

FAIRY TAIL: METAL AND THREADS

Chapter 10: Elicia's Passion

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

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Half a year has passed since Alfonzo and Elicia began training with Laxus, Bickslow, Fried, and Evergreen under the supervision of the more senior members of Fairy Tail. In that time, neither Alfonzo nor Elicia had started creating special moves or a special fighting style with their magic. Instead, they have been strengthening their bodies and magic power reserves to an almost insane degree.

Most days, their days began with Alfonzo waking up and heading to the guild hall to do his job as the chef in the mornings. Meanwhile, Elicia was still struggling to wake up on her own, driving Evergreen crazy to no end.

After Elicia and evergreen arrive at the guild each morning, they would order breakfast and join Laxus, Bickslow, and Fried at their usual table before eventually being joined by Alfonzo.

After breakfast, the group of six would head to the guild's back yard to begin their training. While Laxus, Bickslow, Fried, and evergreen would do their own thing, Alfonzo and Elicia would start out by experimenting with their magic to see exactly what they could and could not do. Then when their magic power was exhausted to just before the point they would faint, they would begin their physical training which consisted of push-ups, sit ups, squats, and running. Then, when their magic power reserves refilled, they would begin the process all over again.

One thing to take note of is that Elicia tried to get Nab to join them for training. Unfortunately, Nab was too preoccupied with finding the perfect quest for himself. A quest that he would not be able to take for some years to come. So, he always gave her a rain check. Eventually, even the ever-energetic Elicia gave up on helping Nab become stronger.

This routine lasted for approximately three months. At that point, Alfonzo and Elicia were able to repeat the process of exhausting their magic power and refilling it five times with little in the way of physical fatigue. So, Alfonzo came up with a way to make their physical workouts more taxing.

Using his [Metal Magic], Alfonzo created thin metal wrappings that he and Elicia would wrap around their hands, wrists, and forearms as well as their feet, ankles, and calves, looking like Muay Thai wraps. Naturally, these metals added weight to their limbs, making their workouts more difficult. And over the three months since they started using them, Alfonzo has been increasing the density of the wrappings, which in turn increases their weight.

In these three months, not only has Alfonzo and Elicia's physical abilities increased dramatically, Alfonzo's control over his [Metal Magic] has also increased. The difficulty of making metal strips heavy enough that they add some weight to their training regimen, yet flexible enough that they react like cloth is difficult work.

Towards the end of that period of time, Elicia had the idea of creating metal training clothing for them. On top of that, her brilliant idea would test not only Alfonzo's control over his magic but her own as well. Elicia's idea consisted of Alfonzo using his magic to create metal threads that she would weave together into rolls of cloth using her own magic. Then, using more of the same threads, she would sew them into the training gear she mentioned.

Naturally, Alfonzo agreed to this idea. They would begin experimenting with it as soon as they no longer felt any benefits from working out with their current arm and leg wrappings.

As the sixth month since Alfonzo and Elicia joined the Fairy Tail family drew near, Laxus was the first of the other children to notice the wrappings that Alfonzo and Elicia were using. After getting an explanation about them, he, with his usual authoritative tone, demanded that Alfonzo make a set for him too. Hearing that demand, it took all Alfonzo had to not hit the older boy in his nose.

Eventually, exactly six months after coming to Fairy Tail, Alfonzo agreed to Laxus' request with some urging from Elicia. The smug expression Laxus wore when he got his wraps irritated Alfonzo to no end, but because Elicia gave him the puppy eyes, he was able to keep his temper in check.

"Damn it, I'm gonna beat that guy to a pulp one of these days." Alfonzo muttered while walking through the streets of Magnolia not long after he made Laxus' wrappings.

"Come on, Fonzie, calm down." Elicia said with her usual cheerful tone. "He just wants to get stronger."

"That's all fine and good." Alfonzo said, still steaming because of Laxus. "But I don't owe him a god damn thing. Would it kill that little bastard to ask nicely? I mean, he's asking me for something, not the other way around."

