

Here's the trick with the majority of evil mages. They don't think they're evil. They think it's perfectly sensible for them to be in charge, because their vision of the world is righteous and noble. They lie to themselves about their motivations, when it really comes down to the same thing every time. They want the power to themselves, and are jealous that others have power. They want to hoard it to themselves and lie to themselves about their motivations. Oh sure buddy, the world is shit and if only *<i>you</i>* were put in charge all the complicated, multi-layered issues would all be *<i>fixed up</i>* right away.

Protip to anyone who cares to listen: Half of politics is preventing things from getting worse, while smiling and telling the public shit they want to hear no matter how made up or bullshit it is. They don't dare tell the public the truth about how thoroughly fucked everything is or they'd be out on their ear before anyone knows what's happened. It ain't the leaders that are at fault, see? It's the herd mentality that's to blame.

So yeah, world domination is sought only by the evil and idealistic self delusional idiots. You want power? What does power mean? It means doing what you want with nobody stopping you. That's it. That's power. Put someone in charge of a whole lot of people, and suddenly you got a heaping load of responsibility weighing you down, stopping you from doing the stuff you actually want to do. I mean, unless you want to take that responsibility? People want weird things.

Not me, though. Let someone else worry about local water systems, waste disposal and all that bullshit. The power I want is the power to have fun without having to worry about all that big stuff. Let other people enjoy being in charge, let them enjoy the responsibility while I do my own thing.

My name is Marcus Mesmero, by the way. Let's start off with the new cafe that I've purchased recently, having moved into fair Magnolia town. I found a nice little place that used to be a laundromat - until the place got torched for the insurance. It was in need of a touch of fixing up to make it work, but the location is frankly ideal for my plan. It's quaint, it's got a nice large basement, it has good street access. All ideal, making it a truly perfect hotspot of activity.

"So, how is everything proceeding?" asked my main investor, who had stopped by for an impromptu visit the day before our big opening. "I've put a decent amount of money into this, so I expect to see returns promptly."

"Of course, of course!" I said, obsequious while still scheming inside. Seething at having to kowtow to this fool with the cash. Not for much longer, not for much longer... "Allow me to give you a quick tour of the building. I think you'll find everything to your liking."

The overweight fool staggered into the building like he owned the place. Which would only be true for a little while longer, in a technical sense. He looked around the ground floor of the building. It was a perfect, pristine example of a family friendly cafe. "No staff on hire?" he asked.

"Ah, just two for the moment," I smiled innocently. I gestured downstairs. "Of course, the ground floor will be for more regular walk ins, while our basement will function as a themed restaurant."

The two of us went downstairs, and passed through a bead curtain that made his eyebrows raise again. And inside were my two staff members: Amber and Lily. Gorgeous girls, really. Orphans that I had rescued some years back. I raised them. I fed them. And oh, like flowers in a garden they had grown up to be so, so beautiful and fiercely loyal to me and my cause.

What? You ask if I have touched them? Heavens no, as delightful a sight as they might be, having raised them I couldn't bring myself to do such a thing. I may be using them as instruments of obtaining power, but to sully them with my own hands? A touch too far. Once I have no more need of them, I shall ask them to lead happy and content lives of their own. With the skills I have taught them, they should have absolutely no trouble in doing so.

"I see what you mean by 'themed'," the investor said, chuckling a little as he took his seat. "Quite a show your girls are putting on."

Indeed. The two of them were adorned in classical belly dancer attire. Where Amber's hair was dark red, Lily's was a bright yellow - and the two of them were wearing costumes designed to contrast sharply with their hair. Veils over their pretty mouths, and the rest of their costumes intended to show off their personalities without them needing to say a word.

Amber was the more athletically inclined of the pair, and so her costume emphasised her figure. The translucent cloth around her legs placing greater emphasis on her healthy thighs, the short top all but pointing an arrow at her belly. Arms fully exposed. You could tell this girl woke up, and in the list of the first ten things she did that day you would inevitably find 'runs a mile'.

