

Introduction

Furo was born on a small, scenic island in the South Blue - to a poor mother who knew that she could never give her child the life she so desperately wanted her son to have. A life, that she herself never had the pleasure of having. Because of this, when Furo was born, his mother, after spending a few precious hours with him, took him to a monastery high in the mountains:

The Hooded Woman - A few hours into Furo's life

It was night, and the rain was beating down harshly as a hooded woman made her way up a gravel path to a monastery that sat atop a mountain. She carried a basket that she cradled in her arms, and a faint whimpering could be heard from underneath her hood. "I'm sorry, Furo," the hooded woman whispered to the thatch basket - with tears rolling down her face as the rain fell around them. Inside, laid a baby, wrapped in soft cloth to keep him warm. He was smiling - he did not understand what was going on. He was just a child that was happy to be with his mother. "I wish I could give you the life that you deserve, but I - I can't. I know these monks will, so you're going to be living with them from now on!" She struggled to say these words, but she was happy because the child was still smiling. She smiled and wiped the tears away from her face, and set the basket down on the steps of the monastery. The child's face turned from a happy, warm smile to sad, confused frown, and the child began to cry. He did not know why, but he was now sad - almost as if he knew what was about to happen. The hooded woman faintly whispered to her weeping child, "I love you, Furo. And I'll always be with you - no matter what!" before forcing a smile and kissing her son on the cheek. She knocked on the great oak doors of the monastery and disappeared into the night.

The Monastery - Furo Age 0 - 9

Furo was raised in that monastery since that day, however, unbeknownst to his mother, the monks were not good to him, and neither were the other children who were raised there. He was constantly being beaten up, punished and tormented by the monks and

children, they said he was an 'outsider' and was from a 'dirty' family, as his mother conceived him to a pirate, who went back to sea before even knowing that he had a son. The monks taught all of the children martial arts - except for Furo, that is. They essentially starved him and forced him to clean the grounds and do work for the monks instead - they said that this was punishment for his father's sins. The only time Furo ever got to fight was when the children decided to beat him up, or the monks let them use him as target practice for his training. Either way, the monks turned a blind eye to whatever the children did to him, and let the children ignore his pleas for them to stop. The monks rarely let him rest, as they were constantly working him, only letting him sleep a few hours a night. Because of this, Furo has since suffered the consequences of a lack of sleep. As a child, Furo would fall asleep randomly during the day, including when he was supposed to be working. This led to the monks punishing Furo even more because of this, and because of the lack of food and sleep and the mass amount of hard work the monks had him do, Furo got to the point where he was too tired to even be bothered to be mad at them, and sometimes too tired to even feel emotion at all. Furo's sleep schedule is still bad to this day, which is the reason why he is so sleepy and emotionless all the time, although he has regained some of his emotions since. Despite the monks not teaching him martial arts, Furo did manage to learn quite a bit from watching the other children train (and from the one-sided beatings he received from them) and often escaped to practice on his own in the forests around the monastery, using sticks that he found in the forest as staffs, and trees and rocks as practice dummies.

Toko and Furo - Furo Age 9

It was a quiet afternoon, and Furo was coming to the end of his secret training session that he was having in a small clearing in a forest near the monastery. He was using a particularly long, straight branch - that he had found a few mornings prior, much to his delight - as a bo-staff, and was practicing his technique against a steep rock that sat in the clearing. He was doing his best to imitate the moves of the monks and children that he watched while he was slacking off from his work. He was finishing up his training, and was sweating and panting due to the clearing's exposure to the sun at the top of the mountain. He sprinted at the rock, ready to perform his last few attacks, and swung the branch at the side of the rock, before pushing off the ground and jumping above the rock. He was now in midair, where he liked it most, and swung the branch over his head at the top of the rock. With a cheeky grin across his face, after hitting the rock with his branch, he planted the branch vertically on the top of the rock, using it as a makeshift pole-vault to help him in his landing on the other side of the rock. He did this by

