sleep with you?” It had been almost a week since they had shared a bed and she missed it too much.

Gray looked at her for a second and shrugged. “I can’t see why not. If the others are bothered by it, screw them. It’s not as if we are going to do it with them sleeping on the next bed.”

Juvia smiled a bit, feeling slightly better.

#

The moment Gray won against Rufus, Juvia felt a thousand times better. When she had to fight Chelia, it was hard: the girl was young, but well trained. Besides, Juvia didn’t want to go all out on the girl so, when Lyon and Gray stepped into the fight, Juvia knew they were going to go all out; there had been tension between them for months.

Juvia and Gray went through a rough patch when both Chelia and Lyon upped their game and their only option was to take a few steps back and breathe. Juvia fell on the ground, utterly tired and trying to gather up her strength.

That’s when she felt a hand on her shoulder.
She knew who it belonged to, she knew that he was trying to somewhat comfort her, tell her ‘it’s alright’ in his own way.

The blunette put her own hand above his, communicating that she was there, that she got the message. They were together and that’s what mattered, if they lost and if they won, they were together. She had a small smile on her lips, her heart was beating faster already because of the fight, but it was even faster when he wrapped his hand around hers.

Juvia was looking down, unable to stare to her loved one at the moment; so many feelings rushing inside of her, but he tightened his grip on her hand. “Their weakness is their teamwork.” He said and Juvia lifted her head a tiny bit. “If it’s us… We can fight together to gain even more power.”

“Gray-sama…” When she finally looked up to him and all she could see was determination in his eyes.

“We’ll defeat them with our combined techniques!” His eyes, so powerful, so full of pride and determination. His eyes, the eyes of the man she fell in love with. That was her Gray-sama. She offered him a smile and she squeezed his hand.

“Yes!” She said with all her determination. Gray helped her up and offered a smile that said everything was going to be okay. And she believed in him. She was always going to believe in him as long as her heart beat.

Lyon and Chelia were looking at them, still panting hard, it wasn’t an easy fight for neither of the couples, but now, the Fairy Tail team had a new motivation and the white haired man and the pink haired young woman were looking at them with curiosity in their eyes.

Once Gray had helped her up, they were only a few inches away from each other. Their eyes met and still smiling, Juvia asked. “Let’s do this?”

“Hell yeah.” Gray nodded, both looking into each other eyes and then their gaze went to the couple in front of them. Lyon and Chelia took one step back instinctively with the intensity of their eyes and Juvia felt even better with it.

After that, their movements were so synchronized it amazed her, every move seemed like they were doing a rehearsed song, moves she didn’t even know she got but with Gray, she was in a roll.

In no time, Lyon and Chelia were down, incapacitated to fight any longer.

They had won.

Juvia finally looked towards him, offering him a smile while he smirked, twining their hands together as they internally enjoyed their victory. After a moment, Gray realized that their hands were still together and a hint of pink flooded to his cheeks as he asked: “When will you let go of my hand?”

It wasn’t like he didn’t enjoy it, Juvia knew he did, but he didn’t like when it was for such long amount of time. Juvia, being Juvia, hugged his arm, put her chin on his shoulder and said, in a very sweet voice.

“Never.” And she meant it.

From afar, they could hear the crowd cheering and he sighed. “Do as you wish.” He mumbled.

Juvia was about to ask what that meant, when Gray suddenly felt really drained and stumbled a bit. If Juvia hadn’t held him, he would’ve probably had fallen.
“Gray-sama?” The blunette held him in place, but she was concerned. “Are you…?”

“I’m fine.” Gray said stubbornly.

“You are not.” She said, just as stubborn. “Juvia will help you.”

“I don’t…” He tried to speak but she didn’t let him.

“You fought Rufus, Gray-sama.” She said, gently. “Juvia saw it, it was amazing. And then fighting Lyon-sama and Chelia? It’s okay to be a little drained.” Gray sighed and let himself be supported by her as they walked in the arena. A few moments later, she kissed his cheek.

“What’s that for?” Gray asked.

“For not doing anything stupid.” She smiled when his only answer was to look away from her.

Somehow, after winning the Tournament, all went to shit.

The things they were accusing Lucy about became true as men from mercenary firms from overseas started attacking Crocus with the purpose of killing the royal family and send Fiore in war. Jellal told them it was Zeref’s doing: he wanted the best trained people in one place so he could take them out in one go alongside with the royals.

Oh, he had another thing coming.

Instead of going to each other’s throats, all the firms united themselves and coordinated a counter-attack with the help of the King’s Army. The city was a mess, civilians tried to take cover wherever they could while the professionals handled the situation.

To Juvia’s surprise, she met Meredy, the young girl she had met a few months before and had talked her out of killing herself and many other people on Tenrou Island. She had smiled, said she had been working with Jellal and Ultear with getting information about Zeref.

Gray saw Juvia talk to Meredy not far away from where he stood, taking one of the men down. A moment before, the blue haired woman had been in battle-mode by his side, up until the moment she saw Meredy. Juvia, then, turned her back carelessly away from the battle and started to talk to the younger girl.

Her guard was totally down, as if she forgotten where she was and what was happening.

She was careless.

The Ice Mage saw one of the mercenaries turn towards the pair and he knew what it meant. Gray ran and just a second before the shots, he got to the girls, knocking them both on the ground.

He was so angry, Juvia could see. Didn’t they know to never let your guard down during a battle? Why would they be so carefree? Stupid Juvia, she thought.

“Don’t lose your focus! This is a warzone!” Lyon Vastia scolded the girls, he had joined them when the King’s Guard was creating groups to fight off the mercenaries. Meredy had the decency to look ashamed and mumbled a small ‘sorry’, but Juvia… Well, Juvia was being Juvia.

“Ah… Gray-sama and my butt…” He didn’t know if she was offering her behind for spanking once again, if he accidentally touched while tackling her on the ground, or even if it hurt when she fell on
the floor, whichever case, he couldn’t think about it at the moment.

“Juvia… Juvia I need to tell you something.” He meant to scold her, but instead Gray spoke in a strong, yet soft voice. Of course, Juvia’s mind got insane, her imagination going more than wild.

“W-Wha-What is it?” Oh, god. Would he say something about his feelings? Because if he was going to, she was going to have a complete meltdown, it didn’t matter where they were.

“No… It’s nothing important, but…” Gray tried to say, but got interrupted by the blunette.

“It could be important to Juvia!” She all but screamed and Gray made a face in response, while Meredy said something for herself with a knowing smile on her lips. The dark haired man opened his mouth so he could speak, Juvia covered her mouth as he did, her eyes shining in happiness as the thought that the man in front of her might confess… Even in those conditions.

“Juvia!” It was Lyon’s voice that made Juvia turn, removing her hands from her mouth, it was the despair in his voice that made all of her body suddenly get aware of its surroundings.

They were at war.

The blunette looked to her left side, from where most of the attacks were originated, a teeny tiny confused. One of the mercenaries was there, raising his gun in her direction. Right into her direction. Before her mind could register what was happening, before her feet could move, before she could raise her own gun to protect herself, the man fired.

There was no time to think, but she felt when she was pushed from her left, towards the floor and it hurt a little. Maybe Juvia was hit by the bullet just as a scratch.

But no. The woman had been shoved away from the bullet.

The hand that shoved her away was familiar to Juvia. She had it all over her naked skin so many times and she held it tightly not even two hours before. It was her Gray-sama’s hand. He had shoved her away.

Once she hit the ground, Juvia turned to thank him again. She was so careless sometimes! It was a shame that Gray needed to save her so often and-

Juvia stopped as she looked over her shoulder.

Gray didn’t just shove her away from the bullet; he had put himself in front of her. There was blood coming from the left side of his back; she couldn’t see his face, but she knew where it hit him.

Why wouldn’t her body move? Why was she shaking like that? Why her own heart seemed to have been shot away when she knew for sure that it didn’t? Why couldn’t she…

Juvia barely registered the men make some noises as more bullets were shot. She barely registered anything other than her hands hurting from the fall. She was in shock, shaking and with wide eyes, wishing it were a nightmare.

Then it happened.

Another bullet hit his right arm, then his stomach and chest.

*Five times.*

He got shot *five* times.
The despair, the impotence, the fear. Juvia couldn’t look away; she couldn’t do anything other than stare at what was happening to her loved one. It seemed so unrealistic; they always returned to each other after a fight, a little under the weather sometimes, but never like that.

Such thing as what she was testifying would never happen to them. It was one of those things that only happened to other people.

But it was happening to them.

The blood. The awful smell of blood flooded into Juvia’s nostrils and her arms finally moved from the floor as her hands founded her cheeks. Her hands got wet with the thick tears that started to fall without her knowledge.

The blunette wanted to scream, but no sound came out. She wanted to move, but her limbs wouldn’t move. All she could do was to watch helplessly as the man she loved more than her own life, lost his.

A last shot echoed through the walls, and in a blink of an eye, Gray was falling back, landing on her side as Juvia finally found her voice.

“GRAY!” Her voice did not sound her own. It was more like a shriek, like she was in unbearable pain.

And she was. Juvia might not be the one who received the bullets, but she sure was dying.

#

Everything after that was a blur. All she could do was to look at Gray’s body on the ground, Lyon was yelling at Meredy for her to call an ambulance and then he was by her side, yelling at her: “Juvia, pressure the wounds! Juvia! Listen to me, put pressure on the wounds, dammit!” She felt Lyon put her hands on Gray’s chest. “Press it!” She did it so without even thinking about it, eyes still wide with shock.

She was looking at Gray’s face. If not for the blood coming out from a wound on his temple, he looked like he was sleeping; he didn’t seem like he was in pain. Her mind focused on the fact that he was most likely dead and her heart hurt so much she couldn’t breathe right.

Gray was dead.

She didn’t even know she said the words out loud until Lyon yelled. “He’s not dead! Shut up and press the wounds!” Only then she noticed he was by Gray’s other side, also pressing down on his chest. “We need to keep him alive until the ambulance arrives.”

Juvia’s vision was blurry with tears when she looked at the white haired man. “I love him.” She said, dumbly, as if it was some kind of secret and an explanation at the same time – an explanation to what, she didn’t know.

Lyon’s expression softened a bit. “I know. One more reason to really pressure those wounds, Juvia.” He held her gaze. “He is not dead. Trust me.”

The blunette nodded and returned to look down to Gray, cheeks getting soaked with how much she was crying. She leaned a bit and whispered to him: “Don’t leave me. Please, don’t leave me.” She sobbed, pressing harder on the wound. “Don’t make me live without you. Please.”

She didn’t know how long it took for the ambulance to get there, but once the paramedics arrived,
she vaguely heard Lyon explain the situation and then there were arms around her, pulling her away from Gray. She struggled until she heard Lyon’s voice in her ear saying she needed to let them do their jobs, that he was in good hands.

The whole time the paramedics were kneeling next to Gray, she was sobbing.

And then, Gray was being put on a board and then put inside the ambulance. Lyon shoved Juvia inside with them, telling her he would follow. Maybe she heard him telling she was Gray’s fiancée and needed to go with them. It didn’t matter, because they allowed her to go.

During the drive, the paramedics had to shock his heart into beating again and everything inside Juvia hurt during those seconds his heart had stopped, she was losing him, getting him back just to lose him again.

It hurt so much to see him that way.

Once they arrived at the hospital, she came off the ambulance after they unloaded Gray into a gurney and she followed them, hearing familiar terms being explained to the doctors like ‘GSW to the chest’ and ‘coded during the trip’.

“Miss, you can’t go further than this.” A woman – a young doctor, Juvia thought – put herself in Juvia’s path. “I’ll go find you when we are done, but he’s going to need surgery and it might take awhile.”

“Surgery…?” Juvia understood the word, but couldn’t process the meaning of it.

“I have to go.” The doctor said. “I’ll find you when we are done.” She left running towards where they had rolled Gray’s gurney, and Juvia was left alone in the middle of the corridor, her whole world falling around her.

Half an hour later, she was seated on one of the E.R.’s chairs when she heard a familiar voice yelling: “Is she going to be alright?” Juvia was on her feet the second she recognized Natsu’s frantic voice and arrived just in time to catch someone with blonde hair on a gurney, just like Gray had been and she realized it was Lucy. “Please, tell me if she’s going to be alright!” But as they done with Juvia, Natsu was stopped to go any further.

“Natsu!” Juvia called his name and he looked a bit confused to see her there. “Was that Lucy-san?”

He looked lost. “She… she got shot. I wasn’t paying attention, they aimed at her… I don’t know exactly what happened.” Juvia noticed his eyes water and her stomach turned with the thought of her friends in so much pain.

“She’s going to be fine.” Juvia tried to be cheerful, but under the circumstances, it came out as nothing more than a whisper.

Natsu seemed to finally realize she’d have to be there for a reason and did a quick over with his eyes, they lingered on her bloodied hands for a moment before he looked up back at her. “Why are you here?” Juvia could hear the fear in his voice.

“Gr-” She choked on his name. “Gray-sama got shot too.”

“Fuck.” Natsu breathed. “Shit!” He said a bit louder that time. “This is so fucked up!” Juvia didn’t say anything, because there was nothing to be said, after all, she couldn’t refute his words. She just stood next to him, looking at the doors they had rolled in Gray and Lucy; twined their bloodied hands together and Natsu seemed to relax just a tiny bit, squeezing her hand. “They are going to be
fine. Both of them.”

“I know.” Juvia cleared her throat and felt her eyes burn with unshed tears. “There’s no other way.”

And during that few moments, they shared their pain and just tried to hold on to each other for support.

#

Lucy’s surgery finished in two hours and by then, most of their colleagues were at the hospital: either being treated for injuries or waiting for updates. Natsu almost ran to the doctor asking how she was and when the answer was that she was going to be okay, Juvia noticed his knees almost gave in. He asked if he could see her and when the doctor cleared him, Natsu nodded, but before he left, the pink haired man said, looking at Juvia:

“Let me know when Gray’s surgery is over?”

“Of course.” Juvia tried to smile. “Go, go see her.”

Juvia returned to her seat next to Lyon, who looked as tired as she was. They didn’t talk much for the next hours; Gray’s surgery was taking a long time and when Juvia mentioned that to him, Lyon tried to coach his face to be impassive. “That’s good. It means he’s still alive. If they are still doing it, he is alive.”

Three hours later, Lyon was pacing around the corridor and told Juvia he was going to get something for them to eat, he needed a bit of air. Juvia just nodded in agreement but had no intention of leaving until she had news about Gray.

Five minutes after Lyon left, someone sat next to her and she wouldn’t have given it a second thought if the stranger hadn’t spoke.

“Are you alright?” His voice was rough and rich, quite beautiful.

“Excuse me?” Juvia looked up and saw the stranger couldn’t be more than fifty years old, had dark hair slicked back, a few days worth of stubble on his jaw, black eyes and a scar above his left eye. He pointed to her bloodied hands and she finally understood what he meant. “Oh. It’s… not mine.”

“Oh.” He said, nodding. Juvia thought the subject was dropped, but the stranger kept talking. “My… my son was brought here. I don’t know how he’s doing yet.” His voice broke a little and she realized the hardness of his jaw and he was quite pale.

He was suffering for someone too.

“Sorry.” Juvia said honestly and her theory about him wanting someone to speak with during the time of distress was proved when he asked:

“How about you? Family?”

“Uh…”

“Boyfriend?”

She snorted. “Well, that’s the closest thing to define us, I guess.” He raised an eyebrow and she explained. “He has bad commitment issues even though he is all but living with me.” Juvia said, smiling fondly at the memory of him walking through her apartment as if it were his.
“My wife was the same way.” The man chuckled. “It took forever for her to accept to go out with me, and even more time to make her admit she loved me.” He looked up to the ceiling. “She broke my nose on our first date because I put my arm around her shoulders during the movies and she thought I was getting ‘handsy’ with her.” He smiled and looked back at Juvia. “She fixed it later, of course, and apologized; but I was a goner then. All I could think was that I had to marry her even if she broke every bone I had.”

Juvia thought the story seemed vaguely familiar, but couldn’t remember exactly from where. “My boyfriend” the word seeming foreign to her “and I met while shooting at each other and he actually hit me on the shoulder.” The man looked somewhat surprised. “It’s fine, we worked with the army, it was all a misunderstanding.” She waved his concerns away.

“Well, I guess your story is more interesting than mine.” He said slowly. “Now I think I had a very boring first date. Thanks for that.” And for the first time in hours, Juvia felt like smiling.

“A broken nose is still very interesting.” She said. “Your wife must be proud of her feat.”

“She was.” He smiled sadly and Juvia wondered if she said something wrong. “I lost her twenty years ago.”

Juvia’s heart broke for him. “I’m so sorry, I didn’t mean to…”

“I know; it’s alright.” He assured her. “It doesn’t hurt as much now. Not all the time, anyways.” He shrugged. “I choose to remember the times she was breaking my nose and teaching our boy to speak instead of the day I lost her.”

“Of course.” Juvia nodded and after a moment, she had no idea why the words left her mouth, she opened up to the stranger. “I’m afraid I’ll lose him.” Her eyes watered. “I’m afraid he’s going to die and I’ll be left here alone, loving him even so.”

“Oh, darling.” The man put a hand on her shoulder, just like Gray had done hours before when trying to reassure her. “Don’t think that way. I bet he’s going to be alright. He seems like a stubborn young man and I doubt he is willing to leave you behind.”

“He was shot while protecting me.” She told him and his grip on her shoulder lightened a bit and then he squeezed it a bit.

The stranger was in silence for a moment before he cleared his throat. “Well, that speaks volumes about how much he cares for you. If I could, I would’ve get shot protecting my wife because that’s what people in love do.”

Juvia laughed through her tears. “He doesn’t love me.” Maybe she was sounding a little hysterical, but she didn’t care.

“I don’t think people throw themselves in front of bullets for random people.” He pointed out.

“He cares, of course, but… Not love.” She shook her head. “Juvia doesn’t want to put her hopes too high. And right now all I want is for him to live. He doesn’t have to love me, all I’m asking is for him to be alive.”

“He will be. He’s strong.”

Juvia opened her mouth to speak, but was interrupted by Lyon’s voice coming from the end of the corridor, saying: “Juvia! The doctor’s here!”
Her heart was beating fast inside her chest and she got up from the chair, looking at the man. “I’m sorry, I have to-”

“Go. Don’t mind me.” He smiled sadly and for a moment she wanted to hug him, but she really needed to talk to Gray’s doctor.

“Thanks for talking with me. I hope your son gets well soon.” She told him and left in Lyon’s direction, heart beating fast inside her chest and if she had looked back to the mystery man, she would’ve seen the look of longing in his eyes.

He looked so frail on the bed but the steady beeping of the machine next to him made her feel better because as long it was beeping, he was alive and it was a miracle, according to the doctor.

Juvia almost fainted once the doctor told them they had controlled the bleeding and even though it had been a mess, no major organs were too severely damaged and he was so surprised Juvia thanked the universe for the gift.

After cleaning up her hands, she was authorized to visit him for a couple of hours. The whole time she sat by his bedside and held his hand and noticed stupid things like how pleasantly warm he was, that he really needed an haircut, that she had to ask where his necklace were otherwise he’d get a fit once he woke up. Plus, he really need to trim his nails, they were getting a bit too long-

A groan cut her thoughts and she immediately looked up and saw him blinking. The relief that washed through her… she couldn’t put it in words.

“Gray-sama?” She was on her feet and hovering over him in a blink of an eye. “Gray-sama, can you hear me?”

“Where-?” He managed to ask, a bit confused.

“At the hospital.” Juvia answered him, crying all over again but with relief that moment. “You were shot.”

Gray blinked a few times, probably trying to understand what was going on. “Oh. That’s why it feels as a bull stomped me.”

Juvia was glad he was not wearing an oxygen mask, just a breathing cannula, because it means she could kiss him and that’s what she did. “You scared me so much.” She said between pecks on his lips and he didn’t complain even when his face got wet with her tears. “Don’t you ever scare me like that again! You promised me you wouldn’t do anything stupid.”

“Kept my promise.” Gray said, tiredly and sighed in contentment when her hand caressed his hair, like he always did, and he closed his eyes; the doctor said he would be a little out of it for a while because of the drugs they gave him.

“How is that?” Juvia asked gently.

“Because keep you alive is not stupid. Can’t let you die on me.” It was all he said before clearly falling back asleep.

Juvia blinked a few times, trying to process the words and what they meant, but she couldn’t – too tired to read too much into it. She was just glad he was alive and hoped to never go through that again.
Chapter End Notes

It was pretty obvious who Juvia was speaking to, so… Did you guys like Silver’s cameo? *wink wink* I wanted for him to properly meet Juvia.

Before anyone asks: of course Juvia didn’t connect the dots about the mystery man and Silver being the same person. He was supposed to be dead, there are files telling exactly that and she never saw a picture of him, so she has no idea whom she was speaking with whatsoever.

And Juvia froze when Gray was shot because we can see at the manga she was in shock seeing him on the floor, while Lyon went for help, she didn’t move at all.

The thing with Natsu and Lucy was because the moment Future!Lucy dies really gets to me because of Natsu’s reaction and I love a brOTP with him and Juvia. Don’t judge me.
For a week Gray stayed at the ICU and Juvia, as his companion, refused to leave him for more than a quick visit to the Honey Bone Inn to take a shower and change her clothes. For the first couple of days he was under severe sedation and was only awake for a few hours, but Juvia always made sure to talk to him, to update him about the condition of their friends, but mostly she just held his hand.

Lyon visited every day and during those visits, it was when Juvia took the opportunity to go to the Inn and when she returned, they were talking about old memories and Gray was less grumpy, he was tired of being bedridden. Sometimes Natsu was the one to stay with Gray for a couple of hours while Juvia went to visit Lucy, knowing the blonde woman was in desperate need of female company.

Two days before he was transferred to Magnolia, Juvia had returned from the cafeteria after she had found something to eat and she noticed Lyon outside the room talking on his phone and he smiled at her before she got inside the room, Gray was watching something on the television. He looked in her direction and turned off the TV.

“You look like crap.” Gray told her and Juvia stopped, surprised.

She blinked a few times before answer. “Wow. That’s all a woman wants to hear from her boyfriend, thanks.” She said, sarcastic and he snorted. It wasn’t as if she was not aware of the dark circles under her eyes.

“Well, you have been sleeping on that crappy couch for the past six days.” He said and she sat on the bed facing him. “Which means you have not been sleeping at all.”

“It’s not as bad as it seems.” She took his hands on hers. “Besides, you’ll being transferred to Magnolia in two days. I’ll sleep then.”

“I saw you wincing this morning; your back must be killing you.” Gray twined their fingers together.

“You do that too.” She pointed out.

“Yeah, but they give me something great to sleep.” He pointed out. “You need to rest.”

“I’m fine.” Juvia smiled.

“Well, I am not.” Gray winced when he tried to sit straighter; Juvia tried to help him, but he waved her off. “I want you to stay at the Inn tonight.” Juvia opened her mouth to speak but Gray was faster. “No, listen. I don’t mind you staying here, I like it, really, but it won’t do yourself any good if you are exhausted.”

She knew he had a point, but shrugged it off. “I don’t want to leave you here on your own.”
“He won’t be on his own.” Lyon’s voice came from the doorway. Juvia looked over her shoulder and saw his standing there, his hands inside his pockets and watching the couple. “I’ll stay with him tonight to ease your mind while you finally get a good night’s sleep.”

“No.” She shook her head.

“Juvia.” Gray sighed.

“No.” The blunette looked back to Gray, afraid. “What if something happens and I’m not here?”

“It’s been a week, Juvia.” He told her, tightening his hand on hers. “If I were to kick the bucket I would’ve done it already. The doctor said I am stable.”

“I don’t mind sleeping on the couch.” She said. “I am fine.”

“Juvia.” Gray sighed. “Please.”

Their eyes locked and for a moment they had a private conversation, his eyes pleading her to say yes to his request, while all she wanted to do was to never leave his side again. “Gray-sama…” Juvia whispered, trying to change his mind.

“Tomorrow I’ll say nothing if you want to stay all night long.” Gray bargained. “Lyon will take you to the Inn and he’ll come back to stay here, because I know you won’t go otherwise.”

“I even promised him to not hit on you. Or touch you for that matter.” Lyon said.

“I didn’t say that.” Gray groaned in annoyance.

“But threatened me if I did.” Lyon’s voice leaked amusement. “And I don’t think it’s a fair fight when my opponent is an invalid for a few weeks.”

“Fuck you.” Gray told his brother, who just chuckled.

“How on earth should I leave you two together knowing you’ll be fighting?” Juvia asked, tired. “It’s better if I stay.” She decided.

Lyon stepped closer and put a hand on her shoulder. “Don’t worry; we are kind of buddies when you are not around.” Gray grunted and Lyon removed his hand, raising up. “Alrighty, me to touchie.”

“Just go. Come back in the morning.” Gray sighed, looking at his girlfriend. “We are not going to fight, I promise.”

Juvia bit her lower lip and she felt her back aching, how sluggish she had felt in the past week and how much she needed a proper night of sleep. “Are you sure?”

“Yes.” Gray nodded. “Go. I can see you are tired.”

She sighed and looked over her shoulder, to Lyon. “Will you look after him tonight?”

“Of course.” The white haired man nodded. “We won’t even fight, I promise you.”

“Alright.” Juvia finally conceded, getting up from the bed, leaning down so her lips touched Gray’s gently. “Call me if you need anything. Any time.” She whispered. “If you don’t, I’ll get angry with you.”
“Got it.” Gray agreed.

“Come on, Juvia-chan.” Lyon called. “Can’t wait to be alone with you.” He said, teasingly and winking at her.

“Lyon…” Gray said in warning and his heart monitor spiked.

“I’m kidding.” Lyon laughed. “I’ll be back in twenty minutes and that’s not enough time to do anything, so calm down.”

Juvia gave Gray another look before they walked through the door, and the moment they passed the threshold, Gray yelled: “I’m counting!”

#

The moment Juvia lied down on the bed at the Honey Bone Inn after she had a long shower, she passed out until the next morning and when she arrived at the hospital, Lyon commended her for being brave enough to sleep there for six days. Juvia just thanked him for staying the night and sat by Gray’s side.

His smirk was almost intolerable. “Can I say ‘I told you so’ now or later?”

“You were right; Juvia needed a good night of sleep.” The blunette smiled and kissed his lips, careful not to mess with any of the medical wires. “Enjoy this feeling, because you’ll probably not have another too soon.”

Lyon snorted. “That’s true, bro. The times men are right in a relationship are few and far between.”

“Maybe Juvia should date Lyon-sama instead of you, Gray-sama.” Juvia teased her boyfriend. “He seems to be already trained.”

“And I accept this idea one thousand per cent.” Lyon caught her joke and played with it.

“Ha ha ha, funny.” Gray rolled his eyes. “Go away, Lyon.”

“‘Thank you, Lyon, for staying the night.’ ‘Well, you are welcome Gray. That’s what brothers are for.’” Lyon mocked, Juvia chuckled and then gave Gray a look, clearly telling him to thank his brother.

“Thanks, Lyon. Now leave.” Gray was suddenly grumpy.

“Fine, fine.” The white haired man nodded. He stepped closer to his brother and offered his hand, it took Gray a moment to gather the strength to raise his arm, but he took the hand and shook it. Lyon turned to Juvia and kissed her cheek. “Always a pleasure to see you, Juvia-chan.”

“Thank you, Lyon-sama.”

“Anything for you.” He winked and left the room.

Juvia’s attention returned to Gray, she took his hand on hers and lifted it to kiss his fingers. “How did you spend the night?”

“Same thing.” Gray told her. “They gave me something to sleep, I slept, Lyon snored. How about you?”

“I think I passed out.” She smiled. “Juvia took a hot bath and the next thing she knew, it was
morning.”

“I’m glad you rested.” Gray told her. “I can’t believe we’ll return to Magnolia tomorrow.”

“Remember that you will be at the hospital for a while when we return there.” She started to pass her fingers through his hair. “You were lucky, but you’ll need a few sessions of physical therapy as well.”

“I know.” Gray always calmed down when she played with his hair. “But being back there will be much better.”

“It will.” She told him. “Lucy-san is getting discharged tomorrow as well. They will take the train, though.”

“I hate to need an ambulance.” He whined.

“I know.” Juvia told him. “But it’s just to be safe. When we get there things will get easier, alright?”

“Yeah.” Gray nodded.

The transfer to Magnolia went without a hitch and after staying ten more days at the hospital, he was cleared to go back home and all Juvia did the way to his apartment was to fuss over him and tell the cab driver to slow down.

Once he was settled in his bed, Juvia took as her mission to make the apartment as spotless as she could, cleaning everything she could, only stopping when Gray got up and told her she needed to eat and sleep. Only then she realized she had been at it for three hours.

The nurse who they hired to change Gray’s bandages was a nice young man called Robert, dark skin and hazel eyes and he chatted with Gray about his time on the army even after the bandages were clean, making Gray feel less hopeless. Juvia liked him instantly and so did Gray.

For two weeks Robert would go to the apartment and change the dressings until it was no longer necessary and it was sad seeing him go.

Juvia made her mission to take care of Gray, take him to his appointments with the doctor and the physical therapy. She was so busy trying to do everything for him that she didn’t realize how frustrated Gray was with all of her hovering over him until Gajeel knocked on his door a few days later.

“Hey.” The long haired man said as a greeting when Gray answered the door of his apartment, Snowball barking around him in excitement. “You are looking less crappy.”

“Thanks.” Gray rolled his eyes.

Gajeel took the dog from the floor and it started to lick his face. “Is Juvia here? She’s not at her apartment.”

“She’s always here.” Gray sighed and stepped away so Gajeel could get inside. “She’s at the kitchen, come in.”

“Trouble in paradise?” Gajeel snickered and Gray groaned.

“Is that Gajeel-kun that I hear?” Juvia came from the kitchen, smiling pleasantly at the sight of him
with the fur ball that was her dog – the sight of a man like Gajeel with cute animals was amusing – and hugging her friend. “Juvia haven’t seen you in a while.”

“If you bothered to stay at the office for more than two hours a day, you would.” Gajeel raised an eyebrow and petted Snowball before putting her back on the floor. “I’ve barely seen you these past few weeks.”

The blunette shrugged. “Juvia has been busy.” When Gray scoffed by her side, she threw him a confused look and then stared back at her friend. “So, Juvia doubts this is a social call.”

“Yeah.” Gajeel took his phone from his pocket and after a few moments, he gave it to her. “He was spotted, Gurian Huski.” Juvia gasped when she looked down at the screen. The Huski she had known years before had been much younger and with dark hair. The man on the photograph, though, had light blonde hair but his hazel eyes were just as she remembered: cruel.

“Where? When?” She could see by the corner of her eye Gray step closer to her to look at the picture as well.

“Orchis, four hours ago. One of my contacts saw him.” Gajeel told her, his whole body tense. Huski had been a human trafficking ring leader they had lost four years before; he had known about the operation and vanished. After that all the information about his whereabouts always came too late for anyone to do a thing about it.

“Who is he?” Gray asked.

“A piece of garbage who thinks it’s alright for people to have sex slaves. And it’s even more alright if some of those slaves are children.” Gajeel said between gritted teeth and Juvia saw Gray clench his hands into fists. “Juvia and I lost him a few years ago but if we leave now we might be able to finally get the son of a bitch.”

Juvia’s first instinct was to grab her guns and leave to kick Huski’s ass so much he won’t be able to walk straight for a year, but she caught herself just before she agreed with Gajeel. “I... I can’t.” She offered the phone back to a very surprised Gajeel. “Not now. I can’t leave.”

“What?” Gajeel was clearly more than confused.

“Juvia, what the hell?” Gray asked her and she just shook her head.

“No.” She cleared her throat. “Juvia needs to go check on the food.” And without saying anything else, she left both men at the living room.

Juvia put her hands on the edge of the kitchen sink and took deep breaths; she had been waiting for Huski to slip so they could get him and when they finally had a solid lead, she couldn’t leave Magnolia, not when Gray still needed her. Gajeel could do it on his own, he was skilled enough.

Oh, but she did want to at least break his nose one time for that one time they met and he had a hand on her ass. Maybe a kick on the balls would be alright as well.

“Juvia.” Gray’s voice came from a few feet behind her but she didn’t turn around. “Why aren’t you getting ready to go after this dirty bag?”

“I can’t.” She said in a low voice.

“Why?” He was exasperated.
Because I can’t leave you alone.” Juvia turned around and watched the confusion in his expression turn to understanding and then to annoyance. “I don’t want to leave you alone.”

“I can take care of myself, Juvia.” Gray almost hissed in anger but she didn’t listen as she kept talking.

“Juvia needs to check on your wounds once in a while, you are in no shape to clean the apartment, your food is awful, there’s the physical therapy, you have an appointment with the doctor in two days and—”

“Okay, stop it right there.” Gray said a bit louder and harsher to finally get her attention and she looked at him in surprise: he hadn’t been rude with her for a while now. “I wasn’t going to say anything because you seemed to enjoy being busy or whatever but this is going too far.” He pointed at her. “I can take care of myself for whatever time you need to go to a mission. I’ve been living alone for years, I know how to survive.”

“But I—"

“You have been driving me crazy!” Gray told her and her eyes widened. “You don’t let me do anything on my own; you all but feed me on the mouth and that makes me feel hopeless, it’s even worse than I already feel. I can’t go out on missions, I have to go to physical therapy which I absolute hate and for almost another month that’s going to be my life. And you don’t even let me get up from the fucking couch to get a glass of water on my own.” He said. “I’m not useless, I am not going to drop dead if you don’t watch me twenty-four seven.”

Juvia was looking at him in surprise with his outburst. “I…” She tried. “I thought I was helping you.” Her voice was just a little over a whisper.

Suddenly Gray’s frustration vanished and his shoulders dropped. He took a few steps towards her and placed a hand on her shoulder. “You did. I don’t know what I would’ve done those first couple of weeks, but now… you are suffocating me. Hell, you’ve been sleeping so far away from me on the bed that I wonder if I’m sleeping on my own and you haven’t kissed me properly for almost a month.” She opened her mouth to say something but he beat her into it. “You give me peck on the lips and that’s it.”

“Gray-sama…”

“I’m entering a new age. I’ve got to clearly lay out the things that I don’t like.” Gray told her. “And I don’t like you putting your life on hold for me, I don’t like you treating me as if I can’t do a thing alone and I definitely need a time away from you, please. Don’t take me the wrong way.” He added before she could overthink things. “In a normal situation I would’ve loved to be locked away in the apartment with you, but I can’t do that for another few weeks.” Gray added with a smirk and Juvia fought off a smile.

“Are you throwing me away from your apartment?”

“Yes.” Gray nodded. “Go with Gajeel, stay out for a few days and shoot someone. Because I am this close of shooting you.”

Juvia fought with herself inside her mind for a few moments; she knew he was telling the truth and she needed to get out of the apartment even if he couldn’t.

“Will you take care of Snowball?” She asked with a sigh and Gray smiled.

“To tell you the truth she’s the only one not getting into my nerves these days.” Juvia slapped his
upper arm playfully and he winced in fake pain. "Hey, I'm injured." She showed him her tongue he smirked. "Gajeel's in the living room, go with him to your place, pack a bag and go get that bastard."

"Fine." She raised her arms in defeat. "You are going to text me every day and if when Juvia comes back and you are not in your best shape..." She threatened and he nodded.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah." He waved her off, and pulled her closer to kiss her and she kissed him back with a little more enthusiasm than she had showed in the past few weeks. "See? We haven’t kissed like that in so long." He said when they stopped the kiss. When Gray tried to kiss her again, Juvia pushed him away.

"Sorry, gotta go to my place, pack a bag and get that bastard." She smiled and he groaned in annoyance. "We'll talk more about how much Juvia annoys you when she gets back."

"That's not a conversation I'll enjoy, I suppose." He sighed. "Now go. Kick him in the balls if you can."

"Juvia will make it happen." She chuckled. "In ten minutes turn the stove off." Juvia walked towards the living room where Gajeel was sitting on the couch while petting a sleepy Snowball and he looked up when she cleared her throat. "Well, apparently Gray-sama is fed up with me and needs me out of the apartment for a few days."

"Amen to that." Gray said from behind her and Gajeel laughed.

"I knew there was trouble at paradise."

"Now Juvia is feeling rather hurt about it and I think the best person to throw that frustration on, is Huski." The blunette told her friend. "Let's find him."

Gajeel grinned. ‘Glad to have you back.’

Juvia could feel her heart start to beat faster because of the thought of chasing a bad guy, holding her gun one more time and she craved the thrill. She didn’t say, but she was happy to be back.

#

They were inside a car in front of a shady hotel in Orchis, waiting for Huski to arrive so they could go in and take him in custody (after they accidentally beat the crap out of him) when Juvia got a text.

From: Gray-sama

19:17: Still alive and so is the dog. Physical therapy went ok, stop worrying and focus.

Feeling slightly better with the update, Juvia replies quickly telling him she’d be home in two days at the most. She put the phone away and when she looked to the driver’s side, Gajeel was looking outside of his window. Tired of the silence, the blunette tried to chat.

“So... How are things with Levy-san?"

He looked out of the window for a moment before he turned to look at her a small smirk on his lips. “I’ve been clean for one year.”

“Really?” Juvia smiled at him and reached for his hand. “That’s great! I’m sorry I didn’t remember.”

“It’s fine, Levy and I celebrated on our own.” He shrugged.
“Oh.” The blunette said. “What did you do?”

“Remember that we were not supposed to enter in relationships for a year while getting sober?” Gajeel asked and she nodded. “It has been a year.”

“Oh.” It took Juvia about five seconds to figure out what he meant and she all but shrieked in happiness. “Oh! Oh my god! Really? You two are finally officially together?” She knew that after the first kiss Levy gave him, he told her about his problems with drugs and the petit blunette agreed to not do that again until the year was over. They spent a lot of time together, but the physical stuff was definitely a line.

“I guess.” He shrugged, trying to be nonchalant about it, but she could see he was happy and she hadn’t notice before because of her own drama.

“I’m so happy for you.” Her eyes watered. “God, you can’t imagine how happy I am for you.”

“Don’t go crying on me, please.” Gajeel groaned. “You know I can’t deal with that shit.”

“Not crying.” She blinked the tears away. “How exactly did you ask her to be with you?”

He raised a pierced eyebrow and seemed to think for a moment. “Well, I realized it had been exactly one year, drove to her apartment and when she opened the door, I kissed her-”

“Aw, that’s so-”

“-next thing I know we are at her bedroom and I am finally taking off her clothes-”

“Ew! No, no, no! Stop that!” Juvia put her hands over her ears and Gajeel laughed. “Why would you say that to me?”

“Hey, you asked.”

“How you asked her to be with you! Romantically!”

“Hey, it had been a long time for me. I’m kind of proud of myself.” Gajeel snorted. “Besides, I was getting to that, it was after we-”

“Alright, I don’t want to know.” Juvia gave up. “You two are together that’s all that matters.”

He laughed and they stayed in silence for a while before he broke it. “What is going on with you and Fullbuster?”

Juvia sighed. “Apparently I am driving him crazy because I am fussing too much over him.”

“I can see that.” Gajeel hummed in agreement and Juvia gave him an outraged look. “Don’t look at me like that. You mean well, but you kind of suffocate the people you love.” Juvia frowned and allowed her friend to continue. “When I was in rehab, you went to see me every day there was visitation and even when I refused to see you, you didn’t give up. It was nice to know someone cared enough for me, but it made me feel like crap when I said I didn’t want to see you. You had planned for us to move to Magnolia, found us apartments and I am so glad we didn’t end up living next to each other because I would’ve freaked. I accepted you coming over and cooking because I needed to gain weight and your food is great, but I put lines you couldn’t cross from the start. Plus, I’m not your boyfriend so our rules are different. Right now I bet Gray is glad you were by his side when things were bad, but you are not adapting as he gets better.
“In your mind he’s still that same guy who returned to his apartment in pain, needed his bandages changed, antibiotics and pain pills. He’s not that way anymore: he can walk on his own, he goes to physical therapy, he doesn’t seem to grunt in pain to reach for things. In your mind, he’s still that guy bleeding on the ground while you waited for the ambulance.” Gajeel finished and Juvia’s eyes were wide.

He was right. God, he was so right. Gray had been able to do things on his own for a while and she had been treating him like he was the same way he was when they returned to Magnolia. Back then he had been grateful to have her to help, but of course he became annoyed when he could reach for his own glass of water but she got it first.

“I’m a fool.” Juvia groaned.

“No arguments from me.” She elbowed his ribs and he snorted. “Look, he has been on his own way long before he met you. He likes being pampered and fussed over, but this time it went a bit too long.”

“How do you know he liked that?” She asked, confused.

Gajeel shrugged. “I like that, I suppose he does too. I mean, I could see the way he looked like a kicked puppy when he got back from a mission with a bruise and you made it sound as if he was on verge of death and just fussed over him. Levy does that too. It’s nice, especially if you’ve been alone for a long time.”

“Hey, Juvia fussed over you.” The blunette pouted and the long haired man laughed.

“Not the same thing, trust me.”

“I guess I’ll try to remember he is getting better and he can do a lot on his own now.”

“Good enough.” Gajeel said and was about to add something else when there was movement in front of the motel and they finally saw Huski. “Look who came to the party.”

Juvia was already checking her guns, her professional persona taking over. “Let’s get this bastard.”

Handing Huski to the feds had been a great feat and Juvia felt a lot lighter knowing that monster was no longer on the streets. The feds had promised to take all the information from Huski about the trafficking before putting him in a jail cell and throwing away the key.

Like she promised, two days later she was using her key to get inside Gray’s apartment – the paperwork for the Bureau had been a nightmare – and she was welcomed by her barking white dog. Juvia put her bag on the floor and took the dog in her arms, kissing its soft fur.

“Hello, baby.” She said. “Did your daddy treat you well?” Snowball licked her cheek and Juvia giggled. “Okay, I’ll take that as a yes.”

“Am I ‘daddy’? Because I don’t like that at all. She’s a dog.” Gray said from her left and Juvia smiled at him.

“You were with me when I got her, we’ve been together for almost as long as I have her, you are always at my apartment and she loves you more than me sometimes. If Juvia’s her mommy, you are her daddy.” She put the dog down and took a few steps in his direction. He immediately frowned when he took a better look at her face.
“What the hell happened?” Gray touched the purple bruise on her cheekbone. “You said you were fine on your texts.”

“This is nothing.” She put her arms around his shoulders gently. “You should see the other guy.”

“I should.” He said between gritted teeth. “I hope he’s in jail.”

“Oh yes. Alongside with his pals, don’t worry. Even kicked him in the balls as you asked.” Juvia put a hand on the back of his neck and pulled him down so their lips could touch and only then Gray’s body relaxed; he put his arms around her waist and brought her closer.

They kissed for a while, just enjoying each other’s presence. When air actually became an issue and they needed to stop kissing for a moment, Gray rested his forehead on hers, both with their breaths raggedy.

Gray cleared his throat. “Juvia. What I said the day you left-”

“Juvia understands.” She cut him off. “Gajeel-kun opened my eyes about what Juvia was doing and how that was a bit too much. In my mind you were still needing my help. You don’t need it anymore.”

“It was a bit too much.” His tone was apologetic and she nodded in agreement.

“Yes, Juvia sees that now.” She touched his cheek. “I… I just wanted to make sure you were healing well that I forgot to adjust my behavior as you actually healed. I’ll try not to suffocate you too much.”

He sighed in relief. “Thank you. I hate feeling helpless and sometimes-”

“I made you feel that way and I am so sorry.” She kissed him again. “It was never my intention to do that.”

“I know. It’s just who you are.” He shrugged. “Just take down a notch and we’ll be alright.”

“Alright.” She smiled at him. “Now, let me tell you about how we took Huski down while I take a shower. I stink.”

#

After their talk, Juvia’s behavior regarding what Gray could and couldn’t do changed a lot, they talked about the things he still needed her help with and everything else he was going to deal with. She made it clear he knew he could ask assistance at any time he needed and he accepted.

She returned to her usual hours at FT and even took a few more jobs with Gajeel, trying to return to her usual routine and letting her old life mix with her new one. After two weeks, Gray’s doctor cleared him to go to FT and have desk duty.

Gray absolutely hated desk duty under normal circumstances, but just to return to the FT building lifted up his spirits fast. With nothing else to do, he helped track some of their targets down from his computer and using his street contacts.

Finally things seemed to turn back to normal, until the doctor cleared Gray for duty again.

It had been two months and a half since the shooting and when Gray returned from his appointment with the all clear, Juvia had been truly happy for him, she knew how much he loved taking missions.
Of course, she was afraid he’d get hurt again, but that was the job.

What really made Juvia freeze on her heels had been another thing entirely.

Gray and Juvia had been watching some awful movie on TV when he decided not to pretend anymore that he wanted to do something else entirely and just started to kiss her, and Juvia gladly kissed him back. A few minutes into kissing, Gray had her underneath him, his hips between her legs and she was enjoying the warmth of his body. She had missed him.

He started to kiss his way down her jaw and down to her neck while she worked on the buttons of his shirt quickly. She was touching his chest when she felt a small protuberance there.

A scar.

It was as if her whole body froze, if she had cold water in her veins.

Juvia pushed him away and Gray blinked at her not really understanding why she was stopping him. Her eyes were wide as she stared at his chest, the five scars scattered on his torso sending her memories of how exactly he got them.

“Juvia?” Gray called her, confused, and touched her face.

It was as if he had slapped her with how fast she had pushed him away and was on her feet, looking for her shoes and purse. “I need to go.” She said without really look at him.

“Go?” Gray got up from the couch as well. “Go where? What is happening?”

Gray called her name but she didn’t answer when she walked away from his apartment – she even took the stairs to just get away from there. Juvia didn’t search for her phone inside her purse nor look up as she crossed the street to her apartment, knowing he was the one calling her and was probably watching as she crossed the street.

When she got inside her apartment, she didn’t turn on the lights until she closed her curtains and she caught a glimpse of Gray looking from his apartment and her phone just didn’t stop ringing. Then, the tune changed as she received a text.

**From: Gray-sama**

21:11: What is going on?

21:11: Did I do something?

21:11: What did I do?

21:12: Juvia, if you do not answer me I’ll go to your apartment.

It was the last thing she needed at the moment, so she replied.

**To: Gray-sama**

21:13: I’m fine. Just need to be alone right now.

21:13: You didn’t do anything, don’t worry.

**From: Gray-sama**
21:14: You ran out like you saw the devil, of course I’ll worry.

21:14: Did it trigger anything? I can help out if it did.

To: Gray-sama

21:15: I just need to be alone.

21:15: Please.

His answer took a while to arrive, but she was relieved once she read what he wrote.

From: Gray-sama

21:17: Fine.

21:17: Call me if you need anything.

In her dark apartment, Juvia’s tears finally fell down.

#

The next day at work, Juvia clearly avoided him and he quickly caught on her intentions and didn’t push her for more information about why she was acting that way, but she knew he’d seek answers once they were alone and she didn’t know if she was ready to give them to him.

She left work early on purpose, trying to set her mind in order to tell him what was happening to her, but the moment he was inside her apartment, facing her, her arguments seemed to have flown out of the window.

They stared at each other for a while, Gray’s face impassive and she was sure she looked like a deer caught in headlights.

“Do you want to tell me why you avoid me all day? And ran away last night?” When she didn’t answer, Gray pressed a bit more. “Juvia. You need to give me a reason why you look as petrified as you are right now.” He sighed. “Did I do anything?” He asked, serious. “I don’t want to do again whatever made you run, but you need to tell me what it was.”

Finally finding her voice, she said in almost a whisper. “It wasn’t you. It was me.”

Gray frowned. “Is this the break up talk, because it sure sounds like it.”

Juvia’s eyes widened and she shook her head. “No. Oh, god, no.”

“Then tell me what this is about because I am lost.” Gray was clearly confused. “We were making out and you just freaked out.” She probably cringed because he narrowed her eyes. “So, the problem was the making out?” He stopped for a moment. “Or… was it what was going to happen if we kept going?” She bit her lower lip and he got his confirmation when she looked away from him. “Sex. The problem is sex?” He was clearly flabbergasted.

“In a way.” She told him.

“I don’t understand.”

“I… don’t think we should have sex yet.” Juvia said.
Gray raised an eyebrow. “Okay? And why is that?”

“You were shot.” It was her only explanation.

“I remember.” He said, slowly stepping near her. “And the doctor cleared me for duty and everything else. I know, I asked if we could because I kind of miss it.”

“What if…” Juvia bit her lower lip. “What if we do something and you get hurt?”

Gray was suddenly amused. “As great as sex with you is, really the best I’ve ever had, I hardly think it’s going to kill me, Juvia.”

“Don’t joke about that.” Juvia scolded him and Gray was confused again. “What if there’s some stitch inside you not properly healed? What if it bursts and you bleed to death because of me?”

“What? Juvia, that’s insane. The doctor wouldn’t have let me return to work if there was something wrong with me!”

“It’s too dangerous.” She decided.

Gray blinked a few times before speaking. “Look, it’s fine if you don’t want to have sex, Juvia. I get it. We are not in that phase that we have to fuck each other senseless anymore; we are beyond that. Just say it you are uncomfortable. What I hate is you making crazy excuses.”

Juvia gasped. “It’s not an excuse. I want to, but what if-”

“It’s been almost three months since I was shot.” Gray told her. “Last night I thought you wanted me to keep going, otherwise I would’ve never…”

The blunette closed the distance between them, putting a hand on his chest. “I did. I do want you.” She told him, their eyes meeting. “But last night…” She felt her eyes sting. “I touched your scars and I remembered why you had them.”

“Juvia…”

“You have them because of me. You almost died because of me.” She felt a tear fall from her eye. “And all that because I wasn’t paying attention, I was being reckless and-”

“Wow, wow, wow, wait up.” Gray frowned. “Juvia, you are not responsible for this. You didn’t shoot me.”

“No, but I was the one distracted.” It seemed that all the shame and hopelessness she had been bottling up the past months were finally exploding from her. She had been trying so hard to be strong for him, but she just couldn’t anymore. “If it weren’t for me, you would have never been shot. You pushed me away.” She sobbed and hid her face on his chest.

“Juvia.” She felt his hand caressing her hair.

“I thought you were dead.” She told him, grabbing his shirt and looking up to him. “When you fell on the ground, I thought you were dead and I... God, I never felt that much pain in my life. And during those awful seconds, I didn’t know what I was going to do without you.” She touched his cheek. “I was in shock and if Lyon-sama weren’t there, you’d probably died. He was the one who told me to put pressure on the wound, he was the one to keep you alive, not me. I’m the one who almost killed you.” It was both a curse and a blessing to finally had spoken the words out loud.
She hid her face on his shirt one more time and sobbed. Gray stayed in silence with her in his arms for a minute, letting her cry it out.

“You did keep me alive.” Gray told her. “I didn’t lose conscious right away, I think. There was pain and when I was drifting, I remember bits and pieces. I heard you telling Lyon you… you loved me. And I heard you asking me not to leave you.” Gray gulped. “I remember thinking that I just couldn’t leave you yet. We didn’t have enough time.” Juvia looked up to him, surprised to hear that. “In a way, you helped me decide not to die.”

“Your heart stopped when we were in the ambulance.” She whispered. “For a few seconds I lost you again.”

Gray grabbed her left hand and placed it over his chest where she could feel his heart beating, their gazes met and at that moment, only they existed in the world. “I’m alive right now.” He whispered as if they spoke louder, their bubble would burst. “No matter what happened, I’m right in front of you and I am not going anywhere.”

“You can’t promise that.”

“For right now, I can.”

Juvia tip toed and kissed him slowly, trying to show him all the love she had for him, all her fears and hope for them; to her surprise, he answered in kind, not rushing their kiss at all, just enjoying their proximity. That time, when she felt his scars from above his shirt, she closed her eyes harder and felt the heat coming from him, and how much faster his heart was beating.

“Bedroom.” She breathed when their lips unlocked and Gray’s eyes widened at her request.

“To… sleep?”

“No.” Juvia smiled shyly.

Gray shook his head. “I don’t mind waiting.”

“I do.” She kissed him again. “I need to feel you are alive.”

He looked into her eyes for a long time before he nodded. “If you want to stop… Just tell me.” Juvia twined their fingers and led him to her bedroom.

#

Gray was lying on his back, Juvia was on top of him, kissing him with no hurry whatsoever, each knee on a side of his hips, but she wasn’t putting any weight on him at all, still afraid of hurting him even though she knew her fears were unfunded.

“I’m going to be on top.” She told him between kisses. “To make sure you won’t overexert yourself.”

“We haven’t had sex in almost three months.” Gray answered, putting his hands on her hips. “You are in the perfect position to ask me anything and I’d say yes.” He moaned when Juvia decided to lower herself and their groins touched.

Juvia smiled on their kiss. “Good to know.”

They kissed for a few more moments but she had to stop kissing him to take off her shirt and Gray’s
hand immediately found her naked skin and he started to kiss her cleavage, muttering words, but she
didn’t mind at the moment, not when she had to take off all of her clothes. She took off her bra and
stepped away from him and Gray actually whined.

“Don’t get up.” She said, kicking her shoes off and working on her jeans and pulling it down
alongside with her underwear. While she did that, Gray had took off his shirt and his pants with
underwear in tow, they were on the middle of his thighs when she helped him pull it all the way and
threw it somewhere next her own pants.

Gray reached for her hips and Juvia gladly returned to her position on top of him, each knee on one
side of his hips. She kissed him, trying to show how much she missed touching him for ten weeks.
Gray hissed when Juvia reached between them and curled her hand around his shaft, pumping it into
full hardness.

“Oh, fuck.” Gray breathed. “Stop.” He said between gritted teeth. “Or this will be finished before it
starts.” Juvia smiled at that and kissed him again.

Feeling that he wanted to turn them around, Juvia put a hand on his chest and pushed him down to
the bed, settling herself on top of his hips, his shaft touching her sex and then she leaned towards
him. Her hand caressed his chest and when she touched one of the scars caused by the shooting,
Juvia stopped.

“Juvia.” Gray whispered, looking down at her and when she finally looks up, his eyes were as still
dark as always but they were also soft. “It’s not your fault.”

She smiled softly. “I know.” She lowered her mouth and kissed each scar she could find and started
moving her hips, his hardness sliding on her wet sex and both of them moaned. She trailed a kiss
from his chest to his neck and then to his lips. Gray’s hands on her hips were making her go faster
and she all but shrieked when it brushed her clit.

“God.” Gray breathed. “Juvia, I want to- I need to-”

She knew exactly what he wanted and she hummed in agreement, kissing his lips, Juvia guided him
inside her; she took him slowly, feeling his hands on her hips tighten almost painfully.

“Oh.” Gray’s eyes were shut and Juvia watched as he gritted his teeth until he was fully inside her.
She was breathing hard and without moving, just feeling his heat. “I missed this.”

“Me too.” Juvia smiled just when Gray opened his eyes to look at her, they were glazed and he
smiled as well; he removed one of his hands from her hips to touch her cheek and she grabbed it,
kissing his palm and she hoped he could see how happy she was with them being together again.
Gray pulled her to a hot kiss and she finally decided to move, Juvia started to raise her hips slowly,
much to Gray’s frustration, but he didn’t complain, knowing that Juvia was worried about his injuries
yet.

Stopping the kiss, Juvia righted her position, her hands resting on each side of his head, her hair
falling over them, creating somewhat a cocoon. Gray’s hands wandered and he was more than
content to touch her breasts and pinch her nipples making Juvia almost slip out on the rhythm she
had found for them; she’d raise herself making him almost slip out of her just to slide back down
slowly.

“Juvia.” Gray groaned, his mouth on her breast. “I’m not going to break.”

“I know.” She panted and their eyes met for a moment and in his dark eyes, Juvia saw he needed
more than that, he did not want to feel hopeless and if she kept treating that way, he would be upset. She decided quickly to speed up her movements and she smiled when Gray fell on the mattress, eyes closed in sensation.

The blunette could feel his heartbeat under her hand as soon as she straightened up her body, her thigh muscles burning pleasantly with her movements. Gray had opened his eyes and the way he looked at her, it made her feel her heart beat even faster. She grabbed his hand and put it on her left breast and Gray took the hint right away, palming it the way he knew she liked.

“You are so fucking beautiful.” It was barely a whisper, but Juvia heard it and she rotate her hips a different way and it hit something inside her that made her gasp and her muscles to contract around Gray and he swore. “Shit, do that again.” Gray told her and Juvia was more than happy to comply.

“Gray-sama.” Juvia moaned, slipping a hand from her stomach down to where they met, touching her clit in unsynchronized movements, knowing he was close.

“Harder, Juvia.” Gray told her and she noticed how his gaze was locked on where they were joined, seeming to be fascinated by it. Juvia, lost in her own desire, did what she was told, fucking him harder to the bed and his sounds plus his hands on her ass urging her faster were all the encouragement she needed. “Yes. Like that. Holy- yes, like that.”

Feeling his release close, Juvia leaned to kiss on the lips, her breasts touching his chest, her fingers pulling his dark soft hair, her clit rubbing the bone of his hip she just needed to make him come first and she would follow him.