Meanwhile, Lily was more of an artistic sort. Her costume was adorned with frills and flourish. Rather than trousers, the bottom half was a mere hanging cloth with golden trim, while glass trinkets cut to look like jewels studded around her top, with the largest of them all sitting comfortably in her navel.

Ah, but not to worry, you'll get to know them in more detail later on. For now, we need to focus our attention on our foolish investor, who was sitting back and watching the show with tremendous interest. The fool. This would be easier than I anticipated.

"You know, you might make even more money if you ditch the cafe idea and go full on stripshow," he snorted back a laugh. "If you can hire girls as pretty as this, with that much skill? You'd clear up! Especially in a harbour town like this!"

I nodded along quietly, watching his expression closely. "Perhaps," I said. "However, to be frank, the only girls that compare in beauty that I have seen in this town are all members of that guild."

"Fairy Tail?" he asked. "Yeah, that sounds about right. Some real beauties in there. Shame they'd never go for it."

I shared a glance with the girls, they tittered a bit knowing my plans. The two of them stepped off the stage, moving a little closer. Not too much too soon, but definitely... closer.

"That's a shame," I said. "A shame they wouldn't go for it. Based on what I've heard, you'd need something like hypnosis to make them want to do it."

"Yeah," the investor shrugged. "Trick is, basic hypnosis won't work on mages of that caliber. You'd have to hit them with something *really* potent, and if you did that you'd bring the whole damn guild down on your belly."

That slip of the tongue got me grinning ear to ear. Belly, huh? Not head? Well, it was his other head doing the thinking right about now.

"Or something really weak," I mused. The girls stepped closer now, much closer, their lithe bodies expertly twisting and grinding while they muttered their spell under their breath. "Something... subtle. Insidious. Intractable."

"...huh? Did you say something?" the investor asked, leaning forward in his seat to get a better look at the gorgeous sight in front of him. I continued, shrugging and smirking triumphantly. What a truly weak minded fool this was.

"Step one, fascination," I said. "The subject gets an interest in a brand new something or other. Say, for the sake of argument, belly dancing. Step two. Intrigue. The subject starts to learn a bit more about belly dancing, maybe even practising it themselves in their spare time. Step three, hobbyism. The subject starts to get truly interested in belly dancing, and starts wanting to share that interest with their friends. Step four, addiction. The subject begins to seek out belly dancing wherever they can find it, to the point they feel withdrawal symptoms when they go too long without. Step five, obsession. The subject is fully beholden to belly dancing, making it trivial for a certain someone to whisper suggestions in their ear. Making them compliant. Obedient."

"Ahhhhh," the investor let out a sigh. By now, the girls were standing directly in front of him. Dancing their dance of utter submission while the glassy eyed investor stared on, unable to look away.

"Girls, teach him who the rightful owner of this establishment is, would you?" I asked, patting him on the shoulder.

"Sure thing!" Amber said, clapping her hands enthusiastically. "We'll have this whole stinkin' town eating off our tummies in no time flat!"

"Now, Amber. Daddy has a plan," Lily tutted. "He has that plan for a reason. Let's stick to it for now."

Amber pouted. A little too eager to please, as always, though the pushback was occasionally necessary. The two of them balanced each other out well, one being a little too obedient and the other being a little too eager to step outside her boundaries to try to make me happy. Truly, neither extreme would work, for I am fully aware that I am an evil mage, with evil intentions and evil plans. Such a mage is inevitably going to experience hubris, the assumption that all will go well.

Still, I could be patient. If all worked out as it should then by the end of this year every pretty girl in Fairy Tail would be willingly, gleefully, dancing for my amusement. Expose them to the dance, and since their willpower would be much stronger than that investor - I mean, really, falling under that quickly? - it would take several days or maybe even weeks before they truly fell under my power.

