

Crossing Paths

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Crossing Paths

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Summary

"Excuse me! What do you think you're doing?!"

'Great! What now!'

"What the hell does it look like I'm doing?" Gajeel snapped back. He was in no mood to deal with strange women on the street. "I'm just standing here. Gotta problem with that?"

But what happens when Gajeel keeps running into this blue haired spit fire and can't seem to get her out of his head? He may discover that they're more connected than he thought.

Notes

Greetings! It's my first time writing in a Loooooong time and this is my first fanfic so I'll probably be making some mistakes. Still working on chapter length. This is kind of like an experiment for me so please be gentle and enjoy!

Ch 1

'How can today get any fucking worse...' Gajeel thought as he lit a cigarette. 'First that prick with the Audi tried to blame me for his dirty ass interior. Then Nel got on me for my shitty "customer relationships". What a fucking joke. '

He leaned up against a fence and took a deep drag. All this on top of a nasty hangover. 'I'm never going drinking with Bacchus again' He took an early lunch break to get out of the shop and clear his head, he'll only get bitched at more if he punches another hole in the break room wall. He blew out his smoke in a steady stream and watched it dissipate into the air.

"Excuse me! What do you think you're doing?!"

'Great! What now!' He turned to his accuser and was a little shocked. A few feet away stood a small woman with short, wavy blue hair and blazing hazel eyes. She was sporting one hell of a scowl too. She might have looked intimidating, with her hands on her hips, if she wasn't so tiny.

"What the hell does it look like I'm doing?" Gajeel snapped back. He was in no mood to deal with strange women on the street. "I'm just standing here. Gotta problem with that?"

"No, I don't have a problem with you standing there," she huffed. She quickly closed in, getting right next to him. "I have a problem with THAT." She jabbed a finger at his cigarette.

"Oh ya gotta be shitting me" He pointed right back away her. "Listen, Shorty, I don't need a lesson from some pipsqueak on the dangers of smoking. I fucking know what they are!" He was practically growing at this point.

He glared down at her and she glared right back. If he wasn't so pissed off to begin with he would have laughed at her. The top of her head didn't even reach his chin and she looked like she weighed no more than 110 lbs soaking wet.

"I'm not here to lecture you! I don't want you smoking in front of the daycare. The kids are going to breathe the smoke in, jerk!"

"The wha...?" Gajeel blinked. Then she waved her hand for him to look behind and, sure enough, a bunch of rugrats were running around a small playground just beyond the fence. Laughing and playing without a care in the world. "Oh." Is there anything worse than realizing you're the asshole in the situation. He looked back at the little woman crossing her arms in front of her. Now, Gajeel knew he was a scary looking guy; with his long thick mane of black hair and face littered with piercings but she didn't look frightened at all. While her fierceness was fascinating, he had a pounding headache that was blocking his better judgment. This means making a bad situation worse. "Ya know, instead of yelling at strangers on the street like a crazy person, ya could of just asked me to put it out, Shrimp." Oh, she did not like that.

Gajeel chuckled internally as he watched her pretty face turn beet red. "Wha! Crazy? Shrimp? Who do you think you are?"

"None of your business, Short Stack" Gajeel put out his half smoked cig and smirked "But you should really learn some manners." Gajeel seemed to have hit all the right buttons because she looked like she was blowing a fuse.

"Me learn manners? Maybe if you paid more attention to where your nasty smoke was blowing-"

"Levy? What's going on?" A pale, orange haired guy had snuck up on the pair. He was wearing one of those awful brown delivery uniforms. As he moved toward the Shrimp (as she has been thus dubbed) he shot Gajeel a dirty look, one that Gajeel has seen a million times. "Is there a problem here?"

Levy turned to him and put her hands up, signaling him to stop. "Everything is fine, Jet. Go back to the store, I'll be right there."

"A-are you sure? I-"

She sighed deeply. "Its okay, I can handle myself." All the bite had left her voice and she gave Jet a small warm smile. Gajeel could see the way that smile made that dork melt.

'If she smiled at me like that, would I melt too? Heh, not likely' He shook the thought from his mind.

"O-okay Lev." Jet gave one more sharp look to Gajeel before turning back to the book shop next door.

Levy wiped the smile from her face before looking back up at Gajeel. She was no longer red and angry, but calm and level. "Just watch where you're standing next time, okay?"

"Tsk, whatever." He spat back. And with that, they went their separate ways. Levy back to her book store and Gajeel back to work as a mechanic. Before getting too far away, Gajeel glanced back over his shoulder to get one last look at her. It was mid autumn and there was a chill in the air but the sun was still shining warm. She was wearing tight gray leggings that lead up to a pleated green shirt that hugged her hips in all the right ways. Her top was an oversized light gray sweatshirt that slightly hung off her left shoulder. He took in her shimmering cerulean locks that bounced as she walked away.

Suddenly, she stopped. Her head turned and Gajeel was caught off guard by her burning gaze. For a second, his heart stopped and time stood still. Then that second passed and he whipped back forward, moving a little quicker than necessary. Almost like he was running away. 'Jeez, that was fucking weird...'

Ch 2

Chapter Notes

This chapter includes Nel, an original character. Someone who wrangles disaster boys and who be explored later on.

"What the hell was that, Levy?" Jet said in a hushed tone as Levy made her way to the door to her book shop. He had three big on his hand trolley waiting for her signature. He nearly had a heart attack when he rolled up to his last (and favorite) stop and saw Levy having a confrontation with the scariest guys hes ever seen.

"It was nothing, really. Just a little disagreement..." she opened the door to The Eden for Jet to wheel in her delivery.

"It looked like you were picking a fight with a bear. Or something worse, "he shuttered "Did you see all that metal in his face?"

She saw him alright. Her day had already started out bad; waking up late and having to rush out the apartment without a meal. It had been busy all morning, which was good for business but bad for Levy's growling stomach and growing fowl mood. As soon as the store cleared out she stepped out for some fresh air, hoping to calm her mind. Out of the corner of her eye she saw an approaching hulking figure. He was dressed in what seemed to be steel-toed boots, oil stained blue jeans and a black tee shirt. There was an aura around him that screamed 'Don't mess with me'. Levy examined his face: 3 stud piercings through each eyebrow, 2 on either side of his nose, and 2 under his bottom lip. It was certainly a unique look but it some how worked for him. Combine that with his wild black hair that reached all the way down his back, he was a sight to behold. 'Wow...he's strangely handsome.'

That thought was thrown right out the window as he stopped to lean up against fence in closing the small play area for the daycare nextdoor and lit a cigarette. She didn't fail to notice he had even more piercings, 3 studs in his forearms before her temper got the better of her. The rest is history.

"Lev? Hellooo" Jet waves his hand in front of her face, snapping her out of her daydream.

"Oh sorry" she took his clipboard from the top of her boxes. "I wasn't picking a fight. I just told him he shouldn't be smoking in front of the kids." Which was true, but she definitely could have gone about it differently. She penned her beautiful signature on his forms as Jet unloaded her delivery of fresh books.