“Gray-sama.” Juvia panted. “Open your eyes.” She pleaded and Gray did as he was told, even if they were unfocused. Clenching her inner muscles round him, she told him: “I love you.”

It was what brought him over the edge; two thrusts later Gray’s eyes rolled to the back of his head, his body arched and he was coming inside her, hitting that amazing spot and Juvia couldn’t do anything else other than to follow him, letting pleasure explode behind her eyelids and each cell of her body.

She was still breathing hard when she realized she was lying on top of him and panicked about her weight on him. Juvia is about to come off him, but Gray’s arms wrapped themselves around her frame. “Stay.” He was panting as well. “For a while. Missed this.”

Juvia just needed that little incentive to stay, she had missed that intimacy as well.

#

Minutes later when she finally slipped off of him and lied next to him on the bed, Gray pulled her close, her head resting on his chest tucked under his chin as one of his hands caressed her back gently. It was funny how much his mood had changed with just one round of sex. She giggled with the thought and when Gray asked what was so funny, she told him.

“Because you acted like I wasn’t going to break.” Gray told her. “And I missed this, you and me together.”

After a moment of silence, Juvia looked up to him. “I’m still going to fret for a while if I see you doing something extreme, I’ll want to be on top when we have sex and I’ll get worried.” She told him and his eyes softened. “I will worry about you and sometimes I’m going to step over some line like I clearly did last time, that’s why I need you to tell me when you get bothered by it so I can take down a notch.” She touched his cheek. “You have to talk to me.”
“Yeah, if you talk to me.” Gray told her and she shyly nodded. “This thing about you being on top for a while… We need to negotiate that.” Juvia smiled. “You know I like being on top.”

“You said I was in the position to ask you anything.”

Gray groaned. “Is this what relationships are? Women hold out sex and men do whatever they ask to have it back?”

“Now you are understanding how this work.” Juvia giggled and Gray smiled, lowering his head to kiss her lips. Both knew they had accomplished another milestone in their relationship and both knew they would be alright.

Chapter End Notes

Well, just as I said this was a filler chapter. HAHA I just wanted to make sure Gray and Juvia resolved some issues before they moved on and I wanted them making love so I joined both in this chapter, I hope it was alright. Next chapter we’ll return to canon. ;)

In a sad note, I was let known that this story was plagiarized and uploaded here on this very website. If you want to share the story, please share the original links. Thank you.
Unlike her last birthday, Lucy decided against a club and chose to just have a dinner with her friends; that year had excitement enough for a lifetime, she'd rather have a quieter birthday and it was more than fine with Juvia.

The blunette was rather happy listening to her friends tell stories and laugh while she could feel Gray's arm resting on the chair behind her; he was touching her arm without even realize it, caressing her skin.

One year of his touches and her stomach still filled with butterflies and her heart still beat faster.

Then a thought hit her and she looked in his direction, and he was laughing at something Loke said. He glanced her way and he frowned when noticed her staring at him.

"What?"

Juvia leaned closer to him, Gray's arm moved from the chair to her shoulders and she grabbed his hand and squeezed. "It's been a year."

"Hm?"

"We got together for the first time at Lucy-san's last birthday party. Last year." She smiled and realization dawned in his expression.

"Oh. I didn't realize it." He seemed to think about it. "Are we celebrating it?" Gray wrinkled his nose and she chuckled, knowing he didn't exactly like anniversaries.

"Juvia has no idea." She shrugged. "I never actually got so far into a relationship to know what to do."

Gray looked surprised for a moment. "Holy shit, neither have I."

The blunette laughed at his expression. "With everything that happened this past year, it sure seems more time has gone by, right?"

He snorted and she knew he was thinking about all the troubles they had faced since that first night. "Yeah."

"What should we do?"

Gray's thumb caressed her arm slowly. "I say we go back home and recreate that night. It was quite mind-blowing."

Juvia giggled. "It was, wasn't it?" She looked up, saw him smirking and couldn't help it but to give
him a chaste kiss on the lips. "And we said it would just happen once, huh?"

He snorted. "Yeah. 'Cause that happened." Juvia's heart started to beat faster when he smiled at her. "I'm glad it didn't go that way."

"Me too." She whispered. "And if we are going to recreate that night, we should go dance." Juvia pointed to where there were a few couples slow dancing. It wasn't exactly the same type of songs: the ones the year before were upbeat while the one playing was made for slow dance.

"Argh." Gray complained "You know I don't like to dance; last time I only went dancing with you to see if it would take some of the edge off. I almost caved in when we stopped."

"You wanted me." Her smile was predatory when she put a hand on his thigh and started to play with the buttons of his shirt.

Gray took in a sharp breath. "Juvia." He said between gritted teeth when her hand casually went up his thigh and almost touched his groin. "Not here."

She kissed his jaw and whispered, close to his ear: "Let's go dancing." She told him. "After that, Juvia will drag you to a dark corner so we can make out and then we go home. Just like a year ago."

"That is a very good idea." Gray nodded, gulping and quickly getting up from the chair and dragging a giggling Juvia towards the dancing floor, ignoring their friends catcalling them. He put a hand on her lower back, bringing her closer to him. Gray offered his other hand she took it willingly, a hand on his shoulder. After a few moments, he told her: "I'm better at this kind of dance, it appears."

"You haven't step on Juvia's toes yet." She teased him.

"I didn't the last time either." Gray reminded her.

Juvia chuckled. "That was because you mostly stood there and let Juvia put her hands on you while swaying her hips."

"Good times." He smirked when she laughed and Juvia pulled him for a sweet kiss. "If you want, we could go up north for the weekend, just us. I know a place you'd like."

The blunette was surprised with his suggestion, but pleased. "Careful, Gray-sama, you are sounding almost romantic. It's a bit freaky." She teased him.

Gray snorted. "Oh, the horror."

Juvia laughed and Gray smiled her way, making her stomach flutter with butterflies. A little over one year before she had been living for her job, with only one friend to count on and just waiting for the mission that would eventually kill her. She couldn't believe how different her life was; she had a great job, friends, a dog and even a boyfriend.

"I do love you." Juvia told him.

Gray stopped their dance to stare at her for a few moments, looking at her like the first time she told him those words, as if he was wondering if she was telling the truth and why. He said nothing, just cupped her face with one hand and kissed her gently.

By the time the kiss ended, her head was fuzzy with how warm he was, with the buzz of saying those words again and his reaction.
Juvia offered him a smile before she rested her head on his shoulder and they resumed their dance in comfortable silence.

#

Three weeks passed when Gray started to get quiet and sullen. He was having more nightmares than usual to a point where he chose to stay awake, lying next to Juvia and just taking quick naps, which Juvia didn't like at all.

When she confronted him about it, he told her he slept when she wasn't looking, but Juvia knew it wasn't true. A few days later and seeing the bags under his eyes, she had enough of it. That was going to end.

That weekend, after they arrived from getting lunch, Juvia hauled Gray to the bathroom to take a hot shower with her – he was quite enthusiastic in there, he really liked her naked, wet and in the middle of the afternoon.

She dried herself and put on her panties and one of his shirts while Gray chose to just put on his boxers. Juvia walked in his direction and wrapped her arms around his torso from behind, resting her head between his shoulder blades.

"Come to bed." She kissed his shoulder and she felt him chuckle.

"You know I'm going to need a few more minutes to get it up again, Juvia." Gray told her.

Juvia smiled. "Not for that, Juvia is quite sated for now." She let go of him and turned him around to face him. "Juvia will help you relax for a bit." He snorted, but let himself get dragged by Juvia to her bed and sat when she pushed him down. "On your stomach, please."

Gray raised his eyebrows in surprise. "What for?" He asked, but did as he was told.

"A surprise." She smiled and opened the nightstand drawer, to which he scowled.

"Juvia, you know I am up to try almost anything, but I swear to god: if you get that dildo of yours and put it anywhere near my ass, I'm outta here."

The blunette was so surprised with his words it took her a couple of moments to process what she heard. Juvia cleared her throat. "You… found it, huh?"

"Please." Gray scoffed. "The first time I was here I looked for condoms and there it was inside a box. Besides, it's been a year: I'd have found it somehow." He narrowed his eyes. "I mean it, Juvia. I tried that once and it's not my thing."

"No." She rolled her eyes and instead of the dildo Gray thought she was reaching for, she got a bottle of scented oil. "You can relax, Juvia is just going to give you a massage." Usually when she did, he ended up sleepy; he was having problems for so long she was sure he would fall asleep once she was done.

He visibly relaxed when she closed the drawer and Juvia had to fight the urge to roll her eyes again; funny that he had no problem asking her to try it a few times before deciding if she like it or not.

"What did I do to have earned a massage?" Gray asked while Juvia got on the bed, and she arranged herself until she had each knee on a side of his hips. She got some oil on her hand, put the bottle back on the nightstand and put her hands on his back.
"Juvia knows you have been stressed these past couple of days." She started to work his shoulders and Juvia smirked when Gray moaned. "I just want you to relax."

"Hm." It was all he said.

They didn't talk for a couple of minutes, the only sounds inside the room were the occasional moans Gray let out every few moments.

"You have knots all over your back, Gray-sama." Juvia huffed in annoyance, working on a particular difficult spot, and he sighed in contentment when she managed it. "How does it feel?"

"Just keep going." Gray mumbled and she noticed he closed his eyes. Good, it was going according to plan. She kept working down his back to the small of his back and by the time she was done, Gray was snoring softly.

Juvia chuckled when she saw him asleep and kissed his cheek before she got off him. She grabbed a towel from her closet and gently cleaned his back the best she could without waking him up before she finally left the room.

With nothing else to do until Gray woke up, Juvia chose a movie to watch and lied down on the couch. Snowball quickly got on the couch with her human and decided that Juvia's stomach would be great for a nap. Juvia chuckled and petted the dog until she was comfortably asleep.

A second movie was playing when the blunette heard the door to her bedroom open, and then footsteps coming her way.

Juvia almost laughed with the sight of her boyfriend. His hair was a mess, half of his face had clear marks giving away he had been asleep and he was blinking a lot, getting used to the light.

"Holy shit, that was a great nap." His voice was rough. "What year is it?"

Giggling, the blunette answered: "It's been only two hours."

"Hm." It was his answer. Gray then, took Snowball from Juvia's stomach and put her on the floor – the white dog looked at him with betrayal when he took her spot and lied down on top of Juvia. "Sorry, it's my turn." Gray petted the top of Snowball's head before he stopped to get himself comfortable.

Juvia waited with patience as Gray looked for a position and she sighed when he did. His head was between her breasts, his body on top of hers. Juvia had to open her legs to accommodate him better and even if half of his legs were dangling from the armrest, he seemed quite comfortable. The blunette started to run her fingers through his hair, to which he made a content sound.

They stayed in silence for a little while, both staring at the TV without paying too much attention to it.

"I'm glad you slept." Juvia whispered.

Gray snorted. "I passed out."

"Juvia was getting worried." She told him pointedly.

He hesitated for a few seconds. "Tomorrow is the anniversary of my parents' death." Gray told her and Juvia's body tensed. How didn't she made the connection? She forgot about it entirely, but his behavior should've tipped her off.
"I'm sorry, I forgot." Juvia told him.

"It's fine." Gray's arms tightened her around her. "Usually I take a long job during this week, just like last year; it works most of the time. This year I couldn't find any, that's why I didn't sleep and when I did..."

"Nightmares." She completed with a soft voice. "And all I've been doing is trying to make you sleep when you were..." Juvia wanted to hit herself. "Sorry if I said anything-"

"You were just trying to help me." Gray interrupted her. "I should've told you, but it's a delicate topic for me."

"It's alright." Juvia told him. "It's hard to share."

Gray nodded, but otherwise didn't move from his spot on top of her. It took him almost a minute to speak again. "I..." He cleared his throat. "I got used to the nightmares. Twenty years of it, they don't surprise me anymore. But it's different this time." Juvia frowned in confusion but didn't ask anything; he would tell her in his own time. "I had nightmares about you too."

That surprised Juvia. "Me?"

"Somehow you were there and you were dead. With them." Them being his mother and father, she knew. "It makes no sense whatsoever, but there you were, throat slit just like my mother's and eyes open and opaque." He took a deep breath. "I don't ever want to see that."

"Gray-sama." Juvia tried to make him look up at her, but he refused.

"Every time I slept, I had nightmare about my parents and every time, you were there. Sometimes I was too slow back at the Games and you were hit instead. I did the math, Juvia: the bullets didn't hit anything serious in me, but by your height and where I have the scars, it would've hit you on the back of the neck, lugs and heart. You'd been dead before you hit the ground." His voice shook. "I've dealt with their deaths, I can't deal with yours. I... I can't."

"Juvia is alive." She caressed his hair and back, trying to soothe him. She knew too well about the nightmares about the Games because she had a lot of them herself. "Juvia was just within your reach those nights."

"I know." Gray told her. "That's why I didn't sleep. It meant more to stay awake, making sure."

The blunette's heart filled with love for him all over again; it appeared every time she thought she couldn't love him more, she realized she could. And did.

"That's not healthy at all." She told him; and she would know, after he was shot, Juvia had been awake whole nights making sure he was alive.

"Yeah." Gray sighed. "And neither is having nightmares all the time, but here we are."

Juvia snorted and pinched his shoulder, to which he chuckled. "Stop it, this is serious."

"Everything is serious in our lives." Gray shrugged and finally looked up. "But this nap helped, and the massage too. A lot. Feel free to do it any time you want. On the front too and lower."

Rolling her eyes and ignoring his last words, Juvia told him: "You could ask too. Talking about feelings like we are doing is a good thing, remember. This should happen more than once every blue moon." She touched his nose.
Gray widened his eyes, joking. "Let's not get crazy here."

Juvia smiled and put a hand on his jaw. "Juvia means it. If you need my help with anything at all, just tell me."

"I know." He nodded and moved up so he could kiss her lips and then returned to his position on top of her, his head on the crook of her neck. "But right now I think I just need to stay here."

"Alright." She kissed his forehead.

#

Thankfully a few days after their talk, Gray's sleep pattern returned to normal and Juvia could finally breathe in relief. Their routine returned and she was grateful for it.

But of course, things needed to go to shit.

It was a regular morning for the couple; Juvia woke up before Gray and as usual went to take Snowball on her walk. She returned and started on breakfast and Gray came from the bedroom right on time. He hugged her from behind, gave her a kiss on the cheek and they proceeded to eat, chatting about what they were going to do that day.

They showered together, Juvia shampooed his hair and he soaped her breasts enthusiastically (she had to swat his hands when he was getting too into it); she applied her make-up while he shaved and by the time they left her apartment, they were almost late for work but made it in time. Juvia tip-toed and gave him a peck on the lips once they stepped out the elevator and Cana told them to stop being disgusting and go to work.

An hour later, Juvia was looking over a report when a breathless Cana barged in her office, saying they had to go to Magnolia General: Laxus, Freed, Bixlow and Evergreen were there. There had been an attack and a biological weapon was used. Juvia's eyes widened and she grabbed her coat and her purse before running alongside the brunette.

Ten minutes later, they arrived to a Hospital in chaos, ambulances arriving, gurneys everywhere, doctors running, people crying.

It was as if she was back to a war zone from her time in the army.

There were already a crowd from FT there and Juvia recognized Gray's jacket and went straight to him. "Gray-sama." She called and he turned to look at her, he was pale and for a moment she thought the worse. "How are they?"

"We don't know yet. I got here five minutes ago." Gray told her. "There was an explosion at the fish market, apparently it went off earlier than it should, Laxus and his team were in a restaurant a few blocks away, acting as bodyguards. They were one of the first on the scene." Gray's jaw tightened. "There was some sort of biological weapon, they breathed in, but not as much as others. The body count is eighty so far, all people who were right next to it."

Juvia gasped and put a hand over her mouth. "What?"

"The number is probably going up in a few hours." He whispered, looking down. "The doctors are trying their best, but this is chaos."

"Oh, god." Juvia breathed. "How is Master holding up?"
Gray's shoulders dropped. "We're concerned with his heart condition, but Mirajane is with him, keeping an eye."

The blunette nodded. "Has some group taken responsibility?"

"Yes. Tartaros." Gray all but growled. "Guess who they serve?"

"Zeref." Juvia muttered.

"Of course that son of a bitch is behind this." He raised his voice, but only a couple of people looked their way. "Fuck, I want to kill this bastard!"

Juvia stepped closer to her boyfriend and put a hand on his shoulder. "Gray-sama, I know how you feel but we need a plan. We can't go after him guns blazing. We know what he is capable of and he is organized, he is smart and he has means."

"He is not bulletproof." Gray told her.

"No, he is not." Juvia agreed, trying to calm him down. "We work with intel, we need to coordinate and a plan. If we work with chaos, it will only bring more chaos. Too many innocent people died today, we will do our best to no bring that number up, alright? Master will want us to do something, but doing it with our heads hot, won't do anyone good."

Gray looked at her and took a few calming breaths before nodding. "You are right."

"Come on. Let's go see if we can get any more news about what is happening." She suggested, knowing Gray hated to stay still while there was a crisis and he promptly agreed.

An hour later, Polysusca, a doctor and an old friend of Makarov's appeared, taking off her surgical mask. She was an old tall woman with a serious expression.

"Polyusca! Laxus and the others! How bad is it?" Makarov yelled and everyone from FT gathered together, looking for news. "Answer me!"

The doctor looked around at the crowd before settling her eyes on her friend. "They'll… make it."

Everyone sighed in relief until she spoke her next words. "But the damage from the substance has clearly taken its toll. To say it's a potent form of poison is an understatement." She sighed, tired. "Even a pinch is fatal in most cases. Whether they'll make a full recovery from this… I cannot say for certain." Her eyes soften while looking at the older man. "Laxus especially… The amount of internal damage he's suffered… by all accounts he shouldn't still be alive."

Juvia looked at Makarov and saw him got even paler and he was shaking with the thought of losing his grandson. His only family left. "Can-" He cleared his throat. "Can I see them? Please."

Polyusca stared at him for a moment before nodding. "I will give you a mask and scrubs. But it has to be quick, they need rest."

"Of course." He nodded and turned around to look at the crowd. "Go home. There's nothing you can do right now." Before anyone could say a thing, he and Polyusca walked away.

No one left.

One hundred and three dead.
That was the final count for the first day, there were still more than ten people in the ICU at risk of dying at any second.

Makarov took a long while to return, by then it was already mid-afternoon and he looked ten years older. All the stress taking its toll on him. No one spoke a word when he appeared.

"I told you to go home." He was clearly tired.

"Gramps." Natsu said, from the opposite side of where Makarov stood and anyone could see the pink haired man was furious. "This means war." He was so angry, his face was all red. "Let's go and kick their asses! Every last one of them!"

Natsu actually tried to leave, but was held down.

"Calm down, Natsu!"

"Everyone feels the same way." Max tried to reason.

"Let go of me you bastards…" Natsu growled when Max grabbed his arm and then yanked it off his grasp. "I'll start by whooping your asses first." More people got in front of him and he groaned. Natsu turned around to look at the Master. "Our own people taken down! We can't let something like that slide! We need to beat all their asses to a pulp, asap!"

Makarov sighed, tiredly. "I have no objections to that. But we don't have enough intel."

Erza agreed. "We know neither their objectives, not the location of their headquarters. Even the Council was in the dark regarding such matters."

"That's right, Natsu! How are you going to beat them if you don't even know where they are?" Max asked.

"I'll just beat their location from some scumbags!" Natsu was clearly not thinking straight.

"And… where are these scumbags?"

"The hell if I know!"

"So… where the hell do you plan on going?" Max was clearly exasperated.

"The only thing we know is that they're going after Council members." Lucy said, arms crossed under her breasts and staring at her boyfriend. "Current and former ones."

"So, should we start by heading out the homes of all former members?" Gray asked the blonde.

"But that information is classified… Finding their locations will be problematic to say the least." Macao, an old member of FT interrupted the younger man. "It's a safety protocol so that enemies can't just seek them out for revenge."

"So our hands are tied here…?" Cana asked, passing a hand through her dark hair.

"Nope, not quite." Juvia recognized the voice and was surprised to see Loki there; he usually traveled all around the country, getting intel; he was rarely in Magnolia and never for a long length of time. "I know the locations of the former members. Not all of them, though."

"Loki!" Lucy exclaimed in surprise.
"How would Loki-san know?" Wendy, the innocent girl she was, asked.

"Well, you see..." The orange haired man smirked and winked, to which Wendy became incredibly red.

"From women, I bet." Lucy rolled her eyes.

"Come with me, Loki." Makarov said and Loki nodded. "The rest of you, I know you won't go home if I tell you to and before we decide something, but this is a hospital and we are crowding the waiting room. Go back to Mirajane's bar and I'll meet you there in an hour. Erza, you stay too."

Begrudgingly, they accepted Makarov's logic and left. Only Mirajane and Elfman stayed behind, he wouldn't leave without seeing his girlfriend and Mira wouldn't leave yet.

Lisanna opened the bar for them but left the sign as 'Closed' and urged them inside every time a taxi pulled over, trying to get everyone and then serving them drinks while they waited for Makarov's appearance.

Juvia sat next to Levy, who was typing like crazy on her laptop, trying to get as much information as she could about the Councilmen. Gajeel, Natsu and Gray were talking together a few feet away and the three were dead serious, which was unlike them.

When Makarov arrived, but Erza stood by his side and so did Polyusca – Loki slipped in behind them. Juvia remembered Lucy saying the older woman had been a doctor for the navy for years and knew a lot about combat and strategy.

The three of them walked inside the bar purposely, Makarov no longer seemed like an old man afraid of losing his grandson. He looked like a General ready to go to war.

Once they reached the middle of the bar, though, it was Polyusca who spoke.

"From Loki's intel, we know the locations of four former Council members. We'll split into teams and protect them from Tartaros' attacks. They'll be tight lipped but we have to get them to tell us everything they know." She said, her voice stoic. "The locations of the others and why they're being targeted by Tartaros."

Makarov stood on top of a chair, his eyes seemed to burn and his voice carried throughout the whole room. "Our enemy is Tartaros. They're a corner of the Balam Alliance... just like Oración Seis and Grimoire Heart... We've destroyed both of the latter." His voice was so powerful, Juvia remembered exactly why he was their boss. "We shall do the same to Tartaros. Let them rue the day that they made us their enemy! Our comrades were mortally wounded! Their pain amounts to our own!" The crowd cheered. "The blood they bleed, is our own! This pain, this suffering will fuel our fighting spirit to take down our enemies! We are not justice! We move by our own wills! We will put all our bonds and pride on the line and eliminate all our family's enemies!" Everyone agreed.

"I am itching to get my hands in one of them." Gajeel growled and sat next to his girlfriend, Gray walking behind him while Natsu was called by Makarov. "Just one would do for now."

Juvia sighed and took a sip of her drink. "God, how many dead?"

"One hundred and four." Levy said, stopping typing for a moment. "Another woman died half an hour ago."

"Fuck." Juvia whispered. She wasn't one to cuss a lot, but sometimes the situation called for it and that was one of them. "So many people died today."
"Yeah, 'fuck' is right." Gray sat next to her. "I can't believe this is happening." Juvia put a hand on his thigh, but did little to calm him down. "We need to take them all down."

"We will." Juvia assured him. "You heard Master."

"What is their game here?" Gray asked. "What do they want?"

"To create chaos, that's for sure." Gajeel hissed. "We will know more once we talk with the former Councilmen and they finally tell us what the hell they are hiding."

They stayed in silence for a few moments, the only sound coming from Levy's quick fingers, typing. The petite blunette got up and told them she had to meet with Makarov; she grabbed her laptop and Gajeel followed her lead. Juvia watched the couple leave and put a hand on the back of her neck, massaging it; it had been such a long day, sitting and waiting for news and then a decision about what to do. Gray put his hand on top of Juvia's on his thigh and squeezed it. When she looked up to him, he whispered: "We are going home soon."

"I know." She told him, trying to smile.

"I'll go get something for us to eat." He got up.

"Juvia is fine." She shook her head. "She is not hungry."

"We only had breakfast today." Gray reminded her.

"I'm feeling a bit queasy with all that has happened today."

Gray sighed. "Yeah. I'll be right back."

The blunette nodded and watched her boyfriend leave and passed a hand through her hair. All she wanted to do was get Gray and drag him back to her apartment, take a hot shower and then fall asleep in his arms, both of them safe.

She had a bad feeling she couldn't shake off. From the moment she heard about the attack, she had a heavy weight on her stomach. She could feel something bad was coming.

Gray sat by her side and it took her from her thoughts, startling her. Gray raised an eyebrow at her reaction, she usually was much more on guard than that. "Sorry." He put a glass with juice in front of her and the other in front of himself. "Since we haven't eaten since morning, I didn't want to drink alcohol with an empty stomach."

"Thank you." She kissed his cheek and gave two sips on the juice when Makarov sat across from the young couple and Erza sat next to him.

"Gray. Juvia." The older man greeted them and they greeted him. "I need you two to go North and find one of the Councilmen we know the whereabouts of. His name is Org-Roshi, he was a Councilman until five years ago. I'll send you to protect him, if you agree, that is."

"Of course we agree." Gray said and Juvia nodded in agreement.

Makarov sighed in relief. "Good. You two are a good team. Everyone wants to help, but if we send too many people, we lose the element of surprise." He stared at them. "You know how to be stealthy and you always get yourselves out of a tough situation and we have no idea yet of what to expect when you get there. I'll have Levy send you the information to your email." He eyed them for a few moments. "You will need to be very careful, I have no intention of losing anyone."
"We understand, sir." Juvia told him, kindly.

Gray nodded. "We will leave in the morning, after we go through the information."

"Thank you." Makarov sighed. "Once you arrive and assess the situation, please get in contact with us."

"You got it." Gray said.

"We still have to speak with some others." Erza informed, gently, and got up. "Master."

"Yes, yes." Makarov nodded. "I'll talk with you soon."

"Yes, Master." Juvia agreed and the young couple watched as they left. Once they were out of earshot, the blunette turned to Gray's direction. "Should we go home? We do need to get over the information Levy-san is going to send us."

Gray got up and nodded; watching while Juvia did the same. "I need to go to my apartment to get my best guns. You go to your place and I'll follow you in ten minutes or so." Juvia stepped in front of him and Gray put a hand on her lower back to guide her and the blunette felt better. "Come on."

The sky was just starting to get orange with sunlight when Gray and Juvia left Magnolia riding his motorcycle. According to the information they received, they had a long trip on their way; four hours if they were on the speed limit. Most of the way, they stayed in silence, going through what they knew inside their heads. They stopped two times to stretch their legs and Juvia drove for a while to give her boyfriend a break and then switched back.

It was almost noon when Gray spoke: "Heads up, we are arriving. Keep your guard up. You shoot, I drive."

Juvia reached inside her coat for the shoulder holster and grabbed her two guns, feeling it was better to be safe rather than sorry. "Got it."

They rode for a few minutes until she heard Gray gasp. "Holy shit."

Juvia frowned and looked over his shoulder and her eyes widened. From the file Levy sent them, Passiflora was a small village, no more than one hundred people. A place totally under the grid, the perfect place for someone to hide.

They rode through what seemed like the town's main street and both were speechless with what they saw: broken windows, some isolated fires and what shocked them the most, was the number of bodies all over.

"Oh my god." Juvia whispered while Gray navigated through the mess that was the street; bodies and abandoned cars on their way.

"Fuck." Gray whispered back. "Shit, Juvia, guns up. They could be here still." Only then she noticed both her arms were down instead of pointing somewhere.

"Juvia doesn't think they are still here." The blunette answered, but raised the guns either way. "Look at the bodies, they are not fresh killings."

"Either way, don't let your guard down." They rode in silence as he followed the GPS to the
"Crap." Gray sighed when they finally stopped and Juvia saw why he cussed; the small cottage was torn apart, the door was opened and that was not a good sign. Gray parked the motorcycle and waited for Juvia to come off before he did the same. Just like the blunette had done it a few minutes before, Gray reached inside his jacket to get his two guns from the shoulder holsters. "I go in first, you cover me."

Juvia nodded and followed him inside, her mind focused on protecting him. Once they were there, it wasn't hard to see the cottage was clear of enemies, as it only had three rooms.

The dead body of Org-Roshi, though, was on the ground, next to a bed, his blue eyes wide open, terrified and opaque. Strangely enough, beside the clear stab wounds all over his chest, his hands were cut off and nowhere to be found.

"We're too late." Juvia whispered.

#

"I think I got it, Juvia." Gray called from a corner of the room; they had been searching for cellular reception and it was terrible. "It connected." Juvia went to stay next to him, looking at the phone and trying to fit on the screen.

Makarov answered and he had a scowl on; that was bad. "Gray? Did you find him?"

"We're too late." Gray told him.

His eyes widened. "What? So then Org-Roshi is..."

"Yes... He's gone." Juvia sighed and she saw Macao and Cana behind the older man. "And it looks like someone really went wild here. It's almost too horrible to look at. So many people died."

"Unbelievable." Makarov said under his breath.

"What about Gajeel and the others?" Cana asked.

"And Belnoroshi?" Makarov yelled to another phone and even though they couldn't see the screen, they heard Gajeel's voice answer.

"We're too late." Juvia gasped and grabbed Gray's forearm.

"It doesn't look like there was any violent fighting here," they heard Levy's voice "implying that this as probably an assassination."

"Damn it! If only we were a little earlier..." Gajeel's voice said.

"They got Org-Roshi and even Belno." Cana's voice was tense. "I guess all that's left are the ones Natsu and Elfman headed for, Michello and Yuuri, huh. I'll try to call Lucy once again."

"Two of them are dead?" Juvia whispered to Gray. "What is going on?"

Gray looked to the side to stare at her. "Let's hope we can fine at least one alive to get some facts straight."

"I got Lucy!" Cana exclaimed.
"Finally! It connected!" Lucy's voice could be heard.

"Lucy? What's the situation over there?" Makarov asked.

"Michello is alright. Natsu has seen better days, though." The blonde informed and they could hear Natsu on the background saying it didn't matter, since he won.

"Have you managed to get information from Michello?" Makarov's voice bordered desperation.

"About that..." Lucy hesitated.

Juvia wished she could see what the others were seeing when an unknown voice came from Cana's phone. "White legacy... FACE, I don't know anything... absolutely nothing."

"FACE?" Makarov's expression was of confusion.

"FACE is one of the weapons the Council possesses." The voice Juvia assumed was Michello's came from Cana's phone and Juvia saw Master's eyes widen, her heart started to beat faster, a feel of dread coming over her.

"Huh?" It was Natsu's voice. "Why would the Council need weapons?"

"The Council's various weapons are managed according to their lethality and priority." Michello said and Juvia's grasp on Gray's forearm tightened. "For example, Etherion. That cannon could target a large town and we have them around the world. It has enough power to obliterate a country in mere seconds. To fire it, the approval of nine standing council members and the firing codes of ten seniors are needed."

"So, now that not all the council members are dead, they can't use Etherion anymore?" Jet's voice came from one of the phones.

"So one of their aims was the nullification of Etherion?" They heard Droy's voice.

"Exactly what sort of weapon is face?" Makarov took the phone from Cana and gave the one he had, the one the call Juvia and Gray made, to someone else, who, thankfully, kept it up. "I know you have a duty do keep these secrets, but now is not the time for that!"

Michello stayed in silence for a few moments, but the moment he spoke his next words, ice went down Juvia's spine. "Nuclear bombs. A weapon that could destroy a country if used."

Juvia gasped and put a hand over her mouth, while Gray all but yelled a "What?"

"What a fearsome weapon." Makarov's eyes were wide.

"Where is it?" They heard Natsu yell. "We'll destroy it before they can get their hands on it!"

"I-I don't really know." Michello gasped. "I heard that only three former council members had their prints scanned, but only the former chairman knows where those three were."

"The lives of those three are the keys to the weapon." Wendy's voice was heard from the phone on Makarov's hand.

Gray gritted his teeth. "That's why Tartaros is trying to get the Council."

"On the contrary," Juvia looked up to her boyfriend "Doesn't that mean that they don't need any more information from them? That they already know where FACE is hidden? Org-Roshi-san's
hands are missing. It means he was one of them and now Tartaros has his fingerprints." Gray's eyes
widened as he made the connection.

"Fuck!" Gajeel said. "If the three that had their prints scanned were found, FACE is going to fall
into Tartaros' hands, old man!"

"Hurry and find those two others and protect them!" Makarov yelled at the phone. "You said that the
former chairman should know who they are, right?"

"P-probably." Michello answered.

Makarov looked to the other people on the room and yelled: "You guys still haven't found the former
Chairman's address? They're probably after him too! Get moving!" Makarov looked around to the
three phones with the teams he had sent out. "All of you, come back. Safely."

"Copy that, Master." Gray nodded and finished the call.

Only when they disconnected that Juvia let out a breath she was holding in. "Oh, Gray-sama." She
looked at him.

"Let's go." Gray's expression was serious. "We have to go back home."

"We can't let him… them…" She waved towards the dead man on the floor a few meters away.

Gray sighed. "We will stop at a Police Station and tell them we were passing by and found them so
they won't stay outside longer than necessary."

"Thank you." Juvia whispered and they walked outside, together.

#

They found a patrol car and told them what they had seen in the village. The Officers' eyes almost
came out from their skulls and after taking notes about the motorcycle's license plate and their names,
let Gray and Juvia go after seeing their credentials.

They were more than half-way through the path back home when Juvia started to speak. "Gray-
sama?" She said through the microphone inside the helmet and heard him hum to let her know he
was listening. "Juvia… has a bad feeling about this." She tightened her arms around his torso. "Look
at what our enemies did to that town. I'd understand if I was feeling sad… But… It's something
different."

Gray didn't say anything at first, just put one hand over hers, that was resting on top of his stomach
and he squeezed it. "I'm here with you." She heard him say and his grip around him tightened. "Like
always, FT will come out on top. Without fail."

Feeling slightly better, Juvia's only answer was: "Yes, Gray-sama."

#

It was mid-afternoon when they arrived at FT, just to receive an information about how they had no
idea where Erza, Mirajane and Natsu were nowhere to be found.

"We went to the ex-Chairman's house, but they were nowhere to be found." Lucy bit her lower lip,
nervous about her boyfriend and friends.
"What the hell is going on?" Gray said between gritted teeth and passed a hand through his hair.

"I hope they are alright." Juvia mumbled.

"I am trying to get some information through the dark net. I might have something soon." Levy informed them and returned her attention to her computer.

"I'm also worried about Lisanna and Elfman. We haven't been able to reach them at all." Cana was walking around, nervous.

"Tartaros. Is there really nothing we can do to get our hands on information about their headquarters?" Master spoke so quietly that if Juvia hadn't been standing close to him, she would've missed.

"Juvia will call some of her contacts to see if they have anything." She told the older man and he looked up to her, as if he had forgotten she stood next to him.

"Yes, thank you Juvia-chan." He tried to smile and she did the same before she left to her office to make some calls.

Thirteen phone calls later, Juvia learned nothing new about Tartaros. Every agency she had ties with had about the same information FT had. She was almost getting a headache with the frustration and her stomach protested with hunger and she ate one of the power bars she had in one of her drawers.

Night was falling when Levy called everyone, saying she had information about Tartaros' whereabouts and some other intel. Juvia arrived when she was in the middle of the information. "…ex-Chairman aligned with Tartaros." She was reading from her computer. "It says here that they had two women with them." She gasped and looked up. "I bet it's Erza and Mira!" Her eyes moved as she read more. "And I have an address for their HQ!"

"What?"

"You do?"

"Where?"

"Not too far from here, half an hour drive." Levy told them. "I'll try to get the layout!"

Makarov said, loudly: "Everyone, prepare for an attack. Get your gear and get ready! We are going after Tartaros tonight!"

Juvia, like most of the others nodded and started to prepare. She thought about getting her bulletproof vest at her office and to tell Gray to wear it as well, when there was a commotion by the elevator and heard people whispering.

"Elfman!" She vaguely recognized Jet's voice.

"You're okay after all!" Macao said.

"Hm? Where's Lisanna?" Droy asked.

Juvia couldn't see him yet, but heard Elfman's reply. His voice distant. "Lisanna… got captured."

Everyone gasped in surprise.

"No way… Even Lisanna?" Lucy whispered when Juvia finally made her way through the crowd and stood next to the blonde.
"We were also too late to save Yuuri-Roshi." He looked down, ashamed. "I… Even though I was there…"

"It's not your fault." Juvia saw Gray step closer to their friend. "Levy's getting all the information she can get about Tartaros right now."

"Don't worry about Lisanna." Juvia told him. "We'll get her back, of that, you can be certain." Lisanna was a good friend.

"Pathetic." Cana said from a bit behind the crowd and everyone looked surprised. "Your sister gets captured and you come crawling back here without even going after those responsible?"

"Cana-san!" Wendy gasped in horror with Cana's words.

"I-I lost the sight of them." Elfman whispered, and Juvia noticed he seemed nervous, looking around, searching for something. Something was wrong.

"Lost sight? The people that captured Lisanna managed to evade you even though you are one of our best trackers?"

"That's enough, Cana!" Gray raised his voice.

"Sorry…" Elfman all but whined. "I just need to… catch a bit of a rest." He wobbled his way to the bathroom by the back of the building and a heavy silence followed.

"Everyone is really on edge, huh…" Juvia sighed.

"You didn't need to say that stuff!" Gray was clearly mad at Cana, who looked just a little ashamed but hid it well. "It's his sister, Cana! You know that he'd do anything to get her back."

"Shit. Yes, I know he would, Gray!" Cana yelled back at Gray. "That's why I don't understand why he came back and didn't go after those bastards!"

"We don't know what we will do until it happens to us, Cana." Gray told her. "He doesn't know where his sister is so he came home. People do that."

"Don't guilt trip me, Gray." Cana hissed. "I'll go talk to him. Figure out why he's so weird." She said and followed the same way the taller man had gone a minute before.

"Damn it." Gray said under his breath and only calmed down a little when Juvia touched his back. "If we fight between ourselves, anyone can take us down. We need to be united."

"I know." She nodded, and was about to say more when they heard Cana scream for help. They looked at each other, and, just like another handful of people, ran towards the bathroom.

The scene was familiar to Juvia: seeing a friend with a vest with C4 strapped on. The same type Lucy wore months before. So it was Tartaros who did that, probably trying on their defenses.

And now they tried again.

"Get back!" Elfman yelled, moving his arms around. "Don't get in my way!"

"Oi! Elfman!" Cana tried to call him.
Juvia went to the door and yelled: "Code Red! Everyone out, now!"

"What is hap-" Someone tried to ask, but she talked louder.

"Now! Out!" People finally started to move towards the stairs and Juvia returned to the bathroom, where Elfman was telling what happened.

"...they said if I did this, they wouldn't hurt Lisanna!" Elfman yelled. "Go away! I came here to be as far away as possible from everyone else!"

"Shit, Elfman!" Gray yelled. "Those people from Tartaros are the worse. They won't keep their promise!"

"I couldn't take the chance." He was pale and shaking. "Please, leave."

"No one is leaving without you." Cana told him, serious.

"The counter is down to two minutes." Juvia heard Gray say and she looked to the digital count.

"Juvia!" Cana called and the blunette looked in her direction. "That time when Lucy got a vest with a bomb… Was it like this one?" The brunette didn't have to say anything else for Juvia to get her meaning.

"The exact same model." She said and ran to the closest office and looks through the desk drawers until she found scissors and then returned to the bathroom, where Elfman seemed to have stopped talking and Cana, Gray and a few more people.

"Got it!" Juvia stepped closer to them. "Elfman-san! You need to stop moving now!" The white haired man looked at her.

"Just calm down." Cana said. "We are going to help you and Lisanna, okay? I'm sorry for what I said, but you need to calm down now. Juvia did this with Lucy, she can help you and then we will go get Lisanna." She touched his forearm. "Trust me."

The moment he nodded, Juvia went behind him. "Take off your jacket." She said and saw Gray and Cana help him out of the clothes and there they were: the wires. "Orange, red, black, blue and yellow." She whispered to herself, trying to remember the order the best she could. "No, no. It's yellow and blue."

"Juvia…" Gray called her and she snapped out of it.

"It's fine." She looked at the timer. One minute left. "Orange, red, black, yellow and blue." She cut them exactly like Natsu had taught her, the closest she could. "I really hope it's yellow and blue." She whispered and started cutting, she didn't have much time to lose.


00:43

The timer stopped and she breathed in relief. "It stopped." Her voice shook a bit. "You can take it off, gently." Cana did what she was told and Elfman tried his best to be gently, but he was a very large and clumsy man most of the time, but thankfully they took it off without a problem.

"I'll put it over th-" Cana's voice got interrupted by a beep coming from the vest and everyone looked at it. Juvia's blood ran cold when she read the words on the timer.
It blinked: *Not this time. HA HA HA*

And it changed to 00:10, then started to count down.

"Out!" Cana yelled, throwing the vest away. "Everyone, *run!*

Before she could even think, Cana had grabbed her hand and the four of them were running towards the stairs. Thankfully, most of the people were already going down.

Juvia looked over her shoulder and saw Gray's eyes wide open, their eyes met. A big explosion shook the building, throwing them towards the wall and everything went dark when Juvia hit her head.

Chapter End Notes

My poor baby. :'( I hope you enjoyed it!
This chapter was a challenge, I can tell ya that. LOL Thank goodness Juvia wasn’t in a third of the clusterfuck that arc was. HAHA

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

A minute at most passed when Juvia regained consciousness if all the yelling of everyone asking if they were alright was any indicator. Cana was slapping the blunette’s face lightly and only when she opened her eyes, Cana stopped and sighed in relief.

“Gray!” Cana looked over her shoulder and yelled making Juvia blink a few times and groan when she felt the throbbing on her temple get worse with the brunette’s loud voice but she felt slightly better when she heard her Gray-sama’s voice asking a rude ‘what?’ from somewhere. “She’s awake!” Cana’s attention returned to Juvia and she snapped her fingers in front of Juvia’s eyes when her eyes became heavier. “No, no. Don’t close your eyes for too long, stay awake.”

“I’m fine.” Juvia whispered, probably dragging her words. She took in the state of her surroundings up the stairs the door was off its hinges, and there was smoke coming to the stairs and she could see the orange color reflecting on the walls, the floor was burning. “How is everyone else?”

“No casualties.” Cana informed. “But there are some hurt, that’s where Gray is, by the way, a little down the stairs.” Seeing Juvia’s blue eyes wide, Cana cleared up her words. “He is fine; there’s an obstruction at the door and he is helping clear it so they can get help and we can get out.”

Juvia nodded and she noticed the brunette looking down to the rest of their friends, who just seemed frightened. “Go.” She said and Cana’s gaze returned to her, confused. “Juvia is fine now and she just needs a few minutes to feel better. Go see to the others or help them get the things out of the way.”

“Gray said-”

Waving her off, Juvia spoke again. “Juvia will keep an eye on that fire.” She pointed upstairs. “Go be of some actual help.”

“Shit.” Cana cussed. “I’ll just go see how they are doing. I’ll be back in a moment.” She said and then yelled again, making Juvia’s head throb a bit. “Lucy! Come to stay with Juvia for a second!”

“Alright!” Lucy said and in a few seconds, she was next to Juvia and Cana left. The blonde woman coughed with the smoke but sat next to Juvia. “Glad to see you are awake. A few people hit their heads during the explosion, most just got a headache but three lost consciousness.” Juvia opened her mouth to say something, but Lucy predicted her words and answered before she could ask. “All awake and fine. We are just waiting for them to work on the way out.”

With a nod, Juvia looked up to see how the fire was and she got worried. “We need to get down a few steps.” She got up and blinked fast when black dots appeared in her vision. Lucy put a hand on the blunette’s elbow and they went down three steps, the furthest they could before there were
people standing, talking to one another and it was clear they were afraid, but thankfully most were trained and contained themselves. She looked over her shoulders and the smoke was getting thicker.

Knowing that a little of the tension needed to be undone, she cleared her throat and yelled: “Gray-sama? It’s getting hot up here. Any time you guys want to get us out, it’s fine by us.” Whoever was speaking, stopped and listened to her words; all of them knew about their relationship.

There was a second of silence and she heard an answer from a few flights of stairs below. “Well, if you are done with your beauty sleep, come down here to help.” Obviously he was joking and some people laughed even through fear.

“Hey, you said I’m pretty!” She said playfully, glancing over her shoulder again, her stomach twisting in fear.

“You obviously think you need to be even more: sleeping when things are getting interesting.” He yelled back and even after a cough, she snorted. “Thirty seconds and we can finally open it.”

“Good.” She tried to yell, but coughed instead and so did Lucy, their eyes red and watery because of the smoke.

Thankfully, a minute later they were slowly walking down the steps and a few moments later both Cana and Gray were in their view, walking up against flow. The moment she saw him, Juvia felt one hundred times better. She let go of Lucy, the blunette didn’t even realize they were holding each other’s hand, and threw her arms around his shoulders the moment he was close enough.

“Are you alright?” He asked in a whisper, his arms around her waist and then led her down, Cana and Lucy a few steps ahead of them.

“Yes.” She agreed. “Just a headache now, the smoke is the thing doing more damage at this point.”

“I’m sorry I left you, I needed to-”

“Get everyone out was the priority and Juvia just hit her head mildly.” She waved his concern away. “Juvia understands and we need to get out of here, have a few of those oxygen masks and then we are going to take Tartaros down.” She looked at him and Gray nodded.

The first emergency attendants were already there when they came out and after a long talk with the EMT’s, who were pissed none of their patients went to the hospital, Makarov finally focused on the plan and Levy finally told them the address of Tartaros’ base.

“Listen up everyone.” Cana yelled to get their attention. “We know where those bastards are and we are going to get them. Gear up, we are leaving to get those sons of bitches in twenty minutes.”

Juvia thanked her EMT and walked over to where Gray was, arguing with Lucy quite enthusiastically. “-and that’s final.” He told her.

“Don’t you dare to try to boss me around, Gray Fullbuster.” Lucy’s face was in an angry shade of red and she was clearly holding her own against Gray. “I am going with you and I don’t care what you say.”

Gray shook his head. “That will be dangerous, Lucy. Natsu wouldn’t want you to-” Lucy actually hit Gray’s shoulder with her tiny fist and even though it probably didn’t even sting, Gray protested. “Hey!”
“He is my boyfriend and he is most likely being held captive there. Now every single friend I have in
the world is going to put their lives at risk and you are asking me to stay behind?” She hit him again,
but his eyes were softer that time. “Don’t even try, because I refuse to stay behind. I will not get in
anyone’s way, I’ll stay as hidden as I can, but I. Am. Going.”

“You don’t even have a weapon!” Gray said in frustration.

“Juvia will find you a nice gun and some ammo.” The blunette intervened and both looked her way:
Lucy’s in hope and Gray’s in indignation.

“Really?”

“Yes.” Juvia nodded. “Mira’s bar wasn’t affected much with the explosion and Cana is getting the
guns out. Boy, Mira-san knew how to stock weaponry.” Being formerly military and member of FT,
Mirajane never lost her interest in guns and was more than glad to hold FT’s stock in a safe under her
bar. “Tell your situation to Cana-san and I’m sure she will show you some options. Juvia will be
with you in a second.”

Lucy gave Juvia a quick hug and threw Gray a dirty look before she walked away from the couple.

“What the fuck do you think you are doing?” Gray hissed. “This is dangerous. Lucy got into danger
before but that was out of our control. Now we are deliberately going and-”

“And she is going whether we ‘let her’ or not and I’d rather she has a gun with her rather than
nothing.” She told him and pointed towards the general direction Lucy went. “It’s Natsu, the man
she loves. She will literally fight with her hands and nails if she doesn’t get anything else.” He just
stared at her. “Do you know how I know this? Because that’s exactly what I would do; nothing
would make me stay put if you were in danger.”

Gray narrowed his eyes at her. “I don’t want you to ever-”

“Men, always thinking you have a say in everything.” Juvia rolled her eyes. “It’s about what she
wants and she wants to go.” She gave him a quick kiss on his mouth. “Now, we need to prepare. I’ll
go get guns while they are still available. There’s a Sig Sauer P226 I saw that would be perfect for
me and a reliable Beretta for Lucy-san.”

Knowing better than to protest, Gray sighed in resignation. “Meet me by my motorcycle when you
are ready so we can go.”

#

In two hours, they finally arrived at the place Levy thought was Tartaros’ base and the terrain was
enormous, and it appeared to be some sort of research facility with all the large blocks and buildings.
It made sense if they were half as organized as they seemed to be.

“We are so gonna get lost in there.” Gajeel groaned and Juvia snorted. They were waiting outside the
walls surrounding the place while Levy, who was inside a car, typed fast in her computer alongside
with her friends Jet and Droy trying to disarm the alarms so the FT crew could get in. Both Jet and
Droy weren’t as fast as Levy with is, but the petite blunette needed all the help she could get.
“Shortstuff, how much longer?”

The group turned to look at her, but Levy didn’t look away from the screen. “A backdoor?” She
frowned and hesitated to type for a moment before starting again. “What the hell? Someone just
helped me?” She looked at her companions, but both were just as surprised as she was.
“Don’t look at us: you are the genius here.” Jet raised his hands in surrender.

“Who helped you?” Gray asked in curiosity.

“No idea.” Levy shrugged. “But it just cut my job in twenty minutes, at least.”

“How long do you need now?” Juvia asked.

Levy thought for a moment. “Five minutes.”

They nodded and Cana told the other operatives who went there to help: “We are a go in five. Everyone check your vests and your ammos. Do not take unnecessary risks and take as many evidence of foul play as you can. We will probably have to explain why we didn’t wait to nail these bastards, got it?” With everyone’s nods, Cana turned back to the smaller group.

“Well, aren’t you the bossy lady.” Juvia chuckled.

“You should see me in bed.” Cana winked towards the blunette, who chuckled but felt her cheeks get warmer: she liked a bit too much whenever Gray took charge in bed for Cana to play with that around her.

“You shouldn’t be a secretary, but a full-time operative.” Juvia said to change the subject a bit after seeing the smirk Gray tried to hide.

“We’ve been through this; I like my benefits as a secretary.” Cana shrugged. “I told you sometimes I’d get to shoot people even then.” She showed Juvia her weapon. “Today is one of those days.” She looked around and saw Lucy’s pale face. “I’ll go talk to Lucy for a minute, she looks as if she is about to throw up.” Juvia nodded and watched as she pulled Lucy by the elbow and away from them.

After making sure her vest was in place, her ammo accounted for and her ponytail tight so she didn’t have any distractions during a fight, she looked to the two men talking a few feet away from her. Gray and Gajeel weren’t the best of friends, but they formed somewhat a friendship and they worked very well together. They were the most important men in her life.

“You two.” She said and they stopped talking to look at her in confusion. “I need you both to not do anything stupid for once in your life.”

“I second that.” Levy said without missing a beat. Or stop her furious typing.

“Look who is talking.” Gajeel snorted and Gray rolled his eyes.

“I mean it.” She narrowed her eyes at them. “I know everyone is under pressure but you need to keep your cool and think before you do something that will get you killed.”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah.” Gajeel waved her off. “Same to you. You know our deal and I’m not looking forward to that.”

“Sure.” Juvia was the one snorting at that and Gray frowned in confusion. “We have a deal that if one of us die doing something stupid, he will have to be buried in a pink sparkly dress and I’ll have my eyebrows and only the front part of my head shaved, if memory serves me right?”

“That’s the deal.” Gajeel shrugged and Juvia chuckled at the memory of the night they made that pact, when they had lost part of their team a few years before and were drowning their sorrows in tequila.
Gray looked at them, mouth slightly open. “You… you two are crazy. And ridiculous.”

“True that.” Gajeel mocked saluted him and fist his hand in Juvia’s direction. “See you on the other side.”

She bumped his fist with her own. “If you can keep up, sure.”

Gajeel rolled his eyes and pointed at her face. “Fuck you.” His attention went to his girlfriend.

Juvia smiled and then looked in Gray’s direction and he was staring at her with curiosity. She shrugged. “It is something we used to do in really dangerous missions. It’s silly, but it’s ours.” Stepping closer to him, Juvia put her hands on his chest. “The last time I asked you not to do anything stupid, you almost got yourself killed. Could you please avoid that this time?”

“I’ll try my best.” Gray smirked. “Now you don’t go doing anything stupid, alright? Keep close to me and we’ll cover each other and take out all these fuckers.”

“You say the most romantic things, Juvia just swoons for you.” She told him playfully and he snorted. “I think we need a vacation after this.”

“Yeah.” Gray agreed. “A whole week locked away sounds good to you?”

“Oh, hell yes.” Juvia sighed when Levy said she was sixty seconds away to take down their security. She tip toed, kissed him and Gray lost no time in deepening it for a few moments. Once their lips unlocked, Juvia didn’t let go of him just then. She pecked on his lips again without opening her eyes just wanting to feel him next to her for a bit longer. The moment she opened her eyes and looked him in the eyes, she knew she needed to tell him once more, just in case. “Don’t forget I love you.”

Gray blinked two times and opened his mouth to say something, but Cana called everyone to get gathered around. They were going in.

With one last longing kiss, Juvia let go of Gray and grabbed her gun.

The group had been divided in two just before they arrived, Master was on the other side in a second gate waiting for Levy to open both entrances so they could attack in two fronts. Once he spoke through their comms for the blunette to do it, they barged in.

Obviously their reception in Tartaros’ compound was a fly of bullets everywhere. The goons hired to protect the premises, though, had no chance against such an organized group as FT. They were the best of the best, especially the ones leading the group.

Juvia had to shoot four men who had tried to sneak behind Gray to shoot him on the back and even though she never enjoyed taking a life, she didn’t feel guilty. Not when she was saving the man she loved.

However, what the guards lacked in being good, the numbers surely compensated for it: they didn’t stop coming and it was getting annoying if nothing more.

“We need to get in the building!” Cana yelled and Juvia couldn’t agree more.

“What should we do?” Lucy asked from between them – both women had been flanking the blonde, and she even had taken a shot or two.
“While we tire ourselves out here, Erza and the others will…” Gajeel started but got interrupted by a man trying to shoot him.

“Have we still not found a breach into the building?” Makarov’s voice came from the comms and as if summed, there was a small explosion in one of the doors.

Erza stepped out from it, her red hair looked as if it was on fire. Truly, she looked almost mystical even when she was pushing a battered woman out, throwing her on the ground, panting and hurt herself.

“Erza!”

“You’re okay!”

Everyone cheered and the guards got distracted by the commotion, making FT’s job to take them down slightly easier for a few seconds.

The red haired woman blinked in confusion with seeing all operatives there. “Everyone?”

“Sorry, but there’s no time to explain.” Gray said loud. “We need to get inside through that door Erza opened!” People agreed fast and they started to run towards the opening.

“Natsu and Lisanna are okay!” Erza informed them. “All that’s left are Mira and Elfm- oh.” She finally spotted the tall man.

“I’ll handle the rest.” Elfman said, running alongside with them. “I’ll bring Mira-nee back safely!”

“Don’t forget about looking for something that looks like an antidote!” Polyuska’s voice came from the comms in their ears; she was in the other group alongside with Makarov.

Even inside the building they were shooting and the enemies seemed to multiply in a blink of an eye. The group wasn’t too big, Juvia, Gray, Elfman, Lucy and Wendy. A minute after they got inside, Elfman told them he needed to find his sister and ran off before they could say anything to stop him.

When a large group of guards appeared in front of them, Gray quickly pulled Lucy and Wendy out of the way with him to a long hall telling them to run while Juvia ran to the opposite hall.

They looked at each other and Juvia pulled a new clip in her gun. “Go with them!” She yelled and shot at the group. “I’ll find you later.” He looked over his shoulder, to where Lucy and Wendy were running away just like he yelled for them to do. “Go! I’ll cover you.”

“Fuck.” Juvia saw his lips move rather than listened to him utter the word, since the guards started to shoot in her direction, and then he was running after the two women. She cussed when noticed she only had one clip more.

Thankfully, the guards they managed to take out had no use to their guns after they were dead or badly injured. She counted the bullets she had and sighed.

She had to work with roughly thirty bullets and there were about fifteen men trying to kill her. Juvia snorted: she’d worked with worst odds than that before.

It took her fifteen minutes to take down all of those bastards. She thought they’d given up after they saw her kill a couple of their colleagues and incapacitate another good number, but she had to give
them that: they resisted quite well.

Her gun was useless, then, so she helped herself with one of the guards’ she killed and got some
ammo. She was so tired already, her body ached and the excitements of the day could be felt through
her body. Gosh, it had only been that morning her and Gray visited the village? And only a couple of
hours since a floor of the FT building exploded?

The throbbing on her temple informed that it all happened and Juvia could feel exhaustion in each
cell of her body already.

“Shit, I’m getting old.” Juvia whispered to herself even though she would be turning just twenty-nine
in a few months. She shook her head and ran towards the direction the rest of her group had gone to.

The building was big and just like Gajeel predicted, she had become lost and her comms had stopped
working the moment they entered the premises; of course they’d have a device that jammed foreign
communications.

Thankfully, after a few minutes of running around, she followed loud noises to a large room and her
eyes widened at the sight.

Lucy was on the ground and a tall large man hovering over her with a sword aimed at her neck.
Before Juvia could raise her gun, though, the blunette saw her best friend run towards the foe and
use his elbow to knock him away.