Then, once they reached stage three, something fascinating would happen: They would pass on their interest to their friends. Without meaning to, 'infect' them with the same insidious magic that had been cast upon them. It would take a little time, but they would spread it throughout the guild before they knew what was happening, half of them would probably be affected before the first reached the last stage.

Although... There was still one factor in my scheming that needed to be accounted for: Namely, which girl would be my first target?

If there was anything that the City of Magnolia was used to it was, regrettably, the concept of collateral damage. It had been drilled into them over the course of many years, many conflicts, and even though the main source of said damage was the same Magic Guild every. Freaking. Time. They really were perfectly able to tolerate them. Because quite often the things they used that collateral damage to put down were much, much more dangerous in the long term.

In this case, Cana had put a stop to a would-be mass murderer who had tried to put a magical poison into the local distillery by drawing a particularly destructive combo in the midst of her rather feverish pursuit. What, that was outright fiendish, wasting all that alcohol to satisfy some inner evil voice? How could she let that slide?

"Come on now, that's a bit ridiculous don't you think?" a local shopkeeper was yelling at her. "Look at my place of business? How am I supposed to make ends meet? I must insist that Fairy Tail pay for the damages!"

"Ahahaha," Cana rubbed the back of her head nervously while trying to think of a way out of this. Shit! Another bill for the guild? It's not serious trouble or anything, but they'd make her take cheap work until it was paid off! Not to mention a lecture from the guildmaster! Who wants to sit on their ass listening to that nonsense about 'collateral damage'?! Go on, who wants to hear that when they could be out drinking?! "Shouldn't ya be billing that creep for trying to -"

"I'd rather bill the mage who hasn't heard of the word 'overkill!'"

Guh! This wasn't going well! Kiss goodbye to your weekends, Cana! You didn't have the cash to hand, so there was no way you were getting out of this one! She needed a drink. That wasn't anything new, but still.

Oh, but then someone stepped into view. Some guy she'd never seen before. Smart suit, well set face. Kinda handsome if you like that sort of thing. He winked at her as he stepped by. "Pardon me," he said, pulling out a wallet. "Would this cover expenses?"

"Huh? Oh...?" the shopkeeper asked. He looked over what he'd been handed. "Yes, I suppose it would."

Suspicious! Very suspicious! Cana's hackles were raised right away by that suspicious, random act of altruism. What's this guy up to?

The man in question merely sighed and shrugged while the shopkeeper left. Then turned back to Cana and offered a hand in a friendly motion. "Nice to meet you," he said. "I make it a policy to stay on the good side of the local magical guilds. I'm Marcus, and I've just set up a nice little cafe over there." He pointed across the street. Yeah, sure enough there was a cafe there.

"Yeah, and what's your real game here?" Cana asked. Looking this guy up and down. No obvious signs of magic or any bullshit about him, but that meant exactly dick. "Randomly butting your nose into my business...?"

"A simple deal, that's all," Marcus said. "Hahaha, yes. You see, the previous owner warned me that he'd been having trouble with local thieves. I'd dismissed it, pretty confident in my own security... but alas, last night a few items were discovered missing. Find the thief, and I'll consider your debt repaid."

Huh, was that all? Made sense. Kind of like a business arrangement. He'd paid her tab, now it was time for her to do her damned job. The alternative is he'd blab to the guild and demand payment from them instead of that other shopkeeper, or something like that. Or maybe get the guildmaster to make her do this job instead...

Although, it would sure beat picking up trash or chasing lost pets or whatever it would take to pay off the bill normally. On that basis, Cana nodded. She'd look into this for him, and debt repaid! That would be the end of it.

How little she knew.

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The first little fish had bitten the bait. He led Cana inside, and could tell that she was still a little bit wary about him. On guard for him trying something at the drop of a hat. Best that he made no suspicious moves, he'd seen what she'd done out there and - he'd put quite a lot of money into this cafe, thank you very much. No need to have it ruined so readily!