He shook his head. "You gotta be more careful out there. That guy looked like he was about to eat you alive. Seriously, if I hadn't shown up-"

"I would have been perfectly fine, Jet. It's the middle of the day on a busy street in plain view. I can handle myself you know." Because she was so small, everyone felt the need to protect her from everything. It made her feel like a child and hated it. She may be small but she was tougher then she looked.

"Yeah, I was just worried...anyway it's about lunch time. Want to go grab a bite to eat?" He flashed her a hopeful smile.

"Sorry, I'm the only one here today. Maybe next time." She watched his face fall dramatically. She gave him a pat on the shoulder to cheer him up. "We'll make plans Droy to get pizza or something, okay?"

"Okay" He replied with a snuffle. "See you around" Jet waves and went on his way. Levy let out a deep sigh and started unpacking her new books. 'Hes just too much sometimes...' Jet and Droy had been her closes friends since high school, but sometimes they were too overbearing.

"Back to work!" She chirped cheerfully. She had been waiting months for this new release to come in. There's nothing better than the smell of a book fresh off the press. She took one out and slowly ran her hand over the textured cover. "The Searing Iron Heart" was the latest and final entry in a captivating fantasy/adventure/ romance series that Levy was in love with. The publisher did an amazing job on the design. It was mixture of black and gray like ash and the title was a striking ruby that leaped from the dark background.

It was almost as dazzling as the eyes of her smoking (hot) stranger. Levy couldn't believe it when she had peeked back to...definitely not check him out, and he was staring right back at her. His gaze was full of heat that ran though her body and she shuttered. Before she could even think, he pivoted and hastily went on his way.

"Maybe I should have have been nicer to him. Oh well," she sighed. "Its not like I'll even see him again."

Gajeel was a mechanic at Nel's Auto Repair. He loved his job, he really did. He loved working with machines and metal, taking something busted and making it whole again. Most people don't know shit about cars, but Gajeel could take any one part and put back together again. That goes double from motorcycles. But he got easily frustrated with customers. For the most part, people were pretty thankful for his work, but every once in a while he would get some asshole that looked down on him for it. So what if he didn't make a million bucks a year. He was living comfortably. So what if he went home most days smelling like sweat and oil. That's what soap is for. Still didn't stop those people from getting under his skin.

Gajeel made his way through the garage to his work station. Grabbing his uniform shirt off a hook and looked the paperwork on his desk.

"I was worried you weren't going to come back after that exit." Nel, his boss, had somehow snuck up on him. "I hope you had a nice walk." Nel was in her mid thirties (maybe, nobody really knew for sure) and her chocolate brown hair was already showing silver strands. She

was tall and build lean, her body not showing that she could take almost anyone and break them in half. Her bright green eye paired with her signature subtle smile gave the impression that she always knows something you don't.

"Not really" He grunted. "But I don't feel like throwing an SUV anymore so theres that." Gajeel slipped his shirt on and smirked "Don't worry, your walls are safe from my wrath. For now."

"Hmmmmmm" she narrowed her eyes and tapped her chin. "You sure? You look like you have something on your mind still."

'Damn. How does she do that' Gajeel scratched the back of his neck. "Well,I had a run in with some girl-"

"A girl huh!? That's wild!" A heavily muscled arm slung around Gajeel's neck. "Was she cute? Did she give to eye? Does she have a friend?" Bacchus Goh wiggled his eyebrows suggestively.

"Get the hell off me, you drunkard!" Gajeel shoved him away. "She bitched at me for smoking!" He growled.

"Ha! You got no luck with chicks, man" Cobra chuckled from across the garage. Bacchus joined with with a snicker. His co-workers were a pain in the ass most of the time but they pulled their weight and got the job done. Didn't stop him from thinking about kicking their teeth in for laughing at him.

"Screw you guys, I've got work to do." Gajeel scoffed.

"You all have work to do" Nel clapped. "You can harass Gajeel on your own time." And with that everyone went about their respective duties.

Gajeel threw himself into his work and the rest of the day flew by. Just as he was finishing up his last car he got a tap on the shoulder from Cobra.

"Come on, let's go for a smoke break."

"Yeah, yeah be there in a sec." Gajeel wiped his hands on a clean rag and headed through the back door. He sat down heavily on one of the several crates kept around back and lit a cigarette. Cobra and Sting were already there leaning against the wall.

"So, tell us about this anti-smoking girl, Gajeel" Cobra sneered.

'These douche bags are fucking relentless' he pinched the bridge of his nose. It's bad enough that his mind kept wandering back to her fierce gaze and swaying hips on it's own, now these guys are bringing her up too. "There's nothing to fucking tell. I was just standing there, minding my own business and she came up to me and told me stop."

"Is that really the whole story?" Sting questioned "I mean I know people are touchy about the about it but it's not like you were blowing it in her face, right?" He raised his eyebrow.

Gajeel coughed. "Well it's possible that I may have been standing next to a playground...with little kids and stuff." He looked away and flicked away his ashes. He could their eyes bore into him before they burst into laughter.

"That's fucking hilarious! Only you could be so dense," chuckled Cobra.

"Hey, we've all been there man" Sting slapped him on the should. Gajeel just shook him off and grunted. "Like this one time in Hargeon-" And with that he stopped listen. Stings stories were often long winded and pointless. He closed his eyes and let his mind find it's way back to his faithful encounter with the Shrimp 'Levy...' That's what the orange haired dork called her. 'Tsk. Probably her boyfriend.' The thought made him scowl. If he stood there just to cool off instead of lighting a smoke, would she have still come up to him? 'Probably not'

Even in a good mood Gajeel was hard to approach. In a bad mood people avaoided him like the plague. Fine bu him too. People suck (not the best attitude to have working in the service industry, according to Nel.) Now, that doesn't mean that he had trouble picking up women seeking "danger" in dimly lit dive bars for the occasional one night stand. But this girl was different, she haunted him like a ghost.

Gajeel suddenly felt a searing pain between his fingers. "FUCK" He had been so busy daydreaming that his cigarette burner all the way down without him noticing. He quickly dropped the butt and stomped it out.

"Jeez, you're really out of it." Cobra gave s lopsided grin. "Is it the gir-"

"You bring up that damn girl one more time you're getting a foot up ass" Gajeel growl.

"See, Cobra, he's feeling back to normal. He threatened you and everything."

"Shut up, Hot Shot" Cobra shoved Sting to the side playfully and grabbed the door handle. "Let's finish up and get out of here." As Gajeel followed them back through the garage he tried to leave his thoughts of the Shrimp outside with his stomped out butt.

'Its not like I'm ever going to see her again anyway'

Ch 3

A few days pass and Sunday arrives, which means Nel's is closed and Gajeel had the day off. He needed it bad. He had been tense since the Shrimp incident and needed to blow off some steam at the gym. There was nothing like letting loose on the punching bag or pushing the limits on the weight machines. Every so often he would find some unfortunate soul to spar with. He had gone up against the owner a few times, a huge bodybuilder by the name of Elfman. He was slower than Gajeel but hit like a truck. He had no luck finding a partner today.