"Fonzie, language." Elicia said sternly.

When Alfonzo glanced at the clearly upset Elicia, he was sure that she was doing her best to look intimidating while she glared at him sternly.

Unfortunately, all Alfonzo could see was a cute little girl with a pouty face staring at him with watery eyes.

'Her attempts at being intimidating are gonna make me laugh.' Alfonzo thought as he looked away.

Seeing Alfonzo break eye contact with her, Elicia nodded in satisfaction. Then, she smiled brightly and began consoling him.

"Anyway, I know. He's not being very nice." Elicia said with a bright smile while grabbing Alfonzo's hand with both of her own. "But you know he'll redeem himself later."

"That doesn't make this any easier." Alfonzo said, looking away from Elicia smile that was as bright as a ray of sunshine.

'*Sigh* It's so hard to stay mad when she smiles at me like that.' Alfonzo thought, feeling his anger slipping away.

"Anyway, where are we going?" Alfonzo asked, trying to change the subject. "What did you want me to buy for you again?"

"A fabric store!" Elicia exclaimed excitedly. "Now that you can spare some money, we'll buy the materials then I'll make all of our clothes from now on. Then, we'll be able to have more luxurious clothes without spending a stack on them every time."

"Okay, that makes sense." Alfonzo said with a nod. "Although clothes for kids isn't expensive, the stuff I can afford isn't exactly the best in quality."

"Exactly!" Elicia exclaimed once again. "This way, we can spend the same amount we usually would for cheap clothes on nice materials. Then, I can make us some really nice clothes."

"Right." Alfonzo replied with a smile at Elicia's enthusiasm.

As they chatted, Alfonzo and Elicia eventually made their way toward the shopping street west of the train station. After walking for a few more minutes, they found the store they were looking for.

"Snitches Get Stitches." Alfonzo said, reading the shop sign aloud. "That's... one hell of a name."

"Fonzie, watch your language." Elicia said with a pout on her face.

"Yeah, yeah, I know." Alfonzo replied while shaking his head. "I know you don't like it when I swear, but you know I can't help it."

"Whatever." Elicia said, rolling her eyes at Alfonzo's excuse. "Let's just go inside and see if they have what we want."

Instead of trying to argue his innocence any further, Alfonzo nodded his head and pulled the door to the shop open. Then, he held it for Elicia to enter. Once Elicia was inside, Alfonzo followed her in.

Ring!

As they entered, a chime sounded, alerting those working in the shop that there were new customers. Then, from the back of the shop, a pretty, mature woman stepped onto the sales area.

"Good after--- Oh, a couple of children?" The shop owner asked, a little confused.

"Good afternoon, ma'am." Elicia said energetically while raising her left hand high over her head. "We're here to buy some fabric and threads."

Alfonzo simply nodded along with what Elicia had to say. He knew she was much better at dealing with people than he was. In fact, in their past life, people's good first impressions of him usually came because Elicia introduced him.

"Oh, running errands for your parents?" The shop owner asked. "Aren't you two good kids."

Instead of correcting the misunderstanding, Elicia smiled. Then, she dragged Alfonzo along to look at the fabrics on display. Meanwhile, the shop owner just watched them with a smile.

As Elicia dragged Alfonzo around, she looked at cloth in the six primary colors she and Alfonzo liked to wear the most. In her case, sky blue, baby pink, and grey the same color as Alfonzo's eyes. Alfonzo, on the other hand, liked to wear white, black, and royal blue. So, she picked up a roll. Of cotton and satin in each color. Then, she picked up some threads that would match the clothes she intended to create.

After everything was picked out, Alfonzo and Elicia hauled everything to the counter so they could pay.

"Did you find everything you were looking for?" The shop owner asked with a smile.

"Yup!" Elicia exclaimed energetically. "Thanks for asking."

"Good. Now, let's see what you've got here." The shop owner said, beginning to total up the children's selections. "Three rolls of cotton, 999 Jewels each. Three rolls of satin, 1,799 Jewels each. Five spools of thread, 699 Jewels each. So, your total is."