"There are two floors to my cafe," he explained, while Cana poked and prodded around a few of the tables. "Up here is the family friendly establishment - "

"And downstairs is where the booze and debauchery is," Cana finished for him. "Well, the best folk to talk to first is your staff, either they did it or they know something you won't."

"Of course, of course," Marcus smiled. "The two who were on duty at the relevant time are downstairs currently, come with me please."

He led the way downstairs, heart pounding in his chest. His girls, he hoped they were ready for the ultimate test. It was fine if it worked on regular people, but this was a magus. Would she notice? Would she detect the effect? Each step felt heavier, more momentous than the last.

Then at last he reached the bottom, and found them both onstage. Dancing, just as he expected them to be. Dancing exotically, dancing hypnotically, gyrating their hips with masterful precision. Marcus stepped aside to let Cana see for herself, and watched the magus with great interest to judge her response. She rolled her eyes at the sight and shook her head, no doubt disappointed in the ridiculous whims of male power fantasies.

"You weren't kidding about this place being family unfriendly," she grumbled. "I notice you're not in any hurry to get them to stop?"

"My apologies, how inappropriate of me," Marcus said. "They are quite captivating, are they not? Amber? Lily? Can I borrow you a moment? You can continue practising later, we have other matters to discuss."

No way to tell if it had any effect yet. Only time would tell. With this kind of game, the best thing to do was play your cards close to your chest, and then go from there!

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If she was being honest this place didn't quite meet her expectations. She was thinking it would be either a dive, or a place trying to be fancier than it really was. There was a kind of weird

balance between the two, like the owner knew exactly what sorta client they were after - and they were flexible enough to accomodate all sorts. The upstairs really was a nice, comfortable family friendly cafe while the downstairs was your run of the mill pub with two hot waitresses putting on a show. Appealing to the male gaze was one of the easiest ways to make a ton of cash in a hurry - though Cana knew that could only take you so far if your food and drink was trash too!

Anyway, she was heading into a back room with one of them now. Her name was Amber. Spunky sort, you could tell right away from the way she carried herself. Body language can tell you a lot about a person, and she sure as hell had a body to talk with. Even watching for a few seconds on stage, Cana noticed that she had tight tummy control and hidden muscles packed away under that trim gut. Hell, she wasn't too sure that she could make her waist do half the shit Amber had done up there! Real practise must've gone into that, the likes of which Cana could hardly believe. Then again, if you gotta make some cash, you gotta practise what you're good at, right?

"So, I understand there was something stolen last night," Cana began, watching Amber's reaction carefully. The girl just stood there, slightly shifting weight from foot to foot, smiling brightly while holding her hands behind her back. "What do you know about it?"

The first thing any establishment should concentrate on if something is stolen is 'are my staff involved?' It's an awful thing to think, but you have to check. It's not because you don't trust them, it's more like the opposite. You're checking because if you don't, the police will when you report it. Well, Cana was no police, but since she'd been hired to look into this she was going to do it right. Even if Amber wasn't involved she probably knew something useful, even if she didn't think that she did.

"Well, since ya asked," Amber began. "Last night we were a bit short on staff, so I was on bar duty while Lily was giving it some of - " She put her hands behind her head and then ground her hips out there lewdly, gyrating her tummy in a rhythmic way that was, in its own weird way, both beautiful and impressive. "Pretty normal night, usual customers, all seemed fine right up until the end of the night." For whatever reason she kept right on dancing while talking. "That's when we found out - that Lily's panties had been stolen!"

Her... Panties? Cana slowly blinked and let her brain do some processing on that. Panty pilfering. Underwear theft. This is what she'd been hired to do? In exchange for paying off that store owner...? Ugh, total waste of her talent. On the other hand, her instincts as a woman were telling her to smash that pervert into powder. Grind him into dust like - like Amber was still grinding her hips. At the very least she could take Amber off the suspect list. Lily too. At this point the store owner was a more likely suspect, but Cana was really hoping that wasn't the case. It would be just her luck to find a patron willing to cover her expenses, and then they turn out to be guilty...