As he was cleaning off the bench to the dumbbells he had finished using, he heard a chipper "Gajeel!" from behind. He turned to see his friend/ swim instructor Juvia. "So good to see you. You look well." She examined him with her deep blue eyes that were always a little sorrowful. "Staying out of trouble?" Juvia was Gajeel's oldest friend and she she knew him better than anyone. As teens they ran with the same bad crowd but each cleaned up their acts.

"Gihe, you know trouble finds me. But I've been on my best behavior. What about you, Water Works?"

Juvia sighed. "I was teaching class with the pregnant ladies and one of their water broke in the pool." Gajeel made a small choking sound in the back of his throat. "Now the pool is draining so Juvia can give it a good scrub. It'll take hours" she cried weakly. Juvia could almost breath water she was in it so much and she always kept her pool in tip top shape.

"That's a bummer."

"Yes. Juvia was going to ask if Gajeel would like to a new cafe that opened up down the road. Juvia has heard good things and has been dying to try it. Oh well..." Her shoulders slumped. She didn't like going new places by herself and Gajeel often got dragged to girly places by his friend. "Maybe Gajeel could try it and give a review?"

He grunted "Cafes aren't really my thing ya know," then she hit him with the big watery puppy dog eyes. "Uhh but maybe I'll try this one out. It better be good!"

"Yay!" She clapped her hands. "Gajeel is so selfless."

"Yeah, yeah whatever." They chatted for a few more minutes then parted ways: Juvia back to the pool area and Gajeel to the men's showers. 'A cup of coffee don't sound too bad right now'

Before heading out of the Strauss Gym, Gajeel got directions to the Blue Pegasus Cafe. He gave a small wave to the eldest Strauss sibling, Mirajane, and out the door he went. Mira was undoubtedly beautiful with her long white hair and full figure. She was always chipper, friendly towards everyone with a smile that was almost sickly sweet. Not his type though. A couple turns and a 5 minute walk later and Gajeel arrived at his destination. Juvia that it has only been open for a few months and you could tell by the clean modern exterior. The whole front of the cafe was a window to let in natural with a blue winged horse painted on the

double doors. Gajeel stood outside and looked in the window to examine the interior. The floor was white and blue checkered tile, with several blue booths and tables evenly spaced out. There were three pretty boy servers in aprons smiling and greeting customers. In addition to the tables, there was a counter with stools that stretched the length of the front window so patrons could sit and observe the bustling main road.

Only a few of those seats were occupied while the rest of the cafe was practically full. Sitting there on the other side of the glass, not even 3 feet away, was someone that made Gajeel's heart stop.

'You've got to be fucking kidding me.' Perched there on a stool was the blue haired shrimp from the other day. Just when he thought she had been banished from his mind, she popped right back up in his life. 'This is some kind of sick joke.' She hadn't noticed him standing there staring her down yet. She was too immersed in the thick book in front of her with a only a hint of a smile on her lips. He seized this moment to take in a full picture of her. Today she was dressed in a light orange sweater, tight brown jeans and a pair of black boots. In her hair she wore an orange headband with a small white flower that kept her soft locks from falling in her face. Gajeel watched as her eyes danced across the pages of her book at lightning speed then gently turn the page.

'Maybe I can sneak in and out without her knowing.' But it was too late and Gajeel had stared for too long. She had finally sensed that she was being watched and they locked eyes. Golden hazel eyes meet smoldering ruby. 'Crap...' Then he did something he rarely did; panicked and retreated. Gajeel turned on his heel and headed right back where he came. 'Sorry, Rain Woman, gonna have to get your review from someone else.' Then he heard something he didn't expect: a bell and soft running footfalls.

"Wait! Stop, please," Gajeel heard her call after him and he froze in his tracks. The shrimp skipped around to his front and stopped with a heavy huff. "Please, just wait a second."

"What do ya want, shorty? Am I taking up to much room on the sidewalk or something?" He grimaced.

She caught her breath and put her hands up "No no, I just want to apologize. You know for last time?" She looked down, guilt written all over her face. Gajeel was dumbfounded.

"Apologize? To me...?"

She looked back up at him with new resolve. "Yes. I'm sorry I came up to you like that. It was uncalled for and I should have handled the situation differently. I've thought about it a lot..."

'So it's been suck in her head too?' He held back a smirk and let her continue.

"I was just having a bad day. Not that that's a good excuse, anyway I'm sorry." She gave Gajeel a smile that lit up her eyes and his mouth to got dry. He tore his eyes away from hers and scratched the back of his neck.

"Yeah well, I was having a pretty crappy day myself. And I maybe, probably should have been paying more attention to where i was smoking." He mumbled. "So I guess I'm sorry too." Gajeel wasn't so much of an asshole that he couldn't admit he was in the wrong. And with that her grew even brighter and she stuck her hand out.

"Apology accepted. Truce?" He looked down at her small hand cautiously. He slowly reached out his own rough, calloused hand thankful he wasn't coming from work where his hands got stained with oil and grease. Gajeel took hold and gave a light shake. He marveled at how soft it was, delicate but not frail like her slight frame might suggest.

"Truce" He breathed. He could feel his ears start to burn. Her cheeks were growing flush as well. 'From the cold air. Right. I don't blush.'

"I'm Levy by the way."

"Gajeel." There was a moment of awkward silence before he realized he was still holding her hand. "Oh".

He released her and immediately missed her warmth.

"Ah, were you going into the Blue Pegasus?"

"Huh?" Gajeel has almost forgotten that's why he was there. "Oh yeah, a friend asked me to check it out for her."

"This place is great! It just opened but it's already really popular. Come on," she headed back to the cafe and waved for him to follow. "I'll treat you to a cup of coffee." Gajeel managed to nod and obediently followed (and definitely didn't check out her ass as he went).

Inside was comfortably warm and smelled of fresh baked goods. Gajeel didn't really care for sweets but even this aroma made his mouth water. Said sweets were tastefully displayed in a glass case next to the register where Levy stood. "Pick out anything you'd like." She said cheerfully.

"Ya dont gotta do that, shrimp." He grunted.

"Please, I insist. As my way to make it up to you. Anything you want."

"Anything?" He smirked as he deliberately looked her up and down, drinking her in. He revealed in the blush that spread across her face. "Gihe" he couldn't help but laugh at her embarrassed expression.

"Ms Levy! Need a refill on your green tea?" One of the servers, the blonde tiny one, interrupted. He was just as small as Levy and barely looked old enough to work there.

"No, thank you Eve. But my..." she paused, searching for the right word. "Friend would like to order."

'Well, friend is much better then some asshole on the street' he thought. "I'll take a large black dark roast and a Blueberry muffin. To go."

"Absolutely. Have a seat and your order will be brought right over to you. And let me know if you need anything else, Ms Levy." He winked at her as she paid.

"Tsk. They sure are friendly here." Gajeel commented sarcastically. He took another look around and realized that the majority of the customers were young women.

"Haha yeah, the guys tend to flirt a lot but they're harmless. If you ignore that, this is a great place to read. I come here to get away on my mornings off." Levy returned to her spot where her book, mug of tea and half eaten donut sat. She had to do a little hop to get back on the stool which made Gajeel chuckle. She shot him a warning as he occupied the seat next to her.

