What We Deserve

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What We Deserve

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Summary

Sanji’s first time with a man doesn't exactly go as planned. It leaves him hurting and convinced he’s the problem. When Zoro offers to show him how it should be, Sanji is sure it’s pity. He says yes anyway.

Chapter 1: Discovery

The bar thrummed with energy, music pulsing through the floorboards, laughter echoing off exposed brick walls, bodies moving together in the dim colorful lighting. Sanji stood just inside the entrance, heart hammering against his ribs like it was trying to escape his chest entirely.

What the hell am I doing here?

He'd walked past this place three times since the crew had landed on this nondescript island but this was the first time he'd finally forced himself through the door. The rainbow flag hanging outside had been both an invitation and a challenge. Sanji had never been one to back down from a challenge, even when that challenge was his own sexuality.

The bartender, a woman with an undercut and more piercings than Sanji could count, caught his eye and smiled. Not flirtatious, just welcoming. Like she could see exactly how nervous he was and wanted him to know it was okay.

He made his way to the bar, weaving between clusters of people. Men with men, women with women, people he couldn't quite categorize and didn't need to. Everyone just... existing and being themselves.

"First time?" the bartender asked as he approached.

Sanji tried for his usual charming smile, but it felt shaky around the edges.

"That transparent, huh?"

"Only because I've seen that look a thousand times." She slid a menu across the bar. "You're in good company. What can I get you?"

"Whiskey. Neat."

As she poured, Sanji let his gaze drift around the space. A couple was making out in a corner booth, hands tangled in each other's hair. Two women were dancing close, foreheads pressed together, smiling like they shared a secret. A group of drag queens were laughing uproariously at something on someone's phone.

Sanji felt... something. Not quite belonging, not yet, but possibility.

He'd been questioning himself for months now. Years maybe if he was honest with himself, which he generally tried not to be. It was easier to focus on women, on the familiar script of flirtation he'd perfected since puberty. Women were safe. Women made sense.

But then there was Zoro.

Stupid, infuriating, gorgeous Zoro, with his ridiculous muscles and his terrible sense of direction and the way he looked at Sanji sometimes like he was trying to solve a puzzle. Zoro, who'd been openly gay for as long as Sanji had known him, who wore it as casually as he wore his swords.

Sanji had tried to ignore the way his pulse quickened when they fought, when Zoro got in his space and growled insults that somehow felt like foreplay. Tried to ignore the dreams that left him hard and confused and reaching for his cock before his brain fully woke up.

Ignoring it wasn't working anymore, so here he was, testing the waters, seeing if this attraction was real or just some weird fixation on the one person who challenged him as much as he challenged them.

"You look like you're thinking too hard," the bartender said, sliding his drink across the polished wood. "That's not what this place is for."

Sanji huffed a laugh and took a sip. The whiskey burned perfectly. "What is it for, then?"

"Being yourself. Whatever that looks like." She winked and moved down the bar to help another customer.

Being himself. Right. If only Sanji knew what that meant.

He nursed his drink and watched. A man caught his eye from across the room. He was tall with dark-haired and attractive in a conventional way. The man smiled at him and Sanji's stomach flipped. He smiled back then immediately looked away, heat crawling up his neck.

Get it together. You've flirted with hundreds of people. This is no different.

Except it was different. It was terrifying and exhilarating and—

"Mind if I join you?"

Sanji turned to find a woman sliding onto the stool next to him. She had short purple hair and a leather jacket that looked like it had seen some adventures.

"Please," Sanji said, and this time his smile came easier.

They talked. She was funny, sharp-witted, and when she touched his arm while laughing at one of his jokes, Sanji felt that familiar spark of attraction. It was comfortable.

When a man in a crop top and tight jeans squeezed past them to get to the bar, pressing briefly against Sanji's back, that spark wasn't absent. It felt different, but it was still electric in a way that made his breath catch.

The woman noticed.

"First time figuring things out?"

Sanji's face must have done something complicated because she laughed, though not unkindly.

"It's okay. That's what this place is for." She echoed the bartender's words. "For what it's worth, you've got good energy. People are going to be drawn to that."

She wasn't wrong. As the night wore on and the whiskey smoothed his edges, Sanji found himself relaxing into conversations. A group of people invited him to their table and he went, letting their easy acceptance wash over him. He flirted with a woman who had the most beautiful laugh he'd ever heard. He flirted with a man whose cologne made him want to lean closer. He flirted with someone in a dress and heels who had shoulders broader than his and a smile that could stop traffic.

