

FAIRY TAIL: METAL AND THREADS

Chapter 6: Leaving the Orphanage

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Hargeon.

May, x771

In the dining room of the orphanage, Alfonzo, Elicia, the orphanage's matriarch, Makarov, and Macao were seated around a table. In front of each of them was a plate of sliced chicken, stir fried with onions as well as green and red peppers, rice, and steamed broccoli.

Seeing the plate of steaming hot food and hearing the words of the matriarch, Makarov and Macao were surprised.

"Young man, were you the one that cooked this meal?" Makarov asked.

"Yes, sir." Alfonzo answered the question in the same manner as last time. "I cooked it all. But the ladies in the kitchen cut the meat and vegetables for me. They said I was too young to use a knife."

Even though the answer was the same as last time, Makarov and Macao's reactions were much bigger. Neither of them thought that Alfonzo was the chef. Instead, they thought that he had helped the cook staff prepare the meal by washing vegetables, boiling water, etc.

"That's quite impressive." Makarov said after regaining his senses.

Then, with a grandfatherly smile on his face, Makarov picked up the fork on the table and used it to spear a piece of chicken. Macao, a moment later, copied Makarov's actions. Then, they both put the food into their mouths. After a moment, they both opened their eyes wide, and tears started to form.

Seeing the reactions of their guests, Alfonzo smiled, happy that they enjoyed his cooking. At the same time, Elicia was wearing a smug expression. If one did not know better, they would think that Elicia was the one who cooked. Instead, she was just feeling smug that Alfonzo's skill was being appreciated.

As for the matriarch, she shook her head and wore an expression that said: "As expected."

Although Alfonzo had been helping out in the kitchen since a few days after he arrived at the orphanage, in the last ten days, his skill seemed to have skyrocketed to new heights. Which makes perfect sense. Although he had learned how to cook from his mother before the incident, he was only five or so years old. However, on his sixth birthday, he awakened his memories from his past life, where he had been cooking for an additional eighteen years.

Even though Alfonzo was only twenty-seven when he died on earth, he started cooking at the age of nine. The reason for that was simple, his mother was a terrible cook. Other than spaghetti sauce, she could not make anything else. So, Alfonzo taught himself how to cook so that he could have some diversity in his diet.

After Makarov and Macao took their first bite of the food, the rest of the meal proceeded in silence. Well, the meal was silent, other than when Makarov and Macao asked for seconds and thirds. At the end of the meal, both the men had light blushes on their cheeks, embarrassed by the way they carried themselves.

"Ahem!" Makarov cleared his throat to change the atmosphere around the table. "I must say, that was excellent, Alfonzo."

"Yeah, that really was great." Macao added with an awkward smile.

"Isn't that obvious?" The matriarch asked while rolling her eyes. "You two ate as if you hadn't had a meal in days."

"Hehehe..." x 2

Both Makarov and Macao chuckled awkwardly after the matriarch outed them.

"Thanks, I'm glad you liked it." Alfonzo said with a small smile.

"Of course, they did!" Elicia said energetically. "Fonzie's cooking is the best!"

After her outburst, Elicia covered her mouth. Then, she hid behind Alfonzo as if she were shy. Seeing that, the matriarch, Makarov, and Macao could not help but laugh.

"Elicia is usually so shy." The matriarch said with a smile. "But when it comes to 'her Fonzie,' she's quite outspoken."

Even though most of her shyness so far was an act, or it was used to hide the fact that she already knew who Makarov and Macao were, after hearing the matriarch's comment, she was genuinely embarrassed, and it showed on her face.

Once again, the adults laughed good naturedly. Even Alfonzo laughed, which made Elicia feel even more embarrassed. So, to hide her embarrassment, she began hammering her little fists on Alfonzo's back.

"Anyway, now that we've eaten, I think it's time that we get down to business." Makarov said, though the smile on his face had not faded. "The matriarch informed us that the two of you have the talent to become wizards. In fact, she even told us that you've already unlocked some magic without being taught. Is that true?"

"Yes, sir." x 2

Alfonzo and Elicia answered simultaneously.

"Would you mind showing me?" Makarov asked.

Instead of answering immediately, Alfonzo and Elicia looked toward the matriarch. After receiving a nod of confirmation, they looked back at Makarov. Then, like they had done with the matriarch, they both held a hand forward.

A moment later, a magic circle appeared in front of each of their hands. In front of Alfonzo's magic circle, a pair of aluminum Eskrima sticks materialized, which he caught before they fell to the floor. In front of Elicia, a long thread appeared. Then, it began doing cat's cradle without Elicia's hands.

"Hmm..." Makarov stroked his mustache as he looked at the magic performed by the two children. "And when did you children awaken these magics?"

Hearing that, both Alfonzo and Elicia looked down at the floor. While Elicia began to tear up, Alfonzo's face began contorting with rage.

Seeing the kids' reactions, Makarov knew that he asked a question that he probably should have waited until they were older to ask. However, before he could tell them not to worry about answering it, Alfonzo spoke.

"It... was when... we were trapped in the cellar." Alfonzo said in an enraged tone.

'Damn it.' Alfonzo exclaimed internally. 'I can't keep my emotions in check with this six-year-old body.'

"After those bad guys killed our parents..." Elicia said with tears flowing down her face. "They tried to break the cellar doors open... When I wanted to stop them from opening the door, the threads appeared and tied the doors shut."

"Same with me." Alfonzo added. "But metal bars appeared and held the doors in place."

Hearing the tones that Alfonzo and Elicia spoke in, the matriarch, Makarov, and Macao sighed sadly. At the age of five, these two kids lost everything and everyone they cared about. Something that no one, especially a pair of five-year-olds, should ever have to go through.