"Like I said, just scooping the place over for a friend. She gets anxious going to new places by herself and she couldn't come today with me. I'm not a chick and I don't read much, so this place isn't really for me."

"It's really kind of you to come here for your friend."

'Kind?' That's not the first thing to come to mind when people describe him. Intimidating, short-tempered, brutally honest but not kind. He coughed (allergic to compliments from pretty girls) and pointed to her book. "So you some kind of bookworm or something?"

Levy puffed out her chest proudly. "I sure am. You have to love books as much as me to run a bookstore." She reached into her pocket and handed Gajeel a business card. It was light green, peppered with tiny white flowers and read 'The Eden book shop' with the address and phone number. He remembered that it was only a short walk from Nel's. In addition, it also said 'Levy McGarden- Owner'. "The guys let me leave these here. I take some of theirs and put them on my counter. Locals gotta help each other out you know." She said cheerfully.

"Owner huh" Gajeel slipped the card in his pocket for safe keeping. "That's pretty impressive."

Levy's face dropped a little. "Yeah I guess so."

'Oh no, what did I say?!' He panicked. "Don't you like being your own boss?"

"Oh I do, really. It's just that..." She trailed off as she seemed to focus in on Gajeel. Levy slowly reached toward him and he held very still. 'What's she doing now?' She then took a small lock of Gajeel's hair and twirled it in her fingers. Gajeel's heart was pounding so hard that he didn't even hear the whispers and giggles of the other patrons of the cafe. They were an odd pair and it didn't go unnoticed. But at that moment, the whole place might as well have been deserted. All Gajeel saw was Levy.

"Your hair. It's damp."

"...what?"

She tugged lightly at the lock. "Your hair is damp."

"So? I just came from the gym a couple blocks down. This may surprise ya, but I don't like being caked in sweat."

"Strauss Gym?"

"Ya know it?" Gajeel tried not to focus on her fingers gingerly feeling his hair.

"Yeah, I went to high school with the Strausses. Lisanna, Elfman's young sister was in my class. Natsu too."

"That weird pink haired aerobics instructor?"

"Haha, yeah that's him." She laughed. "You shouldn't go out with damp hair, you'll get sick."

"Pfft. I don't get sick." Well, he gets motion sickness in vehicles he's not driving, but she doesn't have to know that.

"Everyone gets sick. Having your head wet and out in this cold weather lowers your body temperature and weakens the immune system."

"Well aren't you a smartypants, gihe." Gajeel couldn't help but laugh as she puffed out her cheeks in frustration. He took her hand away from his hair and held it softly. "Ya don't gotta worry about me, shrimp. I'm a big boy." He smirked. Levy pulled her hand back and blushed.

"Stupid. I'm just stating fact, I'm not worried about you." She huffed.

"One fresh dark roast and blueberry muffin for the lovely lady Levy!" They were interrupted, yet again, by the taller dirty blonde server. He was down on one knee dramatically presenting the items to Levy. And were those...sparkles around him? Must be a trick of the light. He had a 1000 watt smile and gave Levy a wink, completely ignoring Gajeel.

"Its actually for him, Hibiki." She pointed at Gajeel shyly.

"Oh." He got up gracefully and handed Gajeel his coffee along with a small paper bag. "Here you are, sir. Enjoy and come back soon." Hibiki gave Levy a friendly wave and went on his merry way to his next target- uh valued customer.

"Where'd my wink, huh?" Gajeel grumbled, which made Levy giggled. "Your boyfriend must love the way they flirt around here."

Levy blinked and furrowed her brow. "My who?"

"The pastey orange haired loser from the other day." 'The one who thought he was coming to your rescue.' Gajeel blew and took a sip from his coffee to hid a scowl. It was strong and rich, not half bad.

"No no no. He's not my- we're just friends now. There's nothing going on between us." She stammered and waved her hands in front of her. "Absolutely nothing. Uhhhhh how's the coffee?" She seemed desperate to change the subject. Gajeel let it slide, he didn't want to talk about another guy anyway.

"Its pretty good. Don't know if I like the service but Juvia might like the male attention gihe." It might be funny watching her lose her ability to speak as shes fawned over by pretty boys.

"Well they have loads of that here." Just then, a clock on the wall struck 3 o'clock. "Shot, I'm going to be late getting back." Levy hastily finished her tea and hopped off the stool much to Gajeel's disappointment. "Gotta cover closing shift at the store." She gathered up her book and gently packed it away in satchel that was sitting on the floor. She slung the satchel over her shoulder and picked up her forgotten donut. "Hey, Gajeel?"

"Yeah, shrimp?" He perked up as she used his name for the first time. He like the way it sounded coming from her lips.

"We're even now, right? No hard feelings?" Levy smiled sweetly at him. 'There's fucking feelings alright' He looked at her, then looked at her donut. Quick as a flash he plucked it from her hand and popped it into his mouth whole. "Hey!"

"Now, we're even gihe." He chewed, swallowed and licked some crumbs from his lips. He watched her eyes follow his tongue and grinned. "Better get moving or you'll be late, shorty."

"How childish!" She turned and headed to the door. Gajeel missed her already. He wanted to ask her more questions, listen to her talk about anything and everything.

"Oi, Levy" he called to her as she reached the door. This was the first time he used her proper name too. It feel good on his tongue. "I'll see ya around, yeah?" It was more of a wish than a statement.

Levy faced him and nodded enthusiastically. "Sure, see you!" She waved, gave one last smile and out the door she went. Gajeel didn't see that she was practically skipping all the way back to her car.

'Wow. What the hell is happening to me...' Gajeel stood up from his spot, made sure his knees weren't still weak from Levy's touch and headed out himself. The walk back to the gym was a blur but he somehow found his way to the pool area. There he found Juvia with a large brush on a long pole.

"Hey Rain Woman, got something for ya." He waved the paper bag.

"Gajeel is truly a good friend" she said, wiping a tear from her eye and took the bag. "My favorite!"

"No need to get so emotional over a muffin. You look insane." This only made her cry more.

"Juvia is sorry!" She sniffled and forced herself to stop with a light slap to the cheeks. "So, did you like it?"

Images of Levy's warm smile and sweet laugh filled his head. She was almost intoxicating. "Yeah, you could say that."

Ch 4

Chapter Notes

Let's add a little spice this chapter, shall we ;)

Levy felt like she had been run over by a truck. Normally her time at the Blue Pegasus is relaxing, and it has been too, until HE showed up. Gajeel. Her heart was sent racing everytime she thought of him. After she arrived at The Eden, she did anything and everything to keep herself busy. Levy helped customers, restocked, dusted the register counter, every shelf on the first and the second floor was now spotless. She swepted the floors, disinfected the small table and chairs in the kids corner, made orders ect. Literally anything to occupy her so she wasn't standing there like a hardcore crushing teenager; you know the ones in movies that gaze longingly out the window consumed by daydreams. But Levy was no teen and she had a business to run. Now she was home and all that work plus long hours was catching up to her.

