

Fairy Tail 96

Chapter 96: Pinako and Winry Rockbell

Earth Land, Ishgar, Kingdom of Fiore, Resenbool.

September, x781.

Currently, Alfonzo and Sun, riding in Alfonzo's Vanquish, were approaching Resenbool, a rural, sheep-hearding town located in the southeastern part of Fiore. Located on the banks of the Rain River, it was a quiet town with not much to attract visitors.

Considering that the town was not present in the version of Earth Land that Alfonzo knew, he had to look at a map to find its exact location. Otherwise, he and Sun would have been searching, to no avail, for days.

"Hey, Alfonzo." Sun asked in an excited tone from the passenger seat. "This is your first time here, right?"

"Yeah, none of my quests have brought me here." Alfonzo replied.

"That means you don't know much about it, right?" Sun asked, the excitement in her tone growing.

"That's right." Alfonzo replied. "Why?"

"Because it will be a real adventure." Sun replied. "we'll be able to explore a town that neither of us has been to."

In response, Alfonzo simply smiled. He had to admit, Sun's innocent, upbeat personality was nice. In fact, Sun was a lot like Elicia. The difference being that Sun was much more curious about the world around her.

"well, I'm glad you're having fun." Alfonzo said with a smile. A moment later, however, his expression became much more solemn. "but remember, we're on a quest. So, you need to stay alert."

"Yes, sir!" Sun said while saluting with a serious expression on her face.

'Damn, she's cute.' Alfonzo mused as he continued to drive.

About an hour later, the duo reached the town. Slowing down while they drove along Resenbool's roads, they did not see many people. That was something Alfonzo expected, however, since the sun was about to set.

Most of the town's residents were probably preparing for dinner, so the lack of foot traffic was nothing out of the ordinary. Luckily, Sun noticed a short, elderly woman, carrying a long tobacco pipe, with grey hair pulled into a strange ponytail that stuck out diagonally from the back of her head, deep wrinkles, and wearing a pair of round glasses, walking with a dog, that had a metal prosthetic replacing its front left leg, and quickly pointed them out to Alfonzo.

'Damn, it's really her.' Alfonzo thought as he looked at the old lady Sun pointed out. 'That's three series that shouldn't be here. I wonder what else this world has in store for us?'

Not letting his thoughts show on his face, Alfonzo approached the old lady slowly.

"Excuse me, Ma'am, we're looking for the Rockbell residence." Alfonzo said politely. "Do you think you could give us directions?"

Turning around with skepticism in her eyes, the old lady looked toward the magic vehicle. Then, when she made eye contact with Alfonzo, she narrowed her eyes. However, when she saw Alfonzo's prosthetic arm resting on the window frame of the vehicle, her expression softened.

"Are you looking for someone to help maintain your arm?" The old lady asked. "If so, you can follow me."

"No, not really." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "I do my own maintenance."

"I see." The old lady replied. "then, why are you looking for the Rockbell residence."

Upon hearing the old lady's question, Alfonzo turned away from the window for a moment. Then, when he turned back, he was holding the quest sheet he took from the guild.

"We're wizards from Fairy Tail." Alfonzo said. "And we're here to investigate the cause of the unknown disease. So, we need to meet with Mrs. Pinako Rockbell to learn the details."

Instead of responding immediately, the old lady raised the pipe in her hand to her mouth. Then, she gently inhaled. A moment later, she exhaled a cloud of smoke.

"I see." The old lady said with a nod. "Then, it looks like you found the person you were looking for. I'm Pinako Rockbell."

"Wow! We're really lucky." Sun said in an excited tone. "The first person we see after getting here is the person we're looking for."

Like Alfonzo had done before, Pinako also smiled at Sun's enthusiasm. Then, she turned away from the Vanquish and started walking.

"Well, you can follow me." Pinako said as she took short steps. "It's about time to prepare dinner, so you two are welcome to join us... My granddaughter and I, I mean, for dinner. We can discuss the details of the commission while we eat."