Amber had moved off to a full body mirror over in the corner of the room. Apparently finished talking. Still dancing though. Looking at her from the back made it even more obvious how much work she must put into maintaining that physique, and that level of tummy control. Cana could plainly see it, right there, as her back muscles were putting in the work as well. Moving and rippling under her smooth flesh. It was like watching a well oiled machine put together by a master artisan going about its work with perfect precision. Each little twitch, each little motion of her waist was carefully and meticulously practised, timed to sheer perfection. It was weirdly humbling watching her do that.

Hell, just as an experiment Cana looked at her own tummy and tried to replicate the motion. Couldn't get it. Which was a bit annoying. She always went around with an exposed midriff, and she couldn't even do something that basic? Pft.

"Say, isn't that embarrassing at all?" she asked. In response, Amber whirled around, her arms spread out and the cloth around her arms seemed to make a brief whirlwind of colour before she stopped, facing Cana, continuing with her routine with the same charming grin plastered on her pretty face.

"Why should it be?" Amber asked. "I got this fit body that I busted my hump to get, why not use it to make a bit of extra dough? Besides, I know Marcus won't let one dirty minded pervert lay a hand on me."

She stuck her arms out parallel to the ground, and then... it was like she was making her navel bounce all over the place. As if some invisible spirit was batting it around here and there, the same way a cat might play with a toy mouse.

"Besides, belly dancing is great for my figure. Burns off your fat like mad, and it's fun to boot. Would you like to give it a try?"

"N-Nah," Cana waved it off. "Not my sort of thing. Do you know anything else about this theft?"

Amber shook her head. Oh well. So much for that. Not much else for it, then. She'd talk to Lily, but probably wouldn't get too much else out of her. In which case, best to have her next move in mind. If she was gonna catch out some pervert, she'd need to be cunning, she'd need to be slick, what she needed was - A truly cunning plan!

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"Chug! Chug! Chug! Chug! Chug!"

The barrel was empty, and cheers went up around the bar. Cana wiped at her mouth and shot them all a flashy grin. Hah! They were impressed by that? Easy peasy! A barrel of that size was nowhere near enough to make her stop drinking! Hehehe! She looked out over the patrons with a wary eye, wondering if any of them was going to try something stupid. Nobody had made a pass at her yet. They were all guys, but they seemed fine with treating her like just another customer. Which was weird given what was going on up on stage right now, but -

Eh, whatever. Cana had to admit that it was a fun show. The booze was good, and Marcus had promised to cover her tab if she found the culprit. Nothing funny or weird had happened since she showed up. Just... a pair of cute girls belly dancing on stage. Her gaze kept on drifting over to them, mainly because of how lit up they were, and the unexpected sudden motions were catching her attention.

Still, all she had to do was get hammered while making sure to watch everyone. Watch everyone... but especially watching those girls on stage as they dance their shift away.

"Fun, good exercise, burns your fat off like mad, makes you extra dough..." Cana muttered to herself while pushing back another drink. "Huh... Maybe I shouldn't have been so fast to turn her down?"



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Cana - Stage 1

In the basement of a certain cafe, all seemed to be going well. The patrons were drinking and chatting, while enjoying the show. The performers onstage were grinding their tummies, shimmying their hips, putting their assets on full display for the amusement of the crowd - and also casting their spell over their temporary security, Cana, who was content to booze it up as always fitting into this not so family friendly scene as though she had been born for it.

Oh, but don't think she was being lax. Far from it. As she wiped her mouth and let out a heady beam, her focus was only, let's say, around 95% on the twirling, interesting complicated motions onstage in front of her. Yeah, only mostly on Lily's delicate figure eight motion of her hips, flowing directly into Amber's more aggressive lifting and lowering of her navel, but not completely on that weirdly interesting display.

Want some evidence that she wasn't totally enamoured of that? How about her tossing one of her cards across the room, making it land right in front of someone trying to sneak into the back room. A dozing ram was momentarily visible in the air - and then the guy crumpled to the ground sawing logs.