She opened the door to her apartment and called to her roommate.

"Hey Lucy, I'm home!"

"Welcome home!" Lucy greeted her from their small couch in the living room. They meet as freshman at Crocus University and became fast friends. Lucy was a beautiful busty blonde, sweet and a very talented writer. You would never guess bu looking at her that she was an heiress. Her tastes were a little on the high end side but she down to earth overall. After they graduated she got a job with Fiore monthly as a fashion and food writer which allowed her to travel all around the country. Levy loved that Lucy was living her dream but it was lonely coming home to an empty apartment half the time. She was thankful she was here today, Levy needed to unload.

"You look exhausted. Rough day at work?" Lucy asked. She patted the seat next to her. Levy gladly sat down with a flop.

"Work was fine. Something else happened though and I need your help." Lucy gave the best advise, even though she rarely took it herself.

"Anything, just you name it."

"Do you remember that guy I told you about?"

"The sexy metal jerk?"

Levy winced, she forgot that's what she called him. Not that is was inaccurate, just embarrassing. "Yeah, him. I saw him again today."

"What? Tell me everything!" She grabbed Levy's shoulders and shook.

"Okay okay stop shaking me!" Levy told her tale of her fateful encounter.

"That's it?! You didn't even put your cell number on the business card?"

"...no." she replied meekly. She took a throw pillow and shoved it in her face.

"Oh Levy" Lucy shook her head in disappointment. "You've been complaining about this guy for days. He shows up out of the blue, you get on his good side, and then you Give. Him. A. Business. Card?!"

"You weren't there okay! He's tall and gorgeous and had this deep husky voice. Oh gods Lucy I touched his hair." Levy buried her face deeper into the pillow before she felt it ripped away.

"You what?"

"It was like my hand moved on its own. It was damp cause he was post workout. POST WORKOUT LUCY!" She sighed. "He was so easy to talk to though. He's so different, Luce. I don't know what to do..."

Lucy closed her eyes, deep in thought. "Let's see. You had a nice conversation at a place you frequent and he knows where you work." She opened her eyes and smirked. "I predict he'll make his way back to you. You're so cute and irresistible. Don't stress about it too much." She leaned over and gave Levy a reassuring hug. Levy paused before returning the hug. She didn't want to tell Lucy that there were other concerns about falling for someone right now.

"Thanks Lu, you're the best. I think I need a nice long shower, then get some sleep." She hopped from the couch and headed toward her bathroom.

"Did you at least get his name?"

Levy let a small smile spread on her lips. "Gajeel". Saying his name was like a spell, summoning his image. She could see him sitting across from her, gently holding her fingers that had caressed his hair. She blushed remembering his unique laugh and the way he teased her.

"Well I hope this Gajeel knows just how lucky he is. Night, Lev." With a yawn Lucy retreated to her room.

Levy went to her bathroom and set the shower to the optimal temperature, steamy but not searing. She striped down, got in and let the heat of the water seep into her bones. She hummed to herself as she shampooed her hair until all tangles were smoothed, then moved to wash her sore body. Levy knew she had a decent body but growing up around girls like Cana and Erza always made her a bit self conscious. They were tall, naturally beautiful and well developed in the chest department. Levy was just Levy in her mind: average. She moved over her breasts to lather them in her lavender soap. They were small but perky, it's a shame they often when neglected during sex (with the few partners shes had). 'Gods it's been forever...' Levy closed her eyes and imagined that it was a large pair of rough hands that were soaping

her up now. She massaged her soft mounds and moved to rub her nipples. 'This is crazy. I've meet him twice and I'm already fantasizing about him in the shower.' But that didn't stop her from lightly tugging on her garden tips and pretending it was Gajeel. She was a grown woman after all, she had needs. Needs that needed to be taken care of no matter how bone tired she was. She didn't think Gajeel would mind help move things along.

She let her right hand slowly move down her body to her now slick lips. Her heart was pounding against her chest as her fingers started to stroke her throbbing folds. How would he do it? Would Gajeel be gentle with her, thinking her innocent? No, he would probably tease her. Levy took her long index finger and dove into her folds. She moaned quietly and braced herself against the wall. '...Anything you want.' She told him at the cafe. 'Anything?' He replied with hunger in his eyes. The way he looked at her set her core on fire. She slowly began swirling her finger around her sensitive walls and her knees grew weak. She braced herself against the wall her breathes grew heavy and pressure began to build deep below. It still didn't feel like enough to satisfy her, even as she added another finger. She hoped that Gajeel wouldn't mind that it was his strong, rough digits work her sex and massaging her breasts. She used the palm of her hand to her swollen clit and screwed her eyes shut to help picture him there so she could reach her release. Last she thought of the way tongue licked his lips and his sly smirk, it nearly made her collapse right there at his feet. The steam of the shower was his hot breath on her skin, 'See you around, yeah?' He said to her in his gravelly voice. He wanted to see her again.

"Gajeel" she moaned his name and she was undone. A shutter shot up her spine and her vision went white. Good thing she was against the wall otherwise she'd be a muddle on the floor being washed down the drain. 'Well at least he's good in my head.' After her legs found their strength again she finished up her shower in peace, clean but feeling a little dirty from her actions. Dried and dressed, she moved a few spray books from her bed and slid under the covers. Exhausted, she immediately started to drift to sleep. 'Hope to see you soon, big guy...'

A few days passed since the cafe and Gajeel had yet to make a move. All advice from his friends on how to approach Levy didn't feel right. 'It's true love, Gajeel! Find her at once and sweep her off her feet!' Juvia told him. 'It's just a girl. Why tie yourself down? Forget her.' From Cobra. 'Let's find her, get drunk and have a wild time!' Was Bacchus 2 cents. Nel didn't even try to help him, completely useless in the relationship department 'You're a big boy, Gajeel. I trust you'll figure something out.'

So now he finds himself at some crumbly dive bar Bacchus dragged him out to, nursing the same beer for the last hour. He wasn't enjoying himself but it was better than mooping around his place all alone. Well there was his cat, Pantherlily, but he hasn't given Gajeel any good advice either. Bacchus said going out drinking would loosen him up, but he was pretty sure he just wanted a ride. Judging by the small mob of giggling bimbos surrounding the drunkard now, he probably won't need a ride home. For what it's worth, he did come to a decision. 'First, I'm going to ditch this idiot here. Second, tomorrow I'm going to find her and hope she doesn't think I'm a fucking creep. Third, pray that she'll agree give me a chance.' Gajeel couldn't remember the last time he was on a proper date. The thought of taking Levy to a restaurant and having cheesy candle lit dinner brighten his mood ever so slightly. 'I can do

this.' If he can do it without pissing his pants is another story. Just as he stood to leave, he caught movement out of the corner of his eye.

"Leaving already, stud? The party is just getting started." Gajeel was approached by a beautiful woman with long off white hair and mischievous eyes. She wore a skin tight white dress with a plunging neck line that left nothing to the imagination. "I'm Angel." She said with a sultry smile.

