

[Volley] Audition: Sweet Child

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Upon floating, broken islands. Sitting in the sun filled open skies. All of them unmoving, with the exception of a few earthy masses lazily rotating in various directions. These islands go on for as long as the eyes can see and they are uncountable in number.

Most have grasses and other foliage that cling to their tops and sides. Only the bottom giving way to brown dirt and rocks, all held together by roots that grow from within the islands. Some are barren and some are completely made of hard solid rock.

Beyond these islands, a blue expanse awaits, promising infinite horizons and an eternity of shattered worlds.

A gentle wind whistles past, the dauntless floating islands are unphased by this gentle breeze, but the vines and roots that hang from them sway and dance to the wind's euphoric tune.

None of the islands cradles anything larger than a shrub or some grass. All except one, one which supports a large leafy and green tree. A strong trunk supported by roots which populate and wrap around the island's entire surface.

Under this tree, sits a boy. He would look like any normal young teen, but his skin was light red in color, revealing an otherworldly nature about him. He had two small pointed horns sticking out from short messy obsidian black hair and two small nubby tusks that grew from his lower jaw.

From relaxing, to standing on his feet at a moment's notice, something had disturbed his rest. The shadow of something large passes overhead. The boy's keen narrow eyes turn upwards, towards a sun obscured by distant floating lands. He fails to see the owner of the shadow, but he does see something falling from the sky.

Tracing it with his eyes, he sees a barrel. This alcohol container falls at a fast pace, soon to pass the boy's own floating island. He had very little time to choose what to do next, but he made his decision with a leap. A powerful jump sends him soaring through the open sky, both hands outreached before him as he grabs the falling barrel. Snatching it from the air he lands upon a floating landmass a distance from the tree he rested under, barrel in both of his hands.

The barrel was much larger than himself, yet the boy held it without any effort at all. The boy looked over the barrel, wondering to himself whether it was treasure or trash. Carefully studying this strange thing that fell from the sky.

Gently, he places it upon the dirt. He was quick to reach for the barrel's lid, intent on opening it and looking inside, but before he could, something came out.

With hollow pop the lid opened, the snout of a white fox pushing through it. The boy took an immediate stepped back, gasping dramatically as the cute fox appeared before him.

"There you are," It said, a distant and feminine voice emerged from the creature. "If I'm right, which I always am, you're Volley correct?"

The boy, shocked, points to himself at the name. There was a pause, the gears grinding in his head.

"Yea thats me," Volley finally said, placing his fists on his sides. His thick eyebrows narrowed together as he studied the fluffy fox before him, unsure but somewhat intrigued in its intentions.

"Excellent! I am The Madame Chief, you may call me Chiefu." The fox proclaimed proudly, "I'm here because someone recommended me to you child."

Volley crossed his arms and put a perplexed expression on his face, tilting his head to the right side. "Nice to meet you, Chifu? What am I recommended for?"

"Haha, its Chiefu kid, and I'm the boss of your aunt, Saki." The voice said from the fox, the creature cutely sat in the barrel, sniffing the air occasionally with its small nose. "And she said you might be interested in this!"

The radiant white fox seemed to lean forward while puffing out its chest, suddenly with a glow, an envelope seemed to materialize in thin air. A corona of white light surrounds it in its sudden appearance, before slowly dimming as it gently floats down toward Volley.

"I heard you are strong Volley, I like strength. Fight in my tournament!" Chiefu seemed to whisper from the white fox, her voice echoing in the magic she just displayed.

Volley catches the envelope from the air, inspecting it over in his rough red fingers. A look of shock, followed by an expression of pure joy grew on Volley's face as he digested Chiefu's words. "Oh wow! Really! I haven't seen Aunt Saki in years! Would I really get to see her!?"

"Of course, should you accept, she'll be waiting for you. I promise." Chiefu chirped through the fox, "I can also promise you incredible rewards should you enter and win~!"

"Sweet! Well I'm in!" Volley states with enthusiasm, ungently shoving the unopened letter into his pocket. With a big grin he then looked expectantly at the fox. "So where do I go?"

"Oh, uh, you are actually supposed to read that." Chiefu's voice said with a confused reluctance.

"Nah! I'll read it later." Volley declared giddily, "I've gotta go see Aunt Saki!"

"Huh, well..." The fox's voice fell short, as a white tail materialized on Volley's backside, not that he noticed. The small fox gives an animated sigh, before hopping out of the barrel and sitting on the ground next to it. "Fine, that will do. Now, all you have to do is get into this barrel."

Volley looked a little confused, but didn't let his smile drop. "Okay!"

In a few moments Volley climbed into the barrel so that only his head and shoulder poked out the top. He looked down at the fox with growing excitement and expectation. "Alright, what do I do now!"

"Just stay still." Chiefu voice musically whispered through the fox.

Then suddenly, faster than anyone could react, a golden invisible force materializes and slams into the cask. The white fox looked on, its small head following the wide arc of the screaming barrel boy as he flew into the horizon. Its tail swayed behind it as it now sat alone amongst the floating lands.

-----Phoenix Bay-----

Billy Brent Braimer or Long Nose Billy as his friends liked to call him was the best and only fisherman amongst the Crossguard in the CrossRoads. His long black hair swayed in the breeze, his 4 inch long nose twitched slightly as he appreciated the clean salty air. He stood knee deep in the water, wearing a pair of rubber pants over his lower body to keep his uniform dry, fishing pole in hand.

Truly the only companion he needed was the scream of his fishing poles reel as he cast into the deep blue of Phoenix Bay.

Hark, he notices something, bobbing amongst the gentle waves of Phoenix Bay. He finds that slightly strange, it wasn't there a moment ago, where did it come from?

He slowly trudges through the waves, pushing against the current to find his way to the treasure brought in by the waters.

Before he could make his way up to the object, a hand blasts violently out the top of it. Billy now realizes that he's looking at a barrel, a barrel with someone inside!

"Rah!" With a warcry, the barrel is torn asunder as a red skinned boy splashes into the water, sputtering slightly.

"Oh hells! A demon in a barrel!" Billy shouted, pointing towards Volley. "Or if I know my demons, an Oni! Now what is an oni doing in a barrel!"

"Drowning!" Volley cried standing up in the surf, looking from side to side quickly. His eyes then landed upon the Phoenix Coast in its glory. They were a bit of a distance from the buildings on the shore but that did not stop Volley's eyes from beholding the rest of The Crossroads. "Where am I?"

"This is The Crossroads boyo." Billy said, walking up and helping Volley to more shallow waters. As Billy did, his eyes zero'd in on the fluffy white spectral tail that poked out from behind Volley. "Oh! So you are a contestant, well that makes a lot more sense."

Volley turned from looking at the entirety of the Crossroads to looking back to the Crossguard. “Yea, I’m a contestant, still a little hazy on the details, I still haven’t really read the invitation. My name is Volley, who are you?”

“Haha, not much of a reader eh? No worries, you look like you are plenty good at other things. My name is Billy Brent Braimer, but you can call me Billy Long Nose!” Billy said, flashing his own giant grin and offering Volley an open hand.

Volley chuckled at Billy’s silly name, grabbing the man’s hand and giving it a shake. “Nice to meet you Longnose.”

“Ha, nice to meet you kid. Now if you’ll follow me, let’s get you checked in shall we?”

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