swinging down from above the branch, still gripping it tightly, and letting gravity do the rest of the work. He was graceful about it though, and landed on the tips of his toes, but as soon as the rest of his feet touched the ground, he span around, swinging the branch with him, and hit the side of the rock. This time, however, he did it with a frown, as he felt his branch crack in two and watched the other half of the branch fall to the dirt. An annoyed look formed across his face, but this was quickly replaced by fear as he felt something watching him and heard leaves rustling around him. Thinking that one of the monks or children from the monastery had discovered him in the midst of his secret training, Furo stopped what he was doing, dropping the rest of the branch to the floor, and prepared for the worst. He closed his eyes and covered his face, as he knew what kind of beating he would receive if anybody discovered his training. Only, nobody was there. He still felt the eyes watching him, but not a single person was in sight. Stupidly, he decided that he must just have been imagining things because he was so tired, and opted to ignore it and go back to his training. Bad idea. "Ow!!" Furo screamed as he felt something hard hit the back of his head. Rubbing his scalp, he turned around and saw a small rock sitting on the ground. "Ow!!" Furo screamed once again, as another rock hit his head. His eyes widened and he began to become scared as he could see branches shaking as something unknown darted between them. He staggered back slowly, backing himself up against a rock that he had previously been using as a practice dummy, his heart racing in his chest. "R-r-reveal yourself!" he nervously stammered, putting a brave face on that was about as convincing as his next words, "I-I'm not scared of you!". He waited for a response, all the while his eyes shot around, trying to find this mysterious threat. He was trembling like a leaf, and was doing a terrible job of trying to hide it.

"Hehehe!!"

It was a strange, high-pitched laugh, that didn't sound human at all, and it wasn't. That wasn't even the worst thing about it, however, as it came from right behind Furo. He span around, jumping backwards as he did so, landing on his back in the grass. He looked up to where the voice had come from, and there - sitting on the top of the rock that Furo had just now been using as a practice dummy - was a small, furry mound, with large, beaming eyes staring at him. As he looked closer at it, he could make out a long, hairy tail... Legs... Arms... Furo cursed to himself and showed an annoyed look on his

face for allowing himself to be so scared by such a creature. It was a monkey. Not even a large, scary monkey like he heard the monks telling the other children to stay away from, but a small, young monkey that he guessed wouldn't even come up to his knee. "Why you little..." Furo muttered under his breath, as he picked up the snapped branch

and attacked the monkey. Closing his eyes and sprinting at the rock which the monkey sat atop, he swung violently at where it sat, swinging the branch from behind him in an arc. Much to his annoyance, the attack hit nothing but open air, as he opened his eyes to find nothing there. "Where the hell did..." Furo mumbled as he dozed off into an untimely slumber.

Furo awoke, sitting up and rubbing his eyes. He started to recall the events that took place before he fell asleep, and thought about the strange monkey that he found so very annoying. "What the hell is a monkey doing all the way up here, anyway?" He thought to himself, as the monastery and the forest he was training in were far up the mountain, well past the jungle that the monkeys were normally found in. As he stood up, he looked around and muttered to himself, "How long did I sleep anyway?" before looking up at the sky. "HOLY SHI-" he instinctively screamed. The sky was pitch black, and with a perfectly timed rumble in his stomach, he realised that he had missed supper. Not that he would be allowed to eat much anyway, he was actually more scared at what the monks would do to him if they realised he was not in the monastery and if he came back at such a time. Panicking, Furo ran through the forest, making his way back to the monastery. This was a route he traversed often, so he knew exactly where he was going. As he ran, jumping over tree roots and fallen trees, dodging and weaving through bushes and various plants - he heard an all too familiar laugh. A high-pitched giggle that he recognised instantly. He looked up and there, swinging to-and-fro on a branch above his head, was the monkey. Furo quickly realised that the monkey must have been following him and, with an annoyed tone in his voice, he shouted "What the hell do you want now?!" He thought about it and came to another realisation - the monkey must have watched him sleep. Angry now, and too much in a hurry to think about the other implications that this may have, he screamed "Why the hell didn't you wake me up, you weirdo?!". He started to become even more angry and annoyed as he watched the monkey playfully and carefreely swing on the branch, and glared at the monkey, before continuing to run towards the monastery. As he ran, he became even more irritated, as he looked to his right and saw the monkey swinging from branch to branch. "Stop followi-". His anger was cut short by a sharp feeling of immediate pain as, not looking where he was going, he ran straight into a thick, outstretched branch and fell to the floor. A large, red mark appeared on Furo's forehead and tears started to well in his eyes, as he sat up and began to pick himself up off the ground. He quickly wiped the tears away from his eyes, dusted himself off and began to rub the large red mark that was starting to swell.