"And I'm out the door. Go find someone else to sink your teeth into." He waved her off. A week ago, Gajeel wouldn't have minded this attention. Possibly gone to her place or a hotel for a night of meaningless sex then went on with his life. But, he realized he was tired of meaningless, there was someone out there that drawing him in like a moth to a flame.

"Don't be like that, sexy." She went to run her hand along his arm. "We can have a good time together." Her voice was dripping with lust. Unlucky for her, she was meet with an iron wall of 'not into you'.

Gajeel quickly stepped away and growled. "Are ya thick I said get lost!" There goes his temper again.

She scowled, clearly not use to rejection this harsh.

"You don't know what you're missing!" She spat back. "I bet someone as nasty as you sucks in bed anyway." She turned on her heel and stormed off back into the fray.

Gajeel rolled his eyes and made his exit. 'I know exactly what I'm missing and it's nothing special.' He got in his truck and stared his way home. He was going to need a game plan before going after Levy. The last thing her wanted has to look like a blabbering idiot in front of her. The road was dark and traffic was mercifully light due to the late hour. He didn't want anything else to get in his way tonight. He was nearly home when he saw a small car pulled over on the side of the road, hood propped up and hazard lights blinking. There was a small stream of white smoke coming from the engine and Gajeel could tell it had a least one flat. He sighed to himself 'probably hit some pothole and ran up on the curb.' As he slowly drove passed he saw the defeated driver sitting on the with their head in their hands. 'God fucking damn it. Why do I always have to save the fucking day...' He pulled a u-turn and parked behind the broken down car.

"Oi, ya okay?" He called to the driver as he exited his truck. He walked around to get a better look at them and froze in his tracks. 'Is this some kinda sick joke?'

"G-gajeel?" There she was yet again. His shrimp, Levy.

'How the fuck does this keep happening?' Not that he didn't want to see her but he was woefully unprepared for how she affected him. She was so small and cute, one look from her big hazel eyes and his brain turned to jelly. But now was no time for jelly brain, she needed help. Illuminated by his headlights, he could see red-rimmed eyes from crying.

"Are ya hurt, shrimp?" He leaned down and offered her his hand. She smiled weakly and took hold. Gajeel frowned at how cold it felt. 'Must have been sitting here a while.'

"No, I'm fine. My car on the other hand is in bad shape." He helped her pulled herself up from the curb. She gave his hand a squeeze before letting go to brush herself off. "I don't even know what happened. One minute I was driving home like normal then BAM! Now here I am, on the side of road and I just don't know-" tears began to well in her eyes again.

"Whoa whoa whoa calm down. No more tears now, okay shorty?" He gently patted her head, resisting the urge to run his fingers through her hair. "Everything will be fine. I'll take a look at it."

"You will?" Levy blinked up at him? "You know how to fix this?"

"Gihe, I can fix anything. You're lucky I was going by."

"Yeah, I'm sure glad to see you." This time Levy's smile reached her eyes and jelly brain almost took over again.

"I ah yeah, gotta go grab my flashlight." He coughed and went to retrieve his flashlight from his toolbox. He began to asses the damage as Levy nervously stood to the side. She marveled at the way he looked laser focused on his task. He went around all sides twice, checked the underside best he could, and finished at the engine which thankfully cooled. Levy could read every manual made about her car and still have no clue what she has looking at. Seeing Gajeel in his element was fascinating to her.

"You really messed this thing up, shrimp."

Levy groaned. "I was afraid you were going to say something like that."

"You have to flat tires on the passenger side. The rear wheel well looks bent and your front axle is busted, I just can't tell how bad it is. Plus the impact must have cracked your radiator judging from the white smoke and the coolant all over the place. Its gonna need a lot of work, shrimp." Gajeel used his default professional voice and Levy was a little taken back.

"You can tell all that by just one look over? Are you some kind of mechanic?"

"No, I'm the BEST mechanic in Magnolia." He puffed out his chest and smirked. He sounded cocky but he wasn't far from the truth.

Levy giggled "Is that your official title?"

"Sure is. Got a trophy back on my mantel if you don't believe me." 'Shit! That sounded like I wanted her to come back to my place, stupid!' "Uh, I'll call my boss for a tow." He blurted out. Levy simply nodded in response. Gajeel could feel his ears burn as he took his phone out. Nel picked up after the first ring like always.

"It's late." She answered in a flatly.

"I need a favor." He said in a hushed tone.

"You're not in jail, are you?"

"What? No!"

"Bacchus get arrested?"

"Nobody got arrested!" He huffed. He saw Levy cover her mouth to stifle a laugh. "Can you just bring the tow truck to Script street? Down from the intersection from Steel road?"

"Did you break down?"

"No! What is this? 20 fucking questions? Look, I'm just trying to help someone out." Gajeel pinched the bridge of his nose. "Please?" He asked through his teeth.

"Hmmmm. I don't do tows past 10, you know. But since you asked soooo nicely," Gajeel could hear the jingling of keys. "Sit tight. I'll be there in about 20 mins."

"Thanks, boss. I'll owe you one."

"No shit." And with that the phone went quiet.

"20 mins, shrimp. She'll take it to the garage and we'll get everything sorted out tomorrow."

Levy sighed with relief. "Yeah, I guess there's nothing I can do about it tonight. So, does your boss have to bail you out of jail often?" She teased.

He groaned and rolled his eyes. "No! Jeez, it happens one time and she lords it of me forever." A cool breeze began to blow sending fall leaves dancing down the sidewalk. Gajeel saw Levy hug herself and start to shiver. The cold never bothered Gajeel but a strong wind could probably carry Levy to the next town over.

"Come on. We'll wait in my truck."

"Are you sure? I don't want to impose-"

"Do ya wanna add freezing to death to your list of problems?" He opened the passenger door for her and pointed. "In." Levy nodded in defeat and hopped into the truck. Gajeel got into the drivers side and pumped the heat to max.

Levy held her thin fingers to the vent and sighed with content. "Ah, that feels great. Thank you, Gajeel. For everything."

"Sure, shrimp." He grunted, hoping she didn't see his red ears. Silence fell between them as he watched her warm herself. They were sitting close enough that he could see something was off. She looked worn out, like she was running on fumes. Her eyes were getting puffy and bloodshot from crying, but now he could see dark circles underneath as well. "Levy." He said sternly and she stiffened. "What happen." It wasn't so much a question as it was a command. He didn't like seeing her like this one bit. It made his chest tight to see her in distress like this. She looked at him, slightly panicked and searching for something. Gajeel held still, she had nothing to be afraid of and he wanted her to trust him. After what seemed like an eternity, she must have found what she was looking for. She took a deep breath.

"I don't even know where to start..."

Ch 5

"I don't even know were to start..."

Gajeel crossed his arms but held her gaze. "Ya can start by telling my why you ran up on the fucking curb like that? Did some asshole try to run ya off the road or something?" Levy bit her lip and looked away. 'Shit, don't think about her lips now jackass!'

"No, it wasn't like that..."

"Then what the fuck happened?" He has a little harsher than he wanted to be, but it was so damn frustrating seeing her so upset.

