

FAIRY TAIL: METAL AND THREADS

Chapter 14: After Another Year

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Magnolia.

July, x 773

On the training ground in the backyard of the Fairy Tail guild hall, a group of five children were just finishing up their daily training regimen. Leading this group of children were Alfonzo and Elicia, who were eight years old by now. Though, Elicia spent just as much time playing around and having fun as she did training. In fact, the only reason anyone considered her one of the leaders of the group is because she and Alfonzo had been in Fairy Tail the longest. That being said, no one could complain about her work ethic while training. She somehow pushed as hard as anyone else during training while still having fun and putting smiles on the others' faces.

While everyone cooled down from their high intensity workout, Alfonzo surveyed the group with a smile. In addition to Elicia and Cana who had already been training with him, there were two new faces, a boy and a girl, who had also started training with them in the mornings.

The first to join was the girl. Laki Olietta. She joined Fairy Tail a few months after Cana, in August of x772. She had pale lavender colored hair styled into a bowl-cut with the right side of her forehead exposed while her bangs covered the left side, brown eyes, and wore a pair of glasses with oval-shaped lenses and a dark, red ribbon tied into a bow on the top of her head.

Although Alfonzo knew about her strange, somewhat sadistic personality, he was not interested in trying to change that. Instead, he had been giving her ideas for ways she could use her [Wood Make Magic], in the hopes that he could get her to use spell names that actually make sense. Although seeing everyone react to the names of her spells in the anime was pretty funny, lapses in concentration like that could get people killed in real life.

Then, the boy, Alzack Connell, joined the guild later last year in December. He was a somewhat emo looking boy with long black hair that covered most of his face, leaving only the left side of his face exposed. Unlike the other four children that had joined in the last two years, he had only awakened his magic power. However, he had not awakened a type of magic instinctively.

Luckily, since Alfonzo and Elicia knew the story of Fairy Tail, they suggested that Alzack look into using Holder Magic.

Though it had been explained to Alfonzo and Elicia during their first lessons with Macao and Wakaba, there were two types of magic that were generally used by the wizards of Earth Land. Caster Magic and Holder Magic. Caster Magic is a type of magic that produces magical effects using only the caster's magic power, like Alfonzo's [Metal Magic] or Elicia's [Thread Magic].

Meanwhile, Holer Magic requires the aid of a magical item. For example, someone using [Sword Magic] would not be able to use their magic without a magical sword. Or a [Guns Magic] user would not be able to fire off powerful spells without a magical gun or magical bullets.

In fact, Alfonzo and Elicia had suggested Alzack take up [Guns Magic] as his counterpart in the cannon story did. On top of that, with Alfonzo learning blacksmithing and magic engineering, he would be able to make Alzack a set of magical guns and bullets in the near future.

"Good work, guys." Alfonzo said, as everyone was done with their cooldown routine. "Why don't we go inside and grab a bite to eat?"

"Sounds good." Alzack replied, wiping a bead of sweat out of his face. "I'm starving."

"Yeah, I want to feed my stomach as well." Laki said, agreeing with Alzack. "After that, I'm going to whit away the defenseless hours for a while."

"Right..." Alzack said, understanding that she meant that she wanted to eat and sleep after spending time around Laki for several months. Even so, he still found her manner of speech quite... unique.

"Fonzie, are you gonna cook for us?" Elicia asked, jumping on Alfonzo's back and wrapping her arms around his neck.

"Please tell me you're gonna cook." Cana requested, looking at Alfonzo hopefully.

Like Elicia and Cana, both Laki and Alzack perked up at the question, hoping for a positive answer. Unfortunately, they were all destined to be disappointed today.

"Sorry guys, I have to go see master Goldstein in a little while." Alfonzo said, shaking his head.

Just as Makarov had said he would, he found Alfonzo someone to teach him about blacksmithing and magic engineering. And the person he found was the most well-known magic gunsmith in the kingdom, Nell Goldstein.

Ever since Nell accepted him as a pupil, he had learned everything he could about adding magic to items with magic engineering. And learning how to produce metal items with blacksmithing. Without the use of his metal magic, of

course. According to Nell, knowing the proper way to create an item would help Alfonzo tremendously in creating items with his magic in the future.

Immediately, Elicia slid off Alfonzo's back with an expression of despair on her face.

"How can this be?" Elicia asked in a forlorn tone. "How am I supposed to eat anything other than Fonzie's food. Do you want me to waste away, Fonzie?"

Rolling his eyes in response, Alfonzo ignored Elicia's mellow dramatic attempt at guilt tripping him and walked toward the guild hall's back entrance.

"he's gone already, Lici." Cana said, approaching Elicia with her hand out.

"Tch!" Elicia clicked her tongue as she reached for Cana's hand. "It didn't work. He's getting really crafty."

"Seriously?" Alzack asked. "Were you actually trying to get him to think you were being serious?"

"Alzack is right, Lici." Cana said while shaking her head. "You were laying it on a little thick, weren't you?"

"Really?" Elicia asked with shock on her face. "I thought my acting was spot on, though."

Alzack and Cana both shook their heads at Elicia's antics. Meanwhile, Laki was following Alfonzo, too hungry to care about where the food came from or who cooked it. A moment later, Elicia, Cana, and Alzack followed the other two in to the guild.