Unfortunately to Juvia, she had been at the end of one of those and it hurt like hell. Good, if he
wanted to kill Lucy, he deserved it.

Her relief was short lived, though, because just coming behind Gajeel, there was a man with a weird
skeleton mask and thick clothes with a gun pointed at Gajeel’s back.

Juvia gave three steps inside the room and shot the man two times; he had realized she was aiming at
him the moment she appeared and took a step to the side, so she missed the headshot and the bullet
meant to hit him on the chest, just grazed his arm.

“Juvia!” Lucy exclaimed in happiness and the blunette glimpsed at her, missing completely the third
enemy in the room.

“Now that wasn’t nice.” Juvia looked back and saw a man with dark hair slicked back, a nasty scar
on his forehead and left brow. She only had a quick look before he shot at her, but she could’ve
sworn she’d seen him somewhere before.

The pain on her stomach made her double over and she was without air for a moment. She heard
both Gajeel and Lucy call her name, but she couldn’t answer. On the back of her mind she heard
Gray’s voice and then fumbling with her vest.

“It hit the vest!” Gray told her. “Breathe, Juvia! Breathe through the pain!”

Juvia nodded and tried to take slow breaths but could only do so when he finally freed her from the
constraining device and threw it away. People often thought a vest would be the perfect protection
against bullets, but they forgot to account the fact that it still hurt like hell when hit.

It was much better than the alternative, though.

“I’m fine.” She breathed, noting some fire at work behind them for some reason. “Juvia can breathe
now.”
“Good.” Gray said and helped her up. “Brace yourself, they are not hired help. They are the real thing.”

The blunette glanced at the people Gray was referring to and the older man with black hair intrigued her. “Juvia has seen him before, but can’t place where. The one with black hair.”

Frowning, Gray looked at their enemies – somewhere along the way another one appeared (and so did Natsu!) – and a second later he took a step back, all color drained from his face.

“Well now… lookie here? Some pretty strong lookin’ dudes all lined up for us…” She heard Natsu say; “Now that’s what I call hospitality ‘cause now I’m getting all fired up. Whatever nasty scheme you guys had, is over now.”

Juvia was surprise to see Gray’s eyes focused on the man she had mentioned before. “You…” He started and the older man seemed interested in what Gray had to say. “No. Never mind. You can’t be.” Gray shook his head.

The unknown man smiled evilly. “I might be, kid.” Listening to those words made Gray’s body tense and his eyes widen. “Let him through, this one is mine.” And then he was running from the room while Gray didn’t hesitate to run after him without saying another word or look in her direction when she yelled his name.

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She tried to run after him but, the dark-skinned man gave a few warning shots on the ground, preventing them to leave. “No guns as of now.” He pointed up to a visible camera and threw his gun to a corner of the room. “He likes the show.”

Juvia didn’t have time to think who “he” was because the next moment, everyone was moving. Gajeel tried to hit the dark-skinned man, but was blocked before he could. Natsu tried to get the man with the skeleton mask, but he kept dodging. And since she was closest to mask-guy, she tried to hit him, but just as with Natsu, he kept dodging and ended up hitting her square on the jaw, making her take a few steps back.

She spat a bit of blood but even so, chose to attack the masked man but he was terribly good at hand-to-hand combat and even though she was hitting him at some places, his thick clothes were a hindrance.

Out of nowhere, he got two small daggers from inside his coat, cutting Juvia superficially making her hiss because of the annoying pain.

“Damn it.”

“I know you.” The man in the mask said, almost singing, teasing her and playing with his knives. “Silver thinks I don’t know about his past, but I do. And I know his future too. I am looking at it.” With the mask it was impossible to see where he was looking, but with a shiver, Juvia realized it was her and it confused her a lot. “Oh, you don’t know.” He chuckled. “Even better.”

“I don’t want to hear anything else.” Juvia tried to hit him again but, as if playing with her, he gave another cut on her arm.

“Do you want to know why your comrade ran after Silver?” Juvia tried to give nothing away with her expression, but couldn’t help it. “Silver’s his father.”

“What?” Juvia tried to understand his words. “You are lying.”

“No reason to.” He shrugged. “No one but me knows and I am glad it was you who ended up
fighting me. Things will get so much more interesting now.”

Breathing hard and confused, Juvia tried to put the facts together. “Gray-sama’s father was an army man. He’d never—”

“Sure, because no one deserts the army.” He said in a mocking tone. “The Underworld King realized Silver’s skills and honored him with a position among us.” Juvia tried to hit him again, that didn’t sound good at all.

“Why would you welcome him?” She asked between gritted teeth.

“Perhaps it was simply a whim of the Underworld King. Whatever the reason may have been, the man was accepted by the Underworld King.”

‘Gray-sama.’ Juvia thought, worried. The man in front of her really seemed to think there was a King around and calling him ‘King of the Underworld’ was everything but a good sign.

A hit on her face made he stop daydreaming and she was focused on the fight once again, but then, the man ran away from the room. Juvia blinked in surprise but

For some crazy reason the bastard ran around for almost five minutes before he stopped in an room that seemed to be used to do some science research. He dropped his weird cape and held his knives. Juvia looked around and ruled out the scalpels laying around on the one table the room had, they were too small and she’d need to get too close, but kept their location in her mind just in case. The only thing she found to help her was a metal trash can lid; she knew how ridiculous she looked, but she’d rather not get cut anymore; those didn’t do much damage but stung a lot.

Fifteen minutes later Juvia was about to drop; the lid was gone and she had another five cuts on her arms and legs. She was so tired, her body was almost spent and she had no help coming her way, not when Gajeel and Natsu were probably engaged in their own fights even. She just wanted to drop to the floor and pass out at that point.

But Keith – she learned his name a few minutes before – was relentless and didn’t seem to get tired as she was. Finally, he was up for a break when he started to speak again.

“Silver died twenty years ago.” Keith said casually a bit out of breath. “The moment his wife died, he went with her. That’s when he was approached. Who else hated the world so much besides the people who were happy and had it taken away?” Juvia stared at him. “I’m a Doctor, Psychiatrist and Silver’s want for revenge… oh, that was beautiful. I could’ve written three theses on him alone. He was a magnificent subject, unlike my others.”

“What—”

“I had to work with him at the beginning, he still cried about his son.” He said the last word with disdain. “The boy got adopted quickly so I couldn’t kill him without raising suspicion, but I trained Silver well.” Keith said. “Soon, his only desire was to serve me and master Zeref. We were few back then, but I made Silver loyal after a while, especially after I inserted a subcutaneous device with a deadly poison on his arm.” Keith stopped for a moment. “But a few months ago he saw Gray at that silly Game the King organized and I could see the threat.”

Juvia was so focused on the story she almost jumped when a grave voice spoke through her comm: “Is this Gray’s girlfriend? Can you hear me, sweetheart? Do you have in your sight the man with the skull mask?”
Juvia didn’t recognize the voice, and, trying to speak lowly so Keith – who was still talking about his crazy project about conditioning people to join Zeref’s cause, talk about self-absorbed – couldn’t hear her, asked: “Who is this?” The moment the words left her mouth, she had a thought and asked quietly: “Are you Gray-sama’s father? How is he?”

“You are as smart as I thought you’d be. Gray is fine.” He said. “Do you see him? The man I’m speaking about.”

After a second of deliberation. “I am fighting him.”

“Did he use his knives? Are you cut?” She didn’t answer, thinking about the several cuts she already had on her body, and it seemed answer enough for him. “Shit!” He breathed hard. “Okay, I need you to listen to me: kill him. He is not as skillful as the others but he has implanted a subcutaneous device on the President of the Council to make him activate FACE, the nuc bombs.” Juvia gasped and Keith probably thought it was because of his fable about neuroscience of a brain set on revenge. “Keith is so self-absorbed he implanted with a dead-man switch: if he dies, all his subjects die.”

Juvia’s eyes widened, recalling Keith saying he had implanted something on Silver as well. “But if I do that… You’ll also…”

The answer took a moment. “What? Did you know? It doesn’t matter, you have to do it, though. For Gray’s sake too. I have to go now.”

“Father? Father?” Juvia hissed, but it seemed Silver was no longer listening or uninterested in answer her.

‘I can’t hear him anymore.’ Juvia thought, already assessing Keith with new eyes, already with the plan of killing him forming inside her mind. ‘Do I have to do this? Will it really be good for Gray-sama?’

She didn’t know Gray’s state, she didn’t know if Silver was telling the truth or if it was a ruse to make her do his dirty work for him.

“I knew that Silver wanted to rebel against us since he saw Gray alive.” She was finally paying attention to his words again. “But he became such an asset… He wanted to take revenge on us, but that was fine. I realized that this new wave of desire for revenge were the driving force that held him together, even more than before. I changed his mind, I made him put that hate towards Gray with a technique of my invention. He is very interesting and pleasant puppet.”

Juvia felt anger boil inside her stomach, he was talking about a human being’s life but was so detached it disgusted her. “How can you be so cruel?” Juvia hissed.

As if he didn’t listen to her, Keith kept speaking. “Father and son will kill each other. This is my story in which I try to create the perfect molded mind.”

“What do you think human beings are?” Juvia yelled at him.

“Tools for my experiences.” He said, evil dripping from every word. “Nice tools.”

“Humans don’t do as you please!” In pure anger, Juvia grabbed the trash can lid that was forgotten on the floor and threw it at Keith to distract him, launching herself at him with all her might and started to make all the movements she knew to just stop him.

“I can make them do so.” He mocked her. “I’ll take you and turn you so I can use you to kill your friends.”
“I won’t allow you to do that!” In her rage, she was sloppy and the next thing Juvia knew, Keith had his gloved hand on her throat, squeezing it tight and pulling her until her back hit the wall.

“You try to kill me.” He said mockingly, and Juvia tried to scratch his hand away from her throat. “The moment he loses his master, Silver will also die.” He squeezed it harder. “What? Aren’t you going to erase the ghost of that boy’s father?” His other hand roamed over her body, she noticed in disgust. “Cut the bond between father and son.”

“I… can’t… do it.” She managed to croak.

She couldn’t see his face but could feel the waves of satisfaction coming from him. “That’s why humans are fools; we know humans, feelings her in the way of reason.” Her vision started to black out. “They’re ugly lumps of ego.” Her body went limp and just like that he let go of her, she hit the ground with a thump. “Pathetic.” Keith snorted and turned around.

Having timing it the best she could her fake pass out, Juvia didn’t mind her body was warm, her vision had dark spots and she was feeling so sluggish: with a burst of energy, she managed to reach for one of the scalpels on the desk, get up from the floor and threw herself on him, arms around his shoulder, the scalpel right on his carotid artery and he screamed. And for good measure, she removed the scalpel and stabbed him again.

Keith fell onto his knees, trying to contain the blood flow, but couldn’t. Juvia, crying, told him: “You can’t sever the bond between humans. Gray-sama’s feelings, his father’s feelings… they will reach each other. Even if they physically vanish, their feelings remain in the others’ hearts. I believe in people’s power of love.”

With a sound she’d never forget in her life, Keith gave his last breath and fell on the pool of blood in front of him. Such a gruesome death, but all Juvia could think was on Gray.

“Gray-sama, I’m so sorry.” She muttered to herself, falling into her knees and crying like never before, knowing she had just sentenced his father to die. “I’m sorry. I’m sorry.” Juvia stayed like that for a few moments, she was feeling hot but was shivering with cold, her vision started to appear black dots once again and it was hard to breathe. Confused, Juvia felt sick and threw up the little she had on her stomach and when she was done, she moved over a bit before lying on the floor.

She was about to pass out to what she thought was exhaustion, she even had her eyes closed, when she felt someone put one hand under her head and check her pulse on her throat with the other.

Opening her eyes, the figure was somewhat blurry, but the black hair was unmistakable. “Gray-sama.” She breathed.

There was a sigh in relief. “Sorry, sweetheart. Older Fullbuster, I’m afraid.”

“Father?” She had no idea why she took the idea of calling him that way. “Where-?”

“He is fine, don’t worry.” He told her. “I’m more concerned about you, you’ve been poisoned.” Juvia frowned in confusion. “Keith’s knives. He liked to create his own poisons and drench his knives with it, they are powerful and deadly even in small doses.”

Speaking of poisoning… “Shouldn’t you be-”

“Dead?” Silver started to fumble through his pockets. “I will be soon. I created a certain resistance to his poisons through the years so I’ll last longer. But don’t worry, I have the antidote for you.”

Juvia frowned in confusion even with her fogged mind. “What about you?”
“Just one dose, I’m afraid, sweetheart.” He told her kindly. Silver finally found the vial and opened it with one hand, the other still supporting Juvia’s head and he tried to make her drink it but she refused. “Come on, Juvia. I am not trying to poison you, I promise.”

She shook her head. “You need it.”

“I accepted my fate a long time ago.” Silver told her gently. “I lived to hug my son again. I am ready to go now. Besides, Gray would be devastated if you died.” He tried to joke.

With another shake of her head, Juvia refused the antidote. “He needs you more than he needs me.” She whispered. “You just found each other again.”

Silver looked at her, surprised and then smiled softly at her. He, then, leaned and kissed her on the forehead. “Oh, my sweet girl how I wish we met under different circumstances. Both times. I believe he feels more for you than you can possibly know.” He whispered but she was almost losing consciousness. “How about this, I take half and you take half? It will hold us alive until I can get more.”

Her mind was mud, by then, and the idea seemed reasonable enough. She nodded and made an effort to open one eye. “You first.” Silver chuckled and raised the vial to his mouth, gulping and Juvia drank easily when he put it on her lips. Juvia’s breathing was still labored and she was exhausted. “Can Juvia sleep now?”

“Of course you can, my darling girl. This is for the best, thank you.” Silver told her gently and passed his fingers through her hair. “Thanks to you I can finally go to heaven, see my Mika again after all these years. And you’ve stopped the FACE bombs.” Juvia hummed in agreement, just wanting to fall asleep. “Look after Gray for me.”

“Juvia will.” She agreed. “Juvia wants… to see Gray-sama.” She muttered.

“You’ll see him, very soon.” He answered.

“Good.” She mumbled, consciousness slipping away, finally; but just before it overtook her, she felt again lips on her forehead and she was glad Gray had his father back.

#

The moment Juvia woke up, she was in an ambulance, her consciousness came and went; she could remember bits of the ride, then she remembered the bright white lights from the hospital. The third time she woke up, she was in a hospital cot, an IV line on her arm, breathing cannulas in her nose and she felt as if every inch of her body hurt. She tried to move, but couldn’t.

She probably made some sort of sound because a moment later Cana’s face was in her line of view. The brunette looked like she had gone through hell too. “Juvia? Juvia, can you speak?”

Her throat was so dry it hurt. “Water.” She managed to croak the word out and Cana nodded. Juvia heard some fumbling and then Cana offered her a straw and the coolness of the water down her throat felt like heaven. She drank the whole thing and could feel her need for it again soon. “What… what happened?”

Cana hesitated. “You… don’t remember?” Juvia frowned, her mind was still a mess. “We went after Tartaros.”

And with just those four words, the events returned to her as if she had been slapped with them.
“Where is Gray-sama? And Silver-sama?” She asked fast and weirdly enough, her breath shortened. “Are they alright?”

Cana blinked two times in surprise. “Gray is fine. A little battered up, but he is fine.” Juvia sighed in relief. “But… Juvia, Silver… well, he didn’t make it. He was poisoned.” It was as if Juvia’s blood became sheer ice, her heart skipped a beat.

“No.” The blunette shook her head. “We… we shared the antidote to… slow down the effects.”

“Juvia.” Cana sighed and grabbed her friend’s hand. “I’m sorry, but I don’t think he got any for himself.”


“Alright, Juvia.” Cana’s eyes widened. “You need to calm down. You still need some medicine for the poison to get off your system completely and raising your heartbeats won’t help you.” The brunette told her and only then Juvia realized the wild beeping coming from the machine next to her. “I know this sucks, but you really need to calm down. Your breathing is impaired because of the smoke after the bomb and the poison, you need to take it slow.”

Without saying another word, Juvia just started to cry harder until Cana had no choice but to call a nurse, who gave her a sedative.

A few minutes later, the medicine was working and she was quietly crying, then, wondering about what Gray was thinking of her, in how much pain he was in.

And all because of her.

She had lost the right to love him.

#

For a week, Juvia didn’t see Gray at all. He didn’t show up at the hospital during the day she was there, he wasn’t even present when some agents appeared in her room to ask questions about what happened.

The doctors discharged her and prescribed her four types of pills for her to really get over the poisoning but Juvia didn’t bother to buy them at all. The only thing she did during those six days at home were to stay in her apartment, preferably in her bed, curled up in a ball.

Not even Snowball could help her, but the loyal pet laid next to its owner in a form of support and, feeling bad for not taking her out, Juvia paid one of the kids in her building to take her out for an hour each day.

The only thing that made her smile the whole time was the text she received from Cana telling her that Laxus was awake and out of danger.

On the sixth day, Juvia decided she needed to confront Gray, no matter what he had the right to know exactly how his father died. And why.

With just a bit of digging she found out he had bought a train ticket to Gerbera, his hometown and his father’s body had been released from the coroner’s office. She booked a ticket for herself and
packed a small bag, knowing it would be awfully cold there, as it always were.

By the time she arrived, Juvia checked in the B&B she reserved for herself and went to the place she was certain Gray would be.

Gerbera’s cemetery was under a thick layer of snow and there were remnants of an old church and sitting in one of the fallen walls, there was Gray, looking straight to a wooden cross. She couldn’t see his face, but by the way his shoulders were hung low, she could easily guess.

She stayed looking at him for a minute before gathering courage to finally say something. That was the point of no return, the moment he’d seen what she truly was, what she had done.

“E-Er… Gray-sama?” She walked to a few steps behind him and the moment he heard her voice, he looked over his shoulder, eyes wide.

“Juvia?” He was confused. “Did you… follow me here?” He didn’t sound angry, just surprised.

“Juvia is sorry! Very sorry.” She looked down to the snow. “Juvia has something she really must say to you.” The blunette couldn’t look up no matter what, she couldn’t see the look on his face when she told him. “Keith, the.. man who controlled your father all these years… The one who killed him… was Juvia.” She took a deep breath, her eyes burning with tears.

“You did…?” He started, but she couldn’t let him speak, not yet.

“Juvia realizes…” her next words would be so painful she didn’t know she’d survive them “that she doesn’t deserve to love you anymore.” A sob escaped her. “Not now that she is the one who…” she sobbed again “killed your father.”

There. She said it out loud and the realness of it dawned her.

Still after almost a whole minute, she couldn’t look up when she heard his heavy boots hit the snow as he approached her.

“You…” He grabbed the front of her coat and Juvia ‘eeped’ in surprise but didn’t move otherwise.

That was it. The end. The moment he would tell her he never wanted to see her again.

By some reason she couldn’t start to fathom, Gray didn’t push her away; instead, he hid his face on her chest, crying and shaking like a scared little boy. He was muttering something and it took Juvia a moment to make out he said: “Thank you.”

As if he couldn’t stand on his own, his knees gave in and in a second, both of them were kneeling in the snow, Gray crying like she never saw before and saying “I’m sorry” over and over again.

Once the shock wore off a bit, Juvia put her arms around him, holding him tight. “Gray-sama…?”

“Sorry.” He said it again, but other than that, didn’t move from his position and neither did Juvia, waiting for him to let it out of his system.

#

Gray cried for a long time before he finally looked up and Juvia’s heart broke with the sight, his face and eyes red and swollen, his painful gaze. She would’ve done anything to take that pain from him in a heartbeat.

Worried about him, Juvia pulled him up from the cold ground and led him to where he was sitting
before and he let her handle him as if he didn’t mind at all.

“I’m sorry about” he waved towards the spot they held each other just moments before “all that. I got… overwhelmed.”

“Of course.” She put a hand on his thigh and was surprised to see him reach for her hand and twine it with his, but said nothing about it. “Gray-sama, did you…. Did you hear what Juvia told you? About… About…”

Gray nodded. “You think you killed my father.” Juvia looked away and tried to remove her hand from his, but Gray held it tighter and she looked up in question. “Juvia, the person who killed my father was Keith, no one else.”

Juvia shook her head. “You don’t understand, there was an antidote and-”

“I know.” Gray cut her off and Juvia frowned in confusion. “Juvia, I saw my father die. I was with him.” Juvia’s eyes widened in surprise. “After I left after him, we fought, we punched each other, but he told me the truth, that he was undercover on his own all this time. That he never converted himself, he was just trying to get to the bottom of it all. He only shot you that day because he needed to keep his cover and you were wearing a vest. He had been giving clues about massive attacks for years, a lot more could’ve happened if my father weren’t there to give the intel. Who do you think posted on the dark net the Tartaros’ address for Levy to find? Who gave the backdoor to Levy so she could hack faster?”

“Your father.” Juvia’s eyes widened even more in realization.

“Exactly.” Gray nodded. “After he told me that, the son of a bitch used a technique so I could lose my conscience for a few minutes; he knew I’d try to stop his crazy plan. He used my comm to talk to you; the signal was scrambled but he had some device, I don’t know the details, but he managed to speak with you.” Juvia nodded. “That’s when he figured out you were poisoned.”

“I’m sorry.” Juvia muttered. “If I had been better-”

“Let me finish.” Gray interrupted her gently. “He knew the only way to stop the Councilman was to kill Keith so the dead-man switch could take care of him. But it would also kill my father.” Juvia’s eyes watered and Gray shook his head. “Juvia, my father chose to go and find you, to give you the antidote.”

“I told him I didn’t want it. You needed him more than-”

“Don’t finish that sentence.” For the first time since she arrived Gray was truly angry with her. “Don’t say that I don’t need you or that if I got to choose, I’d choose him because I still have nightmares about having to choose.” He said between gritted teeth. “I needed you both, each in their own way. Not more and not less.”

Taking a calming breath, Gray took a few moments to speak again and when he did, he was looking at the wooden cross a few feet away from them. “Do you know what he told me when he was dying?” Juvia shook her head, silent tears falling. “That he was glad his last action was to save a life instead of taking one.” Gray used the back of his hand to wipe a stray tear that rolled his cheek. “He gathered information, he tried to help but he also had to do terrible things to fit in.” He looked at her. “You helped his last action to be a good one.” Juvia also tried to dry her tears, but there were too many. “Besides, he was dying anyway.” The blunette looked up to him in confusion. “Prostate cancer. Advanced. My father told me and the coroner confirmed it. He had just a few months to live at most. I would’ve lost him either way.”
“I’m so sorry.” Juvia squeezed his hand.

“Me too.” Gray sighed. “I’ve been trying to understand all this, that’s why I haven’t been around. I was looking for some clues he told me, his phone, his belongings, anything.” Gray told her. “And… And I didn’t think you’d want to see me.”

“What?”

“You were almost killed by a psychopath related somewhat to my life.” Gray tried to be nonchalant about it. “It might make some people mad. But I called Cana every night to know how you were.”

Juvia filed away that bit of information and said: “Juvia was afraid you hated her.”

“Yeah, I got that with all the drama a few minutes ago from both of us.” He snorted and Juvia smiled weakly.

Gray cupped her face. “I am not mad at you at all, don’t you ever feel guilty about this again. Remember what you told me about Lucy wanting to go after Natsu? That it was her choice? Well, it was my dad’s choice and we will respect it.” He stared at her until she nodded and he sighed in relief, hesitating just a moment before kissing her lips sweetly. “You look tired.”

Juvia put a hand on top of his and moved her head just a bit so she could kiss his palm. “So do you.”

“I didn’t even get a room yet.” He groaned. “I rented a locker at the train station, left my bag there. I just wanted to get the burial done.” Gray removed one of the hands from her face and waved towards the general direction of the grave.

“Juvia has a room, we… could go there.” She hesitated even when it was clear they were alright.

“Oh, thank god.” Gray breathed and got up, offering her a hand, which she gladly took. “My father gave me an address. It’s in this town, an apartment. I haven’t entered yet.” He told her in a whisper. “Would you… come with me? I don’t know what I’ll find there.”

Juvia smiled kindly at him. “Of course. But first we need some food and a good night’s rest. Juvia will be with you in everything you want her to.”

“Thank you, Juvia.” Gray said, bringing her closer to him, uncharacteristically, but Juvia enjoyed the moment: she had started the day thinking her relationship was over just to find out it was stronger than ever.

She had her heart shattered, the pieces all over and with just a few words from him and she was on her way to be whole again.

She did love him more than anything.

Chapter End Notes

The Olympics starts today and I got in the mood because I had to juggle so hard to make this have a teeny tiny bit of sense. Lol I did what I could to adapt the arc, which was filled with Magic beings, sorry if anything came out bad.
The next chapter will be about Silver’s mystery apartment and their year away. We’ll know more about Silver’s life then, including his mystery visit at the hospital. ;)}
You Ruin Me

Chapter Notes

Brace yourselves.

(This might’ve turned a bit OOC for Juvia, but I never liked the reaction she had at the manga, too flawless. I wanted her raw feelings.)

Juvia looked at Gray, who stood next to her, as he stared at the apartment’s door for a long time and she squeezed his hand, with his other he held the keys in a tight grasp. The moment he looked at her, Juvia could see he was scared; they didn’t know what was behind the door.

“Are you alright?” She asked in a whisper.

Gray nodded. “Yes. I’m just not sure what I expect.”

With slow movement so he could stop her if he wanted to, Juvia stepped in front of him and gently took the keys away from him, when Gray didn’t say anything, the blunette turned to face the door, inserting the key.

She looked over her shoulder – he was so tense Juvia hesitated but he gave a nod, giving her permission and she opened the door.

The apartment was a very simple one and Spartan, no personal adornments; it almost seemed no one ever lived there. The living room only had one old couch, the kitchen only had a refrigerator and a microwave. In the bedroom, a double bed so old Juvia was afraid it would give in at any moment and an old desk.

“This is very… bare.” Juvia said. “It doesn’t look like he stayed here a lot.”

“Yes.” Gray agreed and started to open the drawers of the desk and stopped with a frown, getting Juvia’s attention. A moment later he took a laptop from inside and Juvia was surprised to see it was a very new model. Gray looked at her, frown still in place, and he walked towards the bed and Juvia did the same, both of them sitting on it.

Gray opened the laptop, started it but groaned in frustration when he saw he needed a password to get in. “Damn it.”

“Was there anything on his phone to give you a clue about his password?” Juvia asked.

“Nothing at all.” Gray shook his head. “Let me try my mother’s name.” Gray quickly typed ‘Mika’ but it wasn’t right. “My name, perhaps?” He typed it, but it was wrong again. “My mom’s birthday?” Try. Fail. “Mine?” Fail. “His?” Fail. “The date he got married?” Wrong. “God dammit.” Gray grew frustrated with each attempt and Juvia had to put a hand on his forearm.

“Gray-sama, calm down.” She told him. “Juvia knows it’s frustrating but he wouldn’t have told you
this address if you couldn’t be able to see whatever he wanted you to see.” With an annoyed groan, Gray typed something else and failed it again. With a sigh, Juvia pointed to the fingerprint scanner. “Try that.”

“I don’t think so.” Gray rolled his eyes.

“Your father was all around in the dark net telling secrets from a secret cult for years and he never got caught. Do you really think he wouldn’t be able to get your prints and somehow make you have access to his laptop?” She raised an eyebrow and saw the moment she accepted her reasoning and put his thumb on the scanner.

It took a few seconds, but it logged in.

“We’re in!” Gray said, surprised and then looked at her. “Holy shit.” Juvia just smiled. “Remind me to always listen to you.”

“Oh, Juvia will.”

“Now let’s see what he had in here.” Gray started to look through the files and sighed when he saw cryptographed files. “I guess I’ll have to get someone to look at these files as fast as I can.”

“We’ll deal with it later.” Juvia told him. “Let’s see what else he has in there.” Gray nodded and started to go through the folders until he saw one with his name. With a frown, Gray opened the folder and there were many more inside, each named after a year.

“What’s inside of these?” Gray asked and opened one dating thirteen years back and was surprised to see pictures of himself clearly taken from afar and by someone obviously hiding. His hair was too short and he was wearing a white simple shirt and an army pants. He appeared to be playing soccer and having a good time if the shots of him smiling were any indication. He looked so young the pictures were probably taken a few months after he joined the army. “What the hell?”

“You look so young, Gray-sama.” Juvia said.

“That’s because I was.” He told her without moving his gaze away from the screen and going through the pictures that changed to him doing drills with other recruits. “I was eighteen when these were taken.” His frown deepened. “There are some videos in here.”

“Open one of them.” Juvia told him and Gray nodded, clicking on the file.

Juvia expected a video of Gray’s training but instead they were showed a younger version of Silver, the video had poor quality but they could hear and see him well enough.

“Today I received these pictures of you in the army, Gray.” Silver says, looking at the camera and Gray took in a sharp breath. “I had hoped you would give up, that you would turn out to have a boring profession so you would be safe.” Younger Silver sighed. “But instead, here you are, shining and getting attention because of your skills. I feel conflicted because even though I wanted you to stay away from all this mess, I am so proud you are making an impression.” Silver chuckled, and his eyes seemed far away as if he was lost in thought. “Your mother would’ve said something along the lines of me being too much of a peacock and teaching you to be one too. She always told me she just put another Silver in the world.” His laugh was sad, then. “But I don’t want you to be like me, Gray.” Silver said. “I want you to become better, to have a life. When I started these videos, it was so I could remember myself when Keith’s grasp became too intense, so I would come here and record a message to you. I had people taking your pictures too so I could feel a bit in the loop of what your life is, and... you make me proud, son. You’ll probably never see any of these videos, but
if you ever do, know that every step of the way, I was watching from afar, trying to make the world a better place for you.” Silver dried a couple of tears that rolled on his cheeks. “You are the only thing that makes me hold to my sanity now. Become better than me, son.” He said. “Don’t waste your life. Don’t sacrifice what I did, and just… be happy.” With a sigh, Silver apparently reached for the camera and the video was cut off.

Juvia blinked fast, trying to control her emotions and she saw Gray stare at the scree with his eyes wide. “Gray-sama?” Juvia asked and he finally looked at her and he was confused.

“He…” Gray gulped. “He kept up with my life.” Juvia put her hand over his. “He knew what I was doing, he cared and I never knew.”

The blunette brought him closer to her in a hug. “He wanted you safe, you were just a boy when your mother died and you were adopted soon after.” She told him. “Keith… he did some awful things to his mind, as you told me. Silver-sama felt it was safer for you to stay away from him because it, Juvia thinks.”

“I wouldn’t have cared.” Gray’s face was hid on Juvia’s shoulder. “I wouldn’t care he was crazy or whatever, I wanted him.”

Juvia caressed his back in a soothing manner. “I know. Juvia is not saying it was the right choice, but it was the choice he made.” She told him in a low voice and just held him for a couple of minutes until he finally stopped hiding his face. His eyes were red when he looked at her and Gray dried the corner of his eyes. “Let’s see if there’s anything else in here.” Juvia suggested. “Then we go back to the B&B and you can watch all these videos and we’ll go through the photographs. Juvia will contact someone she knows about the cryptographed files. Does it sound good?” Gray nodded.

“Alright, then. Let’s go.”

#

It was early morning when Juvia felt the bed move as Gray lied next to her, his arms bringing her closer so her back touched his chest, his face hid in her hair and one of his legs between hers. She was trapped but didn’t care.

“Did you sleep at all?” Juvia asked, her voice rough from sleep and she felt him move his face away from her hair.

“No.”

“Gray-sama…” She started with a sigh.

“I’ve watched them all.” Gray told her and Juvia stopped talking. “All the videos he made, Juvia. I know I should’ve watched them slowly to savor it or whatever, but I… I wanted to know my dad.” His voice trembled. “He went through so much, but he always made the videos. They were not too long, like the one we saw, but they said enough.” Juvia grabbed his hand, the one that was on her stomach. “He talked about you too.”

“Huh?” Juvia looked over his shoulder.

“You said you knew him but didn’t remember from where, right?” Gray asked and Juvia nodded. “He said he met you at the waiting room while I was getting surgery after the Games. He said you two talked and that he liked you.”

Juvia frowned and tried to remember the day of the shooting – those memories were too painful, so she tried to not think about it too much. But she remembered. ‘My… my son was brought here. I
“Oh!” Juvia gasped. “I remember him now. After you got shot, I was such a mess. Juvia remembers thinking she knew him from somewhere. And she does, you two look a lot alike.”

“Yeah.” Gray agreed. “He even has a file on you and he still had been getting pictures of me and there’s a lot of us. Way too many pictures, by the way.”

“Really?”

“Uh huh.” He hid his face on her hair again.

“Juvia will need to look at those pictures.” She told him.

“Why is that?” Gray asked.

“Well, you hate to have your picture taken so I don’t have a single picture of us.” Juvia sighed. “And now you say your father has a supply of them? Juvia’s gonna through them all and select the ones that are not too creepy looking, print them and display it like a normal couple does.” She felt Gray chuckle and she was happy to hear it.

“Really?” He asked. “When were we ever normal?”

“The pictures were taken by some private investigator your late father employed to follow you. That’s the not normal part.”

That time Gray’s laugh was louder. “Well, damn. I guess it is.” Juvia turned around in his arms to look at him and after a few moments he had stopped laughing. “Thank you for being here with me.”

“Nowhere else Juvia rather be.” She told him. “As long as you want Juvia with you, she’ll be there with you.”

“I know you will.” Gray sighed. “I don’t know where this is going, but I will destroy everything Zeref stands for.”

“Yes.” Juvia agreed. “I know you will and Juvia will help you in any way she can.”

Gray looked at her for a few moments before he nodded. “Thank you.”

“Now go to sleep.” She told him and Gray put his head on the pillow while Juvia snuggled up to him. “We’ll think of what to do later.” Juvia pulled the blanket on top of them and closed her eyes, feeling relieved they were in such a good place.

#

One Year Later

The rain kept falling outside and Juvia was more than sick of it by that point. She never really liked when it rained and there she was, living in a village most known for its long periods of storms. Juvia sat on the bed and smiled softly to Snowball. The white dog was excited to see its owner getting up and those days the only thing that made Juvia happy was the ball of fur.

“Alright, alright.” Juvia told the dog when she got up and Snowball started to bark in excitement. “I’m taking you out in a moment, calm down.” Feeling rather sluggish and hot, Juvia pushed through the feelings and got her coat over her pajamas, then put her rubber boots so she could go outside if
needed. “Come on, baby.”

She opened the door of the small cottage and Snowball ran away, happily jumping on the grass outside, raindrops wetting her and Juvia smiled sadly with the sight. Shaking her head, she made sure to schedule for Snowball to go to the pet shop and get pampered. The dog deserved after being so patient with Juvia’s mood.

After a few minutes of walking around to stretch her little legs, Snowball stopped and raised her ears, as if something caught her attention, smelling the air around her. “What is it, baby?” Juvia asked, blinking fast because suddenly her eyes felt incredibly hot. Without any other warning, Snowball ran away, slipping under the fence.

“Snowball!” Juvia called and, without even thinking, stepped into the rain, opening the small gate there and ran to the road and trying to run after the dog, but she was much slower for the past two weeks with her stupid flu and with the heavy rain, Juvia could barely see too much in front of her but she lost the sight of her pet and panic went through her. “Come back!”

“No. No, no, no.” Juvia stopped to run when she couldn’t breathe right anymore, her throat closing, heart beating faster and the cool droplets on her hot skin made feel uncomfortable. “No.” She fell on her knees, dirtying her knees, soaking wet and crying. “No.” She whispered. “Don’t leave me too.” Juvia sobbed. “Please don’t leave me alone too.” Juvia said. “I don’t want to be alone.”

The world was spinning around her, but Juvia had no will to either get up from the ground and go look for her dog or come back to her cottage. What would be the point either way? She was alone. No one would care if she just stayed there, in the middle of the road, crying her eyes out.

So, she did just that.

Juvia didn’t know how long she stayed crying, but she thought she heard someone call her name and looked up in question; her cottage was quite far from the town and she only went there for supplies so no one really knew her.

The rain was so thick it took her a moment to identify three figures in the rain and she felt she knew them somehow. Intrigued, Juvia gathered her strength and got up from the ground, taking deep breaths when there were black dots in her vision.

“Hey, Juvia!” It was a male voice and for one glorious second she thought Gray had come back for her. She felt her heart ache when she noticed it wasn’t him. “Yo! How ya been?” Stepping closer, Juvia recognized the pink hair and was surprised when she saw Natsu, wearing a rain cape.

“I’m relieved that we found you!” Lucy was a step behind Natsu and Juvia noticed she had changed a bit, but her mind was so sluggish she couldn’t figure out what exactly.

“Long time no see, Juvia-san.” It was Wendy, her youthful expression the same as always.

“Natsu-san…” Juvia managed to say. “Lucy and Wendy too.”

“Don’t forget about this little one that went to get us.” Natsu laughed and pointed down to where Snowball was, trying to smell the three newcomers at the same time. “What are you doing in this rain without even an umbrella all by yourself?”

Snowball had come back, somehow three of her friends were standing in front of her. Juvia thought and the relief she felt was abnormal, but welcomed it.

More tears fell down, her vision blackened and her knees gave in. She heard Lucy call her name,
Natsu caught her before she hit the ground and then all fade into darkness.

The moment she came to, Juvia noticed she was in her bed. She had spent way too much time lying there to not recognize it. She also felt unpleasantly warm, her throat seemed to be on fire, she opened her eyes with effort as even they were burning. At least it seemed she was no longer in her wet clothes.

“She has a really high fever.” She heard Wendy say. “Anybody would get sick living in this rain for so long.”

“Is this really Juvia’s house?” Lucy asked and Juvia stayed silent, trying to figure out what to say.

“There are some of Gray’s stuff here.” Natsu said. “But where’s he? He would’ve noticed she was sick.”

“Juvia lived here…” Juvia said with a raspy voice and even if she was looking up to the ceiling, she knew their attention was on her “together with Gray-sama. Just the two of us. We ate together, trained together, took missions together. And in this very bed…”

“We really don’t need the details!” Lucy interrupted her and only then Juvia realized what she was about to say, her fever messing with her thoughts.

“Juvia was so happy.” Juvia panted. “But then one day… he came from a visit to town and he was different.” Juvia could feel her tears falling, recalling that day when he had given her a fake smile when she asked if he was okay. “After that day, he started going off on his own. Then, six months ago, he stopped coming home at all.” Saying the truth out loud only made her cry harder.

“You’re kidding.” Wendy’s whisper was coated with disbelief.

“That jerk, leaving without a word.” Natsu’s voice was angry.

“You should talk.” If possible, Lucy’s voice was even angrier.

“I left a note telling you about my departure.” He explained.

“That’s hardly much better. Did you ever stop to think about the people left behind?” Lucy’s voice lowered. “About how we might feel?”

There was an uncomfortable silence until Juvia broke it. “Juvia went searching every day, but… she never found Gray-sama. So she decided to wait here instead.” She cried. “This place holds so many memories” ‘Juvia, come back to bed, it’s raining and early and I can’t sleep with you all the way over there’ “for Gray-sama and Juvia.” ‘I want a rematch, you can’t be that good of a sniper. Loser makes dinner’ “Juvia was sure that Gray-sama would one day return.” Juvia sobbed and realizing she spoke too much, she turned so her back was directed to her guests. “Forgive Juvia. A reunion should be happy.”

A few seconds passed when he blunette heard Natsu’s voice: “I’ll try to find him. No. I will find him! We’re getting all our friends back together. We’re gonna bring back FT.”

Juvia dared to feel a bit of hope, but didn’t dare to expect too much and get even more hurt later on. Feeling deadly tired, she closed her eyes and fell into a restless sleep.
“The antibiotics seeming to be doing its job.” Lucy told her as she sat on the bed facing Juvia and gave the blunette a cup with tea. They had been staying at the blunette’s cottage for two days and when Juvia refused to go see a doctor, Wendy was the one who had diagnosed Juvia with pneumonia and went to buy antibiotics alongside Natsu, who stopped at a store to buy some sleeping bags for them; no one wanted to leave Juvia’s side to stay at an inn in town and the blunette didn’t have mattresses for them. “You look better.”

“Thank you.” Juvia tried to smile, but really didn’t feel like talking, she still felt hot. Maybe she forgot how to after six months of virtually talking to her dog or when she went to the town.

“Natsu and Wendy went to take Snowball to the pet stop, like you asked them to.” Lucy said and Juvia saw the small smile on the blonde’s lips and she knew Lucy understood the reason behind; Natsu didn’t do well in closed quarters, especially when he couldn’t get out, as the rain was still falling. “Gives us time to talk.”

Knowing it was coming, Juvia nodded in resignation; Lucy wouldn’t give up until she had answers and Juvia had no will to fight but she could stall. “Is there something happening between you and Natsu-san? Juvia saw him trying to get you alone, but you didn’t let him.”

For the first time since they arrived, Lucy’s smile finally faltered and she stopped altogether. “Is it that obvious?”

“I think Wendy-san knows you are angry with him, but I can see you are beyond that. You are hurt in a way you think no one understands.” Juvia said and Lucy looked away. “You have the same look I have when I look in the mirror.”

Lucy blinked fast to try to stop her tears. “Men are so stupid. Natsu is particularly stupidest.” Juvia reached for Lucy’s hand and squeezed it. The blonde looked at her friend. “I’ve been alone for one year, Juvia. He left a note and left. Does he really think it’s going to be this easy for him to win me back and pick up where he left?”

“It isn’t?” Juvia asked, confused.

Lucy shook her head. “Just like you, I thought it would be. I thought I would meet him again and he would sweep me from the ground and take me towards the sunset; even though the moment I saw him my heart stopped beating for a moment, joy and relief overtook me, later I realized that it was all momentarily. Things are much deeper than that and he can’t fix it by smiling at me. No matter how much I love him.”

“Juvia doesn’t know if she’s going to see Gray-sama again.” Juvia felt her eyes water.

“You will.” Lucy assured her. “I might be angry with Natsu right now, but he is like a dog with a bone. He promised to find Gray and he will. And when we do, I’ll make sure to give him a piece of my mind about his actions. Natsu got an earful as well.” Juvia smiled sadly. “When FT comes back, I think I’ll request to move to stay with you; you would sure be a better boss.” Lucy snorted and Juvia chuckled.

“The two of us together… they would tremble in fear.”

“Oh, and they should.” Lucy crossed her arms over her chest and pouted. “They have no idea how strong girl power is, but they fear it. We would come up with the best ways to make them regret something they did wrong.” They chatted for a while longer before Lucy say it was time for another dose of medicine and told the blunette to rest.
On the third day, Juvia woke up from an afternoon nap and thought it was strange for Wendy to be on her own by the table, reading something on her phone. Neither Lucy nor Natsu were in sight, which was strange because they said nothing about going to town.

“Wendy-san.” Juvia said to get the girl’s attention after she looked outside the window and the sun had already set. Wendy looked in her direction and smiled.

“Juvia-san. How are you feeling?”

“Still sluggish, but better.” She informed. “Where are Natsu-san and Lucy-san? Juvia thought they wouldn’t go to town today.” Wendy’s smile vanished and she looked away. Frowning, Juvia looked around and noticed their things were gone. “Where are they?”

“Calm down, Juvia-san.” Wendy got up and walked towards Juvia’s bed, the cottage was very small and there was only one room and the bathroom. “I’ll tell you, they asked me to when you woke up.” Wendy sat facing Juvia and sighed. “Natsu-san figured out where Gray-san is.” Juvia’s heart almost stopped. After six months, someone finally knew where Gray was and the feelings that washed over her made her feel dizzy. “They went after him and they thought you would try to follow them if you were awake.”

“They were right.” Juvia said.

“You look much better, Juvia-san, but you are not cured yet.” Wendy pointed out. “We are just looking out for you.”

Juvia shook her head and pushed the blanket away, getting up, suddenly feeling much better. “I am not stupid, I know I am in no shape to take on twenty guys at the same time, but that doesn’t mean I am useless.” She walked to the corner of the cottage, pushed a basket away and opened a lid to a hidding compartment on the floor. From inside, the took a bag she had hid there with her best guns and ammo, but she was looking for a big case on the bottom. After six months, someone finally knew where Gray was and the feelings that washed over her made her feel dizzy. “They went after him and they thought you would try to follow them if you were awake.”

“Don’t, Wendy.” Juvia didn’t let the younger woman speak. “I’ve been waiting for six months for a lead, for… anything. I don’t care if I’m dropping dead, I’m going after them. You can either help me or stand out of my way.”

Juvia waited to see if Wendy had an answer for her, but the brunette just sighed in resignation. Juvia nodded in approval. She took the bag with the guns and put it on the table with a loud thud.

That night she was going to clean her guns and make sure she was ready, because the next day she was going after her friends and the man she loved.

No matter what.

Juvia had her hair in a ponytail, but even so her bangs brushed her hair, she really needed to go to a hairdresser as soon as possible. It was one of the craziest thoughts she had during a mission and she
It was almost three in the afternoon when she and Wendy arrived at the town of Malva, 30,000 habitants and beautiful with their gardens and forests. But, according to Wendy, Natsu’s information was that Avatar (a mercenary company affiliated to Zeref) would place bombs around and in the middle of the town for being infidels to what Zeref preached, therefore they needed to be purified.

Juvia’s heart was beating so fast; she had forgot the great feeling of going into action after being alone for six months. The people at the station went on with their days, blissfully unaware of the threat over their heads.

“Juvia-san!” Wendy said once they were outside the station and when Juvia looked at her, the younger woman pointed towards a hill, where there seemed to be a small army standing and waiting for something.

“Damn it.” Juvia cussed. “Come on, we need to cover them.” The blunette grabbed her case and bag, running towards the crowd. Once they reached the last building at the edge of town, Juvia located the best spots and told Wendy to get the guns Juvia had given her earlier and run to their friends, Juvia would cover her. “Put this ear piece.” Juvia gave one to Wendy and put another one on her ear. “Tell me if you see anything weird at all, but I’ll be watching you. Don’t worry, Juvia is going to cover everyone.”

After a quick hug and a nod, Wendy ran away and Juvia got her case from the ground and run inside an office building. One man said she wasn’t allowed to get in there, but Juvia just took her handgun from its holster and pointed at his face, saying: “What about now?” The man raised his hands. “Go, take everyone out of the building. Now!” She yelled before turning around towards the stairs, running up the four flights of stairs.

She was breathless once she arrived at the terrace, but she soon found a good spot and put her case down. She opened it and took off her best rifle from inside, put ammo on and placed the rifle on the ledge of the building using the case to make it stand taller for her.

“Wendy-san?” Juvia asked. “Can you hear me?”

“Yes!”

“Good. I’m in position. Tell me what you see.” Juvia looked through the scope to get a better knowledge of what was happening.

“Lucy-san and Natsu-san are around one hundred meters from me. I think Lucy-san needs help.” Wendy said and then she gasped. “Gray-san!” Juvia heard the younger woman yell and every cell of her body stopped.

“What?” Juvia whispered. “Is he here? Wendy-san? Where?” The blunette tried to find him with the scope. She was so nervous, her whole body shook.

“West, he’s wearing a black and white coat. Just a moment!” Wendy panted.

Juvia looked for him and the moment she spotted him, she gasped. There he was, just a few meters from her and he seemed unhurt as far as she could tell, while he shot at the enemy. Juvia felt her eyes water in relief.

She saw a woman point her gun in Gray’s direction. “Oh, no you don’t. Not when I just found him.” Juvia was much faster and shot first, the woman took a few steps back, holding her wound and dropping the weapon. Gray looked around, confused but stepped closer to the woman and
kicked the gun away.

Wendy entered Juvia’s field of vision and Gray seemed to be surprised to see her there. Wendy took the ear piece and offered to him. Clearly confused, Gray put it on.

“Gray-sama.” Juvia was sure her voice trembled because of her tears. “Juvia has missed you.”

“Juvia?” Gray looked around, his expression clearly hopeful. “Juvia! Where are you?” The blunette saw Wendy point towards the building she was in and he looked straight at her, making Juvia cry harder. “What-? How-?”

“I asked Wendy where Natsu-san went.” Juvia said. “We rushed here.”

Gray’s shoulders dropped. “I’m- Juvia, I’m sorry. I’ll explain everything later. But right now…” He pointed his gun to his left and shot.

“Of course.” Juvia dried her tears, trying to get back into battle mode, even with her emotions running wild.

“We are taking these jerks down.”

“Yes.”

#

Once the battle was over after the council’s army arrived and took down whoever was left, Juvia packed her rifle with trembling hands and she ran down the stairs and she was glad when no one stopped her, but perhaps it was due to the fact she had has handgun and didn’t stop until she was on the hill.

Gray had told her he was standing next to a Fiore banner and Juvia had to tell some of the army man to fuck off, she had been covering their asses for half an hour and if they wanted to stop her from going further, they would have to shoot her.

Funny how fast thirty army men suddenly let a tiny pissed off woman go through them once she stated her purposes.

The moment she saw Gray in person she stopped, eyes wide and looking at him as if he were a vision. She was so close to him but it felt as if he was a dream; she wondered if she moved, she’d awake back at the cottage, alone and feverish.

Gray was talking to Erza and Natsu, but took a step back, put a hand on his ear and Juvia heard him through the ear comm. “Juvia?” He started to turn her way. “Where are…” He scanned the crowd and found her “you?”

Neither moved for long seconds. Gray was looking at her with his eyes wide, his only movement was the suddenly heavy breaths he took. Juvia had controlled her tears since she started to cover her friends with the rifle but seeing him so close brought all her suppressed emotions back.

Juvia let the case with the rifle fall on the floor and a second later, she went into a sprint and apparently so did he because they met halfway, his arms on her waist, hers around his neck. Gray picked her up from the ground and Juvia couldn’t say who was holding the other tighter.

Their lips met in a desperate kiss that lasted just a few seconds. Without containing herself, Juvia started to sob while her face was hiding on his shoulder and Gray seemed to be whispering
something, but her heart was beating so hard she could hear them in her ears and nothing else registered in her mind but the fact she was actually holding the love of her life and he was safe.

“I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.” She finally managed to understand what he was saying when he kissed her hair. “I’m so sorry, Juvia.”

“We’ll talk about it later.” Juvia sobbed. “Just hold me so I know I’m not dreaming.”

His hold on her tightened. “Of course. Whatever you want.”

Eventually he had to put her down and only then Juvia let go of him, regretting it already. Even so, Gray didn’t step away from her. He put a hand on her cheek. “Are you okay?”

“Of course.” Juvia waved his worries off. “How about you?

“I am now.” He told her “I can’t believe you are here.”

“This should be my line.” Juvia tried to dry her tears. “Damn it, Juvia must look a mess.”

“Not at all. You never looked better to me.” Gray smiled at her and even though Juvia’s heart skipped a beat, Lucy’s words from a few days before hit her. ‘Things are much deeper than that and he can’t fix it by smiling at me. No matter how much I love him.’ She finally understood Lucy’s meaning. “I have missed you.” Those words hurt her so much she just started to cry again and Gray pulled her back to his arms.

The moment he said those words, she realized he just didn’t understand what happened to her.

He didn’t know.

“We need to speak to some Agents and then we can go home.” Gray kissed the top of her head. Even though Juvia was relieved to have Gray in her arms, to know he was safe and sound, there was something in the back of her mind telling her she needed more than that.

#

“Gray-sama’s interview is going to last a bit longer.” Juvia told their group of friends. “She will be going home now, since they have my statements.”

Everyone looked confused with her words, she had been fierce with her want to find Gray and when he was finally there, she was leaving him behind?

“What?” It was Natsu who asked, confused.

“He knows where Juvia will be. He has always knew.” Juvia shrugged and then looked at Lucy. “I understand now what you told me.” The blonde woman understood immediately and nodded.

“I’ll speak with him.” Lucy stepped closer to the blunette and gave her a hug. “Call me if you need anything at all and keep taking your medicine.” Lucy whispered and Juvia nodded before waving good-bye.

“What the hell is going on?” Natsu asked.

“None of our business. We have our own relationship to worry about now.” Lucy turned around and walked away from the pink haired man.

“Is every woman I know turned crazy during this past year?”
Juvia thought about the conversation and smiled a little with it. She had been back to her cottage for about an hour already and she had already taken a shower, her medicine and was just waiting to see if Gray was coming back home or not.

“This is such a flashback.” Juvia told Snowball, who looked at her and tilted her head a bit. “Will your daddy come back or will he drive your mommy back into despair?” Snowball looked towards the door and then walked right at it, her tail wiggling in excitement and at that moment Juvia knew Gray was near.

Her heart beat faster when she heard the sound of keys and then the door opening. Gray stepped inside, he was carrying a duffel bag and he ignored the excited dog for a few seconds when Juvia’s eyes met his. He gulped, looked away guiltily and kneeled on the floor.

“Hey, Smelly.” He said while the dog barked in happiness, not even standing still for Gray to pet her. “Yeah, yeah, yeah. Missed you too.” Snowball managed to lick his cheek a couple of times and he chuckled. “Alright, that’s enough.” Gray stood up and looked in Juvia’s direction. “You… left early.”

“I did.” Juvia told him, no emotion in her voice.

Gray hesitated. “Lucy told me you would explain to me why.”

Juvia sighed. “Not tonight. I’m so tired, Gray-sama. So tired.” She waved towards one of the chairs. “There’s a clean towel and clothes for you. It’s late.” The clock read eleven p.m. and her whole body ached.

Alright.” Gray mumbled, put his bag down to the floor – to which Snowball started to sniff immediately – and took off his shoes before grabbing the things Juvia pointed out and getting inside the bathroom.

Juvia lied on the bed, her hands over her eyes and she wondered if she could figure out her feelings without letting them explode in his face. She was told he was undercover, that his actions saved the town but even so she couldn’t help but to have an ugly feeling inside her chest.

She must’ve got lost in her thoughts because she was surprised when she heard the bathroom door open and Gray came out wearing only his underwear and looking just as tired as she felt.

“Do you want anything to eat?” Juvia asked and Gray shook his head.

“No, it’s fine.” He looked her way. “I… I can sleep in one of those, Juvia.” Gray pointed to where the three sleeping bags Natsu purchased were. “If you want me to, I…”

“Juvia is tired, Gray-sama.” The blunette interrupted him. “I haven’t slept a whole night since that day you didn’t come home.” Juvia moved the blanket. “Get in. Perhaps I will sleep tonight.” He studied her face for a moment before he nodded, stepping closer to the bed slowly.

Once he was lying down, Juvia didn’t even questioned it, just scooped closer to him, rested her head on his shoulder and threw her arm over his stomach. She sighed in relief when she was satisfied with her position.

Gray didn’t seem bothered at all, he let her get comfortable and caressed her back once she was done and Juvia all but purred with the action, her whole body relaxing immediately.

“Juvia...” Gray whispered.
“No.” She cut him off. “Not tonight. Tonight we are going to pretend things are okay and sleep.”

“Oh.”

And, for the first time in 197 days with his heartbeat as her lullaby, Juvia slipped into a blessedly dreamless sleep.

#

Juvia woke up early the next morning and she was confused to why she couldn’t move right until she processed the feeling of strong arms around her, soft breathing tickling her neck, a strong solid chest touching her back.

That was right, after 197 days away, Gray was home.

The blunette closed her eyes and let herself bask in the feeling of finally waking up unafraid, with no worried if he was hurt or dead. For the first morning in such a long time, Juvia was actually glad to have woken up.

Gently, she turned around in his arms so she could look at his face and she smiled when noticed how relaxed he was. He must’ve been just as tired as she was. His brows moved as he seemingly dreamt about something before they stopped and Juvia smiled sadly.

She was happy he was safe, that he was within her reach and unharmed. But the truth was she needed some time to think about what happened to her during those six months. She needed space, as uncharacteristically for her as it was.

It took her about fifteen minutes to come up with a plan with what her course of action would be and another ten minutes to gather enough will to get up and be away from his arms.

Juvia changed her clothes, took his medicine and ate a quick made sandwich before she started to act on her plan. She stepped inside the bathroom with her cellphone to book a hotel in Magnolia for her and Gray until they figured something out regarding living arrangements, as both didn’t have an apartment there anymore; all of their belongings were in storage units.

Once she was done, Juvia started, as quietly as possible, to pack. Lucky for her, she had some boxes under the bed and she started to put things away.

“What the-?” She heard Gray’s voice and she looked over her shoulder; Gray was on his stomach, up half supported by his forearms and he looked confused. “Juvia? What in the world…?”

“I’m packing.” She informed him and resumed putting the pans away. “We are going to catch the one p.m. train to Magnolia, so we need to hurry.”

“What?”

Juvia turned around to look at him. “We are going back to Magnolia, aren’t we? Natsu-san said he was going to bring FT back.”

“Yes?” Gray half agreed and half asked.

“There you go. Pack. Train. Magnolia.” Juvia said. “Go through the food in the refrigerator, please. There’s not too much, but enough for you to hold on until lunch.”

“Juvia, what the hell-”
“We still have to go to town to pay the rent and thank Mrs. Duval for letting us stay here and ask her to send these boxes to us.” She cut him off. “Go, go, go. We have to put away the bed linen too.”