The shop owner then took out a device that looked like an abacus and began to calculate the total.

Seeing the old calculation device, Alfonzo began to think.

'I wonder how hard it would be to make a lacrima calculator.' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'Then, again, I don't know if they even exist here. What if she just doesn't have one? I'll have to do some research.'

A few moments later, the shop owner was done with her calculations.

"Your total is 11,889 Jewels." The shop owner said, looking at the kids in front of her with worry.

Unconcerned with the shop owner's worried gaze, Elicia looked at Alfonzo. In return, Alfonzo put his hand into his pocket and pulled out a wad of paper bills folded together with a money clip he created with his [Metal Magic].

After unclipping the money, Alfonzo counted out 11,900 Jewels before handing it to the shocked shop owner.

Over the past six months, Alfonzo, who had been working as a chef at the guild, had saved up quite a bit of money. To Makarov's surprise, Alfonzo had, somehow, negotiated a deal that he would get an eight percent. Cut from every dish he made. With each dish costing about 850 Jewels and at least 70 dishes sold each morning, Alfonzo made over 850,000 Jewels in six months.

And with his 80,000 Jewels a month rent, Alfonzo still had almost half of the money he made remaining. Even after buying daily necessities for six months.

Meanwhile, after the shop owner accepted the money and handed Alfonzo his change, Alfonzo and Elicia bid her goodbye and promised to come back next time they needed cloth and thread before leaving.

"Okay, we've got everything we need for now." Elicia said happily. "We'll have to buy shoes and boots, though. I don't think I can make those with my magic."

"Well, as long as you don't mind metal soles, I can take care of that." Alfonzo said, carrying the things they bought over his shoulder. "I mean, I think I can make metal that will flex along with each step. But I'll probably have to experiment for that."

Instead of saying anything, Elicia hugged Alfonzo with a big smile on her face. Then, once she was satisfied, she grabbed Alfonzo's free hand and dragged him back toward the guild.

"Come on, Fonzie." Elicia said energetically. "I wanna get started. Let's go, let's go!"

Allowing himself to be dragged along, Alfonzo smiled, happy that Elicia was once again able to do what she loved.

Once they returned to the guild, Elicia dragged Alfonzo to the spot where they usually sat with Laxus and the others. However, when they sat down, Elicia realized something very important.

"Fonzie~~~!" Elicia whined with tears in her eyes after her realization. "I forgot to get paper and some pencils so that I could sketch out the designs."

Smiling reassuringly, Alfonzo combed his fingers through Elicia's hair before standing up.

"Leave it to me." Alfonzo said as he began to walk away. "Don't forget them next time we go out shopping, though."

With that, Alfonzo walked toward a corner of the guild hall. There, in front of a canvas with a color pallet in one hand and a paint brush in the other, sat a teenage boy, looking to be about fourteen years old. He had curly orange shoulder length hair and wore a white smock while painting on the canvas.

"Hey, Reedus." Alfonzo said quietly, trying not to disturb the painter too much.

"Oh, Alfonzo, what can I do for you?" The painter, Reedus Jonah, said, placing his paint brush on the table next to him.

"Well, Lici and I went out shopping not long ago." Alfonzo said, explaining the situation. "And she forgot to buy a sketch book and some pencils..."

Before Alfonzo could finish, Reedus reached his hand into the bag next to him and pulled out a brand new sketch book. Then, he reached in again and pulled out a pencil. Without hesitation, he handed them to Alfonzo with a smile.

"If that's all you need, here. Take it." Reedus said happily. "I've got tons."

"Thanks, Reedus." Alfonzo replied with a smile of his own. "The next time you come for breakfast is on me."

"Haha!" Reedus laughed. "I couldn't possibly turn down that offer."

After that, Alfonzo thanked Reedus once again. Then, he returned to Elicia with the sketch book and pencil. After dropping them off, he asked Makarov if he could take another shift in the kitchen. Seeing Elicia do what she loves, he also felt the urge to cook.