"Children, I know that we could never replace the family that you lost."

Makarov said in a sad, yet caring tone. "But if you would let us, those of us in Fairy Tail will do our best to give you a place to call home and comrades you can call family."

With those words, Makarov hopped down off his seat at the table. Then, he approached Alfonzo and Elicia with his hands outstretched. When he was little more than an arm's length from the children, he stopped moving forward.

Although they had planned to join Fairy Tail, for some reason they could not explain, Alfonzo and Elicia hesitated. Unbeknownst to them, they were both scared. In both lives, although for different reasons, they had lost everything. And subconsciously, they were afraid of losing it all again once they were attached to this new family.

However, since they both had the minds of adults, they were able to squash their insecurities for now. Then, Alfonzo, followed shortly by Elicia, grabbed Makarov's outstretched hands.

When Makarov felt the two hands, smaller than even his own, in his hands, he gripped them gently. Then, he pulled Alfonzo and Elicia into an embrace.

"Welcome to the family, my children." Makarov said with a gentle, grandfatherly smile on his face. "Now, why don't we go home? To Magnolia. To Fairy Tail."

With those words, Alfonzo and Elicia both began to cry. While Alfonzo cried silently, Elicia cried at the top of her lungs, covering Makarov's cloak in her tears and snot. Seeing that, Makarov could only smile wryly. Meanwhile, the matriarch was wiping her own tears with a handkerchief while Macao was facing the ceiling and wiping his eyes.

"Man, I think I got some dust in my eyes." Macao said in a shaky tone.

After a few minutes, all the crying was over and done with. Then, the matriarch called all the other children and the orphanage staff to gather. She then explained to everyone that Alfonzo and Elicia would be leaving them to join Fairy Tail.

Surprisingly, the ones who took the news the hardest were the kitchen staff. They had gotten used to having their little helper in the kitchen for meal preparation. The other children, however, did not react very strongly. Alfonzo

and Elicia mostly kept to themselves. So, they did not make any strong bonds among the children. Even so, the other children wished them well.

After all the farewells, Alfonzo, Elicia, Makarov and Macao stood outside the orphanage. Alfonzo and Elicia were taking one last look upon the place where their journey in this new world began. Meanwhile, Makarov and Macao, with the children's belongings carried over his shoulder in a large bag, stood by and waited for the children to calm their emotions. Then, after a few moments, Alfonzo and Elicia turned around and smiled.

"Let's go, Gramps." x 2

Seeing the smiles on the children's faces, Makarov smiled as well.

"Yes, let's go." Makarov said. Then, he began to walk towards the train station.

Alfonzo, with Elicia holding his hand tightly, followed Makarov toward the train station, while Macao brought up the rear of the group. While they walked, Alfonzo and Elicia looked around at everything. Even though they had seen many more technologically advanced things and more scientifically sound structures in their past life, the novelty of being in another world had yet to

wear off. On top of that, as six-year-olds, they had not seen much of the world, let alone a big town like Hargeon before, since they were born and raised in a small village.

"Haha, if you think this is interesting, just wait until you see what Magnolia has to offer." Makarov said with a chuckle after noticing the curious gazes Alfonzo and Elicia wore while they looked around.

"Ooh! Is there a lot of fun stuff to see in Magnolia, Gramps?" Elicia asked in a tone full of curiosity.

"let's see..." Makarov paused to think about the answer to Elicia's question. "There's the harvest Festival. To celebrate, our guild puts on a beauty contest and the Phantasia Parade on the same day. Then, there's the Rainbow Cherry blossoms. The whole guild has a big picnic to watch them when they bloom...."

As Makarov named more and more things, from events to landmarks, Elicia's eyes brightened with every new thing Makarov mentioned. By the time Makarov was done, Elicia had pulled Alfonzo forward and grabbed Makarov's hand as well. Then, she began rushing them towards the train station.

'I don't think she's acting anymore.' Alfonzo thought as he looked at Elicia while she dragged him along. 'Even though she knew about all those things, she's genuinely excited to see them. Not that she's the only one that feels that way.'

After another ten minutes, the group of four finally reached the train station. After Macao bought the tickets for the next train to Magnolia, they sat and waited for the train to arrive. After another twenty minutes, their train arrived, and they quickly boarded the train.

Along the way to their seats, Alfonzo touched every piece of metal he could reach. While he did, he injected a bit of his magic power into them, so that he could get a grasp of their structure.

'These are mostly normal metals.' Alfonzo thought as he and the others walked toward their seats. 'But having them is better than not having them. I bet I could get some pretty good magic conductive metals if I could see the train's engine. But I'm certain that's not gonna happen.'

A few moments later, the four were seated. The train departed only a few minutes later. And a few minutes after they left, Alfonzo and Elicia fell asleep leaning on each other.

"We got a couple of good kids, didn't we, Master?" Macao asked while smiling at the children sleeping across from him.

"Indeed, we did." Makarov replied with a smile. Then, his expression turned solemn before he spoke again. "Still, I'd like to know more about the incident when their village was abducted. If we know more, we can do more to stop cases like this from happening again."

"Are you really gonna dig up those kid's trauma again?" Macao asked in a shocked tone.

"If we could solve this case without doing so, I would." Makarov said with a frown while looking out the train's window. "But their village isn't the first one where all the villagers disappeared. But it is the first with any clues as to what happened."

"I see." Macao said in a somber tone.

"I'll at least give them some time to settle in before I start asking any questions." Makarov said, turning his expression back into a grandfatherly smile. "For now, let's just worry about making them feel at home."