Gray was confused, but got up and started to gather the linens and put them inside a box that said ‘laundry’. “Why exactly are we in such a hurry to go back to Magnolia?”

“Because.” Juvia shrugged, avoiding look at him. “Juvia got us room for a while until we get apartments.” She told him. “Now let’s go, eat something while Juvia throws her clothes in her suitcases.”

The cottage was pretty small and most of the furniture came with it, so packing was actually very fast and around noon they were done. Juvia had marked the boxes and put the addresses of the storage unit she rented and, while Gray went to pay rent and call a cab, Juvia stood inside the small room with Snowball in her arms.

“I was very happy here for awhile.” Juvia whispered. “And very, very sad as well.” She felt her eyes sting. “It was the place we were a family and the place I was left.” Juvia kissed Snowballs’s soft fur. “Either way, this was home, as good or bad as it was and I’m going to miss it.” The dog licked Juvia’s cheek. “Yes, baby, I know I got you.”

Juvia sighed and waited until Gray came in, saying the cab was outside to take them to the station. While he took the luggage out, Juvia looked around the cottage with her heart already missing it.

With a final sigh, she finally walked out the first place she and Gray ever chose to live together.

#

The trip back to Magnolia was awkward, if Juvia was being nice. She barely had said a word to Gray, just kept looking outside the window while Gray sat next to her, sometimes playing with Snowball while she was inside her carrier and looking at Juvia, worried.

All Juvia wanted was to get to her room, take a shower, curl up in a ball and let her emotions run wild. She was suppressing them for Gray’s sake and she didn’t know how much longer she could hold on.

Gray had tried to talk to her a few times during the two-hour trip, but her answers were quick and short; he understood she was not in the mood to talk and decided to not speak as well.

Once they arrived at Magnolia’s Train Station, Juvia made sure Snowball was secured in her carrier, grabbed her purse and helped Gray with their luggage. After allowing the dog to walk around a bit and do her business, they caught a cab and Juvia gave the driver the hotel’s address.

Thankfully it was a short drive, she could feel the frustration coming from Gray and she knew they had to stay away from each other soon otherwise one of them was going to explode and it wasn’t going to be pretty.

“Good afternoon.” Juvia told the receptionist, a pretty black woman with red hair, who smiled their way. “Reservations for Lockser and Fullbuster.”

The receptionist, Juvia saw she was called Jade according to her name-tag, typed for a few moments. “Yes, I have you here.” She smiled pleasantly. “I’ll just need your ids and some information and I’ll give your keys.” After five minutes, they were finally over and Jade took two keys from a cabinet behind the counter. “Here: Miss Lockser room 413 and Mr. Fullbuster 417.” Jade didn’t notice, but Gray’s body tensed so much at the mention of two rooms Juvia cringed internally. “The elevators are that way, your rooms are at the fourth floor. And don’t worry about your luggage, it will be brought
to you in a few minutes. Have a nice stay.”

“Thank you.” The blunette whispered, taking her key and getting Snowball’s carrier. Juvia could hear Gray a few steps behind her as she pressed the elevator’s button and they waited.

The moment they stepped inside, Gray pressed the fourth floor button and as the door closed, he turned to look at her. “Two rooms? A heads up would’ve been nice.”

“Juvia said she booked rooms.” Juvia was looking up to the glowing numbers and hoping they arrived at their floor soon.

“Sorry, when was that? You barely even spoke to me since yesterday.” Gray asked and Juvia stayed silent until the elevator’s door opened and they stepped out.

“I need some time. A few days, perhaps.”

Gray frowned. “What?”

“You said you would’ve slept at one of the sleeping bags if I had told you to.”

“I would have.” He agreed.

Juvia nodded. “This is me asking you to figuratively sleep at one of the bags.”

“What are you-?” Gray was clearly confused.

“Please.” Juvia took a step back. “Juvia needs time to process everything. I’ll find you when….” She hesitated because she had no idea how she’d be after those days. “I’ll find you.” She turned around to what she figured was the direction of her room.

“All those days you were alone, so was I.” Gray said and Juvia stopped, not daring to turn. “I hope you know that I missed you too and I’d rather not stay away anymore. I don’t know why you say you have to.”

She really tried to not have a conflict, tried to deal with her feelings on her own. With a surge of anger she hadn’t felt in a while, she put the carrier down on the floor and turned around, eyes narrowed in anger.

“You don’t know why. You don’t know why? Of course you don’t know why because it was me who was left alone in our house without a word. Me. Do you even understand what it was like for me?” Her frustrations were taking ahold on her. “You say you missed me? Well, that’s sweet. Cute, really. Do you know what I felt every single day you were away? I was in pain. I was hurting because I was worried for you.” Her tears blurred her sight. “Did you know I went searching for you every day for two weeks? Did you know that I thought one of your old enemies had grabbed you? That I thought you were being tortured? Dead? That I was praying whoever took you to come for me so I could at least know where you were even if it killed me? That I went to every morgue imaginable? That for one awful second when I was exhausted, since I couldn’t sleep, for one quick second I hoped you’d turned up dead so I would at least be put out of my misery?

“Do you know how much I hated myself for that one awful thought? A lot, you can’t imagine how much. But I stayed there, at our house, waiting for you, for one message, one text. I even contacted your brother and he didn’t know anything as well. You just disappeared and you think that the moment you come back things will go back to what they were? They will never be because I am not the same woman you abandoned- no, don’t look affronted because that’s what you did; abandoned me. I was put through a personal kind of hell and now that I know you are safe, I can finally breathe,
I can finally have a thought to myself and all I’m asking if for you to let me have it.

“Yes you said you missed me, and maybe you thought about me every day. But you knew where I was. You knew I was safe, that I’d never leave our house without you. You had that comfort. I didn’t. You had the luxury of thinking about me once or twice a day. Me? Everywhere I looked back home reminded me of you. You must’ve been lonely during those days, but I was never alone. Your presence was with me every single second; you have the thoughts of me and I was left with your ghost.” Juvia was crying heavily, then and Gray was looking at her with his eyes wide. “You could’ve found a burner phone and texted me. You could’ve told me before you left.” Gray opened his mouth to say something, but she cut him off. “I know the rules, I know procedure but I am not stupid or a civilian. I am an operative, I know the job, I would’ve understood, I would still worry but I would’ve understood your need to leave.

“The point is that right now I am so broken I don’t want you to even look at me before I’m at least a bit whole again. I am ashamed of my breakdown, I’m horrified that I am screaming this in the middle of a hotel hall, but that is the truth. So, before you compare our situations, make sure you know what you are comparing.” Juvia turned around, grabbed Snowball’s carrier and walked towards her room, crying, but feeling somewhat lighter to have shared a bit of her feelings.

#

From: Lucy-san

19:11: Are you in Magnolia?

Juvia stared at the text and replied, quickly. Lucy was one of the few people in the world who would understand what she was going though.

To: Lucy-san

19:12: Yes.

From: Lucy-san

19:12: Where?

Juvia texted the Hotel’s name, address and her room number.

From: Lucy-san

19:14: I’m coming over.

19:14: I’m bringing chocolate

19:15: Stupid boyfriends are stupid

The blunette snorted at the text, but felt slightly better to know Lucy was coming over so they could at least console each other. Juvia hoped her face wasn’t too swollen with her crying but didn’t have too much hope.

About ten minutes after the first text arrived, Juvia heard a knock on the door and Snowball barked in excitement. Juvia got up from the bed and opened the door.

Well, she no longer felt too badly about her swollen face since Lucy was in a very similar situation: face as swollen as Juvia’s, eyes red, hair in a messy bun and looking deadly tired.
Lucy took a look at her face and snorted. “Let me guess, we are *not* going to be asked to be bikini models tonight.”

It was Juvia’s time to snort. “Oh, no. We look incredible, seductresses.”

“See? Natsu is even ruining my good looks with all the crying I’m doing over his sorry ass!” Lucy complained and entered the room, dropping her bag on the floor next to the door, kicking her shoes and going straight for the bed while Juvia closed the door. “I hope this hotel’s options of ice cream are good because I’m in a mood for a bucket. Of each flavor.”

Juvia lied next to her friend. “What happened?”

“Stupid Natsu.” Lucy groaned. “Do you believe he had the balls to ask me if we would be looking into the apartments we were looking before he left. We were going to move in together, you see. And we had a list of things each wanted and guess what? He thinks we are picking up our relationship at that. When I tried to tell him it wasn’t like that, he looked confused and had the nerve to say: ‘I don’t understand, I left a note telling I was leaving and I already told you I’m sorry.’ Can you believe this?” Juvia saw a couple of tears fall and Lucy put the heels of her hands over her eyes. “The **idiot**. I kinda blew up after that and I might’ve told him to never look at me again. I had to turn off my phone because he couldn’t stop calling me and sending me texts.”

Juvia nodded in agreement. “I told Gray-sama I needed some time alone and he said he missed me too and didn’t understand why I wanted more time alone.” Lucy moved one hand to look at Juvia. “I blew up as well and I told him exactly what was like to live with his ghost while he missed me.”

“Look at us.” Lucy said, angry. “We are beautiful, we are smart, I’m funny, you are kick ass. We could have any man we wanted. If we’d go out ready to get someone, we would. Many someones. Then why did we fall for those two morons? Why not a sensitive man?”

“Because love is blind and it took us by surprise before we knew they were idiots.” Juvia said, serious and both women looked at each other, starting to laugh at the same time after a few seconds. Still laughing, Lucy spoke. “I’d like to sue my heart, please, it should know better.”

“Or cupids. They are also at fault here.” Juvia nodded, and they giggled again.

After finally breathing normally again, the blonde said: “Aw man, we are so screwed.”

“Very much so.” Juvia nodded.

“Can I stay here tonight? I don’t want to be around anyone else but I don’t want to be alone and you are the only person who would understand this sentence right now. And my need to stay in my pajamas for the whole day tomorrow.”

“Please, do. Let’s not want to be around anyone, together.”

“Hey, maybe you can teach me some badass move so I can hit him where it hurts the most.”

“That move is called ‘kick on the balls’, Lucy-san. And it’s pretty basic: knee meets scrotum.” Juvia said Lucy had a fit of giggles.

“It would serve him right.” Lucy decided. “I slapped Gray on the face, by the way.”

“Really?” Juvia was surprised with that information.
“Yes. He was being an ass, pretending to be evil and maybe I used him as surrogate for Natsu, since he also was a dick for leaving you.” Lucy shrugged and looked at the blunette. “Shouldn’t I have?”

Juvia thought for a moment. “Even though Juvia hates the thought of Gray-sama in pain, I’m feeling a bit selfish at least someone slapped him? Does it make any sense?”


“Alright. Let’s get room service and watch a movie. Nothing romantic, though. Is there a movie with no romantic plot at all?”

Juvia waved Lucy’s worried off. “If anything goes wrong, we watch porn. No love there, that’s for sure.”

It took Lucy a whole minute to stop laughing so she could call room service and Juvia was glad her friend was there with her, otherwise she’d be crying on her own and not getting better with the help of her friend.

Lucy went to take a shower to change into her pajamas while their orders were being prepared. The blonde had stepped out from the bathroom for two minutes when they heard a knock on the door.

The women got up from the bed and went to get the door.

The blonde was the first to get to it, thankfully, because the person behind the door was not an employee of the hotel, it was Gray.

He looked confused to see Lucy there and then when he looked further into the room, he saw Juvia standing a bit behind, her eyes wide like a deer caught in the headlights. The moment she processed the information about Gray’s standing there, Juvia took three steps back and hid behind the wall.

“Juvia!” Gray called and Lucy must’ve blocked his entrance. “Lucy, let me through. I need to speak with Juvia.”

“No.” The blunette heard her friend reply. “She told you she needed some time.”

“Look, I couldn’t stop to think about what she told me and-”

“Gray, she said she needs some time so only she can end that time.” Lucy was firm. “You don’t get to decide how long a person needs to get over something. If you are ready to talk, you go and be patient until she wants to talk. You have no right to demand to talk to her when she hasn’t told you she wanted that. Same goes for your bff, Natsu. I know you two will compare notes later.”

“But I need to-”

“No.” Lucy cut him again. “You don’t have the right to ‘need’ anything other than need to leave right now.” Lucy’s voice was pure venom. “She is coping in her way and you will respect that, do you understand me?”

“I.”

“Do you understand me?”

There was a long pause before Gray replied. “I do.” Then his voice became louder. “Whenever you decide to talk to me, Juvia, just… text me, call me, whatever. I…” He hesitated. “I will give you space.”
“Good.” Lucy agreed. “And tell Natsu to do the same thing. I don’t care how many times he calls or texts me, he needs to back off until I want to talk to him.”

“I’ll tell him.”

“Yes, now go.” She told him. “There are three buckets of ice-cream coming our way and those porn movies won’t watch themselves.”

“Porn movies? What the h-” Juvia couldn’t hear the rest because Lucy had slammed the door on his face.

A moment later, Lucy was by Juvia’s side, putting a hand on the blunette’s shoulder. “Are you okay?”

Juvia nodded. “Thank you for that, Lucy-san.”

“Anytime.” Lucy shrugged. “You know what, we need to be really away from them. Let’s go to my Godmother’s resort. She wants to kill Natsu for what he did to me and he is afraid of her, no one would bother us. And she likes you, Gray wouldn’t dare cross her. Besides, I think we’ve earned a vacation at the beach.”

Juvia pondered for a moment. “If Snowball can come, Juvia would like to go.”

“Good.” Lucy nodded. “I will send her a message asking for a room. Now, let’s go look for something to watch and I’ll call room service to see if they are coming up already.”

Chapter End Notes

Yes, I love Juvia x Lucy friendship and I’ll protect it. And, you know what… I feel avenged after the slap of truth Juvia just gave Gray. I didn’t write Gajeel in this part, but he’ll hear what Gray did, oh yes.

I think this is the first chapter I didn’t have them getting at the same place/make amends after a fight/tough situation. Sorry, but otherwise the chapter would’ve turned too long.
It had been three days since they arrived at the Celestial Spirit World Hotel and Juvia felt much better than before; the sea and the sun made her more grounded. The first time in months, Juvia was able to think without the fear of never seeing Gray again, if he was safe.

Aquarius let them stay at one of the bungalows she owned by the beach. Each morning Juvia woke up and stepped outside, smelling the sea, a little piece of her returned to where it was supposed to be. Lucy seemed to be getting better as well, enjoying the sun to get a proper tan while Juvia played with Snowball on the sand and they met Aquarius at the Hotel for lunch every day.

As great as those days were, they needed to come home eventually.

On their third night there, the two women were on the porch enjoying the sound of the waves and the aroma of the sea and each had a glass of wine in their hands.

"We have to go back soon." Lucy said quietly. "Face reality. Face them."

Juvia sighed. "I know."

They stayed in silence for a few seconds before Lucy put her glass away at the table in front of them and wrapped her arms around herself when there was a blow of cold wind. "I was so mad at him for leaving me behind."

"It's understandable." Juvia put her glass of wine away next to her friend's. "He loves you, wants you safe."

The blonde nodded. "I know he does. He proved in a hundred ways that he loves me; I've never questioned his feelings. His actions..." Lucy tried to blink away the tears. "He left me behind to protect me, he thought I was going to be okay and I get that. What he doesn't understand, though, is that if I wanted to be safe, I would've walked away a long time ago, the moment I realized the risks. I know his life is dangerous, I know I won't always be safe, but neither will he. If we are going to have a relationship, he needs to trust me and to let me stand by his side no matter what. I know I am not trained like he is, or you, but I am not an idiot, I can take care of myself and if something happens to me and I get hurt or if I die, at least I would've had him." She dried a tear. "I'd rather have had that year running away from bad guys shooting at me than at home, waiting for news, wondering if he was fine, if he was safe. He made a decision for me that wasn't his to make."

"Yes." Juvia agreed. "We make choices for the people we love without their approval because we think we know better, to make us feel better. We forget about what that person wants."

"What I wanted was for him to take me with him or at least have talked to me in person before he left." Lucy said in a whisper. "I love him, but he thinks a simple 'I'm sorry' was supposed to be enough. He didn't think of the ramifications of his choice."

"Have you told him that?" Juvia asked.

Lucy shook her head. "No. At first we were tracking the others down, then we found you, got into
that whole mess… After, when we were back in Magnolia, I tried to talk to him about it but he didn't
understand me.

"Once we return, you will be able to talk to him without being angry." Juvia reassured her friend.
"Hurt a bit, but Juvia thinks that now both of you will be able to communicate better."

"I hope so." Lucy sighed. "I want to move on from this, I want to feel better and go on with our
lives. We just need to overcome what happened."

"Juvia knows the feeling." The blunette said, her gaze fixed on the moon's reflection on the waves a
few meters away from where they were. "I hope we could erase those six months, but we can't." Lucy
reached for Juvia's hand and squeezed it, making the blunette's eyes water. "I was trapped
there, waiting for him to come home, for any news."

There were a few seconds of silence. "Juvia…" The blunette looked towards Lucy and saw her
biting her lower lip in apprehension, making Juvia frown. "I've been meaning to talk to you about the
time you were alone." Juvia nodded so Lucy could go on. "You could've left, but you didn't. You
chose to stay there, waiting for Gray."

"Juvia was waiting to see if he returned home. What if he returned and Juvia wasn't there?" She
explained.

Lucy nodded slowly. "I understand, but it doesn't sound like you at all." The blunette frowned and
Lucy furthered her explanation. "See, you… you are like a force of nature. You go after what you
want, you go to your mission and you don't come back until it's done; I know, I've seen it. The Juvia
I know would've gone after Gray."

"I didn't-"

"You didn't know where he was, I know, but… Juvia, you could've find someone else from the firm,
you could've asked for help but you didn't. When I saw you again after a year, I barely recognized
you. You looked as if you had given up, that you were just waiting to see what life brought you.
You developed pneumonia and didn't even go to the doctor." Lucy said gently. "Juvia, I think that
you are depressed and need to make an appointment with Mira-san the moment we get back to
Magnolia." Juvia blinked in confusion. "Just think about it and tell me if I don't have reason to
wonder that."

Thinking back, Juvia remembered the six months she had spent on her own at their house, the days
had blended together as most of her days she just stayed lying on the bed, her muscles hurt with her
lack of movement, the only times she went to town was to get the groceries and even then, she barely
spoke to anyone. The always present sadness inside her mind, the little voice whispering she had
been left behind, that no one wanted her, the constant tears, the feeling of being hopeless, of not
being good enough.

It was more than just a broken heart.

"Oh." Juvia breathed, eyes wide as she looked to Lucy. "Oh."

"I will go see Mira as well, but I think your case is deeper than mine and that I should point it out for
you." Lucy's voice was gentle and she tightened her grip on Juvia's hand. "I just want to see that
force of nature and I think you need a little help to get that back."

"Yes, I-" Juvia cleared her throat. "I think you are right. The first few days Juvia looked for him
everywhere, I was… desperate. I looked everywhere for him, every hospital, police station even the
morgues. And... and when I couldn't find him I came back and just waited." Her eyes were stinging and watering quickly. "I wanted to be there when he came back home, or whoever had him came to get me. When it didn't happen, I... I just let the bad thoughts take over." Two tears fell on her cheeks. "All I did was to lie on the bed and wait."

"I figured." Lucy said gently. "There was a few days after Natsu left where I did the exact same thing, but then I just tried to occupy my mind."

"That's why Juvia is acting so out of character, perhaps?" The blunette asked and Lucy nodded. "Oh, I'm in more trouble than I thought."

"Mira-san will help and now that we are bringing FT back, everyone will help as well. You are not alone, Juvia, you never were." Lucy told her and without being able to contain her tears anymore, Juvia started to sob and a second later Lucy was by her side, hugging her. "Cry it out." The blonde said in a whisper. "I've got you."

#

Juvia sat on the bed holding her phone and looking at Gray's contact information. She and Lucy had arrived a couple of hours before at Magnolia and the blonde had said she would go to where Natsu was staying, that she didn't want to postpone their talk longer than necessary.

It made sense; the two women had been away from Magnolia for five days and had talked about their situations a lot, sharing intimate feelings and fears. Juvia could never thank Lucy enough for being there to help her understand how much Gray's absence had affected her.

She had called Mirajane the moment they arrived in Magnolia and the psychiatrist was more than happy to set an appointment for the next day and told Juvia she would be available at any time in case she needed.

The only thing she had left to do was talk to Gray and she was nervous about how it would go. She couldn't go on without knowing what would be of them, so she gathered her courage and typed a text.

To: Gray-sama

20:55: Are you at the hotel, Gray-sama?

The answer didn't take long to arrive, as if his phone was in his hands already.

From: Gray-sama

20:56: Yes. Are you back?

To: Gray-sama

20:56: I am.

20:57: Can Juvia go see you now or...?

From: Gray-sama

20:57: You can come here or I can go to where you are, I don't mind.

To: Gray-sama
Juvia took a deep breath, left her phone on the bed, petted Snowball and left the room. It was the time of the truth, time to face Gray; the reasons he left her and worse, their feelings about it. Juvia knew that was going to be a conversation that could define what she would do with her life.

She stopped in front of room 417 and could feel her heart beating fast inside her chest. Juvia closed her eyes, took a deep breath and knocked on the door three times.

It took Gray two seconds to open the door and to her, it was as if time had stopped while she looked into his eyes. Even if she knew he was safe, that he would be there, it still made her heart stop for a second just to know he was close enough to touch.

"Juvia." He breathed her name, as if he was just as amazed to see her there as she was to seeing him.

"Can I come in?" The blunette asked quietly.

"What?" He frowned and then blinked. "Oh, yes. Sure." He opened the door wider and watched as she stepped inside. "Sorry about the mess." He told her as she closed the door and Juvia attempted a smile when she saw clothes everywhere but the suitcase he had opened on the couch.

"Juvia knows your clothes are never folded and put away, Gray-sama." She told him.

"Yes, of course." Gray looked down and Juvia took a second to actually look at him; he had bags under his eyes, there was a light stubble on his face and his hair looked messier than usual. Noting her gaze, he passed a hand through his hair, messing it even more. "Sorry, I didn't shave today. Or yesterday. Things have been…” He interrupted himself. "I was getting used to being back."

"Are you okay?" Juvia took a step in his direction and Gray looked at her.

He shook his head in disbelief. "Only you would ask me if I was okay when I was a complete bastard to you."

"No matter what Juvia will always worry about you." The blunette told him in a low voice.

"I know." Gray sighed.

"You didn't answer: are you okay? Being undercover is difficult, especially with the large amount of time you spent there."

"As much as I can be." He snorted. "And it's not the job that is in my mind." Gray informed her and Juvia felt guilty. He probably saw it in her face, because a second later his hands were in her shoulders. "No, don't do that. Everything you said to me was the truth I needed to hear." She looked up to him, her eyes watering. "Juvia, I needed to know."

"You left."

He gulped. "I did."

"You left me." Her voice broke. "Why? Why didn't you bring me along?"

Gray closed his eyes for a second, taking a deep breath. He took his hands away from her and opened his eyes. "I couldn't. Erza's plan was to have just one person inside the organization. It was supposed to be for one month only, but when I got the information about what they were planning to do to that town, I couldn't leave, not when thousands of lives were at stake."
"You could've at least told me you needed to leave for a while, even a letter or a text would've done the job and Juvia wouldn't have thought you left just because."

"I really couldn't. Once I was in, the communication with the outside world needed to be minimal." Gray informed her. "But… I need you to know why I accepted the mission so promptly, Juvia. It's the least I can do and I owe you that." The blunette frowned in confusion. "Did you notice my behavior a few days before I left?" Juvia nodded and Gray passed his hand through his hair one more time, like he always did when nervous. "Shit, I will sound like a jerk."

"Tell me."

Gray nodded. "A few days before, I went to the market on my own to get what we needed. There was this lady and she asked me where my wife was since I was alone, and I answered you had stayed home." He told her. "I didn't think anything of it until I was coming back. People were assuming we were married and I answered as if it was the most normal thing in the world."

Juvia couldn't believe her ears. "You left because people thought we were married?"

"Yes. No." Gray said, nervous and started to walk around. "Look, I left because I liked it. I liked our house, I liked referring to it as 'home', I liked waking up with you just within my reach, I felt proud when they praised how nice you were because you were mine."

"I- I don't understand."

"Everyone I care about dies, Juvia." Gray told her. "Every single one and I couldn't see it happen to you. I was too comfortable; I was happy and I just knew something would've happened and you would be in danger. It always happens like that: I find happiness and it is taken away from me."

"So you decided to leave without saying a word?"

"I am not asking for you to understand completely, but… I felt… when I realized…" He tried. "I had already almost lost you a few times. Maybe if I left you would be safe." He looked down. "Instead I ended up hurting you more than I thought it was possible." He stopped talking for a second. "When Erza found me, I accepted right away because I needed to be away from you. In my mind I was protecting you from, well, me. I regretted the moment I stepped inside Avatar. I knew I had made a mistake, that I should've told you, but I was already in, couldn't come back."

Juvia was looking at him and tears were falling from her eyes. She had been through her personal hell because Gray thought it would've been better to her?

"Every single day I thought of you, I missed you and it only made me realize how deep I am, how I can't escape, I can't come back to how I was before I met you and I don't want to. Every day I wished I woke up with you snuggled up next to me, I wished I was home with you." Gray gulped. "I thought you would've returned to Magnolia, I thought you'd be okay; you are one of the toughest women I know." Juvia closed her eyes. "I… I thought I was protecting you."

Juvia turned away from him and she tried to breathe slowly to calm her nerves down. It made no sense at all but at the same time it had Gray written all over it. He never wanted to be in a relationship, he made his intentions very clear when they started sleeping together. He tried to deny their involvement for a long time before finally giving up pretending and not hide anymore. Whenever he told the stories about his parents' murders and then his foster mother, he placed way too much guilty on himself. Perhaps Silver's return to his life just to leave again made his illusion of being tied up to him, stronger.
She hadn't realized she had been in deep thought for a while until she heard his voice behind her. "Juvia… do something. Say something, yell at me, hit me if you want. I deserve it."

The blunette turned around and tried to dry her tears. "What makes you think that hurting you will make me feel any better?"

"I… I just can't bear it that I was responsible for your pain during those months." Gray told her.

"And we can't go back to the past, Gray-sama. That time will always exist, no matter what we do." She sighed, she was so tired of the pain.

They stayed in silence for a minute, a million thoughts going through her mind until Gray's voice interrupted her. "Do…" He cleared his throat. "Do you think you could love me again? After all this?"

Juvia blinked. "You think I've stopped?" She asked, surprised. "If I had stopped, do you think that I would've been so hurt? Or angry?" Gray's expression was of pure disbelief. "I still love you, it's not something a person can turn it off on will."

"But…" He tried but Juvia interrupted him.

"Just because I love you doesn't mean I couldn't be angry and hurt as well." She clarified. "But not at you, not at my Gray. My Gray wasn't the one who left me."

Gray was clearly confused. "What?"

"The person who left me was not the Gray I know, it was a part of you, but not who you are." When he didn't seem to understand her, the blunette explained. "Do you know who my Gray is? The person who took me out to eat Caramades Frank because I was down after a tough mission. My Gray is the guy who took me to the shelter to pick up a puppy, who had to endure me showing pictures of said puppy every day. My Gray… " There was a lump in her throat and she wanted to cry, but couldn't. Not yet. "My Gray is the man who put me over his shoulder and ran when we were being attacked while my legs were hurt and he wouldn't leave me behind. My Gray is the man who sat with me in a field of buttercups while I talked about my past. My Gray is the man who took bullets for me, who took me on a trip on our one-year anniversary just because he knew I would like there. My Gray is the man who I sleep next to at night and smiles when he kisses me good-night."

"I love that man and you are him. I won't stop loving you because of one mistake, not when I know you and your fears. Not when I look at you right now and see that you would've done things differently if you could, but the truth is that you can't. What is done is done and we can't go back. All we can do now is to move forward, no matter where that leaves us. I don't know what you want to do, if you think we should be together, but we are moving forward."

The moment she was finished, Juvia started to sob. She couldn't hold on any longer, it was too much for her and all her feelings mixed up: pain, relief, hopelessness, happiness, hurt. Her knees gave in but Gray was fast enough to catch her. He pulled her close to his chest while she cried, a hand stroking her back and his lips on her hairline, whispering over and over again. "I'm sorry, Juvia. I'm so, so sorry."

#

Juvia was exhausted.

She had cried for such a long time in Gray's arms he had picked her up and lied her down on his bed, took off her shoes and joined her a moment later, bringing her closer to him. The hard sobbing had
stopped, but she still cried for a long while as he caressed her hair gently.

There were tears still falling, but she looked up to Gray and saw his worried gaze. With all honesty, she needed to know what he expected now that he was back and so was she. They had been honest with each other so far, they needed to establish a plan of action.

"What do we do now?" She asked him in a whisper. "What do you want, Gray-sama?"

"You." It was his immediate answer; he didn't even hesitate. "Only you. I promise I won't do that again, I can't bear the thought of hurting you so much like I did."

"You want me?" She asked, just to confirm; she didn't believe he was saying those words.

Gray nodded. "I'll spend every day of the rest of our lives making it up to you if you want me to." He said. "I am sorrier than you can possibly know, Juvia. I'll regret my decision to leave the way I did forever. I want you by my side more than anything." Juvia cupped his cheek and Gray put his own over hers and turned his head so he could kiss her palm. "Just give me a chance to make this right."

Juvia stared at his eyes, searching any indication he wasn't telling the truth, but found none. He was being honest, he really wanted to be there with her, to try to make them work and it was more than Juvia could've asked for at the moment.

Deciding, Juvia nodded. "I will trust you again, truly and fully." She muttered and Gray let out a deep breath of relief. "But I can't go through that again, Gray-sama. It almost broke me and if it happens again I... I know my heart can't take another break like that."

"Never." Gray said promptly. "I promise you right now that never again I'll leave like that, that I'll hurt you that deep. I am not perfect, Juvia, I made mistakes and I will make more in the future, but I promise not to leave you."

"We are not a hundred per cent okay yet." She told him. "It might take a while to be like we were before."

"I don't care how long it takes." Gray told her with a shrug. "We can do it."

"If one of us have some idea about leaving because someone has some crazy thoughts" she looked pointedly at him "we talk. No matter where, no matter the time: we talk."

"Alright." Gray nodded and looked at her. Juvia noticed he still looked tired, but his eyes were lighter, as if that talk had made him feel more grounded, just like she was. He was looking back at her and his eyes moved from her eyes to her lips and back to her eyes. "Juvia?"

"Hm?"

"Can I kiss you?"

The question took her by surprise and her heart started to beat faster. Aside from the kiss they shared when she saw him on the field, they hadn't kissed at all. Too much had happened, her mind had been a mess: she couldn't think, couldn't breathe, then. Now, they had talked, they were at the same page.

"Yes." She whispered.

Gray approached her slowly, reading her reaction. The moment their lips touched, Juvia felt the world stop. He pulled away to check and must've saw something because the next time he kissed
her, Juvia felt as if a lightning bold went through her and she was kissing him with as much vigor as he was and the world was spinning out of control.

Her heart was beating fast; her whole body was on fire and her only thought was him. It had been such a long time since she felt like that.

She was alive.

Once they needed air, Gray gave her a peck on the lips and rested his head back on the pillow, their faces so close their breaths mingled and Juvia kissed him again, just enjoying the fact she could.

Juvia couldn't say how long they stayed like that just kissing each other, but even though she wanted to prolong it as much as she could, she was emotionally exhausted and needed to rest. Perhaps she could rest now that she and Gray were trying to move forward.

"It's getting late." Juvia whispered between kisses.

"Sleep here." Gray told her and Juvia's movements stopped, making Gray open his eyes and stare at her with worry. "What is it?"

The blunette bit her lower lip. "Juvia thinks… We just decided to move forward, but… Maybe we shouldn't sleep together yet." She told him. "I… I don't want to fix things up with sex. We really should wait for a while."

Gray frowned. "What?"

"You asked Juvia to stay here, so…"

"Oh." Realization finally hit him. "No, no, no, no. I didn't mean sex. I meant for you to literally sleep here, my hands will stay to myself." Gray said. "Look, that night when I came back and slept next to you, it was the first in six months that I slept through the night and without nightmares. These past few days you were away, I just couldn't sleep. If you don't want to, it's alright."

Juvia understood him more than he could possibly know. "It was the same for Juvia." She said. "Alright, Juvia will stay but I need to leave early to walk Snowball. Can you lend Juvia a shirt to sleep in?"

"Of course." Gray got up and went to see what was inside his suitcase and Juvia smiled when she saw him taking a few shirts from inside and smelling them to get her a clean one. He was such a guy it was ridiculous. On the third try, he turned around and looked triumphant to have found one and once he looked at her, his eyes widened a bit in amazement.

"What?" Juvia asked, looking behind her to see what caught his attention and then back at him. "What is it?"

"This is the first time I saw you smile since I came back." He clarified and Juvia could feel her cheeks get warmer. "Sorry, I didn't mean to make you embarrassed."

"It's alright." She stepped closer to him and got the shirt. "Be right back."

"Okay."

#

The first night Gray came home Juvia slept through the night, but sleeping next to him when they
had resolved most of their problems and both had their minds set on getting past it, it was even better. She woke up with Gray wrapped around her, his body so warm she had to fight the need to stay curled up against him.

She kissed his cheek and smiled when she got up and he patted the bed looking for her. She put a pillow within his reach and Gray grabbed it, hugging it tightly and hiding his face on it. It was quite adorable, but she needed to take Snowball on her walk; the hotel might be pet friendly, but not that friendly if her dog did her business on their carpet.

Once she arrived in her room, Juvia put Snowball on her leash and went to a park nearby, letting the white dog stretch her little legs and played with her for a while before they returned to the hotel and Juvia was glad to see Snowball with the silly doggy grin she loved.

She arrived at her floor and was about to go to her room to take a shower when she heard people yelling and she frowned. She recognized the loud voices and her heart started to beat faster realizing it was coming in the same direction Gray's room was.

Juvia ran and stopped in the doorway of his room and couldn't believe in her eyes: Gray was on the floor with Gajeel on top of him, holding Gray by the shirt. Gajeel's fist was raised and he was ready to hit Gray again – it was clear by his bloody nose that Gray had been hit already.

"Gajeel-kun!" Juvia yelled just in time, otherwise Gajeel's fist would've collided with Gray's face. Instead, his red eyes focused on Juvia. "What are you doing?" She stepped inside, putting Snowball on the floor. "Stop!"

"This bastard…" Gajeel snarled and pulled Gray closer by his shirt. "He left you behind! You got sick because of him. You could've died, Juvia!"

"And your reasoning is to come here and punch him?" Juvia stepped closer to the men and she kneeled. The blunette sent Gajeel a dirty glare and then looked at Gray. "Are you alright?"

"Fine." Gray said, but didn't move from the floor and had his hand on his ribs; Gajeel probably had hit him there as well.

Gajeel finally got up and Juvia helped Gray to sit. "He left you alone!"

"And we are working things out!" Juvia said, looking at her friend. "We talked, we are dealing with it and we are both willing to be more honest with each other. I haven't seen you in one year and this is what you come here for? I didn't need for you to come in here and punch him like that!"

"What do you need, then?" Gajeel snarled.

Juvia's eyes watered. "I needed you a six months ago when I sent you that e-mail."

It was as if Juvia had slapped him by the way his eyes widened. He took a step back and paled and Juvia felt guilty for throwing it on his face like that. Lucy had said Juvia hadn't sought for help, but it wasn't completely true; the day after Gray disappeared she had sent an e-mail to Gajeel saying she needed his help, but didn't get into much detail, afraid whoever took Gray hacked it.

She never got an answer.

"I thought…" Gajeel whispered. "I thought you would be fine. You are the strongest person I know. You are always fine."

"Not always. I'm just human, Gajeel-kun and it felt as everyone that mattered to me had left me
behind and I pretty much lost myself inside my head." Juvia helped Gray sit on the bed and then turned to look at Gajeel, who seemed to be much smaller than a few minutes before now that his anger had been subdue.

"If I'd known…" Gajeel said. "If I knew you were like that…"

"You couldn't come to me." The blunette told him. "You were undercover as well. Not as deep as Gray-sama, but undercover nonetheless." She stayed quiet for a moment. "You can't come here and hit him and think you are avenging me somehow because if this is your plan, start hitting yourself." She said and Gajeel looked down in shame. "And I am not telling you this to make you feel bad, I am telling you that my relationship with you means as much to me as mine with Gray-sama. You became my family and suddenly I didn't have neither of you." Juvia dried a stray tear. "I don't need for you to come here and hit Gray-sama, I never needed anyone to fight my battles for me. What I needed was for you to just knock on my door and talk to me."

"I thought…"

"You thought I would appreciate you gallantly defend my honor? So you could show off your badge of best friend with pride?" Juvia shook her head. "No. You are here so you can feel better because you didn't come when I needed you. You looked at Gray-sama and saw yourself in him." She stepped closer to Gajeel and he looked away. "You know I love you but I won't sugarcoat it for you. When you want to talk to me like a grown man, I'll be here. Stop acting like a child and take responsibility for what happened." Juvia turned around and stepped closer to the bed, where Gray was, watching the interaction. "Can you walk?"

"Sure." Gray nodded.

"Let's go to my room so I can take care of your bruises." She told him and Gray didn't hesitate to get up and follow her. Before she left, she stopped in front of Gajeel. "Close the door when you leave. Come, Snowball, we are going." She whistled and the dog followed her, Gray close behind.

They were almost in her room when Gray spoke. "You… you take a while to hit people with the truth, but when you do… *fuck*, you do it like a pro."

Juvia sighed. "I shouldn't have mentioned the e-mail, he…"

"Hey." Gray grabbed her wrist to stop her and she did, turning around to face him. He would be a hell of a black eye soon and she needed to set his nose back to place. "Look, sometimes we need some harsh truths and tough love. Remember when I got shot and I just couldn't take anymore and told you I needed some time away from you?" She nodded. "You were hurt, but you understood me and later on you adjusted your behavior. Sometimes a dose of reality is what we need. I know that I needed it a few days ago."

She nodded. "Okay." Juvia tip-toed and gave him a peck on the lips.

"*Ouch.* Nose, nose, nose!"

"Sorry!"

#

Later that night Gray and Juvia were in bed watching some silly movie on TV, her body pressed on his side and head resting on his chest, her leg between his, when there was a knock on the door and Juvia frowned when she looked up to Gray and he shrugged.
"Just a moment." The blunette said loudly while she got up and picked up some shorts she had left in hand just in case of a situation like that happened and went to answer the door while Snowball barked excitedly around her.

It didn't surprise her much when she opened the door and saw Gajeel standing there, his hands on his pants' pockets, shoulders low and looking down to the floor. His long hair was messy and he was wearing the same clothes as early that morning.

Juvia didn't say a word, just waited to see what her friend would do.

"I- I'm sorry." Gajeel whispered, looking down to his feet. "I just arrived in Magnolia and Wendy told me about what happened and I just... I screwed up. I should've came when you asked me to."

"There, wasn't too hard, was it?" Juvia stepped closer to him, put her arms around her friend and was surprised when he didn't hesitate to hug her back and even rested his chin on the top of her head. "Juvia understands that you couldn't have left. We have the same job, I understand." She whispered and she could feel him nodding. "What hurt me was that there wasn't even a reply. Not even an e-mail with one word on it. If you had sent me one just saying 'mission', I would've understood." She looked up. "It would've helped to know someone still remembered me."

"What?" Gajeel frowned.

She waved his question off. "Long story, I'll tell you later. Just... Please, don't cut me off."

"I didn't-" Gajeel tried to say but she cut him off.

"You did." She told him, flat. "I know you and Levy-san are more serious than ever, that you two have a life together and Juvia would never want to mess it up. All I ask is for you to not forget about me."

"I couldn't if I tried." Gajeel snorted. "I am here because of you."

"No, I don't want that either." Juvia shook her head. "I don't want to be that person you have to endure just because I helped you once. I want to be your friend because you like me, because you can talk to me. Not because years ago I-"

"Do you think I would've done half the crap I did if I didn't like you?" Gajeel asked in disbelief. "If I wanted to compensate you for being a jerk, I would've left you and never looked back. People are better without me, but you didn't let me do that." He cleared his throat. "And I'm glad you didn't. Look, you are bat shit crazy most of time but you... shit, I don't talk crap like this but you made me want to become better and I did. You have my back, you listen to me and all that. Just..." He huffed in annoyance. "You are my friend, I have no intention of cutting you off, forget you or whatever your crazy mind is cooking in there." Gajeel put his index finger on her temple and she could feel tears falling on her cheeks. "I am sorry I hadn't been the best of friends, but hey, you signed up for this position and this is the kind of crap I pull and sometimes I need help to get it right. I sucked it up after you told me off, now you suck it up because I am telling you off."

Juvia's arms tightened up around him and she couldn't believe her ears. Her friend had grown so much since the day they met, it was like talking to two different people. And he had just told her he had no intentions of letting her fade away from his life.

To anyone else those words could've been simple, but it helped Juvia heal a piece of her she didn't even thought it was damaged. She needed her friend and he was right there.

"Hugging too tight." Gajeel told her. "Alright, this is getting creepy." He patted her back when she
didn't comply with his request. "Juvia? Let me go."

"Juvia hasn't hug you in a year, let me enjoy this." The blunette said, smiling and she could hear her friend huff in annoyance.

"Come on, let him go, Juvia. He can only deal with so much tough affection for one day." Gray said from behind her and Juvia looked over her shoulder and saw Gray had put his clothes back on. After hesitating for a second, she let Gajeel go with reluctance. "You two can get lunch tomorrow so you can talk and Gajeel here can wrap his mind around what happened today. Let's go to the bar and I'll help you sort things out. I know what it's like to speak about feelings and right now only a few drinks will help." He kissed Juvia's lips and his attention returned to Gajeel. "You are buying, though, after the punches this morning."

Gajeel looked from Gray to Juvia and the blunette nodded her approval. "It's alright, Gajeel-kun, if you want to go with Gray-sama to the bar as long as you promise me we are going to get lunch tomorrow and Juvia's allowed to be affectionate." It seemed to be a tough decision for Gajeel, as he didn't seem to want to do neither of the options. Juvia decided to help him decide. "Or we can get in and talk right now. Juvia will ask Gray-sama to go to her room and we can spend all night long talking about-

"Bar it is." Gajeel cut her off. "See you tomorrow for lunch and I reserve the right to leave if things get too touchy feeling."

The blunette thought about it. "You can leave after two hours."

"One." He counteroffered.

"Juvia thinks she deserves two." She said pointedly and Gajeel's shoulders dropped.

"Fine." He told her and turned to Gray. "I think you deserved them so I won't apologize for the punches."

"I didn't think you would." Gray shrugged. "Bar?"

"Bar." Gajeel agreed. "But no feelings talk. I had enough of this shit with Levy after I left here earlier and Juvia five minutes ago."

Gray snorted. "Give it three glasses of scotch and I'll look like your therapist."

Juvia watched both men walk away towards the elevator and she crossed her arms under her breasts, a small smile on her lips. They were easily the most important people in her life and both were only human, they made as much mistakes as she did.

She had spent a few months in so much darkness she almost forgot how great it was to be held, to feel loved and happy.

If Lucy's suspicion was right, she would have a long battle ahead of her. It was going to be hard, she was going to take a few steps back before she finally walked ahead, but for the first time in months she felt she could do it, that she could face the storm heads up.

She thought she didn't matter, but apparently, she mattered more than she hoped for to them.

"Come on, baby." She whistled and Snowball came running from the end of the hall back to her human's side. "It's just us girls right now."
After a very emotional session with Mirajane and a lovely lunch with Gajeel, Juvia just wanted to go back to her room and sleep. Since Gray had an appointment with Makarov, Juvia arrived at the hotel and just threw herself on the bed. It was getting dark when she felt Gray's hand on her back and his lips on her cheek, telling her she should get up so they could get something to eat.

"Where exactly you and Lucy went to?" Gray asked and Juvia slipped her hand into his and she smiled when he, instead of pulling it away as his first instinct, slid his fingers between hers to hold it better, her heart started to beat faster.

"Aquarius' Hotel." Juvia told him as they walked towards the Caramades Franks cart not too far away from their hotel. "We figured Natsu-san wouldn't go there because she was angry at him, and, well… she is pretty scary. I wouldn't go there for awhile if I were you."

"Yeah, I figured." Gray rolled his eyes. "What did you do there?"

"We went to the beach, had lunch with Aquarius-san, Lucy-san tanned and Juvia played with Snowball. She was having the time of her life, by the way." Juvia said and Gray laughed.

"Of course she was, her fur must've been filled with sand."

"You have no idea." Juvia chuckled.

"So… what was that comment Lucy let escape that night we arrived in Magnolia?" Gray asked and Juvia looked up in confusion. "About porn movies not being watched by themselves?"

Juvia remembered her blonde friend's words and giggled. "We… we were hurt, we didn't want to watch movies with romance and almost all movies have a romantic subplot, you know? So we chose to watch porn. It's hard to find the romance on the pizza delivery guy who gets lucky and there's a horny woman waiting for him inside the apartment, then he opens the card box and it's his penis there instead of the pizza." Juvia shrugged. "We laughed for most of it anyways."

Gray snorted. "The, well, let's call them storylines for the sake of the argument, aren't really thought out in those."

"Oh, we watched some with more plot." Juvia informed him. "There was a very good one, historical. Princess and knight, all the theatrics. It was cute but Juvia doesn't think they had vibrators back then so the history accuracy was a bit off."

"Oh god, you watched porn and you criticized the plot." Gray fake groaned. "Please tell me you didn't point out to a guy's dick and said 'Oh, that looks like Gray-sama's.'" He mimicked her voice and Juvia rolled her eyes.

"Of course not." She hoped she had put the right amount of affront in her tone because, well, of course she did. Both her and Lucy were halfway through their ice-cream buckets, so it was the equivalent of being drunk. Besides, Lucy did the same, so she wasn't the only one at fault there.

"Sure." Gray didn't seem to believe her, but let it go. They walked in silence for a few moments and there was a cold wind their way, making Juvia shake. Gray stopped her and took his dark blue scarf, putting it on her. "I told you to get properly dressed." He told her, knotting the fabric around her neck. "You are still sick, Juvia."

"You kept the scarf." She smiled happily at him.
"It was a gift from you, of course I kept it." Gray rolled his eyes. "Even though I have no idea why we should celebrate 413 days together."

"Juvia meant to finish knitting by the first year anniversary but so many things happened she could only finish by the 413th." She told him and tried to keep her heart at bay when he took her hand on his willingly and they resumed walking.

"You are so weird." He said and Juvia snickered. They were almost by Frank's when Juvia chuckled, getting his attention. "What?"

"Remember the first time you brought Juvia here?" She asked.

Gray nodded. "Yeah. It was after that mission with the two little girls and her mom, and only the children made it. It got too you and I wanted to be a good friend."

"Yes." Juvia agreed. "But it was also the night Juvia realized she had a chance with you."

"Really?"

The blunette hummed in agreement. "Yeah. A few days before Juvia had had a talk with Cana-san, she was the first to know I was falling in love with you. You and I talked about Erza-san and Jellal-san's situation, he was being arrested and her heart got broken, remember?" Gray nodded. "Well, you said you never intended to ever fall in love." His eyebrows rose. "It broke my heart. Cana-san saw me and told me you didn't do relationships, just one night stands and she told me that if I wanted you, it would mean waiting and a lot of heartache. I needed to decide if it was going to be worth it.

"Then you tried to cheer me up by bringing me here and when we got home and you offered to take me to the shelter, my heart melted for you all over again." Juvia chuckled. "But when Juvia kissed you good-night… your eyes got dark and Juvia knew you wanted me, even if it was just physical. It was Juvia's chance."

"So you took it at Lucy's birthday party." Gray said and Juvia nodded.

"Juvia had decided to give you more time to see where our friendship could lead us after that amazing dance we got together, but then a few minutes later you were being hit by a woman!"

Gray seemed confused, but finally remembered. "I remember that I had to take you out of my head." He chuckled. "You have no idea how hot that dance left me. Everywhere I looked, I saw blue hair and blue eyes, burning me, but I couldn't do anything because we worked together. I was considering taking that woman home to see if it would help." He stopped her and walked to stay in front of Juvia. "But then you came out of nowhere and just told that woman to get lost and shit, if I hadn't wanted you, I would then. It was hotter than it should've been."

"Good to know." Juvia rolled her eyes playfully. "Either way, Juvia couldn't let you just go home with that woman, so she acted."

"It was a great action, truly." Gray grinned and he looked handsome even with his black eye. "I got really angry with you the next morning, though." Juvia frowned. "I had had the best night of my life and planned to add that into my morning, but you were gone."

"Juvia was afraid you would kick her out." She admitted.

"I wouldn't have." Gray shrugged. "You were my friend and I was really planning on some morning sex."
"And a couple of weeks later, we repeated the dose. Then again, again…” Juvia looked up to the sky and back to him. "Juvia did a lot of waiting until you admitted we were together."

"I'm glad you didn't give up." He said. "Sorry if I was so stubborn."

"It's who you are." Juvia told him in a resigned tone and she started to walk again, but Gray didn't let her get far.

"Hey." She looked his way. "I changed, okay? Six months away taught me a lot. You changed me." He stepped closer to him and put a hand on her cheek. "It took me awhile to realize and to say it out loud, but you are the most important person in my life."

Juvia couldn't believe her ears. She was dreaming, it was the only explanation because there was no way Gray had just said what she thought he said. Was she still delusional and back to their house?

"I thought I was going to get a bigger reaction than you just looking at me as if I had just told you I am serial killer, but okay." It was clear he was embarrassed by what he had just said and was trying to joke it off, but Juvia just couldn't believe.

"Am… Am I really?" She whispered when she finally found her voice. "Really?"

"Yeah." Gray looked down, his cheeks were rosy and Juvia was certain it wasn't because of the cold. "I know that even though you promised to trust me again, it will take a little while and I just wanted to let you know where I stand."

"Oh." It was her answer as his words were still being processed by her brain. "That is…"

"Let's go eat." Gray started to turn so they could go on their way, but Juvia's brain finally caught on to her and the next thing she knew, her arms were around Gray's shoulder and she was kissing him, as passionate as ever.

She was the most important person in his life.

"You are the most important person in my life too." She whispered after they had unlocked their lips, their noses were touching and she could feel the most beautiful feeling she's ever had inside her chest and spreading through her whole body.

*The most important.*

"Good." His cheeks were definitely red and so were his ears. "Glad we are on the same page about that." He cleared his throat. "Now come on, let's go eat."

Juvia nodded and while they made their way to Frank's. She felt as if the colors of the city were brighter, the air around her seemed to have changed and it was as if she was high and walking on clouds.

"Well, well, well. Look who the cat dragged in." Frankie said the moment she saw them, aside for a slightly longer hair, she hadn't changed at all. "You two disappear for a year and now come here as if nothing happened."

"Sorry, Frankie." Gray said. "We were out of town."

"No kidding." The older woman rolled her eyes and then focused her gaze on Gray's left hand and then Juvia's. "I had hoped you two got married, but I don't think it's the case." She raised an eyebrow.
"It's not." Gray clarified.

"How long have you been together now? Two years?" Frankie asked.

"A little over two years, yes." It was Juvia who answered, still a bit dazed and she could feel Gray's eyes on her, confused.

The opulent woman nodded. "It's a good amount of time."

"Things… happened while we were away." Gray told her sheepishly.

"Hm." Frankie looked at them for a few seconds. "I just saw you two over there" she waved towards the direction the couple had been a minute ago "and I can tell you that by the way you look at each other, both are willing to fight for each other." The older woman shrugged. "Well, whoever said love doesn't conquer all was either with the wrong person or the wrong love." Gray and Juvia looked at each other before their attention returned to Frankie. "Now go get a table and I'll feed you in a moment." They were turning to do as she said when Frankie spoke again. "Good to have you back, kids."

"Thanks, Frankie. It's good to be back." Gray sent her a smile and followed Juvia, who was just a step ahead, but waited for him to walk along.

They had found a table and once they were settled, Gray turned to face her. "You said we were together for two years." Gray said and Juvia's mind was still so overwhelmed she took a second to process the information. "You counted the time I was away."

"I did." She nodded after realized what he was talking about. "We didn't break up, even then we were in a relationship." When she saw his frown, the blunette explained. "No relationship can be all about happiness. It's a sweet dream, but there are always bumps on the road. There are some good days and some bad. As it happened, we had 6 bad months and as awful as they were, it's part of our story now. Juvia wishes she could erase them, but she can't. I loved you then and I love you now." She looked him in the eyes. "So… bad and good, but our two years nonetheless."

Gray nodded. "Two years, then."

He reached for her hand and started to talk about how FT's building was almost finished with the repairs and they still had a few weeks to go yet.

Juvia half-listened to his words, because she was basking on the feeling inside her chest. She was important to him. No, the most important. She didn't know what future reserved for them, but she had absolute certainty she would fight for them, for him and for her as well.

Juvia was finally healing.

Chapter End Notes
Hello, guys! So yeah, I don't know if this was the way you thought it would go with her forgiving him so fast, but, well... It's Juvia and she's got the biggest heart ever. The truth is that she had already forgiven Gray the moment he returned but there were so many feeling inside her she needed a break to sort them out and Gray needed to understand the ramifications of his choices. Aaaand I wanted to show how Gray grew up regarding his feelings and honesty about them.

And the Gajeel thing I have nooo idea how it's going to be received by the readers and it is a gamble, but here it is. HAHA We'll see where this go. ;)

“We can’t stay living in a hotel.” Gray said when he came from the bathroom, drying his hair and Juvia looked his way; she was lying on the bed, on her stomach, feet up and her laptop was in front of her.

“I know.” She sighed.

They had been back in Magnolia for two weeks and after three days of Gray sleeping in her room, Juvia just told him to pack his things and stay with her: if he was going to sneak into her bed every night, it was easier if he just moved there.

“It takes a while to find a good place.” Gray said, throwing the towel on the couch and Juvia had a mental note to put that on the bathroom before she fell asleep, and he sat next to her, putting a hand on her lower back. “How about we rent a furnished place temporarily so we can leave here and we can look for a permanent one?”

Juvia thought it over for a moment and ended up nodding. She was tired of living in a hotel, she wanted to be able to come and go without people at the front desk knowing, have a kitchen so she could make her own food and have more space.

“Makes sense.” The blunette agreed. “I’ll see if I can find some options online.” She looked to the computer’s screen.

“Hm.” Gray hummed and his hand traveled from the small of her back to between her shoulder blades. “I was thinking about the money my dad left me.”

“Really?” Juvia asked without taking her eyes away from her search. “You finally decided on what to do with it?” A few days after they returned to Magnolia from Gray’s hometown and were putting their things in storage, Gray received a phone call from an attorney. Once they went to a meeting with him, they discovered that Silver left some jewelry that belonged to Gray’s mother and all his money to his son.

It was a lot of money.

Gray wanted to donate it all to charity so there could be some good coming out of his father’s bad deeds while he was infiltrated, but there was a clause in the will stipulating Gray needed to have at least twenty percent of the money, and even so it was more than Gray ever had.

“I did.” He agreed. “I was thinking that I could actually buy a place.”

Juvia finally looked away from the screen and looked his way from over her shoulder and she could see he was serious. The blunette sat on the bed, her eyebrows raised. “You want to buy?”
“Yeah.” He shrugged. “I have zero idea of what else to do with the money and I don’t have any intention to leave Magnolia. Buying actually works.”

“Oh.” Juvia said. His logic made sense in the end, but she was surprised Gray wanted something that permanent. “I guess.”

“So… how is this done?” Gray asked, crossing his arms over his chest. “Do we look up online, on the papers, hire someone…?”

“Uh… I think it’s better to go to a real estate agent, tell them what you want so they can find the best options for you. It’s a bit more expensive, but…”

“It’s easier that way.” Gray nodded. “Got it. Let’s find an apartment so we can leave the hotel and then we’ll get a real estate agent.” He kissed her quickly. “Now let’s go to sleep.”

“Sure.” Juvia closed the laptop and got up from the bed, putting the computer on the couch and taking Gray’s towel with her to the bathroom to hang it there – it appeared he hadn’t lost the habit of throwing his wet towel anywhere while he was away.

Chuckling with the thought, Juvia exited the bathroom and walked towards the bed, where Gray had already made himself comfortable on the top of the covers.

“What are you laughing at?” Gray asked, raising an eyebrow.

“You.” Juvia chuckled when she saw him get confused. Juvia kneeled on the bed and moved his way, putting one leg on each side of his hips and rested the top of her body on his.

“Me? What did I do?” His hands went to her hips.

“You just can’t walk two meters and hang your towel in the bathroom.” She kissed him lightly. “Is this a pre-setting of men?”

“Probably.” Gray chuckled. “Alongside with never putting the toilet’s seat down.” Juvia started to giggle and she hid her face under his chin while he caressed her back slowly. They stayed in silence for a few moments until Gray spoke. “So, what do you want?”

“Hm?”

“House, apartment? We need to tell the agent that at least.”

Juvia raised her head to look at him. “What Juvia wants? You are the one buying.”

“Yeah, I’m buying but you’ll be living there with me.” Gray frowned and sat, bringing Juvia with him so she was seated on his thighs and they were face to face and suddenly he didn’t seem so sure.