When they arrived, Lexus, Bickslow, Fried, and Evergreen were sitting together celebrating.

"Congratulations, Lexus!" Bickslow, Fried, and Evergreen shouted as the three of them raised their cups to Lexus.

"I knew you'd have no problem completing your first D-Class mission." Fried said with stars in his eyes. "You're amazing."

"Yeah, as expected of the next guild master." Bickslow added.

"That's right." Evergreen said. "There was no doubt that you would succeed."

"What the hell are they so excited about?" Alfonzo asked disdainfully. "It was only an herb gathering quest. He didn't even have to go into the forest to get them. You can find those herbs halfway between the town walls and the edge of the forest."

Over the last fourteen months, Alfonzo and Lexus' relationship had gotten even worse. Naturally, that led to the members of his group disliking Alfonzo as well. Though, it was obvious the others were just following Lexus' example. Everyone could tell that they had nothing against Alfonzo in actuality. Well, except for Bickslow, who had a crush on Elicia.

On top of that, Lexus had challenged Alfonzo to six fights since their first fight. And Lexus had lost five of those fights. With the sixth fight, which was the first challenge, ending up in a draw.

"And what is this about being the next guild master?" Alfonzo asked no one in particular. "Maybe you should find a way to beat a kid that's four years younger than you before you start spouting that crap."

"Don't worry about them, Alfonzo." Laki said, patting Alfonzo on the back. "It's better to feed your stomach."

"*Sigh* I know." Alfonzo said before looking away from Lexus and his friends.

Looking around the guild hall, there were no tables open that could seat all five of the children in their group. Noticing five open seats in a row at the bar, Alfonzo headed in that direction with Laki following behind him. A moment later, Elicia, Cana, and Alzack joined them. Then, they all sat at the bar and placed their orders.

Jumping down from the guild's second floor, Makarov landed on the bar, in front of Alfonzo, who was sitting between Elicia and Cana. Laki was seated on the other side of Cana, while Alzack was sitting next to Laki.

"Alfonzo, my boy." Makarov said, taking a seat on top of the bar, with an alcohol induced blush on his face. "Nell told me that she is quite impressed with your progress."

"Really?" Alfonzo asked with shock. "She always tells me that I must be one of the dumbest kids she's ever met. She says I'm learning at such a slow pace that she considers kicking me out every time I show up."

"Oops!" Makarov exclaimed, slapping his hand over his mouth. Then, putting on a serious expression, he started over. "Alfonzo, if you don't get your act together, Nell is gonna kick you out of her tutelage."

Not only Alfonzo, but all five of the kids sitting at the bar looked at Makarov blankly.

"Don't look at me like that." Makarov said with a frown. "I put in a lot of effort to get Nell to teach you. Don't waste my hard work."

"So... We're just gonna act like you never said that first part, huh?" Alfonzo asked in a dumbfounded tone.

"Huh, did I say something weird before?" Makarov asked with a confused expression on his face. "I've been drinking since dawn, so maybe I'm a little drunk. You shouldn't pay attention to the drunken ramblings of an old man."

'Wow, this old man is shameless.' All five kids thought at the same time.

"Ahem!" Makarov cleared his throat awkwardly. "Anyway, you're going to see Nell after lunch, right? Then take this with you."

A moment later, Makarov pulled out a small box, the size of a ring case. Once again, Alfonzo looked at Makarov blankly.

"If you're going to ask her to marry you, you should do it yourself, Gramps." Alfonzo said, not moving to take the box.

Caught off guard by Alfonzo's statement, Makarov froze and looked at him blankly for a few seconds. It was not until he heard the other kids giggling that he snapped out of his daze.

"You brat!" Makarov barked. "It's not an engagement ring! There's a piece of metal that Nell asked me to get for her in this box!"

"Oh, okay." Alfonzo said nonchalantly while taking the box from Makarov's hand.

Once again, Makarov was caught off guard by how casually Alfonzo responded. He was expecting to receive a skeptical look, or something along those lines. Then, Makarov realized.

"You brat, you tricked me!" Makarov shouted.

"Yup, sure did." Alfonzo replied with a nod and a smile. "Master Goldstein told me that you would have something for me to bring her on my next visit. So, I've been looking out for it."

Hearing that, Makarov opened his eyes wide in disbelief. Then, he hung his head, seeming to be upset. In fact, if one were to listen closely, Makarov's mumbling could be heard.

"Dam it, Nell." Makarov muttered to himself. "You could have told me that you already told the boy. Instead, I ended up making a fool of myself."

After that, Alfonzo ate with the other children. Then, he left the guild hall, headed back to the dorms so that he could get cleaned up. But before he left the building, he heard Elicia and Evergreen start to argue.

"Make me a new dress!" Evergreen ordered.

"No, I've made you so many for free." Elicia said without backing down.

"Those materials don't grow on trees, you know. Plus, I have rent to pay, so I'm not making you any more free dresses."

"Maybe I should teach you how to respect your elders." Evergreen said in a threatening tone.

"Seriously, you're only one year older than Lici." Alfonzo thought to himself while shaking his head. "Whatever, I'm sure Lici will be fine. She's gotta get some combat experience sooner or later. Besides, I'm sure the adults will stop it before things get out of hand."