"Hehehehehehe!!"

There it was again. Furo looked to his right, and there, on a tree-stump now, was the monkey. The small brown, furry creature had a beaming grin from ear to ear, and was currently rolling on his back in laughter, continuing to annoy Furo. "Why the hell are you following me you stupid monkey?!" Furo questioned the monkey, clearly annoyed. "And stop laughing, or.. or.. I'll beat you up!!". The monkey sat up, and perched on top of the stump, and - almost as if he had understood what Furo had just said - he pulled his lips to the side and stuck his tongue out at Furo, clearly mocking him. Furo gave up on being annoyed at the monkey, and instead just simply laughed. Afterall, he had to admit that the face the monkey was pulling was very funny, and his attempts to tell the monkey to go away were clearly proving to be pointless. The monkey looked at Furo, puzzled as to why he was laughing, but decided to join in with the laughter too. Furo walked over to the monkey, seemingly completely forgetting about the heavy knock on the head he had received from the branch, as he now had a smirk across his face. He exclaimed, "You know, you're pretty funny for a monkey!" and proceeded to attempt to pat the monkey on the head. The monkey began to evade his hand, but quickly realised that he meant no harm and accepted his touch. "You're not too bad are you? Do you want to be friends?" he asked excitedly. The monkey, again, almost as if understanding what Furo was saying, smiled and nodded with equal excitement. "You need a name. I'll call you... hmmm.... Toko! I don't know what it means but it sounds cool!" Toko continued to smile, as if confirming that he approved of the name. "You like it, huh? How about you come with me?" Furo asked, outstretching a hand to Toko. As the monkey hesitated, Furo continued "You're all the way up here near the top of the mountain, so you must have lost your family and friends. If you come with me, I'll give you a new one!" The monkey grinned and jumped up onto his arm, before then climbing up onto his back, gripping onto his shoulder with his hand, as his leg wrapped around Furo's upper torso. Furo began to walk back to the monastery, with Toko clinging to his back, clearly very happy with himself and filled with pride. It was the first time Furo had ever had the pleasure of having a friend.. It was a strange feeling, but it felt good... Very good.

The Nurse - Furo Age 10

There was a woman who came to the monastery once a year, a nurse - both in her job and as she was known to the children living in the monastery. She was tall and thin and always displayed a welcoming smile. She had a soft, calming voice and long, black hair that was tied in a bun behind her head. The bun poked out from beneath a blue bucket hat that she wore on her head. The hat featured a pattern of multiple pale blue clouds, and she seemed to wear it with pride. She wore a dazzling blue kimono with beautiful

flower patterns spiralling up from the bottom - the same kimono every time she visited, in fact. She claimed to be a nurse from the village hospital, and came once a year on the very same day, ever since Furo could remember. She was especially kind to Furo and, as he grew, he noticed that the day she visited was the only time the monks were ever nice to him. He had heard rumours saying that she was his mother, but saw them as mere taunts and didn't - or rather, refused to believe them. On the night of one particular visit, when Furo was 10 years old, while he was sweeping the floors of an open corridor inside the compound, he overheard voices coming from another room.

"We've got to get her to take him away, he's a nuisance." One voice said,

"He is her son after all, she drops the little shit on our doorstep, expecting us to take care of him?!" Said another,

"Well, what can you expect from the wife of a pirate? But what annoys me the most is that she demands that she sees him on his birthday once a year, pretending to be a nurse when she knows damn well she's too stupid to be one!" A third voice boomed.