“Won’t you?”

The blunette blinked two times before answering. “When I thought we were renting an apartment, sure. But you want to buy, that’s very permanent. Do you think we should? Last time you – I am not bringing this up to fight or anything – but last time you left when…” She left the phrase in the air.

“I left when I felt things were too serious, I know.” Gray sighed. “I understand why you might be feeling doubtful, but I wouldn’t tell you to come and live with me if I didn’t want you to or if I had doubts.”

Juvia studied his expression for a moment and after a few moments, put her hands on his cheeks and...
kissed him, Gray’s arms wrapped themselves around her waist and brought her closer. “If you are sure—”

“And I am.” Gray interrupted her and Juvia rolled her eyes when he stole a peck on the lips.

“If you are sure” she gave him a pointed look “Juvia would like to live with you, yes.” Juvia smiled and she wrapped her arms around his shoulders.

“Good.” He nodded and gave her a quick kiss. “So I’ll ask again: what do you want?” She opened her mouth, but Gray cut her off. “And stop saying you don’t get a say because the money is mine. I’ll only buy what I also like so if you say you want a farm or something, it’s not happening. I just want your opinion.”

Juvia seemed to think for a moment. “Well, apartments are more practical, I guess.”

“I didn’t ask what was more practical.” Gray pointed out, his hands leaving their places on her waist to go to her bare legs and up to her buttocks. “I asked what you want.”

The blunette smiled, shy. “I really liked living in a house when we were away.” She told him. “Juvia lived in one when she was a child and her parents were alive, it was very homey; but when I moved in with my uncle we stayed in very bare houses made for military families, so it was like living in barracks apart from the flowers some of the maids put there to make me feel better; but it never felt like home. After Juvia quit the military she always stayed in apartments.”

“So you want a house?” He asked.

She shrugged. “Maybe. Home is where the heart is, right?”

Gray hummed in agreement. “Right, but if you were to choose, you’d choose a house.” He said in a matter-of-fact tone. “I liked living in a house too. First with my mom and dad, then with my adoptive mother and Lyon. I ended up staying in apartments too when I left the military until we lived together.”

Juvia started to caress the back of his head, his hair between her fingers and he seemed to be really enjoying it. “Are you sick of apartments?”

“I guess I am.” He said. “So we’ll get a house.”

“Really?” Juvia asked with a huge smile.

“Yeah.” Gray nodded. “You will finally have a place to put all those pictures you selected from my dad’s private investigator.” Since they left so soon, Juvia never had the opportunity to print and to display the pictures she had with Gray and now with them moving in together, she could.

“And we need new pictures.” She informed him and Gray groaned in annoyance. “Come on, we need pictures of us actually looking to the camera instead of the ones that some weird guy took by hiding behind a bush.”

He made an annoyed expression. “I hate taking pictures.”

“I know.” Juvia kissed his lips sweetly. “But we need some. It’s time to have something normal for once.”

Gray snorted. “You and me normal? Good luck with that.” Juvia giggled while Gray got himself busy with kissing her cheek, down to her jaw and then her neck.
She sighed in contentment with the action, it was the furthest they had gone since they returned to Magnolia. “Gray-sama?”

“Oh?” Gray asked mindlessly, clearly more interested in biting the skin between Juvia’s neck and shoulder.

“Juvia still thinks we have to wait a bit more to have sex, but… how about getting to second base tonight?” The blunette asked and Gray stopped his actions to look up at her.

“Oh, yes.” He nodded and Juvia reached for the hem of the shirt she borrowed from Gray, pulling it off and throwing it behind her. The way his eyes darkened when he saw she was only wearing panties made Juvia feel as if her blood was boiling in her veins. His gaze focused on her breasts for a moment. “I really missed those.” Juvia rolled her eyes at how predictable he was, but then he frowned and he touched her side. “You lost weight. A lot of it. I knew it from when I held you, but I didn’t think it was so much that now I can see your ribs.” He touched the protuberances there and Juvia sighed.

She had always been a fit woman but Gray was right, she did lose a good amount of weight from her six months on her own. “Juvia will be more vigilant about her food to get the weight back.”

Gray looked up. “I’ll remind you when you forget.” Juvia nodded and Gray kissed her, the sweet kiss turning heated when his hand slid up from her ribs to her breast and Juvia moaned into the kiss and gasped when Gray broke the kiss and his lips went to her collarbone. “What else do you want?” He asked and Juvia had trouble understanding him.

“Oh?”

“The house, what else do you want?” Gray was trailing down towards the top of her breasts with kisses.

“You want to know this now?” Juvia gasped when his other hand grabbed her breast.

“It is a very important question, Juvia.” Gray said in a very condescending tone but when Juvia looked down to him, his eyes were sparkling with mischief.

“You say what you want first, then.” She said and he smiled. The next thing she knew he spun then around so Juvia was lying on the bed and he was atop of her.

“I like space.” Gray kissed Juvia between the breasts and her hands went to his hair. “Even at my old apartment I had an extra bedroom even though rarely someone used it.” He kissed the side of both breasts before speaking again. “So I want a big house.”


“Now you tell me what you want.” He said and Juvia all but pulled his hair in frustration when his lips barely brushed her nipples and she really needed him to do more than that.

“Damn it.” She whispered to herself. “A garden, so I can grow buttercups there, perhaps.”

Gray stopped his ministrations to look at her. “You want buttercups, huh?” Juvia nodded. “Alright, a big house with a garden.”

“I think we can talk about the other details later.” Juvia put her hands on Gray’s cheeks and brought him close so she could kiss him and Gray’s chuckle made Juvia smile into the kiss. It felt good to move forward.
“So this will be your new office.” Cana said showing the room to Juvia; it was roughly the same size as her old one had been but it was quite dusty yet as it would take a couple of weeks for the rebuild to be done. “Now Makarov decided that each office needed a small bathroom. There.” The brunette pointed to a door and Juvia nodded.

“This is nice.” Juvia said.

“We are getting in touch with our clients to try to bring them back to us.” Cana informed Juvia. She had spent the past year traveling around the country but was more than ready to come back to work.

“Juvia will call some of them.” The blunette said and looked across the hall where Gray was with Natsu and Lucy, looking at his own office and she smiled when Gray laughed at something Natsu said.

“So…” Cana cleared her throat and Juvia’s attention returned to her friend. “I heard about you and Gray, then you and Lucy getting out of town for a few days. How are things now? I know you two are living together but should I go kick Gray’s ass?”

“No need.” Juvia was fast to tell Cana, she was sure the brunette wouldn’t hesitate to pick a fight if Juvia was still hurt. “We talked, I forgave him and we are taking steps in the right direction now.”

Cana’s eyes narrowed as if to decide if Juvia was telling the truth or not and probably decided she was, because she gave a nod. “Alright, then. As long as you are fine. I know you are a big girl but hey, sometimes you just need to offer a friend to kick her boyfriend’s balls.”

Juvia snorted. “Please, don’t damage the merchandise.”

“Just putting it out there: if you need me I’m a great ball kicker.” She shrugged and Juvia chuckled.

“What are you laughing at?” The women heard Gray’s voice and they turned just to see him, alongside with Natsu and Lucy, coming their way.

“I was just offering Juvia my services as a friend.” Cana pretended to take off dust from her jeans. “You know, just making sure she knew I was willing to kick you in the nuts just in case she wanted to but got cold feet. I have no love for what you have in your pants like she does, so it would be easier for me.” Her brown eyes focused on Lucy. “Him too.” She pointed at Natsu. “Just say the word and I’ll do it. I have no interest in whatever he is packing.”

Gray and Natsu stopped on tracks, their eyes wide and the women actually giggled at their reaction.

“That’s not funny.” Gray finally move and went to stand next to Juvia, he was scowling but relaxed a bit when Juvia grabbed his hand.

“Yeah. Threatening a man’s junk is a low blow.” Natsu actually stayed behind Lucy, his hand on her stomach holding her close to him.

“Should we tell them, Juvia, that you promised to teach me self-defense so I can do my own kicking?” Lucy asked and Juvia smiled.

“You did?” Gray looked down to his girlfriend.

“Yes.” Juvia nodded. “She already had classes during this past year, Juvia will work her harder so she can defend herself better. Oh, and shooting too.”
“You are asking Juvia to teach you how to shoot?” Natsu sounded confused. “I already taught you the basics.”

“Yes, I know.” Lucy rolled her eyes and looked over her shoulder to her boyfriend. “Juvia is an excellent teacher, and so are you,” she added when he opened his mouth to protest “but it’s different, you know? You are emotionally attached to me as my boyfriend. Juvia is my friend, she’ll give it to me real and not cut me some slack.”

Natsu frowned and seemed in thought for a moment. “I did go easy on you, didn’t I?”

“Yes and I love you for it, but I need someone who won’t back off because, and I quote you here, ‘you look so cute when you are focused’, unquote.” Lucy told him. “The training sessions cannot end up in sex, Natsu.”

“No risk of that from me.” Juvia said, trying to be helpful.

“Yeah, that would be a risk for me.” Cana said, pensive and everyone looked at her. “What? She does look cute when she’s focused.”

“Ha, told ya!” Natsu said in Lucy’s direction. “On your face.”

Lucy’s cheeks were red but she cleared her throat and looked at her boyfriend. “So, Juvia is my teacher now. You can test me later when I’m better.”

Natsu thought it over and finally nodded. “Sounds good to me. As long as you learn how to protect yourself, Juvia is a very good option. I’ve seen her fight and it’s pretty impressive.”

“Thank you.” Juvia raised her chin in pride.

“Respect.” Natsu nodded her way.

“Well, since my nut kicking won’t be necessary as these two lovely ladies seems to be qualified for it, I need to meet with Makarov. He knows I am good with choosing furniture and I need to pick you guys’. She pointed at them. “And I love an unlimited credit card.”

“Of course you do.” Gray rolled his eyes and then looked down to his phone. “Juvia, we need to go.”

“Sure.” The blunette nodded and hugged Cana. “Sorry, we are meeting with the real estate agent. She said she has some options for us to look at.”

“Of course.” Lucy hugged Juvia. “If you see something that would be a fit for us, tell me.” Lucy winked and Juvia smiled at her friend. It had been almost a month since they returned to Magnolia and like Juvia and Gray, Lucy and Natsu were finally in good terms again and eager to keep going with their lives. Just like them, the couple was looking for a place to finally live together. Juvia and Gray had moved to a furnished apartment just a week before and they were already looking for a house both liked so they could really feel at home.

“Will do.” Juvia said and waved at Natsu while her boyfriend slapped him on the back and they went to wait for the elevator.

Once they were inside the elevator, Gray turned to Juvia: “There’s no way we are going to live next to Natsu and Lucy. Besides having Natsu close, you and Lucy will gang up on us all the time. No, Juvia. Hell no.”
“Tell me again why you separated these in two piles?” Gray asked while looking at the folders neatly separated that was on top of the nightstand next to their bed.

“The one on the right are our real options. The files on the left are the ones that are too pricy for the neighborhood they are in.” Juvia said from the bathroom while she was drying herself after her shower. “There’s no way Juvia will let you spend so much money on a house that has bad surroundings.”

Gray snorted. “Thanks, I guess.” He stayed in silence and Juvia assumed he was going through the files. Juvia put the towel around her and stepped outside the bathroom to get her clothes, but stopped when she saw Gray standing next to the bed with a folder in hands, seeming to be really interested in what he was reading and just wearing his dark underwear. “This one looks nice.”

“I haven’t really looked at the pictures, I really eliminated the options because of the locations first.” Juvia said and Gray nodded without taking his eyes of the papers.

It had been a month, her pneumonia was gone, she was going to her sessions with Mirajane and even though she was nowhere near cured, her mind was much clearer. Even Gray had sessions with Mira after so much time undercover and every time he came home, his shoulders seemed to not carry the weight of the world on them. They were looking for a house together, FT would open again in two weeks, she had been exercising with Gajeel so she could be in shape, she also met with Lucy regularly to train her. Everything was on track.

Except one small thing.

Juvia bit her lip when she looked at him; he looked so handsome, always did, and she really missed being with him. It was the last step for her life become normal again. Gray was very respectful when she’d push him away when they were making out and things got heated; he would take deep breaths and just excuse himself to go to the bathroom take care of himself. She wanted to be with him again, she really did but she was waiting, she just didn’t know for what.

“This one has a basement.” He looked over his shoulder in her direction and smiled. “I never had a house with a basement before. And don’t worry, this one was on the pre-approved pile but I won’t be too attached to it.”

“Juvia will make an appointment so we can visit them soon.”

Gray nodded and his attention returned to the file. “Good. This apartment is nice but it’s not ours. I just want to get our own home and settle there.”

Then it was clear to Juvia what she was waiting for: all she wanted was for him to say those words with no pressure whatsoever, without him trying to impress her to make amends, trying to make it up to her.

Her stomach was filled with butterflies; her heart was beating fast and her eyes were suddenly stinging and she had to blink the tears away.

Juvia walked his way and hugged his waist from behind, her arms crossing on top of his stomach, her head resting between his shoulder blades.

“Uh…” She heard him. “Juvia?”

“Hm?”
“Not that I mind, but what are you doing?” He asked and she could feel him moving, probably putting the file back to the top of the nightstand.

“I’m happy.” The blunette whispered and tightened her hold on him.

“Oh. Good.” He put a hand over hers on his stomach. “That’s good to hear.”

Juvia stayed hugging him for a moment before she moved one of her arms away so she could touch a scar he had on his right shoulder.

“Juvia hasn’t asked about this before.” Gray looked over his shoulder, confused. “There’s a scar here.” She touched it and kissed a moment later.

“Oh, right. I got that during my first week undercover.” He shrugged. “There was this underground fight club I had to go to so my cover could be believable. I was winning but then this asshole gets a knife out of nowhere and stabbed me.”

“You were stabbed?” Juvia asked, letting go of him and turning him around.

“Not as deep as it seems, don’t worry.” He frowned when he saw her eyes water. “Hey, what’s wrong?”

“You were being stabbed and here I was, yelling at you for being left behind.” She said in a low voice. “You were hurt.”

Gray reached for her and put his arms around her in a hug. “Juvia, stop that. Look, I can handle physical pain because it goes away. This one on my shoulder wasn’t life threatening at all. Do you know what hurts more? The scars inside and I know I left some in here.” He pointed to her left chest, right where her heart was. “And I can’t erase those just like my dad couldn’t erase the ones in my own heart when he came back.” Gray reached for her hand and kissed her palm. “But you know what, I actually like my scars.” He pointed to his forehead. “This one was the day Lyon and I finally started to talk again after one hell of a beating.” He pointed to his hip. “This is from Ultear from that day at Tenrou. I finally made her understand how much her mother loved her.” He pointed to the round scars on his chest. “These ones are from the day I didn’t lose you. I’m really fond of those, actually.”

Juvia smiled and dried a tear while Gray was looking at her with such care she all but melted in his arms. “You really should take better care of your body.” She mumbled.

“I don’t care where I get hurt as long as my injuries are visible.” He kissed her softly. “So don’t get all worked up about me being hurt. It’s in the past now.” Gray was about to let her go when Juvia put her hands on his cheeks and pulled him to a kiss.

Gray looked surprised for a second but was quick to reciprocate the kiss as soon as he got his wits back. Juvia needed him to hold her, to touch her and to make her feel like the world was right again. She was finally ready to be with him completely.

Juvia stopped kissing him and pulled him by the hand towards the bed and Gray let himself be handled. She made him sit on it before she took a step back and took off the towel that was around her torso, letting it fall on the floor; she was totally naked in front of him.

She saw his eyes widen and then look up to her, but she lost no time and a moment later she was straddling him and kissing him with all the passion she was feeling, the passion that had been built up for months.
“Juvi-ah.” He moaned when Juvia kissed a sensitive spot under his ear and felt her hand travel from his chest to his abdomen and lower towards his crotch. “Wait, wait, wait.” He put his hands on her shoulder.

“What is it?” Juvia was breathing hard and looked at him with confusion.

“You- this-” Gray was struggling to get a coherent thought. “It’s been a month since I came back and we haven’t done anything… besides you taking off your shirt and me kissing you, we haven’t-”

“Juvia is very well aware of that.” She frowned.

“You said we shouldn’t.” He took a deep breath and put his hands on her hips and pushed her away from his growing erection – he had been seven months without sex, he pretty much looked at her and was excited at that point. “You said you needed time before we had sex.”

“Yes.” Juvia agreed. “And now Juvia has had her time.”

He studied her expression for a few seconds. “What changed?” Gray asked gently. “Just last night you pushed me away when we were kissing.”

Juvia put a hand on his cheeks and smiled. “Juvia realizes you are really looking forward to this next step of our lives and… I don’t know. It was what I needed to hear.”

“You thought I didn’t mean it?” He asked and Juvia shook her head.

“No, it’s not that. I know you did.” She touched her forehead on his. “I needed for you to say it when you were not trying to make it up for the time you were gone. I… wanted for you to be excited, to want this just like I do.”

“I do too.” He told her and Juvia nodded.

“I know. I know.” She whispered. “But I just heard you call it our place, and you wanted to get home soon. I didn’t know it was what I wanted to hear until you said it.”

He narrowed his eyes and studied her. “Just like that?”

Juvia smiled. “I know it makes no sense, but yes, just like that.”

One of Gray’s hands went from her hip to the small of her back and pulled her closer to him and Juvia felt a rush of hotness through her veins when she felt his half-awake erection pressing on her and the only thing between them was his underwear.

“Juvia, if you are doing this because you think I-” He couldn’t finish because she put a finger on his lips.

“Juvia is doing this because she wants you very much. I’ve wanted to be with you every time you kissed me, but I just needed…” She sighed. “I needed time for us to feel like us again.”

“You feel it now?” Gray asked.

Juvia smiled and nodded, bringing him closer, their noses touching. “We are us again.”

Gray was trying to fight a smile, but couldn’t by the end. “Good to know.” He said. “So, if I kiss you right now, if I touch you…” His hand caressed its way from her hips to her waist. “You’ll let me go all the way?” His eyes darkened and Juvia could feel her heart beat faster.
“Yes.” She muttered and Gray’s lips were on hers in a desperate kiss. He was kissing her as if she would vanish at any moment. Juvia’s arms wrapped themselves around his shoulders, one of her hands in his hair while Gray kissed her to an inch of her life for a few minutes, not letting her get a straight thought as he caressed his way from her waist to her ass, groping it. “Oh.” Juvia said, breathless, but Gray kissed her again and she was helpless to say anything.

She was finally able to breathe when he started to kiss her jaw and down to her neck, her collarbone and the top of her right breast. Juvia moaned loudly when Gray’s mouth found her nipple, her hands grabbing his hair even harder and her hips moved against his by instinct, feeling her blood start to boil. God, she had missed him.

“Fuck.” Gray whispered and he put his hands on her hips, slowing her movements. “Slower, Juvia.”

“Can’t” Juvia said, rubbing herself on his erection harder than before and she felt his hands grab her harder. “Want you.”

“Oh, god.” He moaned and let her kiss him while moving, her sex sliding on his and the thin underwear did little to buffer the sensations. “No, no, no.” Gray said after a few moments of indulgence and his hands finally stilled her, much to her frustration; she was really enjoying it. He took two deep breaths before speaking again. “Juvia, slow down. It’s been seven months; my control is really slipping.”

“I know.” Juvia told him and kissed his jaw, then towards his ear. She bit his earlobe and felt him shudder underneath her. “Fast now, slow later.” She whispered and Gray gasped.

“You are going to kill me.” Gray groaned in annoyance and spun them around so Juvia was lying on her back and he was on top of her. His eyes were dark and full of promises, she had no doubt how much he wanted her. He kissed her lips and Juvia moaned when she widened her legs to accommodate him better and he started to move slowly, grinding himself on her in a much slower pace. Gray started to kiss her neck and Juvia had to bite her lower lip to not gasp out loud when Gray slid his hand between them and touched her sex, rubbing her for a few moments before slowly inserting a finger in her easily with her wetness.

Juvia’s body arched when Gray’s mouth enclosed on her breast, his teeth scraping the soft skin of her nipple at the same time he inserted a second finger inside her while his thumb touched her clit lightly. “Gray-sama.” She moaned his name. “More.” His humming of agreement made her gasp, since his mouth was still on her breast. “This feels so good.” She managed to say before Gray curled his finger the perfect way that hit the most amazing spot inside her and his mouth went to her other breast. “Oh, oh, oh.”

“God, I missed the sounds you make.” Gray said, his lips on her skin and moving his fingers faster, his thumb circling her clit and Juvia’s brain was melting. “Juvia…” He said and she opened her eyes to look at him, his teeth closing in her breast and she felt another rush of wetness in her core. “I need you right now.”

She nodded. “Yes. Yes, now.”

Gray got up and took off his underwear so fast Juvia barely missed him; a second later he was kissing her and his hips were moving, his erection finally free and Juvia felt it sliding over her sex and she was feeling very impatient, her whole body was on fire and all she wanted was to be close to Gray again.

Sliding a hand between them, Juvia’s heart beat a little faster when she curled her hand around his shaft and Gray had to stop kissing her to moan out loud. His forehead rested on her shoulder as she
slid her hand up and down a few times, feeling incredibly powerful to know that even after all that
time, he still melted when she touched him.

“Juvia.” Gray said between gritted teeth and she stopped moving her hand, guiding him to her
opening. The moment it touched her, Juvia let go of his shaft as Gray slowly slid inside her, filling
her exactly like she remembered and she put her hands on his lower back, trying to hurry him up.
“Holy-” He groaned but didn’t stop until he was deep in her. “Fuck, you feel so good.” Gray kissed
her neck and his hips started to move so he could slide in and out of her, her nails dug on the skin of
his lower back.

The blunette couldn’t have hold on the moans even if she tried; she had missed him so much, missed
the way he made her feel alive, everywhere he touched seemed to turn into fire. He kissed her lips
and Juvia moved her arms to his upper back and tried to hold on to him, even if she wanted to touch
him everywhere.

“Gray-sama.” Juvia breathed when they stopped kissing and Gray’s lips found her breast, and even
though it felt really good, she needed more. “Oh. Faster. Please, faster.” She managed to say and
Gray looked up to her, his hips stopped and he kissed her lips lightly and then looked right into her
eyes when he started to thrust into her faster. Juvia wished she could’ve stayed looking at him, but
the sensation of him hitting her sweet spot made her close her eyes in delight, while being a little too
loud to her liking.

“God, you are made for me.” Gray groaned, his forehead resting on hers, their breathing mixing, lips
touching occasionally. “I know it makes no fucking sense, but you are.” He groped her chest, her
nipple rolling between his fingers and Juvia didn’t know she could be more turn on than she already
was, but her body surprised her when she contracted around him and Gray moaned as result. “Fuck,
I missed you so much. I dreamt about you, how you felt, your taste, the way you touched me.
Dammit, I dreamt about the way you smiled and I would wake up almost bursting, Juvia.” He told
her, the words tumbling from his mouth and she knew he probably didn’t even know he was
speaking out loud. She crossed her legs over his ass and suddenly he slid a little deeper and Juvia
gasped in surprise. “Made for me.” Each word was emphasized with a hard snap of his hips on hers.

“Please, Gray-sama.” Juvia could feel her climax approaching, apparently hearing him was a huge
turn-on to her. “So close.”

Gray kissed her hard on the mouth, sloppy but full of passion and she knew he was just as close as
she was. “Juvia. Juvia. Juvia.” He repeated her name as if it were a prayer. “You are mine. I’ll never
leave again.” He told her and Juvia nodded, her nails digging into his shoulders… she just need a
little push. Just a little something and she would fall from the ledge. He probably knew how close
she was, because his rhythm faltered when he released her breast and his hand found her clit and the
moment he touched it lightly, Juvia let out a loud moan, her eyes closing. “Look at me. Fuck, Juvia,
let me see you.”

Juvia had difficulty, but opened her eyes and she couldn’t remember seeing him more beautiful than
at that moment: cheeks rosy, some of his hair was glued to his forehead and he was looking at her
with such beautiful dark eyes and behind all the lust, she could see his deep care for her, his feelings.

“Look at me.” He told her, pinched her clit with his fingers and Juvia’s world burned from within
her.

From the back of her mind, Juvia knew she had keened loudly with her release, that she teared up,
that she had held on to Gray so hard he’d have marks and that her whole body had bent his direction;
but she didn’t care at all, not when she knew Gray had just reached his pleasure as well by the way
he stopped on top of her, not every cell of her body was in ecstasy, her mind was blank and she was
just a bundle of feelings.

She could hear her heartbeats in her ears, Gray’s hot breath tickled her neck since he had his face hidden on the juncture between her neck and shoulder, his weight on her and his seed, warm in her.

Gathering every fiber of will she had, Juvia finally relaxed her hands so she wasn’t clinging to him too much and one of her hands went to caress his hair while the other moved around his back, just wanting to feel his warmth underneath her palms.

After a few moments, Juvia felt his lips on her collarbone, kissing it and he started to move slowly, first exiting her. He lifted his upper body, putting the weight on his forearms and when he raised his head to look at her, Juvia smiled at him and he did the same, such a ridiculous beautiful happy smile Juvia just had to put her hands on his cheeks and bring him closer so she could kiss him slowly, trying to pour her feelings into it.

During her bad days back when she was alone, she wondered if she would ever see him again, kiss him or just hold him. And there she was, Gray in her arms and completely happy after making love to him.

The moment they broke the kiss and they stared at each other again, Gray frowned and touched her cheek, worried. “What’s wrong?”

“Huh?” She didn’t understand why he would ask her that.

“You are crying.” He told her gently.

“Oh?” Juvia didn’t even realize she was crying until she touched her cheeks. She dried her face the best she could while Gray looked at her every move, looking anxious. “Nothing is wrong.” She smiled. “Nothing at all.”

“But—”

“These are happy tears.” The blunette told him, her smile even brighter. He was clearly hesitating to believe her. “Very happy tears. Juvia is happy to be here with you after all this time and sometimes people get so happy they can’t bottle it up inside.”

After a moment studying her expression, Gray relaxed and nodded. “I’m happy too.” He kissed her lips slowly and then returned to his position of lying on top of her, his face pressed against her neck. Juvia knew they had to clean up before they slept, but they needed the proximity with the other.

“You were quite chatty tonight.” She said and giggled when he groaned, probably in embarrassment of his words.

“Seven months, Juvia. Seven months.”

If Juvia thought they were at it like rabbits after they started sleeping together two years before, she just couldn’t find a good comparison for them now. At the beginning, they didn’t share the bed for the rest of the night and there were nights they stayed apart. But living together and had just rekindle their sexual relationship, they just couldn’t get enough.

Every surface in the apartment they had rented seemed just as much of a good place as any for one of them to throw the other and just have their way. Gray said they needed to make it up for the time they were apart and both were taking it very seriously. They almost lost the appointment with the real
estate agent because Gray stepped in the shower with Juvia, slid in her from behind and didn’t stop until she had come twice.

Really, Juvia was sure she was living the dream. She looked to her right where Gray was seated next to her in the car while the real estate agent drove and her intern sat on the passenger’s seat. She just had been with him two hours before and yet just couldn’t wait to get him alone again.

“This house fits all your criteria.” The real estate agent, Harriet said while parking the car. She was a woman in her early fifties, greying hair up in tight bun, very expressive brown eyes and a charming smile. She looked to the backseat where Juvia and Gray were. “The owners’ had to move, apparently one of the husbands got a better job offer and the whole family moved there. Beautiful couple, adorable children and the house is gorgeous. Shall we?” She asked and then exited the car, the intern following.

Juvia opened the door and was about to get out when she felt Gray get way too close to her and whisper: “I can’t wait to get you home so I can taste every inch of your skin.”

“Gray-sama!” Juvia hissed and looked over her shoulder to she could face him, but he was looking as angelic as he could. “How on earth did you become even worse than Juvia? We’ll be alone in a few hours.”

“I was sex starved for months. I’m just catching up.” He shrugged.

“Well, behave yourself for two more hours.” She hopped off the car and leaned when he put his legs out the car, but didn’t get up. “If you do behave, Juvia will be the one tasting your skin.” She looked at him very pointedly, she saw the moment he caught her meaning and his eyes darkened. Knowing she had just bought two hours of good behavior, she walked to where Harriet waited for them.

Knowing he was following, Juvia took a moment to look at the house in front of her and her eyes widened. It was such a beautiful home she couldn’t help but to look at it in amazement. The house had two stores, it was painted in light yellow, the garden wasn’t too big, but very well-kept. The windows of what seemed to be the living room were big and at the second store there was a balcony.

“This looks nice.” Gray said, putting his arm around her waist. He looked down to her and probably saw how excited she was when she looked at him. “I take you like it.”

“We need to look inside.” Juvia tried to calm herself down. She had told herself that she would let Gray decide, since he was the one buying. She would give him her opinion only if required.

“Alright.” Gray nodded and the couple followed Harriet, who had managed to get the door open and was waiting for them.

The moment Juvia stepped inside, she knew this was it. She didn’t even hear Harriet’s explanations about the house, like Gray was. If she could ever pick up a place to live with him, that was the house. Like she predicted, the large windows were located at the living room so it was very well illuminated and there was a large door at its other side. The kitchen looked really good as well, not too large but with enough space for two people cooking at the same time. The island in the middle was really a bonus, Juvia thought. There was also a guest bedroom, a bathroom and the pantry, all with good sizes.

When they reached the first floor and Juvia saw the master bedroom, she just wished to move in at that very moment. It was a large room Juvia could easily see in her mind what she would do with it if possible. There was a walk-in closet large enough so she wouldn’t fight with Gray for space in case he got the house and the bathroom had a large bathtub Juvia just knew she would love to relax in.
The balcony she had seen before they entered the house belonged to the master bedroom and it gave the room a good touch.

There were two rooms more besides the master bedroom and they were in a considerable size, plus a bathroom and a small office.

Juvia noticed Gray’s glances at her every time they saw a room and she was aware he was storing her reactions for later. She smiled, though, when Gray got really excited about the basement and tried to control himself.

Later, when Harriet left them in the living room so they could talk, Gray crossed his arms over his chest and raised his chin in Juvia’s direction. “Tell me.”

“It’s… nice.” Juvia tried to look nonchalant about it.

Gray raised an eyebrow and didn’t look convinced at all. “Yeah, as if I don’t know when you are lying. Try again.”

“It’s your money, Gray-sama, it’s your decision.”

He pushed her words aside. “Yeah, yeah, yeah, you said that two hundred times and my answer the two hundred times was: don’t care, tell me your opinion.” When she didn’t say anything, he helped her. “You really liked, didn’t you?”

Juvia thought about dodging the question, but knew it would be for naught. “Yes. This house is… amazing. Close to perfect, really.”

“That’s what I thought.” Gray snorted. “I liked too, the owners repaired every damage they could find to sell it in great condition and it is. I’m actually surprised with the quality of the work.” They stayed in silence for a few seconds. “Should I put an offer?” She opened her mouth. “Don’t say it again. Just give me your opinion, you’ll live here too if I get it.”

The blunette looked around the living room. “Do we really need this much space? There are three rooms upstairs plus the office and there’s another one down here.”

“I told you I like space.” Gray shrugged. “We had our altercations during these past couple of years, thank god it’s not too frequent, but if we get into a fight, at least I’ll have a place to sleep other than the couch.”

Juvia rolled her eyes. “Juvia wouldn’t make you sleep on the couch.”

“Not with three other bedrooms, you wouldn’t.” Gray shrugged and tried to hide a smile. “Look, we will probably have guests from time to time and if not, we’ll give Snowball her own room.” Juvia snorted at that. “You can have the office upstairs to do whatever you want with it, I’ll get the basement.”

“You’ll turn the basement into a man-cave, won’t you?”

“Absolutely.” Gray didn’t hesitate to answer. “I’ll even add some mats on the floor to have a training area. You are invited to join me.”

Juvia chuckled and stepped close to him, wrapped her arms around his middle. “Thank you, very gallant of you.”

“There is a garden, like you wanted.” He pointed towards the front of the house. “I can see it from
here. You can grow your buttercups there. We’ll have to find if there are holes in the fence that Snowball can escape, but I think that if we keep the gate closed, she’s fine.”

“You really thought about all that?” Juvia was surprised.

“I told you I like the house.” He shrugged. “I just want to know if you liked as much as I did.”

Juvia couldn’t help but to smile. “I really did.”

“Good.” Gray nodded. “The others we saw were fine, but I feel good about this one.”

“I do too.” Juvia agreed with him and she rested her chin on his chest so she could look up to him. “If we end up living here, Juvia will need to get a car. The bus stop is too far and walking is not an option, the firm is quite far and Juvia won’t get a ride on your motorcycle every day, no matter how hot you think I become.”

“Makes sense, when we lived nearby we walked to work. Good thing the garage was space for two cars.” He agreed. “But let’s worry about this later if we get it. I’ll put up an offer, since we both felt so strongly about this house.” Juvia laughed and he frowned. “What?”

“God, we are so grown up talking about buying houses, and cars.” She told him. “Three years ago I had a one-bedroom apartment, lived alone and never dreamed of living with someone.”

“I can relate to that.” Gray chuckled. “I ate a lot of take-out between missions, the only thing I enjoyed other than work was taking care of my motorcycle. Really, before you she was the woman of my life.”

Juvia laughed. “You traded it up, then.”

“I’m still in doubt about that.” Gray said and Juvia faked offence, hitting him on the chest and he laughed. “Fine, I traded it up.”

“Good.” The blunette laughed and tip-toed to kiss him. “Congratulations on growing up, Mr. Fullbuster.”

“And you too.” Gray told her. “Now let’s talk with Harriet about money.” Juvia agreed and she grabbed his hand,

“Hey, did you see there’s a house a street down that’s on sale too? Should we tell Lucy-san?”

“Dear god, no.”

#

The day they found out Gray got the house Juvia was so happy she couldn’t believe it. Gray looked so proud of himself it was so cute, like he had won adulthood, and Juvia couldn’t stop giggling when she remembered his expression when Harriet called telling him he needed to sign a few papers and the house was his.

Even though he could’ve gone on his own, Gray insisted Juvia went with him to sign the papers and she was actually very excited about it.

“Hello!” Harriet greeted them at her office and told them to sit down. “Just a few signatures and the house will be in your name in a few days.”

“Great.” Gray nodded. “How long do you think we need to wait? We really want to move in as soon
as possible.”

“I’ll see what I can do. Perhaps in a couple of days you can move it.” Harriet told them and put a pile of documents in front of Gray. “Yes, I know it’s a lot, but at least you’ll have an amazing home after we are done.” She pointed to a line and Gray signed, then she gave it to Juvia. “Here, Miss Lockser.”

“Me?” Juvia frowned. “You need witness or something?”

Harriet looked confused. “I need the signatures of both of you, since the house is in both of your names.”

Juvia took a moment to understand the words. “The house is what?” She looked in Gray’s direction and by the way he was staring at the document he was going to sign so intently; he was more than guilty. “Gray-sama, what is she talking about?”

“Well,” he cleared his throat “you are going to live there with me, why not have your name on the papers too?”

“Because it’s your money-”

“My dad’s money.”

“So the house is yours!” She pretended not to hear his interruption.

“Yes, it’s mine and I decided half of it is yours. And it’s not like I’m poor, I wasn’t even supposed to have this money. Now sign, there are a lot of papers left.”

“Wait, wait, wait.” She stopped him. “You can’t just do that, put my name on your house-”

“Our house.”

“And say it’s mine too.”

He pointed to the pile in front of him. “All these papers say I can.”

“Oh, god.” She moaned in annoyance. “Gray-sama-”

“Juvia.” Gray said serious. “Look, I did this because I wanted to show you I am committed, that you and I are in for the long haul.”

The blunette shook her head. “Juvia doesn’t need papers to-”

“Well, but I do.” He told her. “I know you believe the best you can in my word that I am not leaving, but I just wanted to give you a formal proof and this is it. This is gonna be our house, with both our names on the papers so it’s a promise or whatever. I told you I am not leaving again and I won’t. Just sign the papers so Harriet can stop looking confused to why we are arguing.” He looked back to the paper and signed his name. “Just sign.”

Juvia couldn’t believe her ears. Gray… he wanted to give her physical proof of their commitment to each other and his way was both of them owning a house, the place they would really start their life together.

The ridiculous adorable man, just when she thought she couldn’t love him more.

She dried some happy tears and turned to Harriet. “Can you lend me a pen, please?” The older
woman gave one to Juvia and she signed her name on one of the papers Gray had already signed. “Juvia will buy all of our furniture since you bought our house and I know you won’t let me pay for my half.” She said casually and by the corner of her eye she saw his body relax, as if he thought Juvia was going to reject his idea. Was that why he didn’t ask her? Was he afraid she’d say ‘no’? Oh, they really needed to talk.

“Sounds fair.” He signed another document and she saw him trying to hide a smile.

“And we are so arguing about this later.” Juvia told him.

Gray nodded and signed a paper. “ Wouldn’t have it any other way.”

#

“Thank you for all the help.” Juvia hugged Lucy and waved good-bye in Natsu’s way before closing the front door. Everyone from FT had helped them move in and even though most of their things from storage were sold since Juvia decided to buy new furniture, there were a lot of small things from their old apartments they would keep, so there were boxes all around the house. And their luggage.

At least the store had delivered their furniture so they wouldn’t sleep on the floor that night. Instead, they would spend the night at the queen size bed Juvia bought. Well, Gray said he liked his space.

“Are they all gone?” Gray asked when he reached the last step of the stairs. Juvia nodded and wrapped her arms around his middle. “I’m so tired.”

“Me too.” He rested his chin on the top of her head. “Please, tell me we won’t be doing anything else tonight. I really think we deserve to eat the rest of the pizza, take a hot bath and then sleep for twelve hours.” Juvia chuckled.

“We don’t need to do anything else tonight. If I start, god knows when I’ll stop.” She kissed his lips. “Thankfully the microwave is already in place and there’s enough pizza for us.” Juvia walked towards their kitchen and started to go through the boxes, getting the forgotten pieces.

As payment for their help to move in, Gray and Juvia had bought pizza and beer to the helpers and it was quite a good evening, everyone laughing and helping one another. Really, one of the best days she had since her return.

Juvia heard Gray stop behind her as she put the food inside the microwave and set the timer. “Did you hear that Lucy-san and Natsu-san are thinking of getting that house one street over?”

“Hooray.” Gray’s voice was so dry Juvia had to smile, he really wasn’t enjoying the idea of living so close to the couple.

“Don’t be like that.” She looked over her shoulder. “They are our friends.” He groaned in agreement and Juvia chuckled. “Oh, and the picture we took earlier is so getting printed!” Juvia beamed in happiness while Gray rolled his eyes.

They had arrived quite early at the house and when they were about to get in, Lucy, who had come with them to help clean up, told them to wait. Confused, the couple watched as the blonde took her phone and said: “You two need a picture of your first day here!” Juvia agreed it was a great idea and even though Gray was really annoyed with it, he agreed.

What Juvia didn’t expect, though, was for him to sweep her from the ground, bridal style and wait for Lucy to take a picture. When Juvia asked what he was doing, Gray just shrugged and told her
“The guy carries the girl inside, right? Oh, hey Lucy’s trying to get your attention, let’s do this.”

Juvia had smiled so widely she was afraid to have pulled something, and then when Lucy was satisfied with the pictures, Gray had carried her inside.

The whole day had been a dream coming true.

“Just don’t put up pictures of me looking ridiculous.” Gray told her.

She gasped in fake outrage. “I would never.” He snorted and she giggled. Juvia’s attention went to the microwave when it beeped, but Gray stopped her before she could move. “Gray-sama?” She asked, confused.

Gray was looking at her, his eyes really focused on her and… were his cheeks getting pinker? That made no sense.

“Just listen to me, okay?” He asked and Juvia nodded. Gray cleared his throat and his voice came out low, as if he was ashamed. No, not as if, he was really being shy. “Last time we moved in together wasn’t because we really chose to, we didn’t think about it, it just happened. It was nice and all, but then I got scared and took the first opportunity to leave to try to figure out what was happening to me. I have no idea what my plan was, really. I just chickened out and left.

“You know me, you know I don’t do this kind of crap, I don’t like talking feelings because I assume you already know. This time, though, I really need to say it because I won’t do that again, if I get cold feet I know I can talk to you because we are on the same page about that.” Juvia nodded, a few weeks before he had told her she was the most important person in his life. “And, well, since today we are officially starting to live together for a long time, I’ll just tell you because you should hear it so there are no doubts whatsoever about my intentions here.

“I don’t want to say this when one of us is in the field, dying in the other arms. I don’t want for you to hear it if something bad happens, as if I hadn’t realized before that moment. Because I didn’t, you know? I realized it a while ago but just didn’t want to admit to myself, much less to you. You have so much power over me, you don’t even know.” He snorted. “Anyway, what I am trying to say is that I love you. I’ve loved you for a while and I intend to keep it that way for a long time.”

Juvia’s eyes widened and her world stopped. Did he just…? Did he say…? He couldn’t. Did he? No. It couldn’t be. She was dreaming, that was for sure.

“You…” She managed to whisper, her eyes watering. “Don’t say that if you don’t mean it.”

“If I hadn’t meant it, I wouldn’t have said it.” He shrugged, trying to be nonchalant about it, but she saw his cheeks become even redder. “And you knew this, Juvia. I told you how important you are to me.”

Of course, she knew deep down exactly what he meant, instinctively she was aware of her role in his life, she knew his feelings were much deeper.

But hearing him say those three little words…

The next thing Juvia knew was that she had thrown her arms around Gray’s shoulders and kissing him on the lips. Gray held her and kissed her back. Juvia could feel her tears fall while they were kissing, but she was so happy, so happy she couldn’t keep it together.

“I love you too.” She kissed him again. “I love you so much.” She gave him a peck on the lips. “You have no idea how much I love you.”
“Stop crying.” He told her. “I hate when I make you cry.”

“I can’t.” Juvia laughed through her tears. “Juvia is so happy…” She cried harder. “I’ve waited for so long to hear that.”

“Sorry I-”

“No, no.” She shook her head. “Juvia loves you just like that. You had your own time to figure it out and I’m so glad you did.” Juvia kissed him again. “Oh, god, you just made me the happiest woman alive.”

Gray just held her as she laughed and kissed him again and again. She would need a while to convince herself she wasn’t dreaming, and if she were, she hoped she wouldn’t wake up.

She was living her dream.

Chapter End Notes

You have no idea how long I’ve been waiting for him to say those words to her. I feel so accomplished! Lol I hope the fluff was okay, they had been through a lot and needed a break. HAHA

So, guys, about the Alvarez arc: I really need to read it all again to see if I can incorporate it to the story and even if I do, I will have to diverge from the canon more than I already did. This story has about 3 or four chapters left (it depends on the sizes) and I truly intend to finish it in December *crosses fingers* and I don’t think the arc will be finished at the manga by then. So, I’ll take even more liberties with the plot, but trust me, I have planned Juvia’s “death” already, so there’s a spoiler for you. lol
Juvia parked her car in the garage and grabbed her purse and a bag of groceries before exiting the SUV. She walked between hers and Gray’s car and pressed the control to close the garage door, she saw Gray’s motorcycle in a corner and Juvia snorted.

A week after Juvia had bought her car, Gray told her he was getting one too; he loved his bike but he didn’t want to go to work with Juvia whenever was raining and he wasn’t in the mood to put his special clothes. The motorcycle, then, was put aside to special moments but Juvia caught Gray pampering the ride more times than she could count.

It made her jealous sometimes, really.

So, he bought the same model as Juvia’s car, since he had been the one to pick up the best option for his girlfriend: safe, practical, reliable and with a beautiful design. He chose a different color, though, hers being dark blue and his, black.

Juvia got inside the house and she frowned when she smelled the amazing scent of sauce and then she heard the distinguished sound of someone using a knife in a wooden table.

Snowball greeted her when she got in through the back door and after Juvia had put in the security code, she talked to the dog softly before wondering inside and she raised her eyebrows when she got in the kitchen and saw Gray, shirtless, standing in front of the sink and cutting some vegetables.

“Hey.” He glanced over his shoulder and smiled her way. He had seen her arrive on the small flat-screen TV located close to the sink where they could see the feed from the cameras outside. Gray had been adamant about a good security system in their house and Juvia agreed; their job was risky and they could be targets. “How was work today?”

“Fine, Juvia saw a couple of clients but nothing too exciting.” Juvia put the bag with some groceries on the counter and then walked in Gray’s direction, putting a hand between his shoulder blades and kissing his lips lightly when he turned to look her way. “So… what did you do wrong?” The blunette asked with a resigned sigh.

Gray frowned in confusion. “I’m sorry?”

“What did you do?” Juvia asked again, stepping away from her boyfriend so she could lean on the island behind her, arms crossed over her chest. Once she saw he still looked confused, she explained her question. “You don’t cook, usually, and when you do is because you did something you shouldn’t have and you want to soften the blow before telling me.” She glanced to the stove, seeing some pasta being boiled and the sauce was almost done. “Just hit me with the truth so we can go past this and eat dinner. I do like your pasta, even if it’s guilty pasta.”
“I do not cook when I did something wrong.” Gray looked offended.

“Not every little thing, you don’t.” She shrugged. “But when’s something big and you really screw up, you do.” Gray opened his mouth to protest, but Juvia was faster. “Remember when you did the laundry and ruined my favorite coat? Juvia ate pasta that night before you told her.”

“I bought you a new one.” Gray muttered.

“You did.” She agreed. “And when you took Snowball to the wrong pet store and they shaved her when she was only supposed to get a bath? Pasta.”

“I.”

“There was that time you stole Juvia’s mission.”

“I didn’t steal-”

“You made that pasta.” She pointed to the pan on the stove. “Just admit you have a pattern, tell me what you did and let’s move on.”

Gray looked offended. “I didn’t do anything. I had the day off, got bored and decided to cook instead of waiting for you to come home. I could’ve heat up some of the stuff we have, but decided I wanted to get pasta instead.” He pointed the knife her way. “You are reading too much into simple things.”

She narrowed her eyes his way and he did the same. They kept looking at each other for a few seconds until Juvia sighed. “Okay, fine. I believe you.”

“Thank you.” Gray nodded and Juvia stepped closer to him; seeing that, he put the knife on the sink and put his arms around her when she put her hands on his chest, tip-toeing and kissing him.

“Juvia will go change her clothes and then we can have dinner.” She told him and was going to leave, when Gray’s arms tightened around her.

“I need to tell you something first.”

“And there it is!” She slapped his shoulder. “Ha, Juvia was right!”

“I didn’t do anything wrong!” Gray told her, rolling his eyes. “It didn’t even happen yet.”

She raised an eyebrow. “The guilty pasta is for something it didn’t even happen yet? That’s new.”

“Just… Stop joking for a second.” He said, serious and Juvia sobered up her mood in a second; if he was asking, then it was important. “Natsu called earlier, there’s a mission for us specifically from an old client who wants a follow-up in a job we did a few years ago.” Juvia nodded. “We figure it’s going to take at least one week to get it done. Ten days, perhaps.”

Her whole body tensed with his words.

FT had been back for almost two months by then and both of them had been doing jobs but the longest had been two days apart and even then, when Gray got home, she’d attached herself to him for a long time until she was comfortable with having him too far away from her.

“Okay, take a breath.” Gray’s hand rubbed the spot between her shoulder blades and only then she noticed her hands fisted in his chest and her breathing was shallow. “Juvia, take a deep breath.”
She looked up to him and with a nod, she did as she was told a few times until she was breathing normally again. “That’s…”

“The longest we’d be apart since I came back, yes.” Gray said, calm, his thumbs caressing her back in circles to try to calm her down. “Juvia, it’s nothing like last time. I will come back.”

“You came back last time too, just took a long time.” She told him. “A very long time.”

Gray sighed. “Juvia, you know this was coming. I’ve been saying no to a lot of missions so I don’t spend too long apart from you, but you know most of our jobs is about traveling and spending a few days away.” He put a hand on her cheek. “I told you I wouldn’t leave again without talking to you, so here we are. If you tell me you need more time to get used to the idea, I will tell Natsu to go on his own or to get someone else but you need to trust me to come back.”

“Juvia trusts you.” The blunette nodded and her curls bounced. Her voice was low and she moved her hands from his chest to his neck and jaw. “In her mind, she knows this is not like last time. You are speaking to me, you are giving me a timeframe, you’ll tell me where you are going. Last time you just vanished. It’s already different.” Even with her best efforts, her eyes watered but thankfully she didn’t cry. “There’s this awful little voice inside my mind, though, reminding me of everything I thought when I was alone, every dark thought. It says you won’t come back this time and it scares me when a tiny little part of me agrees with it even knowing it’s not true.”

“It’s not.” Gray said in a decisive tone and he was scowling. “I don’t like this little voice in here, very annoying and makes me repeat myself and I hate that.” He pointed to her temple. “So, whenever you listen that voice, I need you to remember what I told you because I’m not going to be with you every second. You are the most important person in my life; no matter what happens I won’t leave you behind. I’m here with you for the long haul.”

“Okay.” Juvia nodded weakly, her heart beating faster and there was a warm feeling spreading through her chest, like it always did when Gray talked about his feelings for her; she’d have to tell herself that a few times to shut the little voice inside her head, though.

“Okay.” Gray agreed. “Now, what about the mission? Should I take it or you think you need more time?”

Juvia bit her lower lip and gave it a moment’s thought. Her fears, although understandable, were not well funded.

When Gray disappeared, he hadn’t said a word to Juvia, too conflicted with his own feelings. Instead, he fled. That time, it had hurt her so deeply she shut herself down, according to Mirajane. Now, Gray was sure of his feelings for her, he was talking to her, giving her an option. She wasn’t being left behind, she was being consulted before Gray needed to go and take a job offer. Her opinion mattered.

It was nothing like before, no matter how much the annoying dark voice inside her head screamed it was.

“You’ll call me? So Juvia can know where you are?” She asked and even though she might sound like a very clingy girlfriend, she needed that comfort at least.

“Yes.” Gray agreed. “I’ll probably manage to call you once a day, but if you need to talk to me I’d rather you text, you never know if a phone call can make a person get unwanted attention and it might compromise the op.”
The blunette nodded, it made sense. “Alright.” She gulped. “Alright, you should go. You’ll have to go at some point, pushing it will only made me get used to you here all the time and make it harder later.”

“Are you sure?”

“No.” Juvia told him honestly. “Juvia will probably freak out every day until you call, but we need to go through this. Things are almost one hundred percent normal, we need to take this step. I need to take this step.” Gray nodded. “But if you are not back on the tenth day, Juvia will go after you.”

“I wouldn’t expect anything less.” He snorted and kissed her. “Don’t miss your appointments with Mira this week, alright? Let her help you.”

“Yes.”

“You and Lucy had a whole thing with this, so if you need anything I’m sure she—”

“Yes, yes, yes.” Juvia smiled at how adorable he was when worried about her. “Juvia will rely on girl power to get her through this dark time.”

“I really shouldn’t suggest you to meet up with Lucy.” Gray groaned. “God, whenever you two team up, Natsu and I get screwed.”

“Not true.” She told him, the knot in her stomach loosening a bit as she chuckled with his reaction. After a moment, she let him go and motioned her hand towards the stove. “Keep an eye on that.”

With a curse, Gray turned off the stove and picked up a fork to see its consistence. “It’s almost done, I just need to mix it up. Go change.” Juvia nodded and had given two steps when Gray called her.

“Do I really do this… guilty pasta thing?”

“You do.” Juvia smiled.

“Hell, I never realized it.” Gray said, genuinely surprised. “You do that too, but with different purpose.” He asked and Juvia frowned. “When you want something from me, you wear nothing but those shoes that make your ass look fantastic and let me have you that way.”

“What makes you think Juvia wasn’t aware of that?” Juvia winked his way and smiled when she heard his surprised ‘What?’.

Silly Gray-sama, thinking she didn’t know how to use her arsenal to her benefit.

#

To: Gray-sama

22:37: How is the job going? Are you okay?

From: Gray-sama

22:38: I told you this is pretty much surveillance, it’s very boring, actually. I’m fine, just got into bed.

22:38: How was your session with Mira?

To: Gray-sama

22:39: It was fine. She told me that I’m doing better than she expected. Yay!
22:40: The mean little voice gets muffled by Juvia’s memory of you telling her you love her.

22:40: Juvia’s counting, though. If you are not here in four days, she’s going after you.

From: Gray-sama

22:41: Well, at least I finally said something that actually helps you instead of putting my foot in my mouth. Again.

22:41: And trust me, I want to go home as much as you do. I’m sharing a room with Natsu. NATSU. Do you have any idea how much I need to go home and have sex with you?

To: Gray-sama

22:42: Should Juvia worry that sharing a room with Natsu-san makes Gray-sama want to have sex? :P

From: Gray-sama

22:42: That was disgusting.

22:42: Don’t ever repeat that.

22:42: Jeez, I want your half of the house back.

22:43: We can share custody of Snowball.

To: Gray-sama

22:43: Juvia was just asking a simple question, Gray-sama. lol

From: Gray-sama

22:44: And thanks to that I’m going to have nightmares.

22:45: Fuck, don’t you DARE make a joke about me dreaming about Natsu otherwise I’m really leaving and this time I will take the dog. You are a bad influence on her.

22:45: Our relationship already went through some dark times but everything has a limit.

To: Gray-sama

22:46: Never mind all the drama we went through. The limit is joking about you and Natsu-san having sex?

From: Gray-sama

22:46: Yes. I’m not into men, as you are aware.

22:47: And just so you know, if I wanted a dude, I could do much better than Natsu.

22:47: I wouldn’t be desperate enough to settle for that moron. I never understood why Lucy settled. Natsu’s like… a 7 in his best days and she’s a 10.

22:48: Before you get all crazy, I think you are a 13.
To: Gray-sama

22:48: Nice save. :3


22:49: When we were mad at you, though, we talked about this. HAHA Lucy-san said that if we wanted to, we’d get out and find someone else in a heartbeat.

From: Gray-sama

22:49: You WHAT?

22:49: You told me you two stayed at the Hotel with Aquarius, not going out!

To: Gray-sama

22:50: Juvia said “IF we wanted to”, we didn’t do anything, it was all hypothetical.

From: Gray-sama

22:50: Yeah, I’ll have a HYPOTHETICAL talk with Lucy to stop taking you down to a bad path.


22:51: Fuck, don’t tell her I said that.

22:51: Don’t tell her, okay?

22:52: Are you texting her I said that? Please don’t.

22:52: She picks up my lunch sometimes, Juvia. She could poison me.

To: Gray-sama

22:52: Juvia won’t tell Lucy-san what you said. This time.

22:53: And Juvia makes your food too, Gray-sama. Not a threat, just a piece of helpful information. HAHA

From: Gray-sama

22:54: Nah, you wouldn’t poison me if you wanted to kill me.

22:54: You’d make look like it was an accident, wouldn’t you? So you could have my inheritance. I’m onto you.

To: Gray-sama

22:54: Well, now Juvia’s plan is ruined, thank you very much for that.

22:55: And besides, Juvia couldn’t inherit anything, Gray-sama. lol At most she’d get the house because it’s in her name, the rest, unless you specified in a will, Juvia couldn’t get it.

22:55: So, really, killing you wouldn’t be profitable at all.
The day Gray returned home, Juvia had thrown herself in his arms and kissed his face, whenever she could reach and he just stood there, letting her fawn over him and answering her questions until she was satisfied he was fine.

After that, she was much better regarding long jobs, it was as if all she needed was for him to keep his word one time. Sure, she still asked he’d texted her as much as he could and asked for a timeframe, but other than that she fully trusted him to come back home. To come back to her.

Things were pleasantly quiet for some time, even Zeref and his minions weren’t trying to destroy the world as they knew it. The firms still had its eyes and ears opened to anything that resembled work from Zeref, but nothing was picked up.

One afternoon, though, about three months after FT opened, Juvia was typing a report in her computer when she heard a knock on her open door. She looked up and couldn’t help it but to smile.
“Lyon-san!” She said, happily, while getting up and walking from behind her desk to greet him. Lyon was just like always, wearing a huge smile on his face and when he hugged her, she could feel his warmth and it made her happy to see his dark green eyes sparkle in happiness to see her. She really liked him, always did. Juvia kissed his cheek. “What are you doing here?”

“Well, since my stupid brother doesn’t bother to go visit me, as the older sibling I need to come down here to see if he’s alive and all.” Lyon rolled his eyes. “And of course, you are here, Juvia-chan.” He grabbed her hand and brought it to his lips, kissing its back, making her giggle.

“Why do you always put your hands on her when you are here?” Gray said while stepping inside Juvia’s office and with a glance she could see he looked really annoyed.

“You get to have her all the time, let me have five minutes, please.” Lyon told his brother and winked at Juvia, who tried not to laugh. “How have you been, Juvia-chan? Is my brother giving you any trouble?” He still hadn’t let go of her. “I can take you away from him, I just need you to say the word and I-”

“Very funny.” Gray actually pushed Lyon’s arms away from Juvia and pulled her to stay next to him. “How long are you staying?”

“Just a couple of days.” Lyon said, amused and he went to sit on Juvia’s couch when she motioned towards it with her hand. “I’ve heard you two got a house.”