"Huh! Tryin' to use some kind of stealth magic to sneak on by?" Cana asked, grabbing the cloak right off the thief's back. "That might work on regular folk, maybe even your average mage... But not a mage aiming to become S-Class!"

This explained a few things she'd thought were weird about this case. An enchanted cloak, huh? From what she could tell it made anyone looking feel like the person could be safely ignored. He'd be out for a good few more minutes, so she slung that cloak over one shoulder and used her other hand to grab this guy by the collar and drag him across the floor like the trash he was. A couple minutes later, she was knocking on Marcus' office door, ready to put that trash out.

"Ah, Cana! Thank you so much for catching this thief," Marcus said. "Of course, I shall see to it that he is arrested immediately - and I'll also ensure he has a lifetime ban in case he's able to weasel his way out somehow."

"Ah, no big deal," Cana said, scratching the back of her head. Something like this wasn't a big problem for someone at her level. The big deal was that he was going to pay off that debt for Fairy Tail in exchange for something like this! "You got a nice place here, I reckon you'll have big business before long."

"One can only hope," Marcus said, chuckling a little to himself. "We hope that you become a regular. Amber and Lily have already spoken well of you."

A regular here, huh? Cana could sort of see it. At first she'd been a bit worried about how skeezy it was, putting on a pair of belly dancers in front of drunk guys, but after watching for a while - she wasn't quite sure how to put it, but something about the dance seemed kind of interesting. She didn't know that women could move their body like that. It wasn't something she enjoyed watching exactly, it was more like she could just... appreciate the artistry behind it. They must have put hours of hard work into their routine to get it just right, and that sort of effort felt bad to make fun of.

"Well, if you got this guy sorted then I gotta head back to the guild," Cana said. "If you got any more issues, give us a shout."

"Gladly, Miss Cana! Have no fear, we know exactly what to do with this scoundrel."

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Once Cana had left Marcus rose to his feet and strolled over to the side room where they'd put that 'thief'. Oh, he wasn't the actual thief, of course - he was merely someone introduced to keep Cana's suspicions low. There was no real thief, it was all a lure to get her to watch Amber and Lily's show long enough to have the spell sink in.

Actually, half of this time would have been more than enough... but Marcus was anything if not thorough and careful. He wanted to make sure that he had his hooks in her. Which he definitely had. Five minutes before sending that thief out, he had taken a quick peek at how things were going and - well, Cana was chugging a big mug of ale, while her other hand rested on her hip, and her hips were most definitely rocking back and forth.

It was basic, but it was there. A simple little bellydance. She probably hadn't even noticed herself doing it. In time he'd have Amber and Lily offer the opportunity to teach her how to do it properly, but one step at a time. There was no need to rush anything, any attempt to rush would only result in mistakes being made.

Anyway, as for the thief. At this very moment he found that thief bound to a chair while Lily danced for him. Oh, her smooth movements, so graceful and elegant. It was like watching a trickle of water slide down smooth glass, like eating soft serve ice cream, she was truly a pillar of that kind of belly dancing. Nobody else could hope to compare to the effortless dignified practised flicks of her hips, the enticing roll of her tummy that sucked in the view of the unwary and bent it to her will so gradually that they barely noticed it happening.

"Hi boss!" Lily giggled. "Don't mind me, I'm just giving our 'thief' his reward for his fine performance."

"Great," Marcus chuckled. He then dropped a wig and false beard into the man's lap. "Grow a beard, but wear this in the meantime. It probably won't matter within the next two weeks, but I don't want Cana recognising you."

"Yes boss, anything you say boss, please let me watch your girls!" the thief grunted, thoroughly in thrall to the spell. His eyes were like saucer plates, fixated on tracing Lily's navel. Even if a blade was put to his throat such that it would cut him if he moved his head, it would still follow her around without a care. That was the effect this spell had on men, in the end. Total obsession. Compelled to view belly dancing whenever they could get the chance. Not just any belly dancing either, but the prime top quality sort that only Marcus could provide. It wasn't quite like an addiction, but somewhat close.