"Nurse-san is not a real nurse?" He thought to himself in confusion, "They said she's too stupid to be one? But she was always so kind to me... And what even is a birthday?" He had seen some of the other children celebrating specific days with food and gifts, but he never quite understood what exactly one was. He tried to continue along his way, but there was one sentence that stuck out like a sore thumb to him. He kept repeating the sentence in his mind, time after time.

"Well, what can you expect from the wife of a pirate?"

There was just something about that sentence that bugged him. He thought about how the monks and the older children of the monastery would call him the 'son of a pirate', he didn't know what exactly pirates were, only that they were said to be bad people and that his father was apparently one. He didn't believe that all pirates were bad people, however - whether that was because of an internal desire to rebel against the monks, or a subconscious sentimental feeling towards his father - he didn't know. He then thought about how the other children said that Nurse-san was his mother, and began to realise how the pieces started to fit together. He pushed these thoughts to the back of his mind. He was too tired to think about this now. "They must be talking about someone else." He thought in denial, turning his head to see the usually lively Toko sleeping quietly on his back, which comforted him slightly, and went back to his cleaning.

The Kaze Kaze No Mi - Furo Age 12

Furo was 12 now and was still training to become stronger, for what reason, he did not yet know, but he knew that it would be worth all of the hard work in the end. Having climbed up from the ground, he was currently jumping from tree to tree - attempting to improve his agility and balance. He was quickly hopping from branch to branch, making sure to dodge anything that got in his way, and to leap whenever an unexpected gap came about. Swinging along with him was Toko, the pair of them much bigger now than when they first met. They were both laughing and smiling, as they were with each other and that was all that they needed. As he continued to make his way through the forest by way of tree, Furo began to become worn out and, looking at Toko, he could easily see that he was beginning to feel the same. Furo and Toko slowed down, stopping at a particularly long branch, and hopped down onto to the earth. The pair of them collapsed on the ground, both exhausted after their long, hard day of training. As they gasped for breath, they both let out a simultaneous, deafening growl from their stomach, as they both realised that they hadn't stopped to rest or eat since they began that day's training many hours ago. Furo turned to his companion, saying "You're hungry, aren't you little guy? Well... I guess the same could be said for me...". He stood up and looked around, noticing that the duo had reached a point near the end of the forest, and that they had actually completely lost track of where they had been going. He began to walk towards where he could see rays of light beaming through the clustered foliage, and stepped out into open grass. The forest and the monastery were situated on top of a large plateau of rock that stuck out from one side of the mountain, and he was currently near the edge of it. Looking forward, he could see that there was only a few metres of grass, before the ground disappeared into a gaping canyon below. He scanned his surroundings and noticed a singular tree virtually on the very edge of the plateau. Hanging from a lone branch, that stretched over the edge of the canyon, was a very peculiar looking fruit. It was a pale blue colour, and was a large, spherical fruit that looked like no other. "What a strange fruit..." he thought to himself, and rightfully so. As he looked closer at it, he could see a pattern of strange swirls that seemed to resemble wind and covered the peculiar fruit completely. He hoped that it was edible and, with a feeling of desperate hunger taking over his mind and completely screwing up his otherwise reasonable judgement, he made his way towards the strange fruit, totally ignoring the obvious dangers that could end with the loss of his life. Toko followed the careless boy, nervously yet obediently, as he was loyal to his friend, and was also hungry too. He instinctively climbed up his friend's leg and clung onto his back.

As Furo made his way towards the tree, he finally came to the realisation that the fruit was going to be difficult to obtain. Furo's face showed that he was deep in thought, as he attempted to hatch up a brilliant plan in his head. Finally, after a good few minutes, he came up with his master plan. "Aha!" he exclaimed as his and Toko's face lit up with cheer.

"I'll climb it!"