"Sure, that sounds great." Alfonzo replied with a smile. "And thanks for having us."

Less than ten minutes later, Alfonzo parked his Vanquish in front of a large, two-story, wooden house. As he and Sun stepped out of the magic vehicle, Pinako and the dog, who Pinako introduced as Den, during the short trip, were already standing in front of the door to the house.

"Well, don't just stand around." Pinako said as she pushed the door open. "come on in."

Nodding in response, Alfonzo and Sun followed Pinako and Den into the house. As soon as they entered, Den was waiting for them, and immediately began sniffing them like any other dog would.

In response to Den's attention, Alfonzo squatted down and began scratching the dog behind her ears, causing Den's tail to wag happily.

"So, you like Dogs, huh?" Sun asked while she watched Alfonzo interact with Den.

"Yeah, I love 'em." Alfonzo replied with a happy smile on his face. "Not a big fan of cats, though. But they seem to love me for whatever reason."

Just hearing the word cat caused Sun to shiver and her expression to pale slightly.

"I don't like cats, either." Sun said while shaking her head. "They're pure evil."

"So, that's why you never get too close to Happy, huh?" Alfonzo said with a snicker.

"Yeah, he looks at me like I'm food." Sun said with a shudder.

"You two, make yourselves at home." Pinako said, interrupting the conversation between the two.
"Dinner will be ready before too long."

"Sure, thanks for having us." Alfonzo and Sun replied simultaneously.

Hearing Pinako's words, Den gently bit on Alfonzo's pant leg. Then, she pulled him toward the house's living room.

"You're trying to help us get comfortable, huh?" Alfonzo said, patting Den on the head one more time.
"Okay, lead the way."

With that, Alfonzo and Sun followed Den, who led them to a couch before turning around as if presenting it to them.

Taking the hint, Alfonzo and Sun sat down. A moment later, Den laid down in front of their feet. Then, Alfonzo, Sun, and Pinako chatted casually while Pinako cooked dinner, denying Alfonzo's offer of assistance along the way.

After a while, the sound of footsteps descending a flight of stairs could be heard, causing Den's ears to perk up.

"Hey, Grandma!" The voice of a young woman called. "I heard you talking to someone, do we have guests? Are Ed and Al back?"

"Ah, Winry, yes we do have guests." Pinako replied from the kitchen. "But it's not the Elrics. They're wizards from Fairy Tail."

By that point, the footsteps could be heard from the same floor. And they would be passing by the door leading to the living room any moment now.

"Well, it's good that someone came to investigate that disease." The female voice, Winry, said as she walked down the hallway, and past the door to the living room. "But seriously, why haven't Ed and Al shown up to check it out? I swear, those two---"

Before Winry, a beautiful young woman with fair skin, dark blue eyes, and long blonde hair pulled into a ponytail that reached her waist wearing a light green jumpsuit that was pulled down to her waist, exposing her midriff and a black tube top, could get started on ranting about this Ed and Al, she stopped in her tracks. Then, she rushed back to the living room's doorway and stared at Alfonzo's left arm. A moment later, she rushed into the room and grabbed Alfonzo's arm with excitement glowing in her eyes.

"Oh my God! What is this beautiful creation?" Winry asked with equal parts curiosity and excitement. "Is this orichalcum? No that's impossible. Orichalcum is too heavy to be used on prosthetics. But what else could it be? And what about the internal workings? I've never seen anything like this! You have to tell me where you got it! And who made it!"

While Sun was taken aback by Winry's enthusiasm, Alfonzo could only smile wryly. He already knew that Winry was a total Automail nerd from his time watching the two Fullmetal Alchemist anime in his past life. But seeing it in person was more than he expected.

"Well, if you'll calm down, I'll answer your questions." Alfonzo said with a wry smile on his face.