"I'm serious, we won't let you in unless you wear something like that." Heh. Come to think, this is something he'd been putting off asking for a while. No time like the present to clarify a point. "Which reminds me, Lily. I've been meaning to ask, what exactly are you wanting out of this? After all, the enthusiasm you girls are putting into this goes far beyond merely paying me back for saving you from a life of slavery."

Lily giggled again, and went directly into a move called the 'Chest camel'. Isolate the chest, then push it forward, up, back and down in a repeated undulating motion. Very easy on the eyes. Not hard to see why it would so thoroughly enrapture a man's attention.

"Amber and I want the same thing, boss," Lily said, and for the first time he got to see a truly evil smile on her pretty little face. It reminded him of himself, when he let his own mask slip. "I want a harem of hot studly boys... and there are more than enough at Fairy Tail for the both of us to have our pick."

Marcus met her evil grin with his own, then left them to it. Ah, how satisfying it was to have an ally like her. Between the three of them, they'd rule that guild before anyone knew what was even happening!

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That new place to drink had been fun and all, but there really was no place like home. Cana pushed open the doors to the Fairy Tail guild with gusto, beaming in at the sight of her friends within. Yeah, this is the kind of atmosphere she liked! It was nice making new friends out of Amber and Lily, but these were her guildmates! They were way more important to her by far!

Of course, it was total chaos in here. It always was. Sitting in one corner was Erza Scarlet munching on cake as always. Grey was taking off his clothes again, and there was Lucy - Reaching up and very barely exposing her tummy, only for a brief second before going back down to hide it again. From even that brief glance Cana could tell it was a tummy well suited for dancing. Yes. Dancing. Just like Amber and Lily. In fact, Lucy should be on that bar dancing with the rest of them...

Turning her attention away from Lucy, Cana found herself looking at Juvia. Wearing that blue robe with a slit down the side. When she shifted weight just right, you could see her hips... but not her tummy, which was kind of a crying shame.

Oh, and there's Lisanna hanging off Natsu. Cute as a button, as ever, and that short skirt did show off her legs, while that top didn't hide her shoulders at all... but once again, no navel in sight.

They'd all look nicer if they showed off their tummies, wouldn't they? Yeah, Cana had that weird kind of impression.

"Oh? Welcome back Cana!" Mirajane yelled, waving with great, infectious enthusiasm. "Did you have fun?"

"Found a new drinking hole!" Cana laughed, putting those weird thoughts to the back of her - You know, Mirajane would probably look great in one of those dancing outfits... "Got to know some of the staff there, they seem fun."

"It must have been a simple job if you're back already," Elfman said. "Then again, knowing you, it was no trouble at all! Even if it was something as ridiculous as moving the moon a few inches, you'd surely succeed in no time flat!"

Ah. Right. Probably best not to let them know it was an underwear thief. While they'd all taken on more embarrassing jobs in the past, it would just give them a chance to tease her for a while.

"They just wanted help catching a thief, and it turned out they were using a stealth enchanted cloak to sneak into the back room. Easy pickings, and they already paid off that shopkeeper."

There! She hadn't even lied about it or anything! She'd just omitted the fact that it was merely a panty thief, while letting them think the same thing that she'd thought originally, that the thief had stolen money. On top of that the fact there was a magical item involved meant they'd be more interested in that than what was stolen!

"So? How was that new cafe?" Juvia asked, cute as a button... but really, she should show off her tummy to make the image perfect. "Juvia was thinking of paying a visit."

"Well, their top floor is pretty family friendly, but in the basement they have girls giving it some of this!"

And then, she mimicked what she'd been spending the last several hours watching to the best of her ability. Putting her hands on top of her head and grinding her tummy... Urgh, she couldn't quite get it right! Yet those two had made it seem so... natural. Yet she couldn't get her body moving the way that she wanted.