“We did.” Juvia was about to go sit by his side, but Gray put an arm around her waist, keeping her put and she rolled her eyes. “And you are more than welcome to stay there.”

“Thank you, Juvia-chan.”

“Hey.” Gray protested. “I didn’t agree to this. There are plenty of good hotels in town.”

Juvia saw hurt in Lyon’s eyes and she turned to her boyfriend. “Gray-sama. Lyon-san is family, he’s not going to a hotel. That’s why we got a big house, remember? To have guests.”

“And I also said we’d get a room for the dog and we didn’t.” Gray scowled.

Juvia rolled her eyes and turned to Lyon. “You are going to stay in our house, Lyon-san, Juvia won’t have it any other way.”

“Thank you, Juvia-chan.” Lyon beamed at her. “I hear there’s a dog too?”

“Oh, you’ll love her. She’s the most adorable dog on earth.” Juvia walked towards her desk. “Juvia will just logoff her computer and we can go home. Should we go out to have dinner?”

Lyon gasped in hope. “Like a date, Juvia-chan?”

Gray groaned loudly and sent a murderous look to his brother and Juvia sighed, tired. “Lyon-san, you are not helping.”

“Oh, it’s fine. I’m not really trying to help.” He waved her concerns off. “My bag is in Gray’s office, I’ll be right back.”

Once he was gone, Gray walked around the desk to stand behind Juvia as she got her phone and put it in her purse. He grabbed her coat and helped her put it on. “Now he’ll never shut up about this.” Gray muttered. “He’ll talk about how you asked him on a date forever.”
“There’s something going on here.” Juvia ignored Gray’s words. “Juvia will figure out what.”

“What are you talking about?” He frowned in confusion.

“Juvia will tell you once she finds out.” She said and Gray didn’t look any less confused. She offered her hand. “Come on, let’s go home.”

#

“He was so pissed I’m taking a ride with you instead of with him.” Lyon laughed and Juvia couldn’t help it but to smile. A minute before, after a small argument about who would take Lyon to their house, Gray had headed to his car on his own while Lyon got in Juvia’s passenger’s seat, looking rather smug.

“He won’t be happy when we get there and he’ll make you know that.” Juvia informed him.

“It’s fine.” Lyon shrugged and she could see by the corner of her eye that he was looking at her. “You really tamed him, haven’t you?”

“Hm?”

“Two years ago when I met you he tried at all costs make me believe you two weren’t dating.” He said. “Now you two have a house together, a dog. You even held his hand without him pulling it away. Oh, and I saw you managed to take a picture with him. Mom always had a hard time to make Gray take pictures, but you managed it.” Lyon sounded really amazed. “You tamed him.”

“You make it sound like he’s a dog or something.” Juvia could feel her cheeks grow warmer.

“Oh no; Gray would be a cat. He likes to think he’s so cool but if you dare to give attention to someone else other than him, he gets a meltdown. He wants to be left alone but he makes a ruckus if he doesn’t get attention when he demands to.” Lyon snorted. “He gets very territorial and hisses whenever I come too close to you. I can almost see his hair sticking up like a cat’s.”

She tried to fight it, but Juvia couldn’t help but to smile. “That’s… very spot on.”

“I know my brother.” He shrugged and looked out the window. “Like I said, you tamed him. You made yourself his human.”

Juvia glanced his way and decided to see if her suspicions were right. “Lyon-san?” She asked and he hummed to indicate he was listening. “Can Juvia ask you a question?” He looked her way and said ‘yes’, so Juvia finally asked something that had been in her mind for a while. “You haven’t had any interest in Juvia for a long time, haven’t you?”

She glanced his way before her eyes went back to the road, but she could see his surprised expression; whatever he was waiting for her to ask, it wasn’t that.

“I’m always interested in you Juv-”

“Don’t give me that.” She cut him off when he tried to charm his way out of the question. “When we met Juvia knows you found her pretty, we went on that job and you were very charming. But after that, you knew Juvia and Gray-sama were together and every time we are alone, you are a gentleman and not once you hit on me; you only make your ‘moves’ in front of him.” She stopped at a red light so she could look his way. “Today Juvia saw you clearly get hurt by what he said about the hotels. You know he gets annoyed with you because of you hitting on me, but you keep doing it. Can you tell me why you keep doing it?”
Lyon was clearly surprised with her words and she didn’t blame him, but his actions earlier made her want to confront him. She heard a horn behind her and she looked at her rearview mirror and saw Gray’s car behind her and he looked really pissed off. The light was green so she started to drive again, while waiting for Lyon’s answer.

“I’m going to sound pathetic if I tell you.” Lyon said in a low voice.

Juvia sighed. “It’s just us in here, Lyon-san. Whatever you tell Juvia, she won’t tell Gray-sama.” She glanced his way. “Juvia is your friend and she would like to understand what is happening so she can help you, if needed.”

It took him a few moments to sigh in resignation. “I will sound like a whiny little bitch, Juvia-chan. Just remember that you are the one who asked.” She glanced his way again and saw his pass a hand through his white hair. “Okay. Gray… he’s my brother and I know he loves me in his own way.” Juvia nodded in agreement. “But he… he doesn’t give me attention if I don’t demand it. Shit, I sound like an overly attached girlfriend.” He chuckled, sad.

Juvia frowned, ignoring his last words. “What do you mean?”

“When we were growing up, we were really tight. Best friends.” Lyon said. “And then mom died, I went down to a bad path and Gray got into the military. We didn’t speak for years but we reconnected after a shit storm of punches. But it’s not the same, I don’t think it will ever be. We are very different people than when we were kids.

“But I… I miss my little brother, you know? And now he has this whole new life with new people that became his family. He is my only family left, you know?” Lyon said, sadly. “We live so far from each other and when I come here, there’s so much going on. Gray treats me like someone he knew from school that he lost touch with; if I don’t offer information about what’s going on with my life, he doesn’t even ask. I’m sorry to drag you, Juvia-chan, but the only time he gives me his full attention is when I’m being obnoxiously flirty with you. I’ll knock it off if you want me to, I just—”

Juvia was pulling over and stopped the car. Lyon looked confused. “Juvia-chan?”

The blunette took off the seatbelt and hugged him, as much as he could while he had his own seatbelt on. She could feel a few tears falling on her cheek. “I’m so sorry, Lyon-san.”

“Wha-?” He patted her back slowly.

“Gray-sama is not the only family you have left. If you are Gray-sama’s family, you are Juvia’s family too.” She told him, tightening the hug. “I am sure Gray-sama doesn’t even know you want to have more of a brotherly relationship, he didn’t even think it was strange for your flirts, you men are clueless like that.” Juvia sighed. “You really need to talk to him when you are ready, though. Even so, Juvia will make sure he calls you more often. Juvia will call you more often too and whenever we can, we will go to visit you, okay?” She released him from her hug, but put her hands on his cheek. “And you’ll come to visit us for as long as you want to, and call us no matter the time.”

“Juvia, I-”

“Juvia will ask you so many personal questions you will be sick of her.” She kissed his cheek. “Just you wait, you’ll be asking for me to knock it off.”

Lyon smiled. “I highly doubt that.”

“Just wait.” She repeated and smiled, finally drying her cheeks. “Jeez, you made me get emotional.”

“I’m sorry.” He said, but Lyon was beaming, clearly happy to have come clean with Juvia. “So…
Can I keep with the flirts?"

“Yes.” Juvia laughed and started the car again when her phone started to ring and Juvia saw it was Gray. “Oh, here we go.” She pressed the Bluetooth button so she could answer and drive at the same time. “Hello, Gray-sama.

“Where are you?” Gray asked through the car’s speakers.

“We had to stop for a moment, but we are on our way now.” Juvia answered, cheerful.

“You had to stop? Why?”

“That’s for us to know and you to find out.” Lyon teased his brother, winking Juvia’s way and she giggled.

Gray groaned. “Fuck you.”

“We’ll be home in a minute, Gray-sama.”

“Fine.” He growled and ended the call.

“He’s so pissed.” Lyon laughed. “This is great. Thanks for this, Juvia-chan”

Gray had not been happy when Juvia parked her car next to his at the garage and she let him and Lyon argue while they got inside the house. From the moment they stepped in, though, they were greeted by Snowball who seemed to have found a new favorite human by the way she behaved with Lyon and weirdly enough, Gray became jealous even of that.

After showing Lyon his room and giving him a tour around the house, Juvia told the boys they should get ready so they could go out somewhere nice to have dinner.

Juvia stepped in the shower and Gray followed her a moment later, taking a moment to hug her from behind and kiss her cheek. The woman took a step back to shampoo her hair while Gray stepped under the spray of water and started to soap his body.

“Gray-sama?”

“Hm?”

“Why are you so jealous of Lyon-san?” She asked, curious.

Turning around and clearly confused, Gray was frowning. “What?”

“You know he’s all bark and no bite; he’d never would want to lose your trust like this.” She finished with her shampoo and Gray stepped aside to she could rinse it.

“Is there a reason you are asking me this now?” He asked from behind her.

“Yes.” She shrugged, still under the water.

A moment later, Gray wondered: “Are you going to tell me what is the reason?”

“No.”
Gray snorted, but answered her anyway. “It’s not much about what he does, is how you react to it.”

“What?” It was Juvia’s turn to be surprised.

“You should’ve seen yourself when I introduced you two.” Gray’s expression was sour. “All giggly and blushing and touching your hair. ‘Juvia heard about you.’” He mimicked her voice. “You looked so stupidly charmed when he kissed your hand, argh it got into my nerves.”

“I-” She honestly didn’t know what to say.

“And then the next day I saw you coming home from a date with him-”

“It wasn’t a date-”

“It was a date.” He scowled; Gray always hated to think about that night. “I was coming home after going to Frank’s and I saw the two of you, standing close to each other, he was holding your hand and talking in whispers.” Juvia blinked in surprise. “I knew I had no right and I told him lots of times we had nothing going on, but I got so angry. I didn’t know why, then, but you were mine and all I saw was him, trying to get you.

“Women get charmed with his personality, just like it happened to you. He is the prince charming kind of guy, you know?” Gray pushed Juvia away gently and stepped under the spray of water. “Seven out of ten women would prefer him over me. I am not romantic, I’m not charming, I wanted nothing serious, I’m not good with keeping contact. I was great to be a one night stand, but a boyfriend? Hell no.” Gray snorted and continued to take his shower. “It never bothered me until that moment I saw you two. I couldn’t let him get you and the next thing I knew, I was punching him.”

Juvia had her mouth opened in shock. “But we got together after that. You kept being-”

“Because you were always giggling around him.” Gray grabbed her conditioner and put some on his hand and Juvia turned around without even noticing and he applied it to her hair, like he had done a few times. It was oddly intimate and Juvia always liked when he played with her hair. “You still do, actually.”

“So what, you are worried Juvia will suddenly fall in love with him and leave you?” She asked, exasperated.

“I didn’t say it made sense.” She could picture him shrugging with that. “I just remember how close it was for me to lose you then and I get this green-eyed monster inside me.”

She shook her head and turned around. “Oh, Gray-sama.” Juvia sighed and wrapped her arms around his shoulders. “Juvia was already in love with you then.”

“I know that now.” He scoffed.

Juvia pulled him for a kiss. “Juvia loves you now.”

“Yes.” Gray rolled his eyes. “Well, I’ll go get ready. Don’t stay here for too long, I know how you like to put make-up on.”

“Alright.” She smiled and watched him step out the shower.

#

Juvia was drying her hair when she saw Gray come out of the walk-in closet while putting on his
shirt and she made up her mind about what her plan of action would be.

“Gray-sama, Juvia is not going with you and Lyon-san tonight.” She told him and Gray looked her way, confused.

“Why?”

The blunette tightened the towel around her and threw the other on the bed. “Because you two haven’t seen each other in a very long time and need to catch up.”

“He’s just going to be his annoying self and I-” Juvia got closer to him and put a finger on his lips.

“Do you trust me?” She asked and Gray frowned, but nodded. “Then I need you to go out with your brother and talk to him. Most importantly: listen to what he has to say.”

“Does this have something to do with why you two needed to stop when we were coming home?” Gray asked, eyes narrowed and Juvia nodded. “I knew you were up to something.” She shrugged and Gray kept looking at her for a few moments before he nodded. “If you say I need to go alone with Lyon, I trust you have your reasons.”

“Juvia does.” She smiled and gave him a peck on the lips. “Just… remember he is family.”

“I always remember he is family, why do you think we fight so much?”

After she had seen them off, Juvia had dinner and cuddled up on the couch with her dog until she was tired enough to go to bed.

She woke up, though, when she felt a pair of strong arms around her. Juvia blinked and saw on the bedside clock it was almost three a.m.

Noting she was awake, Gray whispered: “Sorry, I didn’t mean to wake you up.”

“Did you have fun?” She asked and Gray kissed the back of her neck.

“We did.” Gray told her. “We had dinner and then went to a bar. It was nice.”

“Yeah?”

“Mmhm.” He agreed. “I missed that, you know? Just my brother and I, talking about stuff.” Juvia smiled; it was a step in the right direction and she would make sure they’d include Lyon in their lives as much as they could. “Did you know he’s interested in a woman from his office?”

“Really?” Juvia asked, curious. Lyon would have to answer a lot of questions in the morning.

“Yeah. She seems nice, from what he told me.” Gray hid his face on her hair. “Maybe I don’t need to worry about his flirts anymore.”

The blunette chuckled. “Maybe you don’t.”

#

With Lyon and Gray’s relationship being much less violent, Juvia enjoyed Lyon’s stay at their house immensely while her boyfriend hadn’t been a fan when Snowball had played favorites and was clearly enchanted by Lyon.

Of course, when Juvia mentioned it to Gray, he had scoffed and told her she was crazy.
Two weeks after Lyon left, Juvia got back to her office after lunch and was surprised to see her best friend lying on the floor behind her couch. His forearm was over his eye and his foot was moving in a nervous tick – Juvia sighed in relief with the movement, it meant he wasn’t dead.

“The couch is much better to take a nap.” Juvia said, crossing her arms over her chest and looking down to Gajeel.

“I’m hiding.” He didn’t even bother to look at her. “If I lie down on your couch, people will see me.”

Juvia granted the point. “Whom are you hiding from?” She asked. “Did you piss Levy-san off again?”

“It’s about Levy, but I didn’t piss her off.” Gajeel said quietly and his tone made all the bells inside Juvia’s mind go off. Gajeel was always loud and rude; if he was quiet, it was something big. “I just… I needed some time to think.”

Juvia sighed and lied down next to Gajeel, putting her hands on her stomach and looking to the ceiling. “Well, do you need help thinking?”

She didn’t take personally when Gajeel said nothing for long moments, just choosing to be by his side until he decided if he wanted to talk to her about whatever was bothering him. Juvia was deciding what a particular stain on the ceiling looked like when Gajeel finally spoke and she couldn’t believe her ears.

“Levy… is pregnant.” He said and Juvia’s eyes widened as she looked his direction while he still hadn’t move his arm from his eyes “Five weeks or so.”

“Oh.” Juvia breathed. “That’s… Oh, that’s… amazing.” She smiled, really happy for her friends. “But I thought Levy-san was on the pill or something.”

“She can’t take those.” Gajeel mumbled. “The side effects that appear on the boxes? Apparently she gets some of those so her doctor told her not to. We used condoms. We skipped a few times and I didn’t think it would…” He trailed off.

“It only needs to happen one time.” Juvia told him gently.

Gajeel snorted. “Don’t I know it.” He sighed. “Make sure you have always some around. If you get lazy like I did…”

“Juvia and Gray-sama haven’t used condoms for almost two years in a few months.” She shrugged. “Juvia has an IUD.”

“Levy was going to get one of those, but then we needed to go undercover and time flew.”

“So now she’s pregnant.” Juvia said, softly.

“So now she’s pregnant.” Gajeel agreed with a sigh and finally moved his arm and turned his head her way and she could see in his red eyes how worried he was. “I really fucked up now, Juvia.”

“Don’t say that.” The blunette frowned and reached for his hand, bringing it between them and giving a squeeze. “What did Levy-san say?”

“She was shocked, but after a couple of hours, she was excited.” Gajeel closed his eyes for a moment. “Fuck.”
Juvia sighed. “Tell me what’s going on inside your head.”

“I’m thinking how much I screwed up her life. She’s tied up to me forever now.” Gajeel confided in his best friend. “I am an addict, Juvia. I’ve done some awful things in my life, I have blood in my hands. How can I be a father when I can’t even get my own life in order? I’m going to screw up the kid somehow.”

“No, no Gajeel-kun.” Juvia shook her head. “You are seeing things the wrong way.” Gajeel looked at her with doubt. “You are an addict, yes, but you have been clean two and a half years. And yes, you’ve done some bad things in your life, we all have, but you did the right thing. You stepped up, you owned your guilt, you took whatever punishment was fit, you went to rehab and now your sheet is clean. Do you know how many people can say that? Do you know how strong someone has to be to just admit they were wrong? That’s what your kid will see.

“You will be a good father because you’ll have had lived in both sides, you’ll support your child, you’ll guide it the best you can. And sure, you’ll screw up at some point. Every parent does, every person in the world got screwed up by their parents in something, you won’t be different. Just… be there for him. Everything else you’ll learn as you go.”

Gajeel didn’t look entirely convinced. “I hate to say this, it pains to say it, but Levy could do so much bet-”

“No, don’t.” Juvia scowled. “This isn’t about finding the perfect person in the world, it’s about who we fall in love with. You are not perfect, I am not perfect. Shit, Gray-sama isn’t perfect; he’s very screwed up, actually, yet I love him more than I thought I could.” She said. “When I told him I loved him, he looked at me as if I was crazy, as if he thought he wasn’t worthy to be loved. In his mind he is the orphan who lost his foster mother, the guy who shot me when we met, the guy who gets everyone killed. Do you know who he is in my mind? He is the guy who holds me when we are going to sleep, who cooks me pasta when he does something he shouldn’t, the guy who puts conditioner on my hair when we take a shower together. I love him, even with all his faults, because the good is much bigger than the bad.

“Just because you don’t think you should be loved, it doesn’t mean people won’t love you either way. I do, Levy-san does, your baby will.” Juvia told him. “It’s alright to be scared, it’s alright to be apprehensive, but don’t think for a second you can’t do this. You and Levy-san love each other; besides, you are as stubborn as they come, the moment you set your mind on something, you do it.”

Gajeel kept looking at her for a few moments before his gaze went to the ceiling and they stayed in silence.

“I’m terrified.” He whispered.

“I know.” He whispered. “I do, Levy-san does, your baby will.” Juvia told him. “But you won’t be alone. Levy-san is going to be with you so you can learn as you go. Plus, you’ll have Juvia to help you whenever you need her to.”

Juvia wiggled her body until she could rest her head on his shoulder and her body was pressed against his. “You are going to be a daddy!” She whispered in excitement and Gajeel let out a strangled laugh.

“Fuck, I will be.” He chuckled and moved his arm so it was around Juvia’s shoulders. “Oh, boy, I’m going to get crazy, won’t I?”

“Absolutely.” Juvia laughed. “And I’m gonna be an aunt.”

“You’ll spoil the kid rotten, won’t you?” Gajeel groaned in annoyance.
“Of course.” She beamed in happiness. “It is going to be so cute.”

Gajeel was about to answer, but someone stepped closer to them so both looked up and saw Gray standing next to their heads.

“Hi.” Juvia smiled at her boyfriend, not moving at all from her position.

“Hi.” Gray raised an eyebrow and crossed his arms over his chest. “Why are you two on the floor?”

The blunette shrugged. “We are dealing with stuff.”

Her answer made Gajeel snort and Juvia fell into a fit of giggles. Gray opened his mouth to ask more questions, but shook his head instead, had learned after two years of being together with Juvia. “Okay.” He sighed in resignation. “I’ll be back later.”

They waited until Gray was out before Juvia started to ask more questions about Levy’s pregnancy to her friend and he was slowly opening up. Juvia knew he would be fully on board in no time and she wanted nothing more than to see Gajeel happy, he really deserved it.

#

The news about Levy’s pregnancy made the firm go in uproar, but the news about the couple expecting twins made even more ruckus.

Juvia was excited with the news and she took upon herself to try to make Gajeel stop look like he was going to throw up at any second and to enjoy his babies. He was slowly coming in terms with it and he was the most adorable man around Levy, always asking if she needed to eat something or if she needed him to do something for her.

He had come such a long way from the punk she had met years before; she was so proud of him it made her heart burst with love.

Since she was very close to Gajeel, she caught a bit of the baby fever and sometimes she caught herself thinking about what hers and Gray’s children would look like. Would a little boy be a mini-Gray? His genes were certainly strong enough if Silver’s appearance was any indicator. And a little girl? Would it have blue hair or black?

Whenever her mind went there, Juvia would shake her head to clear her thoughts. Gray never spoken of children, even after the news. He probably didn’t want them and Juvia tried to push the thoughts away; she had never dreamt of being a mother before. Perhaps it was just the baby fever and it would pass in a couple of weeks.

Yes, that was it.

Right?

A few weeks after the announcement about the twins, Gray and Juvia arrived home after a triple date, Lucy, Natsu, Gajeel and Levy had made them company, and Juvia was putting food for Snowball when she turned around and saw Gray leaning on the kitchen island, arms crossed over his chest and he was looking intently at her.

“What?” Juvia asked.

“I’m waiting to see if you are going to tell me what is wrong.” Gray gave her a one shoulder shrug and Juvia froze with his words.
“Juvia doesn’t know what you are talking about.” She said and walked towards the living room, Gray following her suit.

“I’ve known you for three years, we’ve been together for two and a half.” He snorted. “I know when you have something in your mind, by now. Besides, I’ve caught you staring at me with a very weird look on your face.”

Juvia sat on the couch and started to take off her heels. “It’s nothing.”

Gray sat by her side. “Alright, then.”

They stayed in silence as Juvia took off her heels and she sat back on the couch. Gray hadn’t even bothered with turning off the TV and the silence was getting deafening. Should she talk to Gray? Would it be better if they talked about their expectations clearly?

Maybe it would. Maybe she just needed to hear Gray’s opinion for her baby fever to go away.

“Gajeel-kun is going to have babies.” Juvia said, quietly and she could feel Gray’s eyes on her. “Juvia’s going to be an aunt.”

“Yes.” Gray agreed.

Gathering her courage, Juvia looked his way. “Is ‘Aunt Juvia’ all I’m going to be?” She asked, quickly. “We’ve never talked about this, mostly because Juvia never thought she’d get the opportunity. Honestly I thought the army would’ve killed me even before I turned thirty.” Since she started, she was in a roll and it seemed she lost her filter. “Juvia never thought she’d have a life stable enough for it to be possible, or a good relationship, or any other support but here she is with it all. Since I heard about Levy-san’s pregnancy I’ve been wondering if we’d ever get that because I… I want it.

“If you don’t, I would like to know so I can prepare myself to be just the best Aunt in the world. I’m going to spoil those children like no one else and I might adopt more dogs as surrogates, I must warn you.” She gulped and Gray’s expression was surprisingly blank. “So… am I? Just going to be Aunt Juvia, I mean?”

The next few moments were one the tensest of Juvia’s life. Her heart was beating so fast, she didn’t know what to expect from her boyfriend, but it was time for the truth.

“I knew it had something to do with this.” Gray sighed and put a hand on the back of his neck, massaging it slowly. “Good thing I thought about it, otherwise you’d get me entirely unprepared.”

“Oh?” Juvia breathed, nervous.

Gray took a deep breath and looked her way. “I knew it was a matter of time until you asked me about this. Like you said, we never discussed it.” He shrugged. “After we learned about Levy, I spoke about it with Mira during our sessions and I found out some stuff.” Juvia waited as he seemed to organize his thoughts. “Just like you said, I never thought I’d get what we have. Really, never. If someone had told me three years ago that this would be my life, I would’ve laughed in their face.

“But here we are, going steady even after all the shit we went through. A couple of months ago I told you how important you are to me and I mean it. Honestly, I think I’ll always mean it. We have a house together, a whole life and when I said I’m in for the long haul, I mean I’m in for the long haul.” He stopped for a moment. “You changed me. I’m still me, sure, but you made me better. You… you made me have opportunities I never thought I’d get and I took them. I’m glad I took them.
“You are asking me about children so not you are giving me another opportunity. To tell you the truth I am deeply terrified to bring a life into this world. We are in a peaceful moment, but there’s a lunatic out there trying to destroy society as we know it and it scares the crap out of me. But there will always be lunatics, there will always be bad people and if we get that into account, no one would procreate ever again.” Juvia smiled at that. “And you know how screwed up I am.” She opened her mouth to speak, but he raised a hand to stop her. “I am, and so are you, but somehow together we get happy in our own screwed up way.

“I think I would like to have a family with you.” Juvia’s heart stopped for a moment inside her chest. “Everything you gave me I enjoy, but… not now. It’s just been a couple of months since you stopped freaking out about me going on long jobs, you just stopped with the extra sessions with Mira and I’m still getting used to say how I feel. Let’s just enjoy that for a while.”

“Yeah?” Juvia could feel her eyes water; she was expecting a much different answer. She didn’t know how much his want of having a family with her meant until he had said it.

“Yeah.” He put an arm on the couch and Juvia slid closer to him, their faces really close. “You said you need to change your IUD soon, right?” She nodded.

“In seven months.”

“There we go.” Gray told her. “In seven months we’ll talk about it again and we can see if the time seems right or if we need more. I think both of us need time to wrap our minds around it. And by then Levy will have delivered the twins so we will be able to see if it’s what we really want.”

Juvia kissed him in a very light and sweet kiss. “Thank you.”

“What for?” He frowned.

“Being open to talk about this.” She put a hand on the back of his neck and caressed the hair there. Gray snorted. “A couple of years ago the word ‘baby’ would’ve made me disappear so fast, you have no idea.”

“Juvia is glad it doesn’t anymore.”

“You know what? Me too.” Gray told her and Juvia smiled, kissing him again. “Come on, let’s go to bed.” Juvia nodded in agreement, so happy she was dizzy.

She really loved him more than she thought was possible.
Looking around the table she was sharing with her friends, Juvia couldn’t help but to think how completely normal that moment was. Three couples having nice dinner together, talking, sharing stories and laughing about most of them; her boyfriend’s arm on her chair rest, her hand on his knee and he laughed at the current story told by Natsu.

An awful voice inside her head promised her it was too good to be true, that it was just the calm before her storm and Juvia’s heart started to beat faster, so many scenarios about what could possibly go wrong went by her mind but she took a deep breath and pushed them away the best she could. They were still there, but whenever something bad went through her mind, she told herself that even if something happened in the future, at least they were all happy now.

Noticing her change of mood, Gray, when he looked down her way, frowned and whispered, after leaning in. “Hey. Are you alright?” He whispered and Juvia was glad the other four people on the table didn’t notice – if they did, none gave away. “You looked lost in thoughts.”

“I was, in bad thoughts.” She told him and Gray nodded in understanding. Even though she was much better between her sessions with Mira and was taking some antidepressants to help her, sometimes she still took a step back.

“Alright.” He said. “Do you need to go home to have some time? I can get us out of here in two minutes.”

Juvia smiled at her boyfriend. “No, this is actually pretty perfect, a moment Juvia wants to remember. The bad thoughts were about how too much perfect this is. It’s too quiet, too amazing to last.”

“Yeah, I know the feeling.” Gray sighed. “I think about that all the time. But someone” he put his own hand over hers, above his knee and squeezed it a bit, then he gave her a pointed look “taught me to appreciate the moments we do have instead of dwelling on ‘what ifs’.”

Juvia hummed in agreement and put her chin on his shoulder and smiled. “This someone must be very wise.”

“She is.” Gray smirked. “Just try to remember that. I do. Everyday.”

“You do?”

He snorted. “Every day. Especially when we are home.”

Juvia laughed. “We don’t do anything special at home.”

“I take offense on that. We do a lot of special things there.” He said in a suggestive tone and she slapped his shoulder while he snickered.
“Oh, shush.” Juvia laughed. “No, but really.”

“I don’t know, I just feel lucky.” He shrugged. “Then I have a little panic attack thinking what I would do if I lost it all.” Gray cleared his throat and his cheeks pinkened a bit with the confession and seeing her smile widen with his words. “Shut up.”

“You look so adorable right now.” She beamed at him and his cheeks got pinker when she kissed one.

They heard a throat being cleaned and they looked at the direction of the other two couples. Natsu and Lucy looked amused while Levy was hiding a smile behind her hand and Gajeel had a raised eyebrow. “Don’t you two look cozy.”

“We did. Thanks for interrupting.” Juvia told him and rolled her eyes.

“Always my pleasure.” Gajeel smirked. “Can you two stop being all lovey-dovey – it’s disgusting to see, actually, so please stop – because Levy and I have something to ask of you.” He looked at the other couple as well. “The four of you.”

That time, Natsu and Lucy were surprised as well. “What is it?” Lucy asked, brows frowned in confusion.

Levy looked to her boyfriend and after a nod from him, she returned her gaze to the four people in front of them. “The babies are going to be born in roughly two months.” She put a hand on her expanding stomach – she was so small she looked like she could burst at any moment. “And we are making a lot of decisions in our lives to prepare for them, to welcome them the best we can and provide them with the best future we can think of.” The blunette took a small breath. “But bad things happen all the time and in our line of work, it doesn’t matter if I’m tucked away with my computers: it’s still risky.”

Juvia saw Gajeel’s hand that was atop of the table to turn into a fist, clearly upset with his girlfriend’s words.

“We talk a lot about what would happen to them if…” She didn’t need to finish the sentence for everyone to understand her meaning.

Lucy grabbed Levy’s hand. “Nothing is going to happen.”

“I know.” Levy smiled, trying to reassure her friend.

“Just in case it does,” Gajeel was the one speaking, then “we thought about it a lot and we decided that if something happens to us, the four of you would be the next best thing.”

“What Gajeel means is that we would love for you to be the babies’ godparents.” Levy clarified and the two couples were surprised. “Each couple godparent a baby, I guess.” She shrugged. “We are all friends, closest than some families, so I am sure you wouldn’t separate them and would raise them right if anything happens.”

“Not that we have any intention of dying any time soon.” Gajeel clarified. “But you know… just in case.”

Juvia blinked in surprise; she knew she’d be part of the babies’ life since she snatched an aunt position to herself, but to be asked to be a godmother?

“I would love to be a godmother.” She was certain her voice shook a little as she muttered the words.
Oh, she was so happy.

“Me too.” Glancing at Lucy, Juvia could see her eyes were watering and the blunette wasn’t too far behind.

“Count me in.” Natsu was grinning.

“Yeah.” Gray nodded and Juvia looked up at him adoringly. “But with the condition you two really try not to die.”

Gajeel snorted. “We are going to try our best.”

“Good.” Gray smiled then.

They stayed a moment in silence and then they heard Natsu say: “Dibs on the firstborn.” Everyone else looked at him as if he was crazy. “What? They needed to assign a kid to each couple, I just made it easier.”

“Natsu!” His girlfriend reprimanded him. “It should be their choice.”

“Oh, so what are they gonna do? Match our personalities to the babies?” Natsu rolled his eyes. “Babies poop, sleep, cry and eat. Really, there’s no criteria here to match us to the kids.”

“I’m so sorry.” Lucy said to Gajeel and Levy.

“What for?” Natsu was confused. “Do you understand that I can say they promised us their first child in a pact or something? Do you really want to miss this opportunity for life-long jokes?”

The blonde was clearly exasperated. “Why am I with you?”

“Now the real questions are being asked.” Gray snorted but stopped when Juvia elbowed his ribs lightly.

“Because you love me.” Natsu winked her way and even though Lucy rolled her eyes, her cheeks became pink. “Now, let’s talk pact and firstborns.”

“Idiot.” Gray snorted. “You can’t put on dibs on a baby!”

“Hey!” Natsu pointed a finger at his friend. “Just because you didn’t get the idea of asking for the firstborn, don’t get your panties in a twist!”

“Oh, shut up!” Gray told the pink haired man. “I don’t want the firstborn and this is not a pact-”

“We are the parents, we decide whoever-” Gajeel meddled in.

The girls watched the discussion before sharing a look that clearly said ‘men, right?’ while amused, knowing it would take a while for their boyfriends to be over their bickering.

Even with all the ruckus, Juvia was so very happy to be there, with her friends and the man she loved. She was truly happy.

#

It had been a while since Juvia and Gray had taken a mission together – Mira had suggested they tried to get a bit more independent of one another even with missions – but when she gave them the green light, they chose a good one.
Their main objective was to retrieve two men, suspects of stealing a company secrets and selling to the black market. It was Gray’s turn to be the leader but thankfully he was more than alright with listening to her ideas and input.

Good god, she wanted to jump him at the reunion room when he was in work-mode even when the walls were made of glass. Thankfully, she was a lady so she didn’t. It crossed her mind, though, that afterhours the firm was very empty…

“Guns?” Gray asked while he turned off the car and looked at the house their targets were.

“Loaded.” Juvia said, putting on her coat to hide her holsters.

“Ammo?”

“You know it’s been a while we worked together but Juvia hasn’t forget about being an agent.” She chuckled.

Gray had the decency to look ashamed. “Sorry, it’s been a while since we had a mission together.”

Juvia leaned in his way and gave him a peck on the lips. “Oh, Juvia knows. Usually you like to see Juvia kicking ass. You get really handsy the moment we are alone.”

He cleared his throat. “Well, you do look fantastic.” Gray shrugged. “It’s been a while since we worked together, so I know I’ll get some very good material for later on today.” Juvia giggled and gave him a last peck on his lips. “Now, let’s focus. You know the drill, it should be an easy extraction.”

“Can Juvia rough them up a little bit?

“Oh, please do. I spend many lonely nights on missions and the vision will get me through some of them.” Juvia laughed out loud before opening the car’s door.

John and Jack Kieran, brothers and thieves even though they were caught by surprised in their warehouse and were quick to notice the couple and retrieved their guns. Thankfully, their rounds ended soon and their only hope was to hand on hand combat.

Oh, it was their mistake.

Not wanting to actually shoot them, Juvia put her gun back on its holster quick and ducked when her opponent tried to punch her. Seeing that Gray had everything under control with his own fight, she tried to punch him but he also ducked.

Seeing that he was very skilled as well, she decided to use her size as advantage. She pivots and hit his nose and solar plexus a couple of times, but got surprised with his elbow on her jaw. Juvia stumbled a bit but didn’t slow down, grabbing his head and bringing it down to her knee, hitting right on his face. He groaned and took a step back, clearly stunned.

Not to lose any time, she lowered herself and, with a sweep kick, made him fall on his stomach. Juvia grabbed the plastic handcuffs she had taken with her and joined his arms on his back. He tried to fight, but she pushed him down. “Don’t move.” She hissed, her jaw a bit sore from his elbow but not enough to be a great distraction. “Stay down. I have a gun right here with me if you want some better incentive.”
With a groan of annoyance, he gave up and let Juvia cuff him. “Goddammit. Taken down by a girl.”

“Woman.” Juvia agreed, amused and looked to the direction of her boyfriend, who had his opponent on the ground as well, cuffing the other brother.

“Great.” She heard from underneath her, not happy at all, making her smirk.

Juvia got up and left him on the floor, it really didn’t look like he wanted to face reality just yet, and grabbed her phone to send a text to Cana informing her they had managed to capture both men and that they would go through their things next to see exactly to whom those information had been sold.

“Just texted Cana-san.” Juvia said over her shoulder to her boyfriend without taking her eyes from her phone, reading her secretary’s answer that a police car was coming their way in two minutes. “She said the police is coming and she’s going to contact the client.”

“Juvia?” Gray called and she answered with a distracted ‘hm?’, still going through her messages before the police got there and they needed to get their statements. “Marry me.”

“Sure.” Juvia snorted, amused with his words. “Juvia knows you like it when she’s being bad-ass but it’ll have to wait until we get home. The police are coming and she would hate to get arrested for public indecency. We can be indecent later.”

“Juvia, I mean it.” He interrupted; she frowned, suddenly confused to what he was so keen on meaning it. She almost let her phone fall from her hand when she saw him holding something small and shiny between his fingers. It couldn’t be but oh, it was. Her eyes widened when he stepped closer and she saw he was actually holding a gold ring with a beautiful blue round diamond that looked like the most gorgeous ring she had ever seen. “Marry me.”

“What?” She whispered, looking up from the ring to her boyfriend.

“I’ve been walking around with this ring for a week, trying to figure out the best time to ask.” He was clearly uncomfortable to have confessed how long he had the ring with him, not that it matters to Juvia, because she still thought she was having a dream. “I actually had a reservation at a restaurant in a few days to ask, but… Well, I couldn’t wait anymore.”

“What?”

“I know this isn’t the best place or time to ask.” He waved a hand around the warehouse and the two cuffed men – paying very much attention to the couple, actually. “It’s not romantic, it’s not classy or whatever and I’m sorry, but seeing you today… Shit, you looked so perfect that I just needed to ask you. I knew I had to.”

“You… want to…” The blunette seemed to have found a bit of her voice. Strangely enough her mind was surprisingly still, with the occasional ‘what is happening’ floating around. “Marry? Me?”

His lips curled up just a bit on the sides. “There was never going to be anyone else. Not in a million years.” Oh, she was going to cry. “It has always been you and if you agree, it will always be you.”

“You want to marry me.” She was trying to wrap her mind around it.

Gray rolled his eyes in affection. “Well, yes. That’s why I have the ring and we are talking about it.” He stepped close to her and put an arm around her waist to bring her close and only then Juvia took a better look at the ring he was offering and, just like she thought earlier, it was gorgeous. “I really need an answer, you know.”
“But… it’s me.” She whispered, hardly believing in that moment. “I’m just me and you want to… This is forever.”

“I know it is and because it’s you that I have no doubt to ask you.” Gray said in a low tone. “Most important person, remember? Just trying to make it official.” She smiled with the memory of when he told her that for the first time and a warmth spread through her, her eyes watered, reality finally catching up; that was really happening. “I think you are finally getting what is going on here, so I’ll ask you properly now.”

His cheeks were pink, they were in a dirty warehouse in one of the worse neighborhoods in town, two criminals cuffed just a few feet away from them, Juvia could feel her jaw ache from the hit earlier, the weight of her guns on its holsters, she could hear the sirens of the police cars coming their way and yet nothing else mattered when she saw Gray, stoic Gray who hated public displays of affection and society’s conventions, go down to his knee on that very dirty warehouse ground, offered the beautiful ring and, as open as she ever saw him be, said those precious words she only ever dreamt of hearing.

“Juvia Lockser, will you marry?”

“Yes.” She heard herself sob and nod, because really, what else there was to say? “Oh god, yes.”

Gray’s smile could light up the whole town and she saw his shoulder release its tension, as if he was waiting for a negative answer. Silly man.

The next thing she knew, his arms were around her waist as he hoisted her up and kissed her while she smiled and cried at the same time. She started peppering his face with kisses and between them, whispering: “I love you. I love you. I love you so much.”

Gray put her on the ground when they heard the police entering the warehouse. He grabbed her left hand and put the ring on her finger, to which Juvia sobbed harder – man, she must be a vision – and the moment the ring was safe on her finger, she pulled him for a kiss and she could feel Gray smiling into the kiss, just as much as she was, she guessed.

“I love you.” He whispered, just to her and she started to cry all over again, kissing him.

“Aw! That was romantic.”

“They just arrested us, Jack. Stop crying.”

“Shut up, that was beautiful!”

#

To say it was a bit awkward when the police arrived and found the couple making out as if there was no tomorrow while there were two men handcuffed close to them, was an understatement, but Juvia was beaming with happiness and just couldn’t contain herself, buzzing in excitement.

After a long talk with the police, thankfully Magnolia PD was used to FT and their methods, they were sent home and it was as if Juvia was surrounded in a cloud of happiness, as if she was drugged and euphoric. She looked to the ring on her left hand while Gray drove them back to the firm, and she still couldn’t believe.

The ring was white gold and there was a rather large blue round diamond. It was a simple ring and its simplicity made it even more beautiful.
“It was my mother’s.” Gray told her without taking his eyes away from the road, a hand on her thigh as he drove as he grew used to whenever he was behind the wheel.

“Your mother’s?” Juvia was surprised.

Gray nodded. “I remember her favorite color was blue, that’s why my dad chose that ring, or at least it was what she told me when I was little.” He shrugged.

“Where…?”

“Remember when I got to the bank after my dad died?” He glanced her way and she nodded. “I told you he left me her jewelry, the ring was included. My dad even left a small note.” Gray tried to pretend he was annoyed, but his voice was actually soft when he spoke. “It said: ‘This was your mother’s engagement ring and now it’s yours for whenever you are ready.’” He snorted. “And there was a PS too, saying: ‘It matches her eyes, doesn’t it?’ Guess who the ‘her’ was?”

“That’s why you were so red when you came back from the bank’s vault!” Juvia laughed, she just couldn’t seem to stop giggling and laughing, too happy to bottle up. “And you hid a box inside your pocket but Juvia never wanted to ask to give you privacy. Was it…?”

“The ring?” The tip of Gray’s ears were red. “Yeah. My dad knew I was going to ask you even before I did, the old man, and he only met you one time before that.”

“Perhaps he was just hopeful.” Juvia put a hand over his on her thigh and squeezed it. “Juvia is glad he was right.”

Gray snorted. “Like I told you, Juvia. It could only be you.” He shrugged, tried to be nonchalant about it and she smiled even more.

“It could only be you too, Gray-sama.” Her eyes got moist again – she was going to be in that state for a little while, alternating between smiling like a crazy woman and crying in joy. She suspected she’d do both at the same time a lot in the near future. She looked down to her finger once again, marveling her new ring. “We are engaged.”

“We are.”

“We are getting married.” The words made her heart skip a beat.

“Yeap.” He popped the p.

“Juvia never thought she was going to be this girl, you know? To be so excited to get married, or to have the opportunity of getting married at all.” She told him. “And now all she can think of is marrying you. You made me the happiest woman alive today.” She told him, every word as honest as they could be.

He chuckled. “Well, it was time I reciprocate you making me happy.” Reading between the lines about how happy she made him, Gray panicked. “Shit, stop Juvia! Don’t cry! You know I hate when I make you cry.”

“I-” She sobbed. “I’m so happy.”

“Then laugh!” He was exasperated. “Goddammit, I knew I should’ve done this at home so you could let your emotions go wild.” Gray stopped the car and took off his seatbelt and did the same with hers. “Come here.” He sighed and Juvia was eagerly on his lap a moment later, curling around him. “Better?” He asked after a moment when she was comfortable.
“Yes.” Her face was hidden on his neck. “Juvia is afraid she is dreaming.”

Gray snorted. “If you were dreaming, that propose would’ve been much more romantic, I bet.”

Juvia shook her head and put a hand on his cheek. “No. That was perfect. It was amazing, it was you and me. It was us.” She smiled. “And now you are stuck with me, Mr. Fullbuster.”

“Oh, the horror.” He smiled and kissed her, sweetly on the lips. “As long as you are stuck with me as well, I guess I can cope.” Juvia giggled and joined their lips again.

She really didn’t think she could get any happier than that.

#

Cana raised an eyebrow when she saw the couple step outside the elevator and she got up from her chair, curious.

“So, did you do it on your way here? You two are especially sparkly today.” She crossed her arms under her breasts. “You usually get this way when you get laid after a mission, before you get here for the debriefing. Or just get the hots for each other during the day.” The brunette took in Juvia and Gray’s appearances. “But your hair is not messy and Gray’s shirt is not that much creased, so, not sex.”

“Cana-san!” Juvia blushed – she thought they were being very discreet when having a midday encounter. Out of instinct, her hand went to her hair to comb it even though they did not have sex.

“Wait…” Cana squinted her eyes. “You didn’t have that on your finger earlier.” Juvia blinked and looked down to her beautiful blue diamond ring and then to Gray, whose cheeks became pinker. Cana saw the interaction and, as smart as she was, she was quick to do the math. “Oh, my god. Is this…? No, don’t tell me yet! I need more people to share this moment with. Lucy! Lucy, come over here right now! Oh my god, this is happening. This is not a drill!” Cana was buzzing in excitement. A moment later, Lucy and Natsu, who went along since he was speaking with his girlfriend at the time of the summon. “Look at Juvia’s left hand.”

The blonde frowned and her eyes widened in surprise. “Oh. My. God.”

“What, what is it?” Natsu asked, clueless.

“Did you…?” Lucy asked. “Are you…?”

With a final look at her fiancée (her fiancée!) and a slight nod from him, Juvia grinned. It wasn’t as if they would or want for it to be a secret. Juvia twined her right hand with Gray’s and nodded. “We got engaged.”

The shriek that came from her girlfriends were almost deafening. They pulled Juvia away from Gray and gave her a group hug. “Oh my god! Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god!”

“I can’t believe this!”

“Let us see the ring better- oh, that’s so beautiful.”

“Look at how blue it is! And the cut is amazing!”

“Congratulations!”

Juvia couldn’t stop smiling, no matter how much she tried and when she looked over her shoulder,
she saw that Natsu had stepped closer to Gray and was giving his friend a hug, patting him on the back and both were laughing.

“What’s this ruckus all about?” Gajeel stepped out of his office, confused with how much noise the girls were making.

“Gray and Juvia are getting married!” Lucy announced, almost shrieking happily and grabbing Juvia’s left hand so he could see the ring.

“Oh, he finally got the nerve to ask, huh?” Gajeel barked a laugh and patted Gray on the back and the smaller man rolled his eyes. “So, where was it? The restaurant?”

“You knew?” Juvia was surprised.

“Yeap.” Gajeel grinned. “He didn’t know how to make it special or whatever, so since I’m your oldest friends and the girls” he waved at the general direction of Lucy and Cana “wouldn’t keep their mouths shut, he came to me.”

“Shame me even more, won’t ya?” Gray muttered.

“Oh, absolutely, let me try. He went to my place and started to go all: ‘this needs to be good, Gajeel!’” He tried to mimic Gray’s voice. “‘It’s the least I can-’”

“Alright!” Gray interrupted his friend, clearly embarrassed. “That’s enough. Just shut up and go talk to Juvia.”

With a snort, Gajeel stepped closer to his best friend. “Congratulations. Are you happy?”

“Thank you.” Juvia grinned and she hugged him. “Yes, very happy.”

“Well, then, good.” He patted her on the back. “It was about time. Now let me go threaten Gray if he hurts you he has to deal with me, it’s the best part of all this.” Juvia raised an eyebrow. “The best part for me, you get your wedding and all that crap, I get my threats. Let me have this.”

#

“Say it again.” Juvia whispered, breathless while moving on top of him, his hands on her hips. Gray’s mouth was on her nipple and Juvia felt her body on fire with every thrust. They were seated on the bed, her legs over his thighs and she was chasing her release. “Please, say it.”

Gray left her breast and kissed her lips, a hand went to her hair and pulled it when his fingers twined around her locks, breaking the kiss, he assaulted her neck.

“I love you.” He told her and Juvia’s eyes watered in happiness, heart swelling with so much love she thought she was going to explode. She clawed herself on his back, moving her hips faster and she moaned louder when he slipped a hand between their bodies and rubbed her clit. “I love you.”

“Oh, god.” Juvia sobbed, feeling her orgasm approaching more than ever. “Oh, oh.”

“Juvia.” He pleaded and she looked at his eyes, so sincere, full of love and worship she got dizzy. “I. Love. You.” And with those words, he pinched her clit and Juvia flew over the edge, contracting around him and let out small wail, feeling as the waves of her pleasure crashed on her and she sought his lips in a desperate kiss. He was still moving her and she realized he hadn’t come yet.

“Gray-sama.” She whined, but Gray’s lips on hers made her quiet. He pulled out off of her and she
whined in protest, still hungry for him and wasn’t at all surprised when he turned her around and arranged her on all fours in front of him. Her whole body was still shaking, but she gathered her strength to support herself.

She felt him nudge her entrance and in one quick thrust, he was inside her again and Juvia braced herself. Gray liked that position whenever he wanted to make sure his point was cross, that she knew he meant business and Juvia was rather fond of it herself.

“Oh, Gray-sama.” The blunette moaned when Gray hit a very nice spot inside her and she felt his body cover hers, his lips trailing a path from Juvia’s shoulder to the side of her neck. One of his hands on her hip and the other down to grab one of Juvia’s breasts, thrusting a bit too roughly inside her. She was still in a high because of her last orgasm so soon she was easy to feel the fire in her veins again.

“You are the most amazing woman I know.” He whispered in her ear, biting her lobe lightly and Juvia moaned, pushing back with each thrust. “And mine.” She whimpered when he pinched her nipple. “All mine.”

“Yes.” She agreed and felt him release her breast just to put his hand over her left one, touching the ring and then twining their fingers together.

“Fuck, this looks good on you.” He panted. “Should’ve done this ages ago.”

“Glad you finally did.” Juvia chuckled turned into a moan when he bit her neck. “Oh.”

“Shit.” His hips started to snap on hers faster, indicating he was closest to his own release. “God, you always feel amazing, like that first time.” He panted. “Always perfect for me.”

Juvia hummed in agreement, her right hand between her legs, rubbing herself so she could get off the edge with him one more time. “Just for you.”

“Yes.” He grunted. “Just for me.”

“Harder, Gray-sama.” Juvia begged, her upper body falling on the mattress, arms too tired to hold her up, but her fingers still worked herself closer and she gasped when he complied her request. “Oh, oh. Like that.”


“Let go.” She managed to say and a moment later she felt his teeth sunk into her shoulder and with a final thrust, he emptied himself inside her with a loud moan. It sent her over once again, not as intense as the first time, but left her in an amazing high.

Knees giving in, she felt Gray’s weight on top of her for a few moments before, with a burst of energy, he exited her and lay by her side with a soft ‘humph’. Juvia looked his way and saw he was breathing heavily, much like her.

“Okay in there?” She asked, amused, still a bit breathless herself.

“Engaged sex is the best kind of sex.” He told her and Juvia giggled.

It had been a week since his proposal and they, just like when they resumed their sexual relationship after his return, were with a very high drive of hormones and every time they could, they were at it.

Not that Juvia was complaining. It was amazing, especially since it didn’t take too much pleading for
him to tell her he loved her and boy, was that one of her kinks. The blunette also didn’t hear any complaints from her fiancée (she still squealed internally every time she called him that inside her mind) when he introduced her that way to an old client of his while he was on his way out. Two minutes later, Juvia had pushed him to his office, locked the door, undone his pants and had his mouth on him until he was pleading for her to come.

“If I knew this was going to be the kind of treatment I would have when I called you my fiancée, I would’ve started doing it the second I proposed.” He told her while looking a wrecked mess as he sat on his chair, still dazed from her blowjob – she did use all her knowledge to drive him nuts – and later on when they arrived home, he also put in his mind to drive her crazy.

So far, engaged life had been the best.

Breathing much better, Juvia slid closer to Gray and rested her head on his shoulder and he wrapped his arm around her waist, both clearly satisfied, and the blunette smiled when with his other hand, Gray grabbed her left hand and played with her ring without even realize it – he started doing that and it melted her heart. Even though she was tired, she didn’t want to fall sleep yet so she brought something up she was thinking for a while.

“Should Juvia change her name?” She asked. They had decided to get married on April thirteenth in just three months and they had some major decisions to make yet.

“Hm?” He was clearly distracted.

She propped her chin on his chest. “Since we are getting married, Juvia has the chance to change her surname to yours. Should she?”

Gray looked down to her. “It’s your name, it’s your decision.”

Juvia smiled. “Come on, tell me what you prefer.”

“Oh no, I’m not going to fall into that.” He shook his head. “I’ll be fine with whichever you choose, either keeping it Lockser or changing it to Fullbuster.”

With a huff of annoyance, the blunette asked: “Should I hyphenate? Lockser-Fullbuster?”

“Doesn’t sound bad.” He shrugged and raised an eyebrow when she offered her hand as if to shake his. “What is that?”

“Juvia will introduce herself so we can decide what sounds better. You’ve heard my name a million times, so let’s change it up.” With a sigh and knowing his fiancée had a little of crazy in her, plus, he was too tired to argue, he grabbed her hand and she grinned. “Hello, my name is Juvia Fullbuster, nice to meet you.” The words fell from her mouth so easily but even so her heart beat faster with it. “Oh, it does have a nice ring to it, doesn’t it?”

Gray cleared his throat. “Yeah.”

“Oh my god, you liked it.” She could see in his body language, the way his eyes darkened and how hungrily he looked at her when she introduced herself as Juvia Fullbuster. “You really did, Juvia can see you did.”

“Maybe it’s just because there’s an attractive woman half-naked rubbing her body on my side.” He pointed out.

“Fine, I liked it.” He rolled his eyes. “Call me a Neanderthal but it sounds good to me for you to have my last name. I don’t want for you to change your name to please me, though. If you don’t want to change it, it’s fine too.”

The blunette hummed in agreement and thought it over for a moment. “Juvia Fullbuster sounds good. She would like to be a Fullbuster, she thinks it would make her happy, but only in our personal life. Perhaps she’ll add the Fullbuster and not lose the Lockser.” Gray looked at her in question. “Juvia Lockser Fullbuster. When it’s work related, she’ll keep being Juvia Lockser; I do have a reputation that I built over the years and I would like to uphold and use said reputation.”

“Your record is very impressive and people recognize it.” He granted her the point and she felt proud of herself. “And when would you be Juvia Fullbuster?”

“Everywhere else.” Juvia shrugged. “It’s more practical that way, especially since we won’t have to explain our relationship or to our kids’ teacher it’s not Mrs. Lockser, but Miss, for example. People will just connect the dots easier that way.”

Gray was clearly amused. “Oh, so now we are already on the kids subject.”

Juvia tried her best to look nonchalant about it. “The seven months are almost up, Juvia has an appointment in a few weeks.”

“Yeah.” He nodded. “We’ll talk about this again soon.”

“Alright.” Juvia smiled and kissed his lips.

Gray broke the kiss and she lied down her head on his shoulder once again. “So, Juvia Lockser at the firm, Juvia Fullbuster everywhere else.”

“Yes.” She agreed, finally feeling sleepy. “Is this alright?”

“More than alright.” He kissed her forehead. “Honestly, I just want you to marry me.”

Juvia smiled, turning to her side and feeling her fiancée spoon her from behind. “Give me a few months and she’ll do it.”

“I’ll hold you to that.” Gray whispered.

The day the Redfox twins were born, it wasn’t a surprise at all, it was a schedule C-section but it didn’t prevent Gajeel to absolutely freak out.

Juvia and Gray, alongside with Natsu and Lucy arrived at the hospital early, just an hour after the soon-to-be-parents arrived and the moment she was through the door, Gajeel had grabbed Juvia’s hand and pulled her out from the room (she didn’t even have the chance to properly greet Levy) to the corridor.

“Gajeel-kun, what-?”

“Surgery, Juvia.” Gajeel started to walk in circles. “They need to cut her up to take the kids out. Do you know how dangerous that is?”

Juvia blinked two times before answering. “The doctor told you this was the best option months ago. The babies are too big for Levy-san to have a natural birth.”
“I know!” Gajeel almost yelled. “I thought I was ready, I- I thought that by now I’d be ready. But I’m not. In a few hours, I’ll have two kids.” He was very pale and Juvia was suddenly worried. “I’ll have two kids.”

“Alright.” Juvia put a hand on his shoulder and guided him towards some chairs. Once he sat down, she sat by his side. “You are overwhelmed. When was the last night you slept through the night?”

Gajeel snorted. “Since I found out about Levy’s pregnancy.” Juvia raised an eyebrow. “I get worried. She got really uncomfortable towards the end, back aches, foot aches and a million of different ached but even so, she’s so freaking… graceful, even when she’s annoyed she can’t see her feet or crying because there are no more cookies. She’s a natural, Juvia. She’s going to be amazing to them and I’ll be the awkward parent.”

“Gaj-”

“No, listen.” He interrupted her. “I love them already, I love both of them so much and I never ever touched them, never saw them besides de sonograms. With women is different, because you feel the baby inside so it’s faster, I guess. But with men is different, we are more physical, we want to see, to touch. I love them so much I can’t sleep, I can’t think of anything else other than how much I want them to be safe forever. And I don’t even know them yet! That’s why I don’t sleep, I don’t know how I’ll do this, worry like this for the rest of my life. And there are two of them!”

“Oh, Gajeel-kun.” Juvia couldn’t help but to smile at her sweet friend. “You say you don’t know them, but you do. Juvia knows you talked to Levy-san’s stomach throughout the pregnancy, Juvia knows you felt them kick, you heard their heartbeats during the appointments. That’s why you love them so much. You know them, they are yours. All three of them.” She squeezed his hand. “You won’t be able to protect them forever, but you are not supposed to. You’ll need to let them grow up to become their own people when the time is right.”

“The world is a nasty place.” He mumbled.

“No, it’s not. It can be, but it’s not a nasty place.” Juvia told him. “You will teach your children to make the world better, to be better. Juvia is not a parent, but she knows you’ll always be worried and that’s normal. So, now that you vent a little of your frustration, I need you to remember it all the doctor said about the C-section and how safe it is nowadays.”

Gajeel took a few deep breaths. “Very safe.”

“That’s right.” Juvia nodded.