Hearing Alfonzo's voice, Winry finally realized that the arm she had just been gushing over was connected to a person's shoulder.

"Oh, sorry about that." Winry said, the excitement in her eyes not diminishing in the slightest. "I didn't even introduce myself. I'm Winry Rockbell, and I make Automail prosthetics. And your arm is one of the most impressive pieces I've ever seen."

"Nice to meet you Winry." Alfonzo said, trying to gently pull his arm away from Winry to no avail. "I'm Alfonzo Marcus, a wizard from the Fairy Tail guild."

'Damn, how is this girl so strong?' Alfonzo thought to himself. 'I can't feel a drop of magic power from her. Yet, I can't pull my arm away.'

"Hi, I'm Sun Seto." Sun said, also introducing herself. "I'm a Fairy Tail wizard, too. And Alfonzo's fiancée."

Sun's voice finally caused Winry to register that there was another person in the room. And when she heard that Sun was Alfonzo's fiancée, she felt rather awkward. She could only imagine what Sun was thinking when she saw another woman tightly holding onto her fiancé's arm.

"Haha... It's nice to meet you, Alfonzo and Sun." Winry said, feeling a bit embarrassed by her own behavior while reluctantly letting go of Alfonzo's arm. "So... You're here to investigate the disease, huh?"

'Oh my God, this is so embarrassing.' Winry thought as she could feel her face reddening by the second. 'I'm glad Ed wasn't here to see that. Wait, why does it matter if Ed saw me like that or not?'

"Yup, that's why we're here." Sun replied energetically, snapping Winry out of her thoughts.

"Yeah, but we can talk about that over dinner." Alfonzo said, combing his fingers through Sun's hair to calm her down a little. "For now, I can answer your questions about my arm."

Immediately, Winry's eyes started sparkling again when the topic was about to change to Automail.

"To answer your first question, the surface of my arm is made of orichalcum." Alfonzo said with a smile.

"No way... But how? It should be so heavy." Winry asked curiously.

"Weight reduction sigils." Alfonzo replied simply.

"Ah... That makes sense." Winry replied with a nod. "Since I can't use magic, I would have never even considered that... Wait, you said the surface. Then what's inside?"

"Most of the arm is hollow, actually." Alfonzo replied with a shrug. "The skeleton and frame are made of adamantite while the nerves are made of mithril. Oh, and the bearings in the joints are..."

Like that, Winry asked every question she could think of while Alfonzo answered them all. Meanwhile, Sun had no idea what most of the conversation meant. It was not like she could not understand the individual words. However, when they were strung together into sentences, her head started to hurt, while her eyes spun in confusion.

"I guess all the technical talk was too much for you, huh?" Alfonzo said, pulling Sun to rest her head on his lap. Then, he started combing his fingers through her hair as he continued. "Sorry about that, I didn't mean to leave you out of the conversation."

"Yeah, I'm sorry, too." Winry added with a sheepish smile. "I can get pretty worked up when I'm talking about Automail."

"It's okay..." Sun replied, sounding quite dazed. "Don't worry about me..."

"Actually, I only have one more question." Winry said, looking at Alfonzo excitedly. "Who made your arm? And where did you get it?"

"Uh.. That's two questions." Alfonzo pointed out, causing Winry to blush in embarrassment. "But I'll answer them anyway. First, I made it. And, I guess I got it from Master Goldstein's workshop, since that's where I build it."

After Alfonzo answered her first question, Winry did not even hear the answer to her second question. Why? Because she was too busy gawking at Alfonzo in amazement. Then, after a few moments of awkward silence, Winry finally registered the name, "Alfonzo Marcus."

"Wait! You're Alfonzo Marcus? The one who revolutionized the way prosthetics are built?" Winry shouted as she stood up explosively and pointed the index finger of her right hand at Alfonzo's nose.

"It sure took you long enough to realize that." Pinako said as she stepped into the living room. "Anyway, you can talk about that later. For now, let's sit down for dinner."