Furo, grinning from ear to ear with pride at the success of coming up with his fantastical plan, turned to his friend to see if he approved. He swiveled his head to see Toko with a mortified look, almost as if begging his friend not to go ahead with his plan. Ignoring him, Furo made his way to the base of the tree, muttering under his breath about how he was going to 'show the stupid monkey that he can get to the fruit, easy peasy' and readied himself at the base of the tree, which he could now tell was not a particularly strong one. He lifted his left foot up to rest on a low-hanging branch, that was really more like a twig, and lifted himself up to begin climbing. Slowly but surely, Furo made his way up the tree, until he finally reached the branch that held the strange fruit, and that stretched out above the canyon. Furo knew that if he fell from that height, there would be no possible way that he could survive. He put one hand on the branch, and rested some of his weight onto that hand to test the sturdiness of the branch. Satisfied, he put his other hand in front, and began to crawl across the branch. This was an especially tough feat, harder than he had initially thought, as he realised that the branch was a lot thinner than it had looked from below and, as the wind picked up, the branch started to sway. At last, Furo reached the end of the branch on which the fruit was hanging off of. Without looking down - due to the fact that he was currently lying across a branch that was hanging above a tall canyon - he reached for the fruit. After a few swings into thin air, Furo at last managed to grab the fruit, and tugged on it a couple of times, before finally managing to bring it up to where he laid. Furo stared at the fruit, marvelling at its obscurity, before promptly biting into it. It tasted utterly disgusting, but he was too hungry to care about the taste of it, food is food. He reluctantly swallowed the fruit, and immediately felt something change within him. He grinned, however, happy to have food in his belly.

CRACKKKK

Furo's grin immediately changed to a look of pure terror as he felt the branch give way underneath him. He screamed as he fell into the abyss, Toko too, and subconsciously stretched his arms out in front of him to block his fall - not that that would help in the slightest. Except it did.

WHOOSH

As soon as Furo stretched out his arms, he felt a strong gust of wind being produced from his palms, and was propelled up into the sky. Furo tumbled to the ground, landing on the plateau that he had been standing on previously. He was definitely hurt, but not nearly as much as he would be had he not been saved by the mysterious wind. He shuddered at the thought. There were no words to describe what had just happened, it was a supernatural experience that left him utterly shook. "Toko!" Furo thought to himself. Furo panicked as his eyes darted around, searching for his companion. With a sigh of relief, Furo spotted his friend on the ground a few feet away from him. Furo struggled to stand up, grimacing at the pain, but he managed to pull through, and walked towards Toko. Toko had sat up in the meantime, and looked at Furo with the same lost-for-words expression that Furo himself displayed just a few moments ago. "I don't know what just happened, but I'm glad that you're okay..." Furo croaked, exhausted from the few moments of madness that just took place. He outstretched a hand and helped the monkey up, and offered to let Toko ride on his back again while he rested. Of course, the monkey accepted, and the two began to make their way back to the monastery.

When Furo and Toko got back to the monastery, it was sundown and the children were sat in the dining hall eating their supper. Furo wouldn't be eating with them, however, as he sneaked into the small shed-like hut he called home. He got changed into his work clothes and grabbed a broom, before begrudgingly making his way to the dining hall, with Toko clinging to his back. He began sweeping the floors as the other children laughed and ate, making sure to leave out the excess mess that the children 'accidentally' dropped, obviously to mock him.

"Why if it isn't the pirate's child and his lame excuse for a pet!" Shouted one of the children, as others roared into a laugh.

Furo knew who it was instantly, it was Guotin, one of Furo's least favourite children from the monastery. He was younger than Furo, yet quite a bit bigger than him, which annoyed Furo even more. It seemed like the only thing he enjoyed doing was picking on Furo, and he was one of the main bullies. Furo was annoyed, but he didn't want this to turn into a fight.

"What's with that stupid ape you drag around with you, anyway?" Sneered Guotin, as he stood up and began to walk towards Furo.

Furo became increasingly more and more annoyed with Guotin's taunts, and this was clearly visible. He clenched his fists and bit his tongue.