“I read that-”

“Some things can go wrong, but those are very rare and nothing will go wrong today.” She spoke with certainty. “In a few hours, you’ll have your kids in your arms and you’ll panic about other things.”

“That’s reassuring.” He mumbled.

Juvia laughed. “I know.” She patted him on the back. “Are you feeling better? Shall we return to the room?”

“I think so.” Gajeel took a deep breath. “I’m still not ready.”

“You will be the moment you see your children.” She got up from the chair and so did he.
“Look at us.” He snorted. “I’m about to become a dad, you are getting married in a couple of months and I’m sure you plan on having your own kids soon…” She shrugged in a noncommittal way, but he knew her. “We’ve come a long way.”

“A very long way, filled with bumps and setbacks.” Juvia agreed. “But here we are, happy at last.”

“And terrified.” He added.

“And terrified.” She granted. “But happy.”

“Happy and terrified. Sounds like one of those novels you used to read.” He snorted and Juvia laughed

“Come on, time to become happy, terrified and a daddy.”

The moment Gajeel came out from the delivery room with a wide smile on his lips, Juvia’s heart got filled with happiness for her friend. She had never seen him that happy, boarding euphoric before.

“It’s a boy and a girl!” He told the people waiting, a small crowd, since some more of their friends came to wait and everyone cheered. The couple had decided to wait to know the genders when the children were born. “They are fine, and so is Levy!”

Juvia wrapped her arms around her best friend and, with watery eyes, told him: “I’m so happy for you.”

“I know.” He grinned, clearly buzzing in excitement. “Lots of happy, very terrified and definitely a dad now.”

“That’s the spirit.” Juvia laughed and dried a random tear she couldn’t hold back. They didn’t talk much after their other friends came closer to congratulate them and Gajeel had to come back to his family. She felt Gray’s arms around her, pulling her closer to him and she sighed in contentment.

She couldn’t hold on the tears, though, when they were finally able to visit the room and Gajeel put one of the babies in her arms while Lucy got the other from the bedridden Levy – she looked tired, but happy.

“Well, these are Gale and Anna.” Gajeel told Juvia, who looked lovingly at the little boy in her arms. Both babies were born with blue hair, lighter than Levy’s, and thankfully were quietly asleep. “Since Natsu called dibs” Gajeel rolled his red eyes “and Anna was born first…”

“Yes!” Natsu cheered quietly while looking to his goddaughter and then to his girlfriend. “We did it! Pact baby!” He touched the chubby cheek, sweetly. “We are going to be quite a team, Anna.”

“Oh, god.” Lucy groaned. “I apologize in advance for whatever Natsu teaches her.”

“This sweet little boy will be a gentleman.” Juvia couldn’t take off her eyes off of her godchild. He was so perfect, all chubby and pink and warm. “Juvia will make sure of it.”

“With Gajeel as his dad? Good luck.” Gray snorted, but touched the small hand lightly, as if testing if Gale was real. “He’s so soft.”

“And smells good.” Juvia smelled the top of the baby’s head and seeing the curious look on Gray’s face, she decided to let him try to hold their godson. “Here, hold him.”
“What? No!” Gray took a step back. “He’s too small to- Juvia!” He hissed her name but she didn’t let him run away, passing the baby to his arms, that rose in instinct to take the newborn. “I don’t know how to-”

“Support the neck and head.” She arranged the baby so Gale’s head was supported by Gray’s forearm and the baby snuggled close to him, quietly. “There you go.” She smiled and Gray’s eyes were wide.

“Oh.” He finally breathed. “Oh, this isn’t so bad.” Gray moved a bit, swaying lightly when Gale yawned. “You are stronger than you look, aren’t you, little man? That’s good, buddy.” He whispered to the baby and he looked up to Juvia with a huge smile on his face. “Look! I’m holding him.”

“I can see that.” Juvia couldn’t help but to smile as well, her heart beating faster and images of him holding their own child running inside her head.

Seeing he was confident holding the baby and that Gajeel was hovering like the overprotective father she knew he was going to be, Juvia stepped closer to Levy’s bed, where Lucy was as well, had done the same to her boyfriend, who was now holding Anna and walking slowly towards Gray and Gajeel, clearly proud of his goddaughter.

Gray rolled his eyes at something Natsu said, shook his head and looked down to Gale, his gaze soft and, being brave, held the baby closer to his chest and touched his small nose.

“Oh god.” Juvia groaned.

“What?” Lucy and Levy looked her way, concerned.

“I think one of my eggs just dropped and my body is ready for insemination after watching Gray-sama holding a baby.” She told her friends, who laughed. “Don’t laugh.”

“I’m sorry, but it is kind of funny.” Levy tried to stop laughing while holding her stomach, close to where the incision from her C-section was.

“I felt this way watching Natsu.” Lucy shook her head and sighed. “There’s something about men holding babies… Especially a man you love.”

“Yeah, I feel the same when Gajeel holds them. But now this fabric is closed, no more egg dropping. We’ve got one of each, it’s more than we hoped for.” Levy snorted. “But hey, it must be harder for Juvia, seeing the babies have blue hair and they could easily pass as theirs.”

Juvia groaned again. “Well, two eggs were dropped now. Thank you, Levy-san. Another comment and Juvia will auto-inseminate.”

“Maybe you’ll have twins too when you and Gray have children!” Levy teased. “Or maybe you, Luchan!”

“Oh, no. We leave the multiple birth to you.” Juvia said and Lucy nodded, laughing, and the women fell into a conversation, but every few moments Juvia would look at her fiancée’s direction and wonder if he’d be that amazed by their own children.

No, he’d be more. Much more, and it made her smile.
Juvia kissed her fiancée’s cheek after breakfast, he was still shirtless and eating half of his toast. “Juvia is going, don’t forget we will have the twins here for a couple of hours so Gajeel-kun and Levy-san can have a little time off.” The babies were four weeks old and even though they were having a lot of help from their friends, it was a lot on the young parents. “Juvia bets they will be glad to take a nap and a shower without worrying about the babies.”

“Yeah, okay.” Gray nodded and frowned when he saw her grab her purse. “It’s 8 a.m., too soon to leave for work.”

“Uh, Juvia has her appointment?” She told him and his face remained impassive. “It’s time to change her IUD.” Since they hadn’t talk about going forward on the baby front, she figured he wanted a little time on their own after they were married to take the next step.

“I know. I… Uh, I have been thinking about that.” He cleared his throat. “Don’t put another IUD.” He blurted out. “If you don’t want to, I mean.”

Juvia blinked in surprise. “What?”

“It’s a simple procedure, I know, but unnecessary if in a couple of months we’ll not need it anymore.” His cheeks were clearly getting redder.

“We won’t?” She asked in a whisper, leaving her keys and stepping closer to him. “Are you sure?”

Gray nodded. “Yeah. We are getting married in just four weeks, we’ll use condoms again. When… we don’t want to anymore, we let nature take its course.”

“We haven’t used condoms in years.” She put a hand on his cheek, rubbing her thumb on his cheekbone.

“Before you, I could count in one hand how many times I’ve had sex without them.” Gray snorted and put his hands on her hips, looking up her way from his spot on the chair. “So, whatever you decide; to remove it or to put it back, it’s fine with me.”

“Alright.” She passed a hand through his hair. “I think… I think Juvia won’t put another IUD. Not now. Being with the twins in a regular basis makes me want to have our own.”

“Yeah, weirdly enough I get the feeling.” He nodded. “Alright, I’ll make sure to buy condoms, then. Today. Lots, just in case. When we are ready…”

“Nature takes its course.” Juvia smiled and gave him a peck on the lips.

“Nature takes its course, yes.” He agreed.

To be taken in a mission in such a short notice wasn’t something that happened often, but even so it wasn’t exactly weird, but Juvia frowned to her phone when she saw Gray’s text saying he was needed alongside with Natsu, Erza, Wendy, Mest and even Lucy went along since she was already with them. It was about Master Makarov’s long absence, top secret mission.

The text was quick, clearly written in a hurry so she wouldn’t freak out, but did little to help her.

Juvia didn’t like it at all, a bad feeling forming in her stomach.

They had been in a quiet strike for almost a year, Zeref’s forces finally stopped the random attacks
and he was nowhere to be found.

“So, how is the wedding planning coming along?” Lisanna asked from across Juvia’s desk. They had met while riding the elevator up and the white-haired woman went to the blunette’s office to have a little chat. “Is Gray helping at all?”

Juvia smiled. “He doesn’t care about this in the slightest.”

“You don’t seem upset about it.” Lisanna raised an eyebrow in question,

“Juvia isn’t upset.” She shrugged. “She knows who’s she’s marrying. All Gray-sama says is that I need to tell him when and where to show up and he’ll be there. He wants to be married, he’s leaving the wedding to me.”

“At least he is not getting in the way.” Lisanna chuckled.

“He said he wants me to have a good day and since we are only doing this once, Juvia is free to make the decisions.”

“And the bridesmaid is helping a lot, I suppose.” Lisanna smiled and Juvia chuckled. She had chosen Lucy to be her bridesmaid while Gray chose Natsu to be his best man and it was a nice fit: Lucy was very invested with helping planning the wedding meanwhile Natsu match Gray’s vision to just show up when they were needed. The women, though, were having a blast while planning.

“She’s crucial for this to turn out to be a good day.” Juvia said. “The days we spent trying to find my wedding dress… boy, those days were very sentimental. If Juvia had been alone…”

“But you weren’t.” Lisanna reached for Juvia’s hand over the table. “You have an army of girlfriends now to help you with everything, especially weddings. We love weddings.”

“Funny that Juvia never thought she’d have one and here I am, worrying about venues, catering… even a dress! I didn’t even know I wanted a white dress until I started dating Gray-sama.” Juvia said. “Juvia never thought she’d be that girl.”

“You told me once you never expected to be in a serious relationship. You also never expected to live with a boyfriend, to build something.” Lisanna told her, gently. “Yet, here you are. Perhaps your mind wired itself since you were young to think you didn’t want those things, so, if you never had them, you’d think you never really wanted. But now you have the opportunities and you are seeing things you do want.”

“I do.” Juvia nodded.

“Nothing wrong in wanting something you never thought you needed it. So what that at the age of fifteen you thought you didn’t want a big wedding? Or no wedding at all? People change. You changed a lot since you started to work here three years ago, and so did Gray.” Lisanna smiled. “I never thought I’d see Gray engaged and ready to get married in a few weeks. You managed the impossible.”

“Hopefully the impossible will happen in three weeks.” Juvia smiled.

“You must be very anxious.”

“You have no idea. The time will fly now, I just know that.”

“Hey, Juvia.” She heard a male voice and looked up to see Gajeel and Cana standing there, arms
crossed and looking her way. Right after, the remaining Strauss siblings got inside her office as well. “Lisanna.” He nodded her way.

“Hey.” The blunette smiled. “What is it?”

“Heard about this emergency mission?” Gajeel asked and Juvia frowned, but nodded, suddenly very interested. Gajeel smirked. “I found out what it is about. We’re putting B-Team back together.” He smirked and even Cana looked his way surprised.

“Ya mean from the Games?” The brunette frowned, confused.

“We’ll go out to find Mr. Lightning-fer-brains.” Gajeel told her and Cana looked confused for a moment before realization dawned on her.

“Wait! You know where Laxus is?” Her whatever-they-were had been undercover for a long time.

“Yeah, and not just him. From what I could find out, he’s got his lackeys here too.” Gajeel told them.

“The Raijin Tribe?” Elman asked, his voice thundering on the walls. Of course, Cana couldn’t help it but to tease.

“We know you only wanna come along to see Ever.” She smirked when the tall man became bright red.

“But I wonder…” Mirajane asked, sitting on Juvia’s couch “if it is really necessary for us to split up.”

“They called it an infiltration mission.” Gajeel told them, serious. “That’s precisely what is needed in this case. We are not facing a foe we can beat this time. We’d have a zero percent chance of winning otherwise.” Cold ran down Juvia’s spine after seeing the serious expression on Gajeel’s face. “Even sneaking in is a long shot.”

“The chance of success for this mission is so close to zero percent as to be negligible.” Juvia turned her head towards the door, where Levy was stepping inside, a baby monitor in one hand and her laptop under her arm. “That’s the whole reason why you’ll be taking different routes, to improve the odds even the tiniest bit.” She stopped in front of her boyfriend and shoved the baby monitor on his chest. “Honestly, Anna starts to cry and you bail?”

“She is very loud and she wakes Gale up! You know how sensitive my hearing is.”

“You are on diaper duty for a week.” She narrowed her eyes. “Jet and Droy are with them for now, but you are so on diaper duty and I hope they poop a lot.” Juvia smiled at the interaction; seeing Gajeel fake sigh of resignation was always entertaining. “But just so you know…” Levy’s attention returned to her friends. “The enemy this time is seriously dangerous. I don’t want anybody thinking of going to battle with them.”

“What is the mission exactly?” Juvia asked, confused. “Gray-sama texted me saying it was about Master, but nothing more and now you are all here talking about strong enemies, battles…”

The others seemed curious too, with the exception of Mirajane, Gajeel and Levy, who had been in the loop, whatever that loop was.

“Master wasn’t in a secret mission.” Mirajane finally offered and her sister looked surprised, being Makarov’s secretary, she should’ve known but was clearly confused. “He is… a guest in Ishgar.”

“A guest?” Juvia didn’t like the sound of that at all.
“A hostage. Master is a hostage and we are bringing him back home.”

Suddenly three weeks to her wedding didn’t seem it would fly.

Chapter End Notes

Fist of all: THE PROPOSAL! Yessss! Gray finally found his balls and asked her. I hope it was alright. I know it wasn’t what ya’ll were expecting but I hope it was good even so.

Second, the babies’ names: Anna for Metalicana and Gale because Gajeel + Levy. I’ve used those names before because of this exact line of thought and I think it makes a bit of sense, haha. It’s not as if the names are ugly or weird, so I stuck with those.

Third, Gray and Juvia deciding to take the next step soon regarding their own babies soon. Yay. They are so grown up, I’m so proud of my children *wipes a tear*

Fourth, the “canon” is coming next chapter. Let’s brace ourselves because everyone knows where this is headed. I hope I stopped in a good place to pick up next. :)
I'm Bruised and Scarred

Chapter Notes

What 9 months without updating? *pretends to be confused*

I had to adapt a lot of the Alvarez arc for this chapter to make a little of sense and it was a pain in the ass, that’s why it took so long. I am sorry if it kind of suck?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When she was informed they would get Blue Pegasus’ help, Juvia thought they would lend FT a motorboat to get to the island they knew Gray and the others were, but she was pleasantly surprised when she saw the large helicopter, the name “Christina” painted on its side.

“Is that a CH-47F Chinook?” Gajeel asked from her side and he was as impressed as Juvia was.

“Yes, it is.” Ichiya, a short man with a square chin, reddish hair and small green eyes, said with pride. He was an old friend of Makarov’s and was eager to help.

“There are just a few of those outside the army.” Cana whistled, putting her hands on her hips while looking at the helicopter. “And why the hell is it named Christina?”

“Well…” Ichiya cleared his throat. “Hibiki might or not have promised the person who sold us the helicopter that he would… uh, remember her forever. So he kind of…”

“Named the helicopter after her.” Gajeel snorted. “Hard to forget a woman’s name when it’s painted on the freaking thing.”

“Is everyone ready?” Laxus asked – they had found him alongside with the rest of Raijinshuu at Blue Pegasus and Cana had almost fallen over with laughter after she found that particular information, especially since they knew the firm was known for their “personal way” of treating clients.

“We’re ready.” Mirajane nodded, Lisanna and Elfman by her side.

“Good.” He nodded and crossed his arms over his chest. “Ichigo is flying the plane but he needs a co-pilot.”

“I’ll do it.” Gajeel said.

“I thought you got sick while in any kind of transportation, like Natsu.” Lisanna frowned.

“Not when I’m in control of it.” He mumbled, not happy that everyone knew about his weakness. “That’s why I don’t get sick when I’m driving a car.”

“Huh, that’s good to know.” Cana shrugged.

“Alright,” Laxus got their attention back to him “Gajeel will be the co-pilot. Juvia and Freed.” Juvia looked his way. “You two will cover the rest of us when we land. Blue Pegasus has some M240 machine guns that will be more than enough for that.”
While Freed nodded with the command, Juvia shook her head. “No way. No. I need to-”

“You need to get Gray back, safe.” Laxus told her, serious. “That’s what I want, to get everyone back, including Gray and my grandfather, safe and sound.” Juvia opened her mouth, but he didn’t give her the chance to speak. “I analyzed the current team and you and Freed are our best shooters. We don’t know what we will find when we get there, so we need to be prepared for anything.” Juvia knew he was right, but she didn’t like it and Laxus saw it on her expression. He raised an eyebrow. “Look, if you don’t want to come-”

Juvia sighed, trying to convince herself to get calmer. “I’m sorry.” She cleared her throat. “It’s fine. We’ll cover you.”

Laxus nodded. “Let’s go. The guns are inside, we can prepare in there, the trip is long enough.”

“Caracol Island is in view.” Laxus said and everyone got up and grabbed their guns. “The mission is to get in, get our people and get the hell out.” His voice was loud so they could hear it over the noise from Christina. “We don’t know exactly what we are going to face, but everyone here is trained to do their best job. Let’s bring the rest of the family, home.”

Everyone nodded and got into position by the helicopter’s hatch, which was by its tail. Juvia tightened her ponytail, checked her earpiece plus her bulletproof vest and got the machine gun Laxus had spoken of and she saw Freed do the same. They would come off first, shooting if anything seemed threatening and they would cover the rest of the group until they got into the woods. Then, they’d wait.

“We found somewhere to land.” They heard Ichiya’s voice through their earpieces. “Get ready, I can see some people and I think they are hostiles.”

“They are shooting at us, they are hostiles.” Gajeel said and Juvia could practically hear her friend’s eyes rolling.

“Let’s do this.” Laxus said at the moment the helicopter landed and everyone raised their weapons.

As much as Juvia wanted to run after Gray to get him to safety, she needed to trust her team and she needed to stick to the plan. Laxus was a great team leader and every individual who was with them was outstanding. They would bring the others back to safety.

“Freed, Juvia. Go.” Laxus instructed when the helicopter’s hatch opened and the two of them stepped outside, Juvia’s mind already in conflict-mode, while the rest of the team was a few steps behind.

She saw three men on her left and she immediately shot them, the machine gun had a bigger kickback than she thought so she filed that information for later.

“Left is clear.” Juvia said, pressing on her earpiece so everyone could hear her.

“Right is clear.” She heard Freed.

“Going in.” Laxus answered and she followed the group, flanking them until they got between the trees. “Go back to Christina, guard it.”

“Copy that.” Freed answered and the moment everyone was out of their sight, he looked her way and Juvia nodded, following him back to the helicopter. Gajeel and Ichiya had closed the hatch until
the others returned and while Juvia was concerned about Gray, she pushed the thought aside and focused on guarding the helicopter.

“We’re coming back.” Juvia heard Laxus voice from her earpiece and he was clearly panting. “Be ready, we are being followed.”

Juvia glanced at Freed, who did the same and they had a silent conversation before their attention returned to the tree line.

“Ichiya, Gajeel.” Juvia heard him say. “Open the door, we’ll probably need to leave here in a hurry.”

“Copy that.” Gajeel answered and a moment later the hatch opened, both Juvia and Freed went to stay on each side of it.

They heard shots and pointed their guns right, waiting to see where their friends would turn out to be and just a few seconds later, they saw the group come off from between the trees some people were shooting at them. Juvia saw Evergreen and Elfman staying behind for a few seconds while they shot at the enemy and the others run.

Juvia and Freed ran for a few meters and stopped at a good distance before they started to shoot so the others could get into the helicopter safe. Noticing they were being covered, Elfman and Evergreen started to run, catching up with the group.

With relief, Juvia saw Gray and the others and they seemed unhurt at first glance.

The moment everyone had passed between her and Freed, they started to walk backwards, still shooting and it seemed as if the more people they shot, more took their place. They stopped at the hatch, still not going inside the helicopter until they were ready to leave and the propellers were still too slow.

“Freed, Juvia! Inside, now!” They heard Laxus through their earpieces after a minute. “We are ready to go!”

Juvia was the first to move, walking backwards just in case, Freed just a few steps in front of her and they stopped almost at the same time, finally getting inside and the hatch closed just a second before they took off, they still heard shots being fired.

Breathing heavily with adrenalin, Juvia turned around seeing the people she went there with and the people they had just saved and she finally saw Gray, just a few feet away from her and his eyes met hers. They moved at the same time, Juvia putting her gun away just in time to embrace him.

Gray put a hand on her jaw and kissed her for a moment. “What are you guys doing here?” He asked.

“We thought we’d help out a bit with rescuing Master.” Lisanna said, a few feet away from them and Gray glanced her way, an arm still around her waist and Juvia’s arms around his torso, happy to be with him.

“So we brought Laxus.” Mirajane said happily while she checked on Makarov.

“This helicopter is great. Is this a Chinook?” Natsu seemed to be hurt by the way he was holding onto his right side. He looked up in Laxus direction and grinned. “Okay, let’s fight, Laxus!”

“Shut up.” Laxus rolled his eyes and crossed his arms over his chest.
“You all…” Makarov said and their attention went to him and Juvia tightened her arms around Gray when she saw the older man’s eyes water. “You’re the best family a guy could ever have.”

Everyone was smiling when Juvia looked around and she felt Gray kiss her temple and Laxus got their attention. “Everyone should just sit down. When we land, we’ll exchange information.”

With nods, they agreed and they were quick to go sit on and strap on their seatbelts. Juvia turned to Gray the moment they were seated. “Are you alright? Did you get hurt at all?”

“No, I’m fine.” Gray grabbed her hand. “But Juvia…” He hesitated. “We saw some of their equipment and it’s far more advanced than we thought.”

Juvia felt cold run down her spine. “Well.” She cleared her throat and squeezed his hand. “Okay, we need to defeat them sometime in the next three weeks.”

“What?” Gray frowned in confusion.

“We are getting married April 13th.” She told him. “Juvia doesn’t care we are at war, this is happening. I waited too long for this.”

He looked at her in exasperation and then chuckled. “You are unbelievable.” The blunette smiled. “We will get through this.”

“I know.” Juvia nodded and looked to the ring on her finger; she could feel it in her gut not everything would be alright.

#

Juvia snuggled closer to her fiancée as the celebration raged on around them at Fairy Tail, Mirajane, Lisanna and Elfman trying their best to serve every costumer. They were all happy Makarov was back but the people who had been in the rescue mission were clearly concerned. Gray was too, if his hand gripping hers was any indication.

“This calls for liquor!” Cana’s voice brought Juvia back from her thoughts and the loud answer of: ‘We’ll drink the place dry!’ made the blunette smile a bit.

“I never thought you guys would join Blue Pegasus.” Gray said and Juvia noticed Freed pouring them some beer.

“Serving customers is not a bad experience.” The green haired man told him and Bixlow, who was a few feet behind him, laughed.

“But I only feel at home in run-down bars like this!”

Juvia glanced at Laxus, who was sitting on the opposite side of the booth and a thought occurred to her. “Erm… Laxus-san, you participated in that, did you not? That… how to say it… ‘service’ they provide?” It was no secret Blue Pegasus sometimes offered more than just the usual service.

Evergreen, who was seated next to Laxus, leaned on the table and fake whispered: “Only now and then.” She giggled. “And it was a sight to see…”

“We don’t need to go into it.” Laxus glared at Evergreen and Juvia could swear she saw his cheeks get pinkish.

Chuckling, Juvia took a sip of her beer and put her glass back on the table, Gray did the same and
then looked down to her. He was clearly exhausted and would drop hard when they got home.

“We should go home.” Juvia told him.

Gray shook his head. “Not yet. We need to decide about what to do if Alvarez really attack us.”

“That won’t be decided tonight, Gray-sama.” She squeezed his hand and sighed. “I just want us home.”

His eyes softened with her words so he leaned to give her a quick kiss on the lips. “I want that too.” He told her. “We’ll be home within the hour, okay? Then you can fuss all over me if you want.” He rolled his eyes playfully.

Juvia offered him a small smile. “You say that as if you don’t like it when Juvia fusses over you. Or if you’d have much choice about it.”

“I know I wouldn’t.” He untangled their hands. “I’ll get us something to eat.” She opened her mouth to argue, but Gray spoke before she could. “I need to stretch my legs.” Juvia sighed but nodded.

Once he was gone Juvia looked around and she could feel the tension in the room even when her friends were laughing. They didn’t want a war, of course, but sadly it was no longer an option. It was just of a matter of ‘when’ instead of ‘if’.

All she wanted was to be at home with Gray, lying on their couch with Snowball sleeping peacefully by the end of the couch.

Juvia saw him next to Natsu, Gajeel and Elfman, and Juvia could see they were starting one of their many silly fights when they heard Makarov call for their attention. She got up and stood next to the booth, trying to see the small man, who was on top of a table.

“Everybody, I’m sorry.” Makarov sighed. “My mission was pointless. Alvarez will attack us.”

Juvia’s breath got caught in her throat. “They’re an enormous empire and they’re going to send their forces against this country-”

“Yeah? What about it?” Natsu’s loud voice interrupted Makarov. “How many times do you think we’ve fought for this country so far? And the enemies have always been powerful.” Juvia couldn’t help it, and she nodded, agreeing with his words. “Our determination to protect what’s really important makes us strong. Sure, we’re scared! That fear is like a heavy weight we gotta put down, but we don’t know how.” Natsu walked amongst their friends so he could face Makarov. “But everyone’s gonna help out! I know it! You know what’s really scary? The idea that these days that we love so much will go away.”

Juvia walked to the spot Natsu left empty between Gray and Gajeel. Her fiancée glanced her way and when Juvia took his hand, he squeezed it, their attention returning to Natsu.

“This is about keeping it so I can sit and laugh with my friends again! And for that, I’d fight anybody!” People started to murmur in agreement. “It ain’t about winning! We’re making a stand to keep on living! That’s what we’re fighting for!”

Everyone cheered, their spirits clearly lifted by Natsu’s words. Even Makarov looked fired up to protect their home, their friends and family. Gray put his arm around Juvia’s shoulder and Juvia snuggled closer to him.

“They think they can threaten my family?” Makarov said, loud. “Well, we’ll make them regret it! We will give back everything we get and more!”
“I’m all fired up!” Natsu yelled.

#

Juvia closed the bedroom door and frowned for a moment when she didn’t see Gray on the bed. She had gone down the stairs to put some food for Snowball while Gray took a shower. Noticing the balcony door opened, Juvia walked over there and saw Gray, only in his underwear, eating a chocolate bar.

Of course he had noticed when she stepped on the balcony, but he kept looking forward until Juvia put her arms around his middle and kissed his shoulder.

“Gray-sama, let’s go to bed. Today was very tiring, you must be exhausted.”

Gray hummed in agreement. “Want some?” He showed her the chocolate bar and Juvia shook her head. Gray ate the last bit of it and pulled her so he could hug her. Juvia saw his expression, he was still tired but also very focused. “I’m really grateful to you, you know?” Juvia frowned in confusion. “You’re always by my side. No matter what.”

“Um…” Juvia was lost for a moment, Gray rarely spoke about his feelings – he was more of an action guy – and whenever he did, it always threw Juvia off her game and melt her insides. “No, it’s just that… Juvia…”

“You know Alvarez is coming and you know perhaps we will have to postpone our wedding, right?” He asked, gently and Juvia offered him a sad smile. “If that happens, when the war is over, we’ll get married no matter what. So let’s focus on the fight ahead, okay?”

“Okay.” Juvia whispered, feeling butterflies inside her stomach – almost three years of loving him, of being held by him, of his touches and kisses and yet she still felt as if it was that first night all over again.

She put a hand on his cheek and her thumb caressed it slowly. He had grown so much in the past few years; he went from someone who never wanted to settle to having a home, a fiancée and planning to grow their family soon.

Alvarez could attack at any moment, at any second and she might not make it, but in that moment Juvia realized she already had more than what she ever thought it was possible. She loved him and was loved back; perhaps if the time came for her during a fight, she could go without regrets.

“I love you.” She told him and usually Gray’s eyes would soften with the words, but that night his face hardened and took her by surprise. “What’s wrong?”

“Don’t say it like that.” He told her and she frowned. “As if you think something bad is going to happen and you have to say it.”

She shook her head. “Juvia wasn’t-”

“You were.” Gray tightened his arms around her. “Just stop it, okay?” He asked. “I don’t want to hear any good-byes.”

“Alright.” Juvia pulled him down for a kiss and Gray took advantage of it, deeping it. His hands went from her hips to the back of her thighs, pulling her up from the floor.

Juvia wrapped her legs around his hips and shrugged the robe, letting it fall on the floor, the cold air a contrast with her skin – each second Gray’s hands were on her, she got hotter and hotter, her tank
top suddenly feeling very constrictive.

“Bed.” Juvia whispered when Gray kissed her jaw and he hummed in agreement, taking her back to their bedroom.

#

If there was something Juvia was sure she’d never get used to, was how Gray made her feel when they were together. They had been together for three years, had been through all types of set-backs but they always ended up back in each other’s arms, like it was supposed to happen.

Gray moved on top of her, his mouth sucking a nipple, a hand between them while his thumb worked its magic and bringing her closer and closer to the edge while she had her hands on his ass, urging him to keep going.

“Fuck.” Gray groaned, teeth scraping her nipple, and he panted.

“Gray-sama.” Juvia moaned, trying to bring him even closer to her, body arching. “Please. Oh, god, please.”

Thankfully it seemed Gray knew exactly what Juvia was pleading for because the next moment one of her legs was over his shoulder so he could slide even deeper, his hands were on her hips, holding her still and then he was moving fast and purposely hitting the sweet spot inside her.

“Gr- ah, Gray-sama.” Juvia moaned, her whole body aching as she tried to get there. “Oh, oh, oh.” She bit her lower lip, panting, just waiting for that wave, that amazing wave that she knew would wash over her soon.

She didn’t know if she imagined or not, but she could swear she heard a whispered ‘I love you’, but she couldn’t think anymore because Gray moved in a perfect way that sent her over the edge with a loud wail.

“Fuck.” He grunted, hips moving a few times, she felt his seed inside her before he slumped on top of her, face hidden on the junction of her neck and shoulder.

Juvia took a few moments to bask on the feeling of her muscles so relaxed she felt she was floating, Gray’s weight on top of her and her hands roaming on his back. He started to kiss her neck, his hand traveling from her hip to settle it just on top of her breast.

“Do you think married sex is going to be this good?” Gray asked, exiting her so he could lie next to her.

The blunette giggled and snuggled closer to him, feeling every muscle of her body relaxed. “Yes. Until we are old and tired of it, that is.”

Gray snorted. “We’ll have a couple of decades before that.”

“Let’s enjoy it, then.” Juvia smiled and kissed him. “Sleep now.” She whispered, noticing he was clearly tired with all that happened that day. “You must be exhausted.”

“I guess old and tired isn’t that far from coming, huh?” Gray asked, amused, pulling her closer to him like he grew used to.

“If you weren’t tired after today, Juvia would be really surprised.” She said and Gray just closed his eyes.
Juvia didn’t sleep right away, instead she waited for him to fall asleep before she went to the bathroom to clean herself with a wet towel and then returned to his side. Maybe it was the bad feeling she had inside her chest that made her just stare at him for some time, as if she wanted to memorize his face without any worries.

“Juvia does love you.” She whispered, gently touching his hair. “You have no idea how much.” The blunette kissed his lips lightly and, by instinct, Gray pulled her closer. She smiled and tried to sleep.

#

“Argh, I’m too tired to cook.” Juvia said when they got home the two days after Gray’s return. It was an exhausting day they spent trying to figure out the best way of defense in case of an attack. Makarov had provided them with dossiers about the highest ranked officials he could remember from Alvarez and their records were chilling. Most of them were psychopaths who have killed many people because of Zeref’s orders.

“Let’s just order something.” Gray looked as tired as she felt. Juvia could see he was as worried as she was, both had seen war, they knew what was coming. “Is pizza okay?” Juvia hummed in agreement while she picked up Snowball’s food. Gray kissed her cheek and went to grab the phone.

Juvia could hear Gray on the phone in the living room when she finished feeding the dog. She was about to join him when both their phones chirped at the isle in the kitchen. Juvia sighed and went to grab her phone, unlocking the screen. It was a text message from FT and the words chilled her blood.

From: FT

19:33: Code Black

She unlocked Gray’s phone and checked: he had received the same message as her which meant someone sent it to every member of the firm. It wasn’t good and under their current circumstances, it could only mean Alvarez was attacking or about to attack.

Losing no more time, Juvia went to the living room, holding their phones. Gray had his back to her.

“…yes, large. If you could add a couple of sodas-”

“Gray-sama.”

He turned. “-it would be grea-” Noticing her expression, he frowned. “I’ll call you back, sorry.” He hung up the phone and stepped closer to her, clearly worried. “What is it?” Without saying a word, she handed him the phone and the moment he read the text, he looked up at her, alarmed. “Now? It’s too soon!”

“I know. We have to go.” She told him and Gray nodded. “Juvia will get the Kevlar.”

“I’ll get the guns.” Gray told her and before he could leave, Juvia put her hands on his cheeks and pulled him down to a kiss – she didn’t know when they’d get the chance again. Gray was scowling when she released him. “Don’t do that, I told you.”


“Stop it.” It was his turn to cup her face in his hands. “Go get the Kevlar, put it on and do not take it off until we are safe, do you hear me?” Juvia nodded and Gray was the one kissing her lips. “Stay by my side all the time, don’t stray away. Now go. I’ll meet you in five minutes.”
Gray ran down to the basement where he kept their best guns and Juvia took a few breaths before she ran upstairs to get ready, a bad feeling following her.

#

Juvia and Gray had just got inside the firm when they heard the commotion, everyone inside was either on the phone or running to get something done. Juvia looked to Gray and the moment their eyes met, they knew it was something huge.

“Juvia, Gray! Good, you are here.” It was Cana who caught their attention, she looked worried and just like everyone else, it seemed, she was wearing a bulletproof vest.

“What is happening?” Gray asked. “We put on our vests, took our guns and drove here. We didn’t see anyone being attacked. Is it really Alvarez?”

“They are coming. They will reach Magnolia in six hours.” The brunette told them.

“How the hell did they get their army together in forty-eight hours to attack us?” Gray was confused.

“They didn’t.” Cana answered. “It’s their elite troops, it’s a group of people coming to Magnolia, they are coming from every direction. We’ve notified as many people as we could. Erza, Mira and Lisanna have been calling every single agency and firm like ours for an hour, since we heard. They must have some plan.” Gray nodded.

“Are the people in the dossiers here?” Juvia asked.

“Some of them.” Cana nodded and they went to her desk where Cana looked through some folders while Gray put his bag with the guns and ammo on the floor. “These are the ones who are confirmed coming here: Invel, Ajeel, Brandish, Dimaria, God Serena, August and Wall.” She gave them the folders. “Nasty motherfuckers, crazy and ruthless. We have to prepare.”

“Of course.” Gray said between gritted teeth. “Who has eyes on them?”

“Levy and the rest of the nerd squad.” Juvia turned around and saw her best friend there. Usually Gajeel would be smirking and telling people how he would kick some ass, but that night he looked stern and it spoke a lot about how serious the situation was.

“Where is she? And Gale-chan and Anna-chan?” Juvia stepped closer to her friend to give him a hug. “Are they safe?”

“Yeah.” Gajeel nodded. “I sent them out of town to a safe house earlier today alongside Jet and Droy.” Juvia sighed in relief to know the children were far away “I had a gut feeling this was going to happen sooner than we expected and I wasn’t going to take any chances. She had just put the kids down when she connected her equipment and noticed Alvarez’ moves.”

“Levy-san didn’t go quiet, I take it.” Juvia raised an eyebrow.

Gajeel snorted. “Went kicking and screaming and she has learned some colorful language since we met but she knows Anna and Gale come first. Made me promise not to die, though. It will very painful to me if I upset her like that.”

“Not only her.” The blunette offered him a smile.

“So Levy, Droy and Jet are sending us information?” Gray asked.
It was Cana who answered. “Yeah. Warren is receiving the info and sharing, Max is there helping too. They are with Makarov and Polyuska upstairs.”

“Everyone gather around.” Erza’s loud voice echoed and everyone who was in the lobby stepped closer. “We are under attack. Some troops are coming this way and I know we can take them, what trouble us is that we have at least 7 high ranks from Zeref’s cult and they are absolutely insane. They will hurt civilians and they will fight dirty but they are here for us, we are the ones who took a prisoner and damaged their ego. We have to use that in our advantage.

“We will meet them outside Magnolia. We cannot bring our fight here, do you hear me? We will get help from everyone, some of them are on the move as we speak. We predict their first forces will come in by the western side and we will have to push him back out until the reinforcements come from the capital.” Erza told them and showed them some papers in her hand. “I will assign people to each point we know there are troops.” Erza stepped aside and a very nervous Warren took a step forward.

“Levy-san has been sending us intel. From the east they have attacked some villages, they wiped them out near Bosco.” People started to whisper, afraid and Juvia grabbed Gray’s hand. “And they are still coming forward.”

“We have sent distress calls to everyone we can think of but I’m afraid they will only be able to get here in the morning.” Erza told them, her mood somber. “Which means that tonight, we are the only barriers between them and this town.” She looked around. “I hope all of you know what we signed up for.” Juvia nodded and noticed more people doing the same as well and she felt Gray’s hand tighten around hers. “Come get your assignments.”

“Stay here.” Gray told her and Juvia did as told, looking after their heavy bags and, like it had been happening since they learned about Alvarez, she felt a bad feeling inside her chest. She didn’t tell her fiancée otherwise it would freak him out, but it was there and worse than ever. Gray returned to her side a few moments later. “We are going to the western side of town and we need to go now. They are close by. It’s a scout’s team as far as we can see, around twenty or so, and we need to take them down. Mira, Elfman and Lisanna are coming with us so we will do this the fastest we can.”

“Alright.” Juvia nodded. “We can do it!”

#

The Western side of Magnolia was a mess, there were around twenty soldiers just like Gray had said it would be and the team didn’t even have time to get off their motorcycles before they started to shoot.

Taking cover behind a building, the five of them shot back but their mission was to push them away from town.

“Cover me.” Juvia told her teammates and before Gray could disagree, she received a nodded from Mirajane and knew it was a good plan. Juvia ran from behind the building to behind a fountain, her shooting range was much better, then.

Shooting three guys to the ground, Juvia returned to stay behind the fountain to reload her gun when one of the soldiers, a big large guy, stood behind her. She only had time to turn before he shot her three times on the chest.

Her breath got caught in her throat with the pain – the Kevlar had taken the worse of it, but it still hurt like a son of a bitch. She saw the man get taken down and a second later Lisanna and Gray were
by her side, Juvia fighting to breathe and taking off her Kevlar, otherwise she wouldn’t be able to breathe properly.

“I’m alright.” Juvia took a deep breath once the vest was off. “I’m alright.”

“Juvia…” Gray frowned.

“Give me my gun.” She was still a bit breathless, but controlled. “Give me my gun and we will finish this.”

Thankfully for them, once the team found out the best ways of taking them down, their enemies were down like flies.

No one messed with Fairy Tail at their town.

No one.

#

Once they returned to FT, there were already new orders for them. They had to reload their weapons and divide into teams once again and Juvia was glad to have ended up with Gray, alongside Laxus and Wendy. She was even glad the team who would meet them at the field for support was Lyon’s team which was most likely a well thought move from Makarov.

It didn’t matter, they needed to defeat the threat otherwise they were as good as dead.

Thankfully, Laxus had a motorcycle of his own and was willing to take Wendy with him, Erza rode her own bike while Gray rode with Juvia until they needed to stop for the night to get some rest.

Gray analyzed the red marks on Juvia’s stomach from where she had been hit earlier and his face clouded with anger.

“I told you to be careful.” He sulked and Juvia pulled down her shirt. “Being shot three times is not being careful.”

“Juvia is sorry.” She tip-toed and kissed his lips. “We should get some rest.” To lighten up the mood, she said, happily. “Gray-sama, I thought we could use this!” She pulled the sleeping bag from her things. “A sleeping bag for two!”


“Come to think of it, where’s Laxus-san?” Wendy wondered.

“He said he was hungry and ran off somewhere.” Gray shrugged. “Maybe he’s going to catch a bear and eat it.”

“I wonder what they taste like!” Erza was all but drooling.

Juvia looked apprehensive. “It’s dark, perhaps one of us should go find him.”

Gray sighed. “I’ll go. Everyone, prepare to sleep.”

The blunette nodded and put her sleeping back on the floor and lied inside waiting for her fiancée. Erza got in next to her for a few minutes because of the cold but as soon as Gray appeared, Laxus on tow, the red-haired woman went to her own sleeping back while Gray slipped next to Juvia, arms around her.
“I thought you said it was too hot.” She tried to lighten up the mood and was rewarded with a snort. 
“Was he alright?” Juvia asked quietly.

“Yeah, just thinking.” Gray kissed her forehead. “Remember the rules for tomorrow, huh?”

“Be by your side all the time.” She chuckled. “Juvia is very needed to have your back.”

Gray snorted. “You are, so let’s not have any surprises tomorrow, please. You know who is coming from the south and he is a sadist son of a bitch. If I tell you to run…”

“Juvia won’t listen because wherever you are, is where Juvia has to be.”

He groaned. “Juvia…”

She kissed him, long and sweetly. “Let’s sleep, Gray-sama. Tomorrow will be an eventful day.”

He clearly wanted to say more, but gave up, knowing how stubborn she was. “Good night, Juvia.”

“Good night, Gray-sama.”

#

The next day had been such a clusterfuck almost nothing went according to plan. Whenever they thought they were one step ahead, they were not. Even with every single agency helping, they were quite fucked.

Natsu and Lucy ended up meeting Gray and Juvia when they faced Yura Invel and his men at a clearing and shots started to get fired.

“Natsu, Lucy, Juvia.” Gray said, getting their attention. “You three go. I’ll hold them as long as I can. I can probably kill the bastard and there’s one fewer enemy for us to worry about.”

“Gray…” Natsu was offended until Gray grabbed him by the kevlar.

“You will take them away from here and protect them.” He looked into his friends’ eyes and they had some sort of conversation without words. “Now go.”

“Gray-sama…” Juvia shook her head.

“Juvia.” He pulled her for a kiss. “I’ll find you when this is over, okay? Go and help take Zeref down.”

“But-” She tried, but he kissed her again.

“Go help with Zeref, this is bigger than any of us. Please.” Juvia felt Lucy’s hand on hers, pulling her towards the trees and, with tears in her eyes, Juvia let herself get taken.

Not a minute after they started to run in the direction they assumed would lead to Zeref, gunshots echoed on the forest and Juvia stopped.

What was she doing? Capturing and killing Zeref was a priority, but what would her life mean if Zeref was gone and so was Gray? She wasn’t meant to kill Zeref, she was meant to stay with Gray, come what may.

“Juvia, we have to run!” Lucy said in a whisper and Natsu was right behind his girlfriend.
“Go.” Juvia told them. “I will go help Gray-sama. You two go and find Zeref.” She looked at Natsu’s eyes and she saw understanding there: he knew if that was the say the world went to shit, she would want to go with Gray by her side.

“But-” Lucy tried but Juvia put her hands on the blonde’s shoulder.

“Juvia’s place is by Gray-sama’s side. Lucy-san, Natsu-san, go and find and try to find Zeref.” Juvia said. “Only with him gone we have a chance, okay? Juvia is going to Gray-sama because if this is it, that’s where I want to be. We will hold them as much as we can in whatever way we can but you have to go.”

Lucy’s eyes watered but she nodded and started to run in the opposite direction. Natsu nodded and ran after his girlfriend and when Juvia was sure they were gone, the blunette started to run back to where she could hear the gunshots and then nothing.

She found her fiancée hiding behind a rock and she went immediately to his side and the moment Gray saw her, his eyes widened.

“What the fuck are you doing here?” He asked. “I told you to leave!”

“Juvia is not leaving you. Ever.” She told him. “For better or for worse, remember?”

He was evidently exasperated with her. “We are not married yet.”

“We are in all that matters.” She kissed his lips lightly. “Let’s face whatever, together.”

“Fucking stubborn woman.” Gray muttered, pulling her for a deep kiss and then cleaned his throat. “I’ve taken most of them down, but I’m out of ammo and that crazy fuck Invel is still out there.”

“He’s out of ammo too, probably.” Juvia said. “And now we are in two, we could take him.”

“Unless he has some secret weapon.” Gray pointed out. “And you are without your vest.” Juvia looked down and cussed at herself, she had forgot to take it after she was shot the day before. If he indeed had a secret weapon, she was fucked.

“If he does, we’re screwed either way.” They looked into each other’s eyes for a moment and nodded. If they were going down, they would fight until the end. “If this is it: I love you.”

“Not more than I love you.” Gray pulled her for a kiss that poured all his feelings to her, his love, his fears, his hopes, his hopelessness. It was so bittersweet Juvia couldn’t help but to reciprocate in kind. Once their lips unlocked they breathed hard for a few moments before Gray took a deep breath and told her: “Go left and I’ll go right and let’s see if we can ambush that son of a bitch.”

“Okay.”

Slowly, they came out from behind the rock and saw some movement by the trees and when they were about to advance, a gas bomb fell between them. It wasn’t pepper gas or anything but it smelt familiar somehow.

Juvia’s eyes widened once she realized she really knew that scent, she had smelt it before, years ago with Vivaldus. That gas was meant to control them.

“Don’t breathe in!” Juvia yelled at Gray and covered her mouth and nose, watching him do the same but they couldn’t hold on forever, not when Invel threw another smoking bomb where they were. Soon enough, they were coughing and tearing up. “Fuck!” She cussed.
“What the…” Gray said and as the gas dissipated, they could see the figure of Yura Invel coming towards them. “My head…” He put a hand on his temple. “Everything is going dark…”

Juvia felt her body stiff, as if she couldn’t command it to move. “My body…” Juvia whispered. “Won’t do what I tell it.”

“Will Lock.” The white-haired man said, approaching the couple. “This gas seals a person’s mind and makes them my willing puppets. Whatever I command, you will do it.” Juvia’s mind was getting hazy but she fought it the best she could. “You two will now fight to the death. You have zero say in the matter.” Juvia’s heart stopped at his words. “I will only order you to only stop when of you is dead. The other one, I’ll bring to the battlefield and watch as he or she butchers your friends.”

“What’d you just say?” It appeared Gray still had some of his mental faculties as he tried to reach for the other man, but his body seemed to be as reluctant to move as Juvia’s was. “Guh… My head.” Gray looked down for a moment and when he looked up, she saw he had been caught up by the gas. That was not her Gray-sama. “Juvia…”

Instinctively, Juvia groaned at him without meaning to. “Gray….”

Inside her mind, Juvia screamed to herself. ‘Not gonna happen! If it means harming a single hair on Gray-sama…. Juvia would much rather take her own life while she still has her wits about her!’

“No, I refuse to harm Gray-sama. Anything but that!’ She took a step forward and so did Gray, she could see his menacing eyes on her. ‘I could never bring myself to harm a single hair on his body, and yet…’

She couldn’t have guessed who threw the first punch, or who kicked the other, or threw oneself on the ground first. Juvia hit the man she loved while he hit her back, tears in her eyes while inside her mind, she just screamed in pure agony.

She didn’t know for how long they fought hand on hand, but the effects of the gas weren’t as strong as they had been before and she could think more clearly, even control her body slightly better than before.

‘Why is Juvia bringing harm to Gray-sama like this?’ She thought to herself, seeing a red bruise on his cheek and blood coming from his mouth. Not even when they were enemies, she had hurt him like that. ‘It cannot be! These actions are unforgivable! The very thought of Juvia hurting Gray-sama…’ She thought, feeling another punch on her stomach while she managed to bring him down and punch him in the face. ‘Juvia would rather simply meet her end at Gray-sama’s hands but that too is unacceptable! Gray-sama would surely blame himself…’ Juvia knew if Gray killed her, he would never forgive himself. He could never move on, not after all he had gone through. ‘If that’s the case, then the choice is obvious. Yes, Juvia shall end her own life, here and now!’

Juvia got off Gray and she could feel him trying to grab her feet as she ran to where the bodies of Invel’s troops were. She had to act fast, while she didn’t lose her mind once again. ‘Before my consciousness fades away completely, Juvia will…’ She got one of the guns lying on the ground. ‘You have nothing to fear. Muster your courage and fortitude, Juvia!’ She thought to herself and saw Gray do the same and reach for the rifle. She needed to act fast, before he did something that would haunt him forever.

She was hurting him. Not with her fists, not with her punches. He was hurting because he was
hurting her. He was in pain because he couldn’t stop and the only guarantee they had was that supposedly Invel would take whoever stayed alive, with them.

Juvia needed to save him.

“Any and all resistance is utterly futile. Will Lock completely imprisons one’s mind. The two of you lost your ability to reason and until one of you drops dead, you won’t stop.”

Juvia took a deep breath and with the last control of her body, she yelled at the white-haired man: “Juvia’s body is far too small for these overflowing feelings to ever be imprisoned within it!”

Invel looked surprised but Juvia’s gaze went to her fiancée, her love, the man she’d do anything for. The man she was going to die for.

Her words seemed to have woken him a little, but just like with her, not enough to stop their fight.

Looking straight into his dark eyes, his beautiful amazing loving eyes she would always remember whenever she went after what she was about to do, Juvia smiled and she hoped he could see how much she loved him. She couldn’t express how much, never could.

“Words cannot express the joy Juvia has felt by loving you, Gray-sama.” With one swift move, Juvia grabbed the rifle in her hands, turned towards her and with the bayonet, she stabbed herself under her breast and to her utter surprise, she saw her fiancée do the same the bayonet right under his chest.

“Why… did you go and do… something stupid like that?” The pain of the blade was close to unbearable but seeing Gray’s eyes, wide in shock as he tried to stab himself hurt her even more. He was still wearing his Kevlar, he wasn’t hurt as much as she was.

“What…?” Juvia managed to speak between the pain. “Gray-sama… this cannot be.” She panted, tears in her eyes. He had been willing to do exactly what she was doing: dying to save him.

“I could never… hurt you. That’s why I… and yet…”

“Ahh…” Juvia moaned in pain and fell to the ground on her side, pain irradiated from her stomach to her whole body but Juvia just wanted to look at Gray. If this was the last few moments of her life, it was him she wanted to see.

“I wanted to… protect you.” The gas made his words slurred, but it was her Gray speaking to her. Her Gray, her love, the man of her life. “No matter what the cost… but… I couldn’t.”

Even in pain, even knowing she had hit herself in a very delicate area and she would have just a few hours to live at most, Juvia’s heart couldn’t help but to beat faster while looking at him. “No…” She managed to smile at him despite the pain, she didn’t want his last memory of her as a crying mess. “Your words bring Juvia such joy… Gray-sama.”

Juvia’s eyes were closing but she was very sure she heard him say “I love you” before she lost consciousness.

#

She mustn’t have been out for too long when she opened her eyes, pain hitting every cell of her body, so much she couldn’t move much. Juvia looked down and brought one trembling hand to the darkening spot on her dark blue shirt where the bayonet was still in place.

Her blood, she thought and she looked to the ground and saw a pool of blood surrounding her.
Throughout the years Juvia had been injured a lot and she always tried to keep her head clear, but seeing where she was stabbed – most likely on her liver which promised her a very painful death – and the fact probably no help would arrive anytime soon, she knew what it meant.

She was dying.

She started to cry, breathing hard and in so much pain she wanted for it to be over already. Fear washed over her like a cold blanket: she was dying.

‘I want to see Gray-sama one more time.’ She thought, trying her best to keep her eyes open; she knew if she lost consciousness again, it would be for good. ‘One more time.’

Oh, she always thought when the time came she’d accept it, she’d be grateful to have lived that far and to have met the amazing people she knew, that she would rejoice meeting the love of her life.

But at that moment, none of it was true as she sobbed in agony.

Juvia tried to fight the pain and she didn’t want to go, not yet. She had so much to live for; she was supposed to get married in two weeks and then have her whole life with Gray by her side. They were supposed to spend their honeymoon at the beach. They were supposed to start trying to have a baby in a few months. They were supposed to grow older together.

Now, she couldn’t. Her future was gone;

She was wrong before, the time she had spent with Gray wasn’t enough. It would never be enough.

She had no clue how long she just stayed lying on the dirty ground, crying and in agonizing pain. So… that was dying, huh. Despair, unbearable pain and cold.

She was so cold and in the back of her head she knew it was because of all the blood she had lost. It wouldn’t take long now, she couldn’t feel her legs anymore, the rest of her body was numb and she had to fight to keep her eyes opened.

She was so tired. So, so tired all she wanted was to sleep. Fighting to stay alive exhausted her and maybe if she just took a nap…

“Juvia!” She heard Gray’s voice when she almost had her eyes closed and she gathered all her strength to open them again. She saw him kneel next to her and he gently turned her around. What was he doing there? He had left, why was he back? Was it a hallucination because her blood loss? If it was, she was glad it was him she was seeing. “Juvia? Juvia, don’t close your eyes.” His tone was desperate and he looked so afraid… she never saw him like that. It broke her heart. “Don’t speak.” He said when she opened her mouth and he started to put pressure on her wound. “I’m sorry, that bastard still controlled me and took me away, but I finally overcame the gas.” He looked down to her and paled. “Don’t worry. You’re going to be alright.” He tried to convince her, but man, was he a shitty liar.

She knew it wasn’t true, she knew she was dying. “Gra-”

“Shhhh. You’ll be okay.” Gray looked around in a frantic seek for assistance, but there was no one else around. It was just them. “You have to be okay. I just need to- there must be someone-” He looked down to her, pleading with his eyes for her to be alright. “I’ll find someone to help you.”

“There’s no one.” Juvia managed to croak.

“No. No.” He shook his head, his face in an expression of pain. “There has to be someone.” Juvia
gathered all her strength to shake her head. “No!” He all but yelled. “You can’t do that, Juvia.” He said, tears falling from his eyes. “You can’t make me love you, make me want to marry you and be with you forever and then leave me.” He sobbed, a hand cradling one of her cheeks sweetly. “Please don’t leave me too. I won’t be able to take it. Don’t leave me.” He whispered in such a painful tone, Juvia started to cry again. “Please, don’t leave me alone.”

“I’m sorry.” She said, sobbing. ‘I’m sorry for hurting you, I’m sorry for loving you, I’m sorry for leaving, I’m sorry for being selfish’, she wanted to say, but instead, just whispered: “I’m sorry.”

Gray held her close to his chest and Juvia could see her vision darkening. It was time and she needed to make sure Gray knew.

“Juvia…” She whispered, her strength almost gone as she put a hand on his cheek. “Will live on within your heart, Gray-sama. That’s why there’s no reason to be sad.”

“This isn’t happening.” Gray sobbed, thick tears coming from his eyes and staining his face. “Juvia…”

“Juvia’s life will forever and always belong to you, Gray-sama.” She smiled between tears and her vision was almost completely black when she couldn’t feel her hand anymore and let it fall on the ground, where her blood had stained it. She did manage, though, to whisper ‘I love you’ before darkness took over her.

And for a second, before her mind went blank, she could swear she heard Gray’s scream of agony, asking her to come back.

#

The first thing she realized was how she couldn’t breathe with something deep inside her throat, the second was that when she opened her eyes, everything was unfamiliar and the noise from the machines’ beeps was driving her crazy and she couldn’t fucking breathe.

“Juvia!” She knew that voice. She loved that voice. Juvia searched for him, but her eyes were still adjusting to the light but she saw a blurry figure with dark hair and felt a warm hand on hers. She knew that hand. “Doctor! She’s awake.”

Her blue eyes were finally focusing more and more and by the time she could see properly, she saw a team of people in white rushing towards her, everyone speaking at the same time and the warm hand was gone while she craved it back.

“Sweetheart,” a female’s sweet voice said “I need you to cough. Cough and we can take this tube off of you, yes?” Knowing Juvia couldn’t answer, the lady counted. “On three, okay? One, two, three.” As instructed, Juvia coughed and the tube slowly moved from deep her throat. “Atta girl. Very good, darling.”

Juvia couldn’t stop coughing and her body ached with it, her chest, her throat, her side, everything. Even when someone put an oxygen mask over her nose and mouth, Juvia kept coughing, her throat felt sore and tender.

“Deep breaths, honey. There you go.” Sweet lady said and Juvia was finally stopping the coughs gradually while taking deep breaths. That went on for a few minutes until Sweet Lady said. “Wonderful, my dear. I will get the doctor, he will want to talk to you. But there’s someone here who didn’t leave your side for a moment since you got here.”

Juvia looked around and saw Gray by door – far enough to not to get in the way of the medical
professionals but close enough to know if something was amiss. The moment their eyes met, Juvia started to cry and Gray took a few steps closer to her bed, grabbing her hand and his own eyes were shining with unshed tears.

The blunette moved her oxygen mask for a second and Gray took the hint and gave her a kiss on the lips and damn her if it wasn’t the best thing she ever felt. She laughed and cried when Gray dutifully put her oxygen mask back on her face.