"I uh...may have, possibly...fallen asleep at wheel."

"FUCKING WHAT!" He roared which made her jump in her seat. He turned away to wrap his fingers around his steering wheel and watched his knuckles go white. "That's. Dangerous. And stupid. So fucking stupid." He's seen a lot of accidents from people falling asleep while driving. Its almost as bad driving drunk.

"Its not like I did it on purpose..." She huffed and pouted. "And you don't have to shout at me."

Gajeel took a few deep breaths and loosened his grip on the wheel. "Sorry, shrimp. I didn't mean to yell." The last thing he wanted to do was scare her away. "Just...Tell me, what's going on?"

"I'm just, ugh, so worn out. I don't enough help at the store. It's just Reedus and I and he only does part time nice since he's getting older. I only get a couple morning off a week, otherwise I practically live there. It's a lot pressure, you know? Until I find some help, I'm swamped, no time for myself-" she was beginning to ramble, obviously trying to get all her frustrations off her chest.

"Whoa, slow down, shrimp." Gajeel cautiously put his hand on her shoulder. She tensed only slightly before relaxing.

"Sorry." She shook her head. "I guess everything is catching up to me. I had to stay extra late tonight because one of my shelves broke. I was driving, my eyes began to drift shut and before I knew it." She motioned to her car. He looked into eyes, they seemed a little ashamed. "It's so embarrassing..."

"Hey, knock it off with that!" He frowned. "Accidents happen. To everyone. I'm just glad the car is the only thing that got damaged. You could have gotten really hurt..." He trailed off as he admired how, despite everything that happen, she was still gorgeous. The moonlight was shining bright tonight and it shone beautifully off her hair. He looked at slightly parted lips that turned up into a small smile.

"You don't have to worry about me, I'm a big girl."

Gajeel rolled his eyes at having his own words from the cafe thrown back at him. "I clearly do have to worry about ya..." he grunted. "If it's all getting to be too much for ya, why not just change the hours of the store?"

"No!" He watched her hands curl into fists. "I absolutely can not do that."

"Why the hell not?"

"Mom and Dad never changed the hours, ever. They were open every day faithfully. If I change the hours, it'll disappoint them..." She trailed off sounding sorrowful.

Gajeel furrowed his brow. "I'm sure if ya talk to them they'll understand. It's no good overworking yourself like this."

"Oh...they passed away. A while ago..." Gajeel should have smacked himself. 'Fucking smooth, bring up dead parents.' Levy saw the look on his face and waved her hands at him. "Please don't feel bad! There's no way you could have known, ha. It's okay, really." She tried to smile again but it was too forced.

"That's rough, shrimp...I still think they would understand..."

"Hmmm." She nodded. "Why do you smoke?"

"Wha?" This is definitely not where he thought the conversation was going to go. "Why ya asking something like that?"

"Ha, I don't know. I don't really want to talk about me anymore...I want to know more about you."

Gajeel could feel his ears start to burn again. He scratched the back of his neck "And that's the question you ask?" Levy simply shrugged and patiently awaited her answer. 'What a cute weirdo.' He sighed. "My dad." She looked confused. "He smokes too?"

Gajeel snorted. "Yeah right. No, he was a military drill sergeant. As straight lace as they come. I started smoking as stupid teenage rebellion. Now its just a bad habit. Kinda embarrassing to say out loud now that I think about it..." Its not something he thought about much let alone told anyone. It was a strange thing for Gajeel to open up so easily for someone who wasn't Juvia or Nel. Especially about his dad.

"What a terrible reason." She giggled, music to Gajeel's ears. The change of subject thankfully perked her up a bit. "Not there is any good reason really."

"Thanks for laughing at me." He replied sarcastically. "Ya know, I was thinking of quitting."

Levy wrinkled her nose and gave him a sceptical look. "Is that so? When did you decided that?"

"Just now." He smirked and she giggled again. Then there was a comfortable silence and the air grew thick. His heartrate picking up as he gazed into her glittering eyes. It almost seemed

like she was leaning in ever so slightly, but that could be his hopeful imagination. 'She's so close. I could just reach over and...'

HONK HONK A loud car horn broke his train of thought. He watched a tow truck pull up to the front of Levy's car. "Fuck." Gajeel muttered.

"Huh?"

"Nothin'. That's Nel, let's go." Gajeel huffed. They went out to meet Nel standing on the sidewalk in a winter jacket, fuzzy PJ bottoms and slippers. "Pfft, hey Nel nice-"

"Choose your next words wisely, Redfox. I can easily turn around and go home." she deadpanned.

"Huh, thanks for coming out or whatever..."

"That's better, kind of." Nel turned to Levy and extended her hand. "Evening, I'm Nel of Nel's Auto repair. Sorry to meet on poor circumstances and for any harrassment suffered from Gajeel."

"OI!"

Levy laughed as she shook her hand. "Not at all! He's been a perfect gentleman, really. Well, beside some yelling and cursing. I'm Levy McGarden." Nel raised her eyebrow and shot Gajeel a knowing look. A sly smile spread across her lips.

"Is that so? Well Ms. McGarden, let's fill out some paperwork while Mr. Gentleman gets your car set up." Gajeel grumbled and rolled his eyes as he went to set up Levy's car on the tow truck. Nel produced a clipboard from under her arm. "Just basic info and whatnot. Then tomorrow Gajeel will work his magic to get you all fixed up. It may take a day or two depending on part availability"

"Oh he's a magician now?" Levy mused. "Before he told me he was the best mechanic in Magnolia. Trophy and everything."

"Hmmm I don't know anything about a trophy. I gave him a certificate once to officially name him a pain in my ass, maybe he's thinking about that."

"I CAN HEAR YOU!" Gajeel growled. Levy tried to stifle a laugh as she handed back the clipboard and handed over her car keys. "S'not funny..." He crossed his arms and stomped back over to the girls, finished with his task.

"Everything seems to be in order. Here's my card. Do you have a ride home?"

"Oh," Levy shifted her weight from foot to foot. "I tried calling my roommate but she didn't answer. I'll just call a cab-"

"I'll take you home." Gajeel interjected. '...what the fuck did I just say...' He swallowed hard as he looked at the two pair of wired eyes.

"Gajeel..." Levy said softly. "You've done so much already, I'd hate to be more of a burden..."

"Stop that! Yer not a damn burden. I wouldn't have asked if you were." He huffed. He just wanted a little more time with her.

Nel cleared her throat. "I can vouch for him Ms. McGarden. He'll get you home safe and sound if that's your concern."

"Oh I'm not concerned about that." Levy shook her hands in front of her.

"Then it's settled. Take her home, Gajeel. Goodnight." Without waiting for a response, Nel got in the tow truck and left with Levy's broken car. This left Gajeel and Levy standing awkwardly on the sidewalk.

"Ah... do you know where Fairy Hills apartments is?" She asked.

"Yeah. Come on, shrimp, let's get you home." Gajeel opened the passenger door for her and mockingly bowed. "After you."

