

"Say 'aaaaan'." Alice smiled at Rui holding a spoon of porridge near his mouth. It had been eleven months since Rui had been born. He had grown accustomed to the mundane albeit pleasant life that he had come to be living for the past ten months. Still, although he had very few tribulations as an eleven-month-old, he would notice that the state of the orphanage was not what his comfortable life would lead him to think it was.

Life was hard. the 21st century had the highest quality of life in the history of Earth and only got better and better every year due to growth in technology. But this was a world in its Middle Ages, even basic necessities that he took for granted on Earth such as easy access to food, shelter and security were difficult to obtain, and even harder to maintain for the lowest of the middle class and lower, the risks and consequences of failing were much harsher too.

He could tell that the financial state of the orphanage was poor, the condition of the orphanage left some to be desired. He wasn't sure where the orphanage managed to scrape the necessary money to sustain itself, but he was sure it was far from easy, orphanages were a non-profit organization, they usually made their ends meet by donations or in rare cases subsidies.

Though clearly this orphanage struggled with those. The sisters would often forgo eating meals so that the children of the orphanage could eat fully, he could sense the anxiety hidden behind their smiling facades when they fed the hungry children.

('Sigh, to feed a helpless worthless baby like me, they sacrifice much, they endure much.') He couldn't help but feel guilty.

('When I'm older, maybe I can use my knowledge to earn a large amount of money. I'll support them myself. They already think I'm a genius after all.')

As an adult mentally, Rui was able to learn languages much quicker through active learning. He quickly remembered everybody's names first, followed by basic greetings, words he came across most, such as 'food' and 'eat', before making his way across a large portion of the common language. He could form basic coherent sentences by ten months, and had grown more comfortable and fluent with them by eleven months. The orphanage considered him a genius, after all, what baby could speak so well before it even turned one year old?

The rate of growth of his speech was more than thrice of than that of the average child. Of course, as an adult, Rui didn't feel very smart, ten months of non-stop practice only to be able to speak as well as a four-year-old was actually rather embarrassing, even, but of course that was without any active help or learning resources, and purely from observation and deduction. But he could use this rate of growth to get a well-paying occupation to support his new family in the future.

For now, he indulged himself in the food his body needed to grow up strong.

"How's the porridge Rui? Is it tasty? I added extra pepper just as you wanted." Alice smiled as she fed him another spoon.

"It's really tasty sister." Rui replied with as much sincerity as he could fake. In truth, he hated porridge, as someone from the middle class of a first-world country, he was accustomed to much better food than porridge, but this was something Alice had personally made for him, with a lot of love and care, he did not dare hurt her feelings out of his privileged lifestyle.

Besides, he did need to eat, nutrition was most important for a child his age and malnutrition could screw him forever in the worst-case scenario. This was not something he could tolerate, as someone who suffered from poor health for a lifetime. As a former chronic asthma patient, the feeling of air gushing into his lungs and invigorating every cell in his body was addictively satisfying.

('That also means I can practice martial arts in this world!') He reminded himself excitedly. Ever since he was reborn, he realized that the fact that his body did not seem to be hindered by any health ailments meant he could do all sorts of things he never could before, with the number one activity on his list being martial arts.

('Fuck YES! This is by far the most exciting part of being reborn!') He couldn't wait until he was old enough to start practicing martial arts.

"Alice, the Squire you called to clear the fallen tree trunk blocking the back exit is here." Karin, another caretaker of the orphanage, informed,

"...Squire?" Rui inquisitively inquired, he'd never heard anyone mention that phrase so far.

"Ah, you don't know yet. Well, would you like to come and see?" Alice put down the bowl of porridge and gestured at him to follow, which he did out of curiosity.magic

The man waiting outside the house was extremely tall, and ridiculously buff. He wore a what looked to be a Gi, something that resembled training uniforms, but his muscles could not be hidden despite his loose baggy clothing. His head was partially clean shaved, while his remaining hair was neatly braided in a single long pony tail.

('Wait a second.') Rui's eyes lit up.

('Is this a martial artis-')

"Ah, it's over there." Alice guided him to the back where a huge tree trunk had fallen and blocked the gate.

"I see, then please take several steps away." The man nodded at the sight, before taking a martial arts stance. He'd stood before the fallen tree before putting his left foot forward, and his right leg back. He folded and brought his left arm forward, with his forearm perpendicular to the ground and his fist

pointing to the sky. It was a common stance for launching a straight right in most martial arts. Yet it seemed as though the man intended to use it to... clear the tree?

Rui's eyes flew wide open at this sight.

"What is he tryi-

"Floating Tiger Fist style: Roaring Impact." The man whispered.

What followed next shocked Rui from head to toe. Every cell in his body froze as if they each wished to witness the miracle that had followed. He didn't think anything could surprise him anymore, but he was wrong. This was merely the beginning.

The man's body disappeared, Rui could only see a haze as he began his movements, and it completely vanished in his vision as the man twisted his core to generate enough torque while driving all that momentum into his fist.

The next thing Rui heard was a huge shockwave that hit him with a mild force even at a distance of more than ten meters away, and a large thud followed by the sound of crumbling wood. The shockwave had lifted up dust and sawdust, that prevented him from seeing the immediate consequences of the strike. Yet once it settled, his shock escalated.

The tree trunk was reduced to bits! The man damn near pulverized that huge tree trunk with a single punch!

The man turned and glanced at Rui and Alice, unperturbed.

"Anything else?"