"I'm surprised the monks let you keep the pathetic rat if I'm honest. Though, now that I think about it, it was most likely out of pity for the pair of you!" Guotin snarled, standing in front of Furo now.

Furo had reached breaking point now, he dropped the broom, screaming "SHUT THE HELL UP!!! YOU STUPID SHIT!!!!", and attempted to push Guotin away. Only, the same phenomenon occurred again, because as Furo attempted to simply push Guotin away, he felt a strong gust of wind emanate from his palms, sending the bully crashing through tables and into a wall.

The monks had previously been ignoring the little fight, as they had witnessed Furo receive many beatdowns, and a beatdown at supper was almost bound to happen. However, as they heard the sound of tables snapping, they looked over to see what had happened, and their faces fell as they saw that Furo was the one who was still standing. Furo knew that he had screwed up. Without even a slight bit of hesitation, he immediately started to sprint out of the compound, as children and monks chased him down - they were fast, and Furo ran while knowing that if they caught him he would be dead. Cleverly, Furo lead his pursuers into the forest - which he knew better than them. So, after what seemed like hours of trying to lose his pursues, amidst jeers of 'demon' and 'scum', Furo and Toko finally lost them. They knew that there was no way in hell that they could go back to the monastery, so he decided to go to the village to get work for himself.

Mother? - Furo Age 16

Furo had gotten a job for himself as a hunter. He had quickly learned how to control his new powers to some extent, which he learned from some of the locals were called 'devil fruit powers', and would go up to the mountains in search of game, selling the meat to butchers and selling hides to tailors. He was 16 now and, despite being employed in the village, lived in the forests on the mountain, which actually made his job a lot easier.

Furo, with a loud yawn, was awoken by Toko - who had a terrified look in his eyes. He signalled for Furo to follow him, and made his way out of the tent that they had set up in a clearing as their temporary base. When Furo had finally got out of the tent, rubbing his

eyes, the clearly shaken monkey looked at him, before pointing to the sky. "What's up, Toko?" asked Furo, half asleep. However, his almost shut eyes shot wide open, and a look of pure horror swept across his face as he saw what Toko was pointing to - thick, charcoal-coloured smoke billowing into the sky. It was from the village. Pirates! Furo grabbed his bo-staff, a weapon that he had bought to help with his hunting, and sprinted through the trees, onto a gravel path that headed down from the mountain and into the village. As he came closer and closer, he could hear the screams of innocents, the crackling of burning wood and the laughs of evil men as they raided the small town, all the while getting louder as he approached. Reaching the village, he saw innocent civilians being cut down by the pirates, as flames blazed around them. With a loud roar, Furo gripped onto his staff and held it behind him, before swinging it forward, in a horizontal arc. As he did so, a powerful gust of wind followed the staffs direction, and he managed to blow the flames out from a number of houses. He had also used his money to rent a Devil Fruit Encyclopedia from the village library, and had learned that the fruit he had eaten was the 'Kaze Kaze No Mi', a paramecia type devil fruit which gave him the power to control wind. As he sprinted through the village, he came across a young woman and her child being chased by one of the raiders, who was laughing manically and holding a cutlass above his head. Putting his forefinger and middle finger together, Furo created a gun shape with his hand, and pointed it at the legs of the delirious pirate. Without a second thought, Furo fired a bullet of compressed air at his legs, sending the pirate tumbling down and screaming in agony. Furo ignored him, and continued through the village, before reaching a house that he somewhat recognised. As Furo looked closer at the aflame building, he finally realised where he recognised it from. It was Nurse's house. Furo had been to visit her a couple of times since he had left the monastery, but had never managed to muster up the courage to bring up the talk that he had overheard when he was 10. She was always kind to him, and Furo looked up to her greatly. Furo kicked open the door, with a mixture of fear, anger, and trepidation, and began to desperately search the house, praying that he would not find her lifeless body.

He did.

He reached her living room, and sprinted in - only to find her body sprawled across the floor in a pool of crimson blood. And, with tears streaming down his face, Furo did the only thing he knew how to do in this situation... He cried.