“I thought you died.” He told her, a few tears falling from his eyes. “I asked for you to come back.”

“I…” She panted, voice rough. “Listened.” And that time, when Gray started to cry again, she knew they were tears of joy, just like hers were.

She was alive and so was their future.

Chapter End Notes

I can’t believe there’s just one more chapter to go! *3*

Kevlar does not stop stabbings, as far as my research told me, but they can be quite an obstacle so that’s why Juvia’s stab wound is much more serious than Gray’s. She hit a major organ, her liver, while Gray got lucky and it’s a much simples wound. Liver wounds take a while to make someone die, but if there’s no medical attention, said person will die from exsanguination, which was pretty much how Juvia died in chapter 499, that’s why I had to make Gray leave with Invel, so she could bleed out. Mean Bonney, I know. We’ll talk about it more in the next chapter. :)
I can’t believe I am finishing this after 2 years and 3 months. Thank you for everyone who has been following this from the start, or got here in the middle or even after this was finished. I couldn’t have done it without you.

Once told how close she had been to really dying, Juvia couldn't believe how on earth had she survived. Gray had told her how Invel had taken him away and how Gray had killed him the second the gas lost its effect on him.

"I was in so much pain, Juvia. I thought you had died." Gray told her and she noticed his purpled knuckles. "I killed him. He was going to use me to kill our friends after I had just seen you…” Gray couldn't finish the sentence. "After he was dead, I went looking for you and for a moment I had hope you were alright when I saw you, but your wounds… And then you closed your eyes and I knew you were dead. I went insane, I wanted to go and kill Zeref myself. I even got into a fight with Natsu because of it." Gray's hand tightened on hers – he was rarely not touching her the past few days. "If Wendy hadn't given you assistance when she did…” Gray didn't finish the sentence and Juvia gave him a squeeze on his hand to assure him she was alright. "For more than six hours I thought you were dead."

"I'm sorry." Juvia whispered and she couldn't fathom how must've been horrible to know for certainty she was dead. Juvia would've die from the heartache alone.

"The moment they told me you were alive but in surgery… I thought Wendy was playing a cruel joke on me. But she wasn't." She could see the pain in his eyes. "I didn't dare to hope but the doctors came out and told me you had a chance and fuck, Juvia. Please, don't ever make me go through that again. It was the worse day of my life and then the best because even if you were breathing through machines, you were alive. And then you woke up and I just… Fuck." Juvia's eyes were tearing up and she tried to lighten the mood, knowing Gray had been battling with some very dark and awful thoughts for days while she was unconscious.

"Of course Juvia woke up. You promised to marry her and you are not getting out of that so easily. Juvia's dress is already picked, there's no turn back after that." Gray looked at her as if he couldn't believe in what he was hearing and then started to laugh and to Juvia, it was the most beautiful sound in the world.

"Oh, fuck, Juvia. Only you would come back from the dead just to marry me." He told her, joking and chuckling.

"Juvia has been waiting for this for more than three years. Death can wait until we are married, old and surrounded by greatgrandchildren."
"That it can." Gray kissed her hand and told her to get some rest.

Even though Juvia was lucky to be alive, some others hadn't been so lucky. Makarov being one of them. Juvia had cried when she had learned about FTs casualties and even though she hadn't been close to any of them, they were still family.

Being bedridden, Juvia wasn't able to attend to their funerals but insisted Gray went in her stead, telling him she would be alright for a few hours and one of them should be there. He was very reluctant to go and was back in less than two hours, but once he returned, Juvia was glad he had brought Lyon with him – his own agency had lost people during that day but he took the day off to pay his respects to Makarov, see his brother and check on Juvia. Gray excused himself for a moment to speak with Juvia's doctor so Lyon stayed with her on his own for a few minutes.

"How come you look beautiful and sparkling even lying on a hospital bed, Juvia-chan?" Lyon said to her with a big smile and stepped closer to her bed, sitting on it, facing her after giving her a kiss on the cheek.

Juvia knew he was lying – she looked exactly as if she had died and come back, as really happened.

"I do not, but thank you for lying, Lyon-sama." Juvia chuckled. "How are you?"

"I should be the one asking you that." He took her hand on his. "We all thought you had died, Juvia. Gray believed you died and it was..."

"Juvia believed she died." She sighed. "But by some miracle, here she is."

"Good." Lyon said. "You didn't see him when he thought you were gone." He whispered. "I have seen him sad, broken, angry. But that... Anyone who looked at him could see whatever feeling we thought he was having was nothing compared to what was inside him. He was in true despair."

"I'm so sorry to have caused him so much pain." Juvia's eyes watered.

"It wasn't your fault." Lyon reassured her. "And you are alive. I was there when they said you had good chances after your surgery, you know?" Lyon told her. "I couldn't leave even after I was called back, I needed to make sure you were alright and my brother too. He almost fainted – due his wounds, exhaustion, shock, I don't know. But the relief I saw in his eyes... I hope you know how much he loves you, Juvia-chan."

"I do." She told him. "Just as much as Juvia loves him, she reckons."

Lyon snorted. "You two are so perfectly suited it's ridiculous."

"What's ridiculous?" Gray asked when he entered the hospital room.

Lyon didn't miss a beat to answer. "That Juvia-chan had to almost die to try to get away from the prospect of marrying you."

"Oh, fuck off." Gray snarled, but with no true bite into it – by then he knew Lyon only spoke things like that to make him riled up and that was their thing.

"Juvia-chan." Lyon whispered and stared at Juvia, completely serious. "If you are being kept here against your will, blink two times and I'll get you out."

"Alright, get out. You overstayed your welcome." Gray said while Juvia chuckled, holding her side where she had been hurt a few days before. "Visiting hours is almost over anyways. Do you have
"Yeah, don't worry." Lyon nodded and got up from the bed, bending over to kiss Juvia's cheek once more. "I will come back tomorrow morning to say good-bye before I come back home."

"Thank you for coming, Lyon-sama." She said and watched as her fiancée walked his brother out the bedroom talk to him for a few seconds before they gave each other a very quick man-hug with pats on the back that warmed her heart. Yes, her Gray-sama had grown up a lot.

A week into staying at the hospital, Gray was lying on his side on the bed next to her and on the other side of where she had been hurt while they watched some movie or another and truly just enjoying each other when there was a knock on the door before it opened to reveal Laxus.

Juvia was surprised to see the blonde there and saw Gray was just as surprised.

"Laxus?" Gray got up from the bed, confused. "Is something wrong?"

"No, no, don't worry." Laxus waved his worry off. "I have been visiting the members of the firm who are still at the hospital for the past days, to check on everyone's conditions. It was what my grandfather would want me to do." He muttered the last sentence. He was Makarov's heir, of course.

"Oh." Juvia smiled in understanding. "Juvia is doing fine, Laxus-san. They are keeping me here for another week, but mostly for observation."

"She's out of danger." Gray informed him. "But there was a beginning of an infection so they want to be extra careful even if it's under control."

"That's good." Laxus sighed in relief. "I should-" He looked so uncomfortable, but Juvia couldn't let him leave yet.

"Laxus-san. Juvia is so very sorry for your grandfather." She told him softly. "I wish I could have gone to the funeral, but…" She waved around.

"It's alright, I understand." His lips curled up a bit. "We'll have a memorial for the ones who lost their lives when everyone is discharged from the hospital and can attend."

"That is good." Juvia said. "He touched a lot of lives and we all would like to pay our respects."

"He did, didn't he?" Laxus' expression softened a little.

"Your grandfather's kindness changed our lives." Juvia said, getting emotional. "If it weren't for him seeing something in Juvia, he wouldn't have accepted me into FT and Juvia and Gray-sama would probably not meet again." She took her fiancée's hand and looked up at him adoringly before looking back to Laxus. "If it weren't for him, my life would have been so different and sad. But he took a chance and now we will forever remember and be grateful for him to have done just that."

"When I was out of the army and had nowhere to go, he gave me a home when I thought I could never have one again, he treated us like family and that's what we became. And then," he looked down to Juvia, squeezing her hand and she smiled "because of him, I met the woman I love and going to marry as soon as I can. Without him, my life wouldn't be like this."

Laxus took a deep breath, eyes clearly shining and he tried to contain his emotions. "My grandfather's legacy is this. All the people he helped, all the people he met and the people he joined
even if by accident. *Fuck* there's even a new generation of brats who are alive because their parents met at a firm he created." He said, referring to Asuka, Gale and Anna. "And there will be some from you two, then Natsu and Lucy. God knows how many more.

"He was a good man and everyone who met him changed because of that meeting and that's what we will always cherish. I will never be like him, but I will try to be. I will try to live by what he believed in, which is that everyone deserves a second chance and anyone can have goodness in them. I might be wrong sometimes, but most time I'll get it right, I know. Like he did."

"You will do it well, Laxus-san. You know how it is like to be saved that way, so you will know when to be kind." Juvia nodded, drying a tear from her cheek. "We will always remember him as the man who changed our lives. He would be proud of the man you are becoming."

"Thank you." Laxus cleared his throat, trying to keep his emotions at bay. "Well, I have to go."

"Of course." Juvia knew he needed time to sort his feelings – Laxus was a very private man. Juvia would text Cana so she could check on him later. "Thank you for coming."

"I hope you get better soon." He told her and took Gray's hand to shake it when he offered it before he practically ran out the room.

"That was… odd." Gray told her.

Juvia smiled. "No. That was progress and a sign of good things to come."

Gray snorted. "Oh god, please. Let good things come for once." Juvia giggled with his words.

#

Two weeks of being at the hospital and Juvia was sick of it. She felt much better, she was even allowed to walk around at the hospital and the wound seemed to be healing perfectly fine inside and outside.

She was always receiving visits from her friends and that afternoon it was Cana who slowly walked with her in the corridors of the hospital, pushing her IV so she could walk more freely.

"The doctor said Juvia will be discharged tomorrow." The blunette told her friend.

"Oh, that's great!" Cana was truly happy for her. "So that's why Gray hired a cleaning service to clean up the house and took Snowball to be groomed."

"He's afraid Juvia will get an infection when she gets home. It has been two weeks since we actually went home." Juvia chuckled – Gray had been there quickly to take a shower and change his clothes before returning to her bedside. Snowball had been staying with Lisanna and Juvia was dying to hold her baby after so long.

"He's just worried, he got real close to losing you." Cana said kindly.

"I know. Juvia was much the same when he was shot." Juvia shrugged – she couldn't really condemn Gray for his actions when she had freaked out just as much when she had been in his shoes a few years before. The two women walked in silence for a few seconds before Juvia spoke. "It's funny, you know?"

"What is it?"
"It's a weird coincidence: we were supposed to get married tomorrow and it's the day Juvia will be released from the hospital." She chuckled sadly. "Maybe we can do it in a couple of months when things get normal again."

Cana was silent for a second before she nodded. "Yes, maybe."

The next day, after the doctor had discharged her in the morning, Gray went to settle whatever debts they might've had while Juvia finished putting her things in the bag Gray had brought when she heard the door open and when she turned around, she saw her friends there.

Lucy held a large necessaire, Levy had another one in her hands while Cana held on her pink wedding dress cover up.

"What the hell…?" Juvia asked, absolutely confused. "Is that my wedding dress?"

"Yes!" Cana nodded and carefully put the covered dress on the couch Gray had spent his nights on for two weeks.

Juvia frowned. "And why is my dress here instead of at home?"

"Because you are getting married today!" Lucy said, excited. "If you want, that is."

"What?" Juvia shook her head. "No, Lucy-san. We cancelled the venue when we realized Juvia would be in the hospital for a while. We canceled the arrangements too and—"

"I know." Lucy stepped closer to her friend after putting the necessaire down to the floor. "But we came up with an alternative: you two still have your marriage license and you can go to the city hall and get married today."

"I told them you could want to have a grand wedding, Juvia-san." Levy said, kindly. "And it's all up to you, but I think you are absolutely dying to call Gray your husband." She smiled when Juvia nodded. "If you want us gone, we will and we will help you plan the wedding you want and deserve but we are offering you a way to marry him today."

"You chose this date for a reason." Cana said.

"And you were released from the hospital on the same day." Lucy emended. "Sometimes there are signs from the universe we can't deny." She was quick to add, though. "But say the word and we'll go away and you'll go home, like Levy-chan said, and we'll plan your wedding again."

Oh, that was so tempting. "Gray-sama…"

"Natsu and Gajeel are outside with him just waiting for a text to tell him if it's on or not." Cana said. "I probed yesterday and he told me he'd marry you any day. Now it's up to you."

Juvia felt a little pressured to make that decision at the spot like that, but at the same time, she knew the answer, she knew what was in her heart and she knew it was never about having a big wedding, or a party: it was to marry the love of her life.

"It appears Juvia is getting married today." She said and the girls all but buzzed in excitement.

"I'll call the boys." Levy said.

Lucy and Cana made Juvia seat on the bed, they knew she still needed rest so for as long as they
could, they would try to keep as relaxed as they could.

"I'll do your make-up." Lucy said. "I'm great at that."

"I'm not too great with hair, but we'll make do." Cana confessed.

Levy finished the call and turned to the others: "I could hear Gray's answer at the background and it was: Fucking finally." Levy chuckled and Juvia's eyes watered as she laughed.

"Thang god I brought some waterproof mascara." Lucy said and the girls laughed.

Fucking finally indeed.

#

As Juvia sat at the backseat of Lucy's car outside the City Hall, she was trying to wrap her mind around the what was happening. There she was, about to go get married inside that building, in her beautiful wedding dress. She would most likely be the most dress up bride in there but she didn't care, she felt beautiful.

With her dress, she felt like a princess even with some changes to accommodate her injuries. Her corset was much looser than it would've been had she not be hurt, but it fit her perfectly. Her hair was loose and fell into waves on her back, hiding the loose corset and her make-up was light, but perfect just like that. Hell, she was wearing flats and she didn't mind.

The car door opened and Gajeel appeared, offering a hand, and wearing a tux to her surprise. "Come on. It's almost your turn and Fullbuster is getting antsy."

"Wha-?" Juvia took his hand to come off the car and he gently helped out, not letting go off her hand so she could support herself in case she felt any pain.

"I was supposed to give you away, right? Just doing my job." He shrugged and Juvia's eyes watered.

"Thank you."

"No crying." He scolded her. "You chose to marry Fullbuster, no time for crying about it now." Juvia laughed at his words and so did Gajeel.

Cana and Levy, who were filming everything with their phones, chuckled as well while Lucy stepped closer to her friend and gave her a bouquet and she was surprised when she saw it was made entirely of buttercups, the bouquet she had chosen.

"How…?"

Lucy smiled. "You never called to cancel the bouquet."

"Oh my god, this is really happening." Juvia whispered.

"Here." Lucy removed a necklace she was wearing with a beautiful sapphire charm in form of a heart. "This has been in my family for generations so it's old, borrowed and blue!"

"The dress is new." Cana supplied. "We are all covered with the tradition, then, now let's move it, people!" She said, still recording on her phone.

#
The moment they saw each other, Juvia knew they were one hundred percent right to be getting married that afternoon at the city hall.

Gray was wearing the tux he had chosen weeks before, his hair was as wild as ever even though he clearly tried to comb it, but he was a vision. The most handsome man in the world and by the way he was looking at her, she was having similar thoughts about her.

Juvia walked in his direction, having support by Gajeel's arm twined to hers and she didn't care the weird looks she was receiving, she didn't care some people were sneering at the crazy couple who came to the City Hall all dressed up just to sign some papers.

She didn't care because she was marrying the love of her life.

Next to Gray, stood Natsu and surprisingly enough, Lyon (for some weird reason, they were also recording the whole thing).

"You better take care of her, Fullbuster." Gajeel told Gray when he put Juvia's hand on Gray's arm.

"She takes better care of me, actually, but I'll do my best." Gray couldn't look away from her as he answered Gajeel's threat. "You look beautiful." He told her in a whisper.

"You too." She smiled. "Are we really doing this? This isn't a dream, is it?"

"Better not be." He told her and before he could say anything else, a clerk called their names and they walked to the judge's chambers slowly. Gray got the papers from Lyon and went inside.

#

Juvia looked down to the ring in her finger as they came out of the judge chambers and she couldn't be happier. She had just married Gray, the love of her life, the man she wanted to be with forever and now she would.

Gray couldn't stop smiling as well and just when they were stepping out of the City Hall and their friends were about to throw rice as a celebration, Gray stopped them.

"Wait, wait, wait." Everyone was confused, especially when Gray took off his ring. "Give me your ring."

Juvia blinked in surprised but did what was told, completely confused. "Want the divorce already?" She asked just half-joking. "Juvia thought we'd have more time than that."

Gray snorted. "Not even close. Look, what we said before the judge was too formal and I don't feel married yet, and neither do you, not really. It was too formal and standard and we are all but standard, I mean, look at how we are getting married." Everyone agreed. "So... let's do what we always do. Make it our own. I want this to be special to you, even if it's not what you thought it was going to be."

He turned her his way and held both of her hands. "Juvia, you know how I hate to speak in public about my feelings but just two weeks ago I almost lost you and I say 'screw it' to that. When we met, I shot you and at that moment if someone had told me that three years later I would be marrying you, I would've laughed at that person's face. I never wanted to get married, I never wanted to be involved with someone for too long. I thought I was good with it, I thought being alone was good. But then you came and crashed down all I thought I knew.

"I didn't even see you snuck inside my mind, my heart until it was too late and I couldn't be without
you anymore. You saved me from myself when I didn't even know I needed saving. We went through some awful times, but three years later, here we are, getting married. I know some people say that they wouldn't do anything different, but I would. I would do and say so many different things if I had the chance but only if we still ended up here, in this moment." He put the ring on her shaking finger. "I swear to love you and care for you no matter what comes our way because I know we will be able to face it together."

Juvia was openly crying with his action of saying his own vows, surprisingly, and the words themselves. She hadn't been expecting that at all.

"One of these days you will give me a heart attack, Gray-sama." Juvia said, laughing between her tears. She took a deep breath. "Just like you, if someone had told me I would be marrying the man who shot me when we met, I would have thought that person was crazy. But you know what?, even then I knew you were different. You actually went to help me after you shot me and I knew I had to find you. And I did. As anyone knows, Juvia did all the chasing and you were very hard to get, mind you" everyone chuckled "but Juvia knew she would want to stay by your side even if we never got involved romantically. To my luck we did and we still are.

"You took me away from a lonely life full of rain and brought me to the sunshine. Hearing you love me, that you want to be with me makes me so happy I wonder why I haven't exploded from so much happiness yet. We hurt each other at times, but not for lack of love but for misunderstandings and wishes to protect the other, but we did it anyway. Us, we are not perfect and I would do some things differently, say some things differently too but just like you said, only if it still brought us here to this moment. Marrying you today, right here, right now is where all that heartache and pain between our good moment led us and for that I will be forever grateful." She grabbed his hand and for the second time, she slipped the ring on his finger. "I also promise you to love you forever and care for you no matter what. We can face anything together, as we have been doing since we met."

Gray smiled and pulled her for a kiss, a much deeper kiss than the one in front of the judge. Their friends cheered and they felt the rice being thrown at them in celebration.

"I love you." Juvia whispered.

#

Gray carried her upstairs in bridal style. Her corset was loose, Gray's coat had stayed in the car and Snowball was barking in excitement because her humans were back, she had been especially missing Juvia.

Entering their bedroom, Gray placed her on the bed gently, seated. He kneeled in front of her and started to pull her flats.

"Juvia wishes she could give you the wedding night we deserve." Juvia whispered, deadly tired, and even though she knew she was forbidden to, Snowball jumped on the bed to lick Juvia's face and the blunette chuckled and petted her dog, whispering how much she missed her.

Gray snorted and he unbuttoned the first few buttons on his white shirt. "Yes, Juvia. This is what I'm concerning myself with right now: that I won't be having sex tonight with my wife." He was clearly being sarcastic but Juvia grinned and when he looked up, he frowned, confused. "What?"

"You called me your wife." She told him. "We are married." Juvia looked down to her ring finger and watched the beautiful golden band that rested in front of her engagement ring for a moment. "We are married. Us." She all but shrieked. "You are Juvia's husband."
"I am." Gray couldn't help but to smile as well. "After a long time and many setbacks, we are finally married." He said. "Man, you promised the war would end before the day we were supposed to get married and you were right. I married a witch." Juvia chuckled.

Gray took Snowball from her arms and put her on the floor and helped Juvia up. He turned her around, pushed her long hair away and started to loosen up the corset of her dress even more to get her out of it. He pushed away her wedding dress and it pooled by her feet.

Juvia was glad Cana had forethought the whole thing and made her wear some lace underwear even though she was aware Gray and Juvia couldn't do anything for quite a while because of her injuries.

She sighed with the thought.

"What's wrong?" He asked, worried.

"This night wasn't supposed to go like this."

Gray's expression softened. "I know getting married at the City Hall and then going to Mira's wasn't what you planned, but-"

"Oh, no. Not that." She smiled. "That was perfect. The way we got married was perfect, seeing our friends after was perfect. Your vows were perfect." It was amusing to see his cheeks get pink. "No, it wasn't like Juvia planned, it was better because like you said, we made it our own. We have quite a story to tell now from how we met, to how you propose to how we got married."

Gray chuckled. "If my father were here, he'd say we beat him and my mom on the stories."

"Perhaps that was a Fullbuster tradition we didn't know about and completely fulfilled." Juvia giggled but then her smile got sadder. "I know you said it's not on your mind, but tonight we were supposed to be making love, to seal our marriage. But not with this." She pointed to the bandage on her side.

Gray examined her face for a moment, his expression turned to disbelief. "Dear god, I always knew you wanted to have sex with me all the time, but get a grip, woman." Juvia's eyes widened and her cheeks got redder.

"Gray-sama!" She said, slapping his shoulder lightly and blushing as he laughed, pulling her closer to him and kissing her lips.

"As much fun as spending tonight making love to you would be, you are hurt and that wound almost took you away from me." He told her in a whisper. "Tonight is not about making love, having sex, screwing or whatever else people might call it." Gray put a hand on her cheek. "Tonight I will hold you and that is going to be the best wedding night I can think of just because I can hold you. Anything else doesn't matter to me other than the fact you are here."

Juvia let two tears fall from her eyes and dried them quickly. "Stop making Juvia cry on her wedding day, Gray-sama!" She laughed between her tears and he kissed her. Once their lips unlocked, he rested his forehead on hers and the blunette spoke. "Since Juvia can hold you too, she guesses this is the best wedding night she can think of too." Both of them smiled, just happy to be there together, alive, well and married at last. "But the moment Juvia's well enough we are having our honeymoon and doing it on every surface we can to see if married sex is just as good as engaged sex."

"Oh, god, fuck yes." Gray didn't even hesitate. "Two weeks away from everything and no clothes allowed."
"Great rule." Juvia nodded and they both laughed.

"Now come on, let's get you cleaned up and ready for bed." He kissed her forehead. "You must be exhausted."

"Yes." She agreed and let him lead her towards their bathroom, Snowball was curled up atop of Juvia's wedding dress.

"I know the doctor said you could walk around a bit – that's the only reason I agreed to get married today – but tomorrow you'll stay off your feet all day long." Gray started to tell her all the things she wasn't allowed to do and Juvia humored him, just overjoyed to be with him, her husband and the love of her life.

During the first few days of her return home, Gray made as much of a big fuss about everything she did as she made when he got shot a few years before. Thankfully, her friends often went to visit and sometimes Gray was dragged away by Natsu or Loke, or Gajeel to go out to give Juvia some peace.

In one of those visits, the girls brought her the edited video of the wedding and the pictures and Juvia couldn't believe how great they turned out.

"I know some people." Cana told Juvia while they watched the video on the big screen of the TV. "I got the videos from every phone that was recording it and the guy just got the best audios and best angles, synchronized the whole thing." Juvia couldn't believe her eyes. She could hear clearly each word and there were many angles of both hers and Gray's expression, many angles of the kiss on the stairs of the City Hall and she started to tear up; it had been as beautiful as she remembered. "That's my gift to you two, by the way." The brunette said and Juvia pulled her friend to a hug, thanking her profoundly. "There's footage of when we went to Mira's too."

"Well, Levy-chan and I – she says sorry she's not here but the twins are teething at the same time – took the best pictures we could find and took to get retouched." Lucy took a tablet from her purse and after a moment offered it to Juvia and the first picture she saw, was of their kiss, both smiling into it, the bouquet of buttercups between them and it was clear the couple was incredibly happy.

The next picture was of everyone that was at the wedding – they had asked a couple of young girls to take some pictures of them all and Juvia could see the subtle retouches Lucy mentioned, like taking away other people from the background, adding the cut part of the build into the picture.

She passed to a picture of Gray with his groomsman posing for a picture, then another with all of them laughing at something and another with Juvia also posing with her bridesmaids and then another with all of them hugging each other. The retouches Lucy spoke of made it seemed as if there had really been a professional photographer who had taken the pictures. Even the ones of the "reception" at Mira's had been beautiful. The few ones of just Gray and Juvia looked amazing (Gray was always fretting she should stay seated but she managed to bring him out to the back of the bar where Mira had a garden and they managed to take some beautiful pictures).

"Oh, you guys." Juvia started to cry. "Thank you so much for this. That day was perfect because of you." Juvia pulled Lucy to a hug.

"Stop crying or I'll cry too." The blonde said.

"Crybabies." Cana snorted but her eyes had also watered a bit.

Later that evening when Gray had returned home and the couple was lying on the couch, watching
the wedding video again, Snowball on Juvia's lap, Gray's arm around her shoulder and Juvia's head resting on his; he was surprised.

"Holy shit, that looks really good. Cana needs to introduce us to the people who did this." He commented, clearly impressed. "It almost looks professional."

"You need to see the pictures." Juvia told him. "They looked beautiful."

Gray snorted. "I am sure you'll print them all and spread them around the house soon enough."

Juvia laughed. "You know me so well."

"I do." He kissed her lips. "Now come on up, it's late and tomorrow you have the doctor's appointment."

"Alright, alright." Juvia pushed Snowball gently away from her lap and put her arms around her husband's neck when he carried her bridal style. "Juvia will miss having you carrying her around like that even though she hasn't needed this in weeks." She chuckled. "You'll miss it too, admit it."

"Shut up." His cheeks got redder and Juvia laughed.

#

Two weeks after getting discharged, Juvia was allowed more movement, she could leave the house and run some errands for a couple of hours, but nothing too strenuous and if she could rest in between activities, even better.

Gray didn't like it, but he couldn't deny her freedom and was constantly calling when he knew she was out. Since she wasn't allowed back to work yet, she took her time to renew some of her documents.

Most of them would be mailed to her after a few weeks, but she reserved one afternoon to change her ID and went to FT to surprise her husband.

"Hey, Cana-san!" Juvia said when she got inside FT and Cana got up to hug her friend.

"What are you doing here? You are supposed to have at least another week before coming back for desk duty."

Juvia chuckled. "She just came to see Gray-sama."

Cana rolled her brown eyes. "I don't get this, you see him every day and yet…"

"Newlyweds, remember?" Juvia raised her left hand to show her ring.

"Oh, yeah. That." Cana snorted and Juvia chuckled while walking towards her husband's office. She had almost the same conversation with Lucy before the blonde let her inside.

Gray was finishing a call when she got in and he smiled when he saw her. Juvia walked to stand in front of him and gave him a kiss on the cheek.

"Yes, sir. I'll go over there tomorrow at 9a.m. to see the damage and figure out what can be done." A pause. "Yes, thank you. See you tomorrow." He hung up the phone and turned to his wife, pulling her for a kiss.

"Hi."
"Hey." He smiled. "What are you doing here?" He sat on his chair and Juvia sat on his lap, arms around his neck.

"Juvia wanted to show you something." She kissed his cheek before she reached for her purse to find her wallet. "Since she has a lot of free time, Juvia has been changing her documents. She still has some to change, but today..." She took the ID from inside her wallet and showed to him. "Today she changed her ID."

Gray frowned and looked to the picture and then turned it around and Juvia saw the moment he read her new name.

"Juvia Lockser Fullbuster." He said softly. "You said you would do it and did." Gray chuckled. "It suits you, you know, both names?"

"Yes." She smiled. "She can still be Juvia Lockser in here when she's allowed to come back. Juvia hopes you are not offended when she says she'd rather have her clients acknowledge her for herself and not for whom she married. She loves to be Gray-sama's wife, but not to be just that in here. Juvia doesn't want to get hired because she's Gray-sama's wife, she wants to get hired because she's good in her job, like she had always been before we married."

"Of course." Gray told her. "You are right to want to be acknowledged by your own work, you spent fifteen years earning your reputation. I told you if you wanted to keep your name, it wouldn't have bothered me. I like to show you off how badass you are, actually."

"Thank you." She laughed and gave him a peck on the lips. "Do you want to leave early and go to eat at Frank's? If we don't stop by soon, she'll be angry with us."

Gray nodded. "Yeah. Just give me twenty minutes and we can leave?"

"Of course." Juvia got up from his lap. "Juvia will go talk to Lucy-san and Cana-san while you finish up. No hurry."

"Okay." He kissed her before she left his office.

#

Juvia had been back to work within a month after she returned home, Juvia was allowed to go back to desk duty and it took her from inside the house. Thankfully she didn't mind like many others and she found the time helpful so she could finally finish some old reports for a couple of weeks.

The real thing she and Gray had been waiting for very eagerly was the doctor's permission to go to their honeymoon. They even scheduled their trip to the afternoon of the appointment and the moment the doctor told them Juvia could resume to her normal activities, they had flown from Magnolia to a secluded island. The hotel was known for renting entire houses by the beach that were very far away from each other to grant privacy to their guests and with just one phone call, the guest could ask for a ride to the main building, where they had restaurants, a small supermarket, pharmacy, whatever they needed.

Gray and Juvia didn't need much during the first few days on the island.

As promised, every surface was used and the conclusion was that indeed, married sex was better than engaged sex.

The two weeks they spent there relaxed both of them in a way they hadn't since they knew about Zeref's threats. Years of stress finally melted away.
The day they were set to leave, though, Juvia was awoke slowly by lips on her breasts and a hand between her legs for a few moments, she thought she was dreaming, after all she and Gray had been quite enthusiastic; but when those lips started to trail down to her stomach and she felt like her blood was boiling and then hands were pushing her legs open, she opened her eyes. It was quite a vivid dream.

Instead, it wasn't a dream.

Her whole body was hot already, her blood was boiling and the moment she pushed the covers away from her, she saw her husband kissing her navel and was clearly about to go down on her.

"Good morning." He whispered with a smile, kissing the inside of one thigh and Juvia's still sleepy brain was trying to get caught up on what was happening.

"Good mo- oh god." Juvia moaned loudly when Gray licked her, her hands went straight to his messy black hair as he worked her, licking and sucking her just the way he knew she loved it. "Gray-sama." She moaned loudly when Gray took a moment to suck on her clit at the same time he inserted two fingers inside her, making her body bend up. "Oh, fuck." She whispered.

Gray's fingers inside her and his lips on her made Juvia feel closer and closer to the edge with every touch and in mere minutes her lower stomach was boiling and the need to come, to get the release he promised her.

"Hm. Gray-sama." She moaned. "Close."

With her words, Gray gave one last sucking on her clit – almost sending her over – and before Juvia knew, his lips were on hers, she was tasting herself while Gray took himself in hand and entered her in one swift motion on just the right angle and she came, his mouth of her muffling her sounds, but she clawed her nails on Gray's back.

He didn't even give her time to recover, while she was still feeling her high, Gray started to move inside her, fast and hard. Juvia wasn't even over her first orgasm when she felt the second one building up.

Juvia kissed his neck, biting it which made him growl and her hands traveled to his ass, squeezing it. Gray cussed, one hand went to her breast and Juvia knew he was close and so was she. One of her hands traveled from his backside to between them to rub herself.

Gray thrusted a few more times, his fingers playing with her nipple and Juvia was so close, so, so close she just needed…

"I love you." Gray grunted in her ear and it was all it took for her body to explode from within a second time, this time she wasn't quiet at all, calling his name at the same time Gray grunted her name and thrusted into her one more time, spilling himself inside her.

Breathing heavily, Juvia started to kiss her husband's cheek, jaw and brought her hand from between them and the one on his ass to his back. She felt his kiss her shoulder and up her jaw until he kissed her lips.

Gray exited her and lied next to her, bringing her closer to him and Juvia rested her head on his shoulder.

"What was that about?" The blunette asked, a hand on his chest, her fingers tracing random symbols on his skin.
"I dreamt I was going down on you." He snorted. "So I decided to go down on you. I improvised the rest, though." Juvia laughed because it was such a simple crazy answer it couldn't be anything other than the truth.

"Well, I guess we proved ourselves married sex is the best kind." Juvia told him.

"Definitely." Gray agreed and they stayed in silence for a few moments, enjoying the afterglow until Gray broke it. "I can't believe we have to return to civilization today."

The blunette sighed. "Me neither. This island has been such a good haven.

Gray snorted. "Especially knowing there wasn't a psychopath trying to take over the world."

"Yet." Juvia chuckled. "There will probably have another soon otherwise we will run out of jobs."

"Cheery." Gray rolled his eyes and then his hand caressed the scar on her side and Juvia felt his hand linger there. She looked up and saw his somber expression. He always looked like that every time he saw the scar and even though she didn't mind it, she knew he felt guilty.

"Do you remember Fantasia Parade a few years ago?" Juvia asked in a light tone and Gray frowned in confusion to why she brought the subject up. "Juvia dressed as a princess and you dressed as a prince?"

"Yes?"

"Remember that we met a few girls before the parade and Juvia had some burns on her shoulders because of the tasers she used on herself?" It took him a moment but it seemed to finally have come to him as he nodded. "Do you remember what Juvia told them?" He shook his head. "Well, Juvia said that 'Princesses have their own battles and sometimes it leaves scars.' This one" she put her hand over Gray's which was atop of her scar "is a princess battle scar so stop sulking about my royal status." She teased him.

"Right." Gray chuckled and pulled her closer. "I remember saying something how princes take a while to arrive, so princesses need to help themselves out of trouble." He said and Juvia laughed, remembering his words to the little girls. "And sometimes the princess saves the prince." He said, suddenly serious. "You certainly saved me." By his tone and the way he looked at her, she knew he didn't mean the battle with Invel.

She put a hand on his cheek. "We saved each other." She kissed his lips.

Gray groaned in annoyance when their lips unlocked. "Oh, god. Cana is right, we are sickening to be around now that we are newlyweds." The brunette had been very vocal about how sweet Gray and Juvia were and all lovey dovey (Gray in his own way) and it made her stomach turn. "I would've vomited if I had heard another couple say that, yet here I am."

"Aaaaaand the mood is gone." Juvia sighed, getting up from the bed. "Let's take a shower and finish packing. The plane back to reality is in three hours."

"Argh, I hate reality." Gray complained but got up, following his wife into the shower for a last hooray before going home.

Since they had lived together for almost a year before getting married, the actually signing of the papers did little to change their routine so returning home felt almost the same. Every once in a while,
though, Juvia would look down to her left hand and see her engagement and weddings rings or catch a glimpse of a picture of them at the day of the wedding and her heart would just melt.

She was so happy she thought she could explode.

That afternoon what caught her attention was the screensaver on her work computer, a picture of Juvia and Gray at the beach during their honeymoon. She had set the timer and ran to his side so he had his arm around her, and for once they were both smiling and the background of the blue sea behind them was beautiful.

"Do I need to get Gray for you or are you flying solo? Because if you are, you really should lock the door." Juvia heard and saw Cana on the threshold, with eyebrows raised and Juvia was confused for a second until the brunette looked pointedly at Juvia's chest where Juvia was rubbing her breasts.

She stopped, feeling her cheeks get warmer. "Sorry. My breasts have been feeling very sensitive for days now and only rubbing them makes me feel better, as weird as it sounds."

Cana nodded in understanding. "Your period is probably just around the corner, we get it the same week. Remember yesterday when you felt nauseous because of my coffee? I get like that too with certain foods when my period is coming."

Juvia started to nod and looked at her calendar, trying to remember the last time she had had her period while Cana kept talking. "There was one time I actually got nauseous because of bacon. Bacon, Juvia. Bacon." The month before she sure didn't have it because the week she was supposed to, she was on a high-profile job and it didn't happen, she would've remembered, then. "That's when I told my body: listen up, a life with me getting sick over bacon is not worth living. We are either getting over it or life is over." Cana said while Juvia recalled that she was due her period two weeks after she returned from her honeymoon, but also nada. "I think my body listened because never again we had that problem."

Then it dawned on her; her last period had been three months before.

"If you forgot, I have tampons with me all the time, okay?" Cana said before leaving the office, closing the door behind her.

Trying not to panic too much, Juvia took a deep breath and started to document her symptoms. She had missed two periods, her breasts were sore, she hadn't been sick but strong smells were making her nauseous, she had been more tired than usual. And the most defining factor: Gray and she hadn't been using condoms since their honeymoon. There wasn't a talk to stop, they just… stopped. No protection and all those symptoms?

Juvia grabbed her purse, threw her phone inside, turned off her computer, grabbed her keys and left her office. "Cana-san, Juvia just remembered there's something she needs to do and it can't wait and since there are no appointments today, it's going to be fine." Cana nodded. "See you tomorrow. If Gray-sama asks, tell him Juvia will see him at home."

Of course, the moment the elevator's door opened, Gajeel appeared, the twins on their stroller looking absolutely cute with their matching dungarees.

"Hey." He grinned at her friend. Juvia put a hand on the door so it wouldn't close while Gajeel exited.

"Can't really talk right now." Juvia put her foot in place of her hand so she could lean and give each baby a kiss on their chubby cheeks – recognizing their aunt, both Anna and Gale reached for her,
smiling and Juvia's heart broke; she wanted to stay and hug them forever, but she had to take the doubt off her mind. "Love you two." She muttered to the babies and then looked at Gajeel. "Love you too, talk to you later, bye."

She got inside the elevator and waved good-bye to the babies and Gajeel frowned at her, but waved good-bye as well.

#

Juvia noticed Gray's car already parked at their garage and took a deep breath before she left her own car and entered the house. As usual, Snowball jumped around and Juvia took a minute to pet her.

She found her husband at the living room, watching something on TV. He noticed her and smiled her way, his beautiful amazing smile and before he could say anything, she spoke.

"My nipples felt really sensitive the past few days."

Gray blinked two times before speaking. "Hello to you too." He muted the television. "What's that about your nipples again? I got caught off guard."

"They were sensitive. And coffee made me nauseous and I've been feeling tired." She told him. "And Juvia's last period was three months ago."

"Alright?" Gray frowned and the moment he finally did the math in his head because he went to his feet, looking at her with wide eyes. "Three months ago, you said?" She nodded. "Do you think…?"

Juvia opened her purse and found a neatly folded paper there, taking it and giving it to him. "That's why it took me so long to come home; Juvia went to have a blood test just to be positive. Pun really not intended."

Eyes even wider, Gray read the paper and opened his mouth in shock. Juvia knew he was focusing on the words 'Pregnancy: Positive' in bold letters, it was really hard to miss. Gray looked up and she finally said the words to him for the first time: "I'm pregnant."

"Oh." Gray said, the information still processing inside his mind. "Oh!" Gray smiled and pulled to a hug. "Oh!" He kissed her lips and Juvia smiled. "We are having a baby?"

"We are having a baby." Juvia nodded, eyes watering in happiness. "I know we didn't really talked about it after Juvia had her IUD removed, but-"

Gray shook his head. "We are two adults who knew they had to wear condoms and yet we didn't, neither of us, ever since we got married. I think we decided the nature take its course."

"And it did." Juvia said.

"And it did, yes." Gray grinned and kissed her. "I can't believe this. I wasn't expecting for it to happen so soon."

"Me neither." Juvia admitted. "But since it did…"

"We are happy about it." He affirmed and then asked, with caution. "Right?"

"Yes. Very happy about it." Juvia smiled. "Juvia needs to make an appointment with a doctor, see if everything is alright."

"Right." Gray nodded.
"If it is, we can tell people after Natsu-san and Lucy-san's wedding. Let's not steal their thunder."
Juvia told him and Gray nodded. He was the best man and Juvia was one of the bridesmaids and it
wouldn't bode well to announce a pregnancy when the wedding was just two weeks away – Lucy
had been planning it from the moment Natsu had asked, when he was discharged from the Hospital
three months before. And for such an 'express wedding' it was going to be quite a party.

"Of course." Gray nodded and kissed her. "Just so you know, I will freak out a lot later, but right
now, I'm really happy."

"Me too." Juvia told him. "Me too."

#

Juvia was six months pregnant when the fight happened. It had become so ugly Gray said he was
going to sleep on the bedroom downstairs but Juvia couldn't sleep without him next to her or with
him being mad at her, but he was being highly unreasonable.

Slowly she made downstairs and noticed the TV on the living room was on and Gray was 'watching'
whatever, arms crossed over his chest and Snowball curled around him.

"Come on up, Gray-sama." Juvia said and his body tensed. "It's one a.m. and we go to work
tomorrow."

"I'll sleep down here tonight." He was stubborn, but so was she.

Juvia sat next to him, Snowball between them and the dog looked up to her and laid its head on her
lap, knowing she had more probability of getting petted that way.

"Gray-sama, Juvia understands what you want, but we can't leave Magnolia." She said, calm. "This
is our home and we can't deprive her" she put both her hands on the bulge of her stomach "of her
home."

Gray finally look her way. "You know how dangerous this town is. You know how many times FT
got blown up and how many times we've escaped death. I want her to have both her parents, I want
her to have a childhood without worries. I want to raise her in a safe place."

"Zeref is dead, Juvia doubts there will be many people trying to blow up FT again." She tried to
release some tension. "No place is safe, Gray-sama. Not really but here she'll have her family. In
Magnolia she has so many Uncles and Aunts to turn to that she'll never be alone and everyone will
protect her if needed."

Gray sighed and put a hand over her stomach. "I am so fucking terrified all the time, Juvia. She's
going to be so small and this world… we see so many bad things in our line of work, how can we
bring her into this when even we got screwed up because of it?"

"When we talked about children for the first time, remember what you told Juvia? There will always
be lunatics, there will always be bad people and if we get that into account, no one would procreate
ever again'. The world will always be screwed up, we just need to make it less screwed up for her
and help her do the same."

"I hate it when you use my own words against me." He muttered but his lips curled up when the
baby moved and he felt it with his hand. "Look who's still up."

"Her parents' argument is keeping her awake." Juvia chuckled and so did Gray. "Do you think you
are the only one worried, Gray-sama?" The blunette asked softly. "Juvia stays awake for hours
during the night, terrified something will happen because I already love her so much I couldn't bear it if it did. And right now I am able to protect her, she's inside me, but how about when she's born? How can I protect her?"

"Well, this sucks." Gray stated.

"It sucks very much, yes." Juvia agreed. "But now we are responsible for her." She looked down to her stomach. "Both her parents know now not to take any unnecessary risks, we won't be reckless and we both know she comes first. If it comes down to it, you'll choose her over me and Juvia will do the same." They looked up and locked eyes. "She comes first, forever."

Gray nodded. "She comes first."

"And we stay in Magnolia." Juvia smiled.

With a heavy sigh, Gray nodded. "And we stay in Magnolia. But if all that exploding crap starts again…"

"Juvia will be the first to start packing." She agreed. "Now let's go up to sleep, please? Juvia is exhausted. She hates fighting with you."

He helped her up and gave her a hug and a kiss. "I hate fighting with you too. Let's not do it again for a while."

"Deal." Juvia agreed and watched as her husband turned off the TV. "You know I love you."

"I love you too." He put a hand over her stomach. "Both of you."

#

"Oh fuck, I hate this." Juvia groaned as the doctor examined her, the pain hitting once again and she pushed, as instructed. Gray was behind her, holding her hands, supporting her but other than that, being fucking useless in Juvia's opinion.

Gosh, she hated him at that moment. She loved him, always would love him, but fuck, she hated him so much. She hated everyone at the moment.

"Just a few more pushes, Mrs. Fullbuster." The doctor said, he was doing his job but Juvia wanted to claw that stupid mask off his face and just tell him to change places with her if it was 'just' a few more pushes.

"You can do it, Juvia." Gray whispered in her ear and she was about to tell him to fuck off when another contraction hit her and she pushed with all her being.

"The head is out, Mrs. Fullbuster. With the next contraction, you need to push the hardest and we'll get this little troublemaker out." The doctor told her and Juvia nodded, breathing hard, waiting for the pain and when it came, she groaned loudly as she pushed and pushed and pushed until she felt the so awaited relief.

Everything hurt and she fell limp in Gray's arms but then every single instinct in her body lit up when she heard the most beautiful sound in the world.

A loud wail of a newborn echoed through the room and Juvia looked between her legs where the doctor was showing a baby covered in white goo and screaming bloody murder. It was her baby.
Her baby had been born.

"A perfect little girl with a hell of a couple of lungs." The doctor announced, smiling under the mask.

Juvia didn't even think of it, but her arms outstretched towards it, she needs her baby in her arms. Her eyes watered when the nurse put a towel around the baby and gave it to her. Juvia started to sob and she barely heard the doctor asking if Gray wanted to cut the cord, which, with a bit of maneuver, he did.

She was finally there, on the last week of winter, of course, being Gray's daughter there was no other season she could be born into – their honeymoon baby.

"She's perfect." Juvia heard Gray whisper in her ear, his arms around both of his girls but all Juvia could to was cry and nod. She was perfect, she was amazing, she was their world now. "Thank you." He kissed her temple. "Thank you so much," Juvia just couldn't take her eyes from her daughter otherwise she would see a couple of tears rolling down his cheeks. "I love you."

Juvia nodded and cried harder. She loved him too, especially since he had given her the baby in her arms, the perfect mix between them.

"I need to clean and examine her, Mrs. Fullbuster." The nurse said and Juvia pulled the baby even closer to her chest – she didn't want her out of her sight. The woman didn't seem to take offence at that, instead, suggested: "How about Mr. Fullbuster follows me while you and the doctor finish up here? He will be with her all the time"

Finally looking away from their daughter, Juvia looked over her shoulder to her husband, who nodded. "I'll be with her every second, I promise, okay?" Juvia nodded and gave the baby to the nurse, already feeling her arms too empty and Gray came from behind her, fluffing pillows so she could feel more comfortable. "I will see you in a few minutes, okay?" Gray asked before he kissed her lips and followed the nurse with the baby.

"Well, Mrs. Fullbuster. Let's see if this placenta comes soon so you can have that beautiful daughter in your arms for as long as you want."

Juvia smiled to the doctor for the first time in hours and even though her bottom half seemed to have been ripped into half, she had never felt so happy before.

#

"If she snarls at her, I'll take Snowball away from both of you." Gray told his wife as they arrived home, Juvia with their daughter in her arms and Gray with the baby carrier in hands. He had been worried about Snowball's reaction to the baby – they had spoiled the dog quite a lot.

"It's going to be fine." Juvia carefully opened the door and was greeted with an excited Snowball as usual, but times 10 since she could smell there was someone else there as well. "Hello, baby. Have you been waiting to meet your new sister?"

"God, we spoiled the dog so much. Sister." He snorted and followed Juvia as she walked slowly to the living room – she was still a little sore from the birth the day before.

Juvia settled on the couch and Snowball jumped next to her and started to smell the baby's feet, her tail started wagging. "Snowball, meet Coral, your new baby sister." Juvia said and Snowball walked around Juvia on the couch to have a sniff of Coral's dark hair, starting to lick it a moment later. Juvia chuckled and looked at her husband. "I guess someone else loved the new baby like we did."
Even Gray was smiling at the interaction. "I guess the three of us are already enchanted." They let Snowball get used to Coral's smell for a little while longer before Gray insisted they went upstairs to settle the baby on her crib.

Gray was on alert at every second behind Juvia as she carried Coral upstairs and Juvia thought it was really cute of to be so concerned. Coral's room was themed as a field with buttercups, Juvia insisted, so the yellow walls were quite cheerful.

Gently Juvia put the sleeping baby on her crib and both her and Gray (and Snowball who was standing on her back paws and was trying to take a peek of the baby) stared at her.

"I can't believe she's finally here." Juvia whispered and touched the black hair atop of the baby's head – it appeared Coral got the Fullbuster genes on that, but Gray insisted she got Juvia's nose.

"She is." He kissed her cheek. "Come on, you should go lie down too. I'll get the baby monitor and we'll keep an eye on her. We are going to need as much rest as we can, or so I'm told.

Juvia kissed the baby's forehead and left the room with her husband, noticing how Snowball just curled on the floor next to the crib.

#

Juvia arrived at FT with Coral on her carrier, the little girl was happily sucking on her pacifier and the first person she met was Cana, who squealed and came from her desk in Juvia's direction.

"Hello, precious!"

"Hello, Cana-san." Juvia said, knowing the brunette hadn't meant her.

"Urgh, not you, boring old lady." She made a disgusted face towards Juvia. "I meant my precious girl. Hello! Hello, Coral!" She cooed and took the carrier from Juvia and placed it on her desk. Cana carefully took Coral from the carrier and held her close to her chest, smelling her head. "Oh god, babies smells so good." She looked down to Coral. "Did you know that your smell is like a drug, Coral? You are addictive."

"There is something about baby's smell, isn't there?" Juvia chuckled and looked at her daughter lovingly. Coral, aside from the dark hair, looked like Juvia but with brighter blue eyes and with Gray's chin. She was five months old by then and the smartest baby Juvia had ever seen, bias aside. She saw Coral rubbing her eyes and told Cana. "She's teething so she hasn't been sleeping well so we are not sleeping either."

"Poor baby." Cana kissed Coral's chubby cheek. "But good job on sharing your pain, honey." Cana smirked at Juvia's incredulous face. "Mirajane says all the time to not bear pain on your own."

"Screw you." Juvia rolled her eyes and asked. "You and Coral are pretty tight. Are you and Laxus planning anything or…?"

"Oh, no." Cana shook her head. "I have zero intention of having a baby of my own, thank you very much. I get all the fun playing with my friends' offspring. I can even choose an age range I want to be around that day. The twins are almost two, Coral's five months, Evergreen is gonna pop at any minute, Lucy and Natsu are planning on starting their own baby factory next year. I'll be surrounded by babies, don't worry." She snorted. "But... We were thinking." Cana said, voice low which meant she was serious. "There are many kids who need families. I was at the system for a while and it sucks. We... could be that family to them. You know, to older kids with less chance of getting adopted? We were talking about it and I think it might become true soon."
"That is great, Cana-san." Juvia said, truly. "You will be a wonderful mother to those children." Cana wasn't easy to make blush, but when she did, all her face turned red. "I mean it. Everyone here knows it's not blood that makes us a family. You are my sister in all but blood."

Cana's eyes watered. "Jeez, you are the one hormonal here, stop trying to make me cry."

"Hey." Gray stepped closer to them and gave Juvia a peck on the lips and then took his daughter from Cana's arms. "Hello, princess." The baby smiled and Gray's smile was even wider. "Ready to go out?" The baby rested her head on his shoulder and he sighed. "Teething sucks."

"It does." Juvia agreed and took the carrier. "Shall we have lunch tomorrow, Cana-san? Just us girls? Juvia needs some girl time with no baby. You have no idea how much Juvia craves to come back to work next month. Gray-sama can stay with Coral and we can go to that restaurant down the street."

"I'll call the rest of the squad." Cana said and said her good-byes to the couple.

"Hey, what if I had something planned for lunch?" Gray asked.

Juvia raised an eyebrow as she pressed the elevator button. "Do you?"

It took him a second to answer a mumbled "No."

"There we go." She chuckled.

Juvia sat at one of the plastic tables while Gray ordered for them and Coral sat on her stroller, looking to the park's movement and Juvia's heart filled with love, how could have them ended up with such a perfect baby?

Sure, Coral had her tantrums, she had trouble sleeping, they worried constantly about her safety, whenever she got sick neither her nor Gray could sleep, she got moody from time to time.

Juvia had locked herself into the bathroom a couple of times to have a complete meltdown, cried her heart out, she had cried of exhaustion. Juvia had gone to the supermarket with mismatched shoes and she had fallen asleep a few times with a bit of vomit on her shirt or while she pumped milk from her breast.

Motherhood wasn't perfect. Juvia wasn't perfect.

Coral wasn't perfect, but she was perfect.

Juvia didn't think anyone who wasn't a parent could understand her. Or perhaps they could, she didn't know, all she knew was that she was happy Coral was their baby, their amazing perfect baby.

"I got us Caramades Franks, as usual." Gray put a plate in front of her and the smell made Juvia's stomach growl in hunger. "Frankie's coming to take our drink order in a moment. I told her I could bring it, but she wants to see Coral." Gray chuckled. Frankie, like everyone else, was enchanted with Coral and always wanted a bit of time with the baby.

Juvia started to eat, but Gray criticized her. "It's been almost five years, woman, can't you eat it any better by now? You're all sticky"

"You know this thing is huge and it seems Frankie has been making them bigger every time we come here!"
He shook his head. "You know this isn't something that's meant to be eaten politely."

"That's why we usually take it to go, so Juvia can be as messy at home as she wants." She pointed out and ate a piece of it, trying to eat the whole thing and be polite as she could.

"Nice of you to show up with the little girl. I was beginning to think I scared you off." Frankie said, approaching the table and she seemed the same as she had when Juvia had first went there with Gray all those years ago, her hair was even greyer in a pixie cut and her chocolate brown eyes we still tough but kind.

"We were here last week." Gray pointed out.

"Without the baby!" Frankie complained. "I want to see the baby, Gray, not your ugly face. Thank god little Coral takes after Juvia." She cooed to Coral, who smiled, showing her one tooth on the front. "God, she's adorable. Those bright blue eyes of hers will get you in trouble in about fifteen years, kid."

"Don't remind me." Gray groaned. "She's going to be just as beautiful as her mother and I'll have to beat boys with sticks to get them off of her."

"Yes you will." Frankie chuckled and looked at Juvia, narrowing her eyes. "And you, young lady. You are too skinny." Frankie said even though Juvia hadn't lost all the baby weight yet – she hoped returning to work would help. "You need more food, girl. I'll make you two more to go. Put more meat in those bones so you can feed my beautiful baby Coral."

Knowing better than to argue, by then, Juvia smiled and nodded. "Thank you, Frankie."

She nodded at her job well done. "I'll be back soon."

Juvia chuckled. "She's still as bossy as ever."

"I'm not the one who's gonna cross her." Gray snorted. "So, excited about going back to work next month?"

"Oh god, yes." Juvia didn't hesitate. "Don't get me wrong, I love Coral and love spending time with her, but Juvia also loves her job and misses it. So much."

"I understand." Gray chuckled. "I got a three months license and I was going mad, I can only imagine being six months away from work. Besides, she'll be at the daycare just around the corner. We can visit all the time."

"Thank god for that. Juvia will cry everyday dropping her off, I know I will." She looked at Coral and back to her husband. "And when Juvia's ready for longer jobs…"

"We'll take turns, we talked about this." Gray shrugged. "Calm down, Juvia, Coral has two full time parents, she won't be in need of anything."

Juvia sighed in relief. "Thank you for understanding Juvia's wish to go back to work. There are many people who think that coming back to work so soon means someone's a bad mother."

Gray snorted. "Then those people are idiots. Just because you are a mother, doesn't mean you can't still do your job. If I can, why wouldn't you?" He took a bite of his food. "That's ridiculous."

"This is one of the many reasons why I love you so much." She smiled at her husband.
"Well, good thing I think that way, then." He chuckled and watched her take another bite at the Caramade's Frank. "Really, what is the mystery of eating the thing the right way?" Gray, then, proceeded to teach Juvia one more time on how to eat the sandwich and Juvia couldn't help but to smile.

Five years before he was doing that for the first time as just friends and now he was her husband, the father of her daughter, her partner. A lot had happened during that time, but they stayed together and inside her heart Juvia knew that was how they would be for the rest of their days.

Together.

-The End-

Chapter End Notes

I tear up as I write this. I can’t believe it’s over. My baby. I know we shouldn’t have favorites, but this one is my favorite fanfiction. With this story I think I managed to develop Gray and Juvia as characters and as a couple in a level I never could before. I think making them fight from time to time added to their relationship because just because you fight with someone, doesn’t mean you don’t love them.

I think I made Juvia look more human with her struggling to forgive Gray – it doesn’t mean she stopped loving him or she cares less, just that she is human and you can still love someone unconditionally and still call on their crap. I tried my best to develop Gray’s emotions and by the end I think it was a job well done (let’s remind ourselves the timeframe pro chapter 1 to 20 is roughly 5 years). If it’s just me, it’s okay, but I feel a sense of accomplishment with this story that warms up my heart.

The part where Laxus discuss Makarov was really important to me because what he said, is pretty much what I said when my own grandmother passed away two months ago so it hit really close to home and I hope it was worthy of you, Vó, if you are watching me from where you thought you would go after this. This one was for you.

Well, a couple of interesting facts about this story: It was about to last just like, five chapters and here we are at chapter 20 (counting the prologue); This chapter has a lot of references from old chapters, Each chapter has a title with a “bad thing” on it, even if the whole sentence isn’t actually bad; This is my longest Fanfiction yet; and yes I am actually crying because this is over haha.

It has been an honor to write this to you!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!