"Haha, see! A perfect gentleman." Levy curtsied and got in his truck. Gajeel smirked as he slipped in the driver's seat and stared on their way. "I can't wait to get home and crawl into bed. What a nightmare today was been...well not a complete nightmare thanks to you."

'First she mentions her in bed, now she saying mushy shit...is she trying to give me a heart attack?' He shrugged. "Quit making a big deal out of it. Ya better start taking better care of yourself! I can't save ya all time time, ya know." '...or can I?'

"Hmmm, I'll try." She didn't sound very convincing, just tired. Gajeel let her response slide for now, he gave her enough grief for one night. A comfortable silence fell and they drove through the dark. Gajeel was fine without conversation but on the other hand he wanted to everything about the tiny woman next to him. He wracked his brain for a way not to seeming creepy when he felt a small bump on his shoulder.

"Huh? What are ya-?" His words caught in his throat as a sleeping Levy was slumped against his side. She was breathing the softest snore Gajeel has ever heard. He carefully lifted his arm and tucked her closer to his body. His heart skipped a beat when she let out a small satisfied hum and she snuggled into his side. 'I am so fucked...' He drove a little slower than necessary on his way to Fairy Hills, enjoying her weight against him and the smell of her lavender shampoo. He listened to her steady breathing as he drove carefully to their destination. It took no time at all before he was pulling in the parking lot of the first building of the complex.

After parking in the closest spot he could find, Gajeel reluctantly turned to the sleeping Levy. It was a shame he had to wake her after such a long and horrible day. This was the first time tonight she seemed at ease. If he could have, he would have carried Levy to her bed and tucked her in. But, that would be weird considering this was their 3rd time meeting and he didn't know where she lived...

He gently shook her shoulder. "Oi, Shorty, ya gotta wake up. We're here."

Levy groaned and groggily moved her head. "Wha...?" She slowly looked up at Gajeel, clearly not fully awake. She lifted her hand toward his face and it looked like she was reaching up to caress him. He froze, watched her hand coming closer then her finger *booped* him on the nose. "You're here again...that's nice..."

"W-whadda mean!? This is my truck, remember?" He gave her another shake. She blinked a few times before her eyes cleared up and she realized what she was doing.

"Oh, OH I so sorry! I thought I was dreaming..." She covered her face with her hands, hiding her blush. "I'm so embarrassed."

Gajeel waved her off. "Yeah, well, ya shouldn't be fallen asleep in strange mens cars ya know..."

Levy snorted and peeked through her fingers. "Are you calling yourself a strange man, Gajeel?" He hated the way his heart jumped at the sound of his name on her tongue.

"No! You know what I mean, smartass." He huffed.

Levy giggled and he couldn't help but smirk. He could put up with her teasing if it meant he could hear her laugh. "I want to thank you again for everything you did tonight."

"Its no big deal," he shrugged. "I look at cars all day."

"No, mean for everything else. I guess I had a lot more on my mind then I thought, it was good to talk through some of it. And for bring me home. This was probably weird for you."

"It wasn't weird at all, believe me. Listen, if you uh, ever need to talk again you don't have to crash your car next time. You could call me or whatever." Jelly brain was taking over fast, he could almost feel grey matter leaking out of his burning ears. 'Gods, I sound like a bumbling moron'

"I would like that a lot actually..." Gajeel meet her gaze full on, caught in a burning hazel trap. It felt like the temperature shot up another ten degrees as they just sat there staring into each other. The air was so thin with tension that he could barely breathe. He moved from her eyes down to her lips, slightly parted and oh so welcoming. 'Fuck it', he had to make some kind of move or he was going to go insane. He moved slowly moved in, giving her the opportunity to retreat from him, but Levy held her ground. Gajeel reached out to-

THUMP

"LUCY LOOK I FOUND LEVY" Gajeel and Levy were both shocked back into reality by head full a of pink hair a a face smushed against the passenger window.

"OI GET YER UGLY MUG OFF MY WINDOW!" Gajeel roared.

"Who you callin' ugly?!" The loudmouth peeled himself from the window and Gajeel could clearly see he was drunk. "Hey, I know you. Your the guy who breaks the punching bags..." Gajeel finally recognized him as Natsu, a trainer at his gym.

"Natsu what are you doing? You can't just go up to random cars like that, idiot!" A blonde came up and lightly smacked the back of Natsu's head. After scolding him, she peeked in the truck herself. Her flushed cheeks showing she had been drinking as well. The blonde gasped and whispered in that drunk person way that wasn't a whisper at all. "It's Levy's sexy metal jerk." Gajeel had to choke back a snicker when Levy's face flashed red.

"Wha?" Natsu slurred and swayed in place.

"I don't think tonight could get anymore embarrassing." Levy said as she rubbed her forehead. "At least this explains why she wasn't answering her phone. Gajeel, this is my roommate Lucy. And I think you know her boyfriend, Natsu." They both waved and gave him big goofy smiles. Gajeel nodded and frowned. He was glad that she wouldn't be alone tonight but it seemed more like she was stuck babysitting now. Levy sighed "I better get them up to the apartment..."

"Phone." Gajeel held out his hand. He'll be damned if she gets away again without him giving his number. She nodded and eagerly searched for her phone to hand off to him. He quickly punched in his info and handed it back. "Ya gonna be okay with those doofuses?"

"Hey! They're my doofuses! And yes, I've done this dozens of times. They'll pass out as soon as they hit the pillows. I wouldn't be too far behind."

"Good. I meant what I said about taking better care of yourself. There'll be hell to pay if you don't ya hear." He smirked.

"Oh I'm so scared." She smirked back but frowned as she turned toward the door. "I'll talk to you tomorrow, right?"

"Yeah, shrimp, you can talk to me whenever..." He couldn't believe himself, he barely knew her but he was basically willing to become her doormat. She could walk all over him.

"Great! Until tomorrow then." And with that she hopped out of the car to her stumbling, swaying friends in the parking lot. She waved one last time before Gajeel watched her drag the two drunks towards the building and through the door. As soon as she was out of sight Gajeel slammed his head into his steering wheel. "Why the fuck do we keep getting interrupted!" It was like the universe was punishing him. He sighed and started to make his way home. The only good thing about that is now his determination increased 10 fold. He's going to ask her out tomorrow or die trying.

The drive back to his house was a blur as he found himself completely drained of energy. He trudged through his front door, kicked off his boots and headed straight for his bed. He stripped off his shirt and flopped face first onto his cool sheets. Not even 30 seconds later, he felt the pressure of 4 tiny feet on his back.

"Meow."

"I'm fine, Lily. Just tired."

"Meow." The black cat circled around a few times before curling up in the center of his back and began to purr. Before he could drift off to sleep, Gajeel felt a buzz from his pocket. He groaned and reached for his phone, careful not to disturb Lily. There was a message for a number he didn't recognize.

"I just realized that I forgot to say goodnight, sooo goodnight :)" Buzz, another message. "This is Levy btw. You know, the blue haired girl with the broken car." Gajeel snorted and texted back.

"How could I forget. Got the fuck to sleep. Night, shrimp." He saved her in his contacts as Shrimp Cutie and fell fast asleep with a smile on his face.

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