Wiping the tears away from his face, Furo turned her body over, and saw that she had a large gash across her chest. "It's a sword wound, so she must have been killed by the pirates," he thought to himself.

CRACKKKK

The harsh noise could be heard across the village, as a large portion of the house gave way. Dust fell on him from the ceiling, which by then had begun to groan and show cracks across the plaster. Quickly, the situation had gone from bad to worse, and Furo realised that he was not going to make it out of the house if he tried to carry Nurse with him. And so, with tears welling in his eyes once again, Furo hurried out of the crumbling structure. By the time he had made his way outside, the pirates had already disappeared back out into the sea, most likely proud of themselves for their epic raid. Furo collapsed onto the floor, exhausted from the night's events.

When Furo awoke, it was dawn, and the blaze had died out. Around him, where cosy buildings had once stood, were piles of charred wood and rubble. The sun was out, and it was well into the morning. Above him sat Toko, having woken him up. Furo then realised that he had accidentally left him behind at the tent in the rush of things, and apologised profusely. Toko once again beckoned for Furo to follow him, and lead him to a small camp on the outskirts of the town, which the survivors had set up. Furo noticed that some of the men were helping to clean up the town already, which put him at ease a bit. As he arrived at the camp, he spotted Yosin, one of the butchers he sold his kills to, and a man that Furo looked up to a lot. "Hello Yosin.." said Furo, gravely, "Did you hear about Nurse?"

"Yeah... I did." Yosin answered, "It's a great shame, she was a good woman... Oh, speaking of Nurse, she gave me this years ago - shortly after you fled from the monastery and came to the village. She asked me to give it you if she ever died. I was surprised, as she seemed to love it so much... Also, she said there was a note inside meant for you. Don't worry, I haven't read it."

Yosin handed Furo the blue bucket hat that Nurse used to wear with her everywhere. He could tell that it was old, but he did not care, and marvelled at the pattern of pale blue clouds that spiralled around it. He looked inside the hat, and found a folded up piece of paper taped to the base of the hat. He opened the paper up, and began to read:

Dear Furo,

If you are reading this, I am most likely dead, as I do not think I could ever conjure up the courage to give this to you personally. I have never told you my true name, and just let you call me Nurse instead. My name is Masumi, and... There's no easy way to put this... I am your mother. I birthed you to a pirate father - who had left the town before I got chance to tell him I was pregnant with you. I knew that, with my financial situation then, I could never raise you with the life I wanted you to have, so I took you to the monastery and left you in the care of the monks there. However, after hearing some of the stories you have told me about that place, I sometimes wonder if that was the wrong decision... I pretended to be a nurse so I could come to see you, I practically begged the monks to allow me to do so, and I can safely say that many of those days are some of the happiest days of my life. I am extremely proud of you, both for the man you are now, and for the man that I know you will become.

As I said, your father was a pirate. Don't get me wrong, I am angry that he left me so soon, but I know that that was the right thing for him to do. He may be a pirate, but he is a great man. This hat belonged to him, he gave me it shortly before he went back to sea. Take this hat, as when he sees it, he will know instantly who you are. His name is Ishio, find him and prove to him that you are a great man, and an even greater son.

Please, forgive me, and accept me as your mother.

Yours truly,

Nurse / Masumi

Tears poured down Furo's face as he read. "Of course I forgive you..." he thought to himself, wishing that he could tell her face to face. He wiped his tears with his sleeve, and looked at the letter, noticing the marks of tear droplets dotted around the page. He did not know if they were his or his mother's, but he liked to think that they were the latter's. He folded up the letter and taped it to the base of the hat, which he then put on his head. He signalled for Toko to climb onto his back, and the monkey happily obeyed. He shouted cheerfully to Yosin, "Thankyou!", which the old butcher found rather strange, and then Furo sprinted away back to his tent.

He had made his mind up. He was going to save up enough money for a fishing boat and sail out to sea to find his father. Whether or not that meant becoming a pirate, he did not know, but he would happily do so if that is what it's was going to take.