In the back of her mind, the spell cast upon her whispered 'not yet, too many at once', and she drew to a stop, laughing nervously about it.

"Yeah, it was kinda embarrassing watchin' them go at it like that, thought I'd give it a try! Hah!" she laughed it off, and so did they, and from there she settled in for further drinking and boozing and laughing and joking and trying desperately to keep her father from paying that cafe a visit because she wanted to go back and it would be weird if her old man was there to stare at the show!

All the while, a ticking time bomb was going off in her brain. A bomb that would metaphorically explode from her fit, trim tummy. Out through the navel, and into the brains of her closest friends. Tick, tock, back and forth like a pendulum... or like the hips of a belly dancer.

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Naturally, Cana wasn't even tipsy when she got up to her room despite having drunk at least twice her body weight since getting back to the guild. It wasn't so much that she had alcohol tolerance, as it was the other way around. Yes, alcohol tolerance had her, that makes perfect sense. Want to fight about it?! No, you're drunk!

Anyway, upon returning to her room, her eyes fell upon a body length mirror situated in the corner of the room. What, you think she just rolled out of bed looking like this? Pft. Get real. She approached the mirror and stared at her own reflection, and asked a simple question aloud now that she was alone.

"How the heck did they make it look so easy and natural?" she asked, and gave another try to rolling her tummy. She stuck her hands on her hips, and used them to guide the motions. They hadn't done that, but... This seemed like a good way to start, probably? "I mean, it almost seemed like they could will their bellies to just do whatever. They could probably do a dance where their navel flies around the room shooting lasers and stuff."

Ah, but now that she was alone, the spell in the back of her mind seized its opportunity to deepen its influence over her. A little advice here and there on how to properly move her body. Exercises that she could try to make herself more flexible. "Heh, this is kinda fun," she said to

herself. Yeah, now she was getting into it. "Heh, I can really feel myself using muscles I ain't used before.."

"Well, strictly speaking you would have used them before, just not in this way."

At the sound of that voice, Cana very nearly jumped clear out of her skin. She turned around, and found Levy standing in the doorway, just out of sight of the reflection in the mirror. Looking at her with mild confusion.

"Hehe, hey Levy!" Cana said, continuing to dance almost despite herself. (No, keep going, you have nothing to be ashamed of). "Ah... Seeing those girls at the cafe got me a bit interested in this, so I thought I'd try it out."

"Oh, is that all?" Levy said. Of course, she was a little bit embarrassed by that. It was quite cute of her. "Um... I can come back later -"

"No, no it's fine, come in," Cana beckoned with her hands, still dancing despite herself, and finding that she'd already improved a little. Her gaze travelled to a clock at the side of the room and - an hour? She'd been dancing for a whole hour? Oh, never mind. "Did you want something?"

"You borrowed a book a while back, I was wondering if you were done..." Levy said. "Oh, there it is. Can I have it back? It's time for my monthly bookcase reorganisation, and I do need perfect symmetry."

"Yeah sure, take it," Cana said. "No big deal!"

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Levy grabbed the book and hurried from the room, her gaze lingering on Cana's dancing form a little as she left. What a strange thing for her to do out of nowhere. Was she inebriated? Cana could usually hold her liquor well, but maybe that was all for show?

In all honesty, Levy had been so struck by how odd and embarrassing it was to walk in on Cana dancing like that, she'd been watching for at least a few minutes in total silence, not quite able to interrupt her, but not quite able to look away either.

She supposed there was something a little bit interesting about that kind of dance. Why did men find that erotic? Was there a history behind that? The more Levy thought about it, the more questions like that sort of... popped into her brain, unbidden. By the time she was back at her room, she was already scouring the shelves for anything like a history of dance so she could find out the answer.

There wasn't anything to it, of course. Merely an idle curiosity. A minor fascination and nothing more. Completely and totally... harmless.

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Cana - Level 2

Levy - Level 1