It felt... good. Natural. Like a part of himself he'd been holding back was finally allowed to breathe.

Sanji was in the middle of a story, something about Luffy and a disastrous attempt at cooking, when he felt a prickling awareness of being watched. He glanced around, still talking, and his heart stopped.

Zoro.

Zoro was here.

He was sitting in a corner booth with a beer, looking directly at Sanji with an expression that was impossible to read.

Sanji stumbled over his words, recovered and then finished the story to polite laughter. His attention was fractured now, hyperaware of Zoro's presence like a compass needle pointing north.

Of course he's here. He's gay. Why didn't I think of that?

Zoro didn't approach. Just watched, his face carefully neutral. Sanji didn't know what to do with that. He didn't know if he wanted Zoro to come over or stay away, didn't know if this changed everything or nothing.

So, he did what he always did when emotions got too complicated: he threw himself into the moment. He laughed louder, flirted harder and tried his best to ignore the weight of Zoro's gaze on his skin.

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Zoro had come to this bar specifically because he knew Sanji wouldn't be here.

The Sunny's cook had been acting weird ever since they landed on this island. He was distracted and snappish in a way that felt different from their usual antagonism. Zoro had needed space to think, to drink, to maybe find someone to take the edge off the want that had been building in him for months. Years.

The want for someone he couldn’t have.

So of course, because the universe had a shitty sense of humor, there was Sanji. Right here in the middle of the queer bar Zoro had been coming to since they’d docked.

His first instinct was to leave. His second was to march over and demand to know what the hell Sanji was doing here. His third, which he actually followed, was to sit down in a corner booth and try to process what he was seeing.

Sanji at a queer bar, looking nervous and excited and so fucking beautiful it made Zoro’s chest ache.

Does this mean...?

But no. Zoro couldn’t let himself hope. Sanji was probably just here with some women who’d roped him into this or he came out of morbid curiosity.

Except Sanji was alone for the most part and he was flirting with everyone.

Zoro watched as he charmed a woman at the bar, then a group at a table, then a man who leaned in close to hear him over the music. He watched as that nervous energy transformed into something magnetic, the way it always did when Sanji felt comfortable. People gravitated toward him like he was the sun and they were planets caught in his orbit.

Zoro knew the feeling. He’d been caught in that orbit for years, pretending he wasn’t.

He’d known he was gay since he was fifteen. He’d never seen the point in hiding it. Life was too short and he had more important things to worry about than what people thought of who he wanted to fuck. The crew knew. Most people they encountered figured it out eventually.

He’d never told Sanji how he felt about him because Sanji was aggressively, performatively straight. Their friendship, if you could call their constant bickering friendship, was too important to risk. Zoro had convinced himself that wanting something he couldn’t have was just part of life.

Except now Sanji was here, in a queer bar, flirting with men, and every certainty Zoro had built was crumbling.

A server came by and Zoro ordered another beer, eyes never straying from Sanji. He should leave. This was clearly something Sanji was figuring out on his own. Zoro’s presence would only complicate things, but he couldn’t make himself move.

He watched Sanji laugh at something a person in a sequined dress said. Watched him lean into a conversation with a man whose hand rested casually on Sanji’s lower back. Watched the way Sanji’s eyes kept darting around the room, like he was looking for something or someone.

Their gazes met across the crowded bar and Zoro saw the moment Sanji recognized him. He saw surprise flash across his face, followed by something that might have been panic, or excitement, or both.

Zoro raised his beer slightly in acknowledgment.

Sanji's expression did something complicated then he turned back to his conversation, but his body language had changed. He was more aware, more tense.

Fuck.

Zoro should definitely leave. but the beer was good and he'd paid for it. He wasn't going to run away just because the situation was uncomfortable. That wasn't who he was.

So he stayed, watched and tried not to think about what it meant that Sanji was here. Tried not to imagine what might happen if Sanji was actually, finally, possibly interested in men.

He tried not to hope.

~*~*~

The man's name was Sadaichi and he was exactly the kind of handsome that should have made Sanji's brain short-circuit. He was tall and well-built with dark eyes and a smile that promised interesting things. He'd approached Sanji about an hour after the Zoro sighting and Sanji had been grateful for the distraction.

"So what brings you here tonight?" Sadaichi asked, leaning against the bar next to Sanji. Close, but not invasive. His cologne was nice, woodsy and warm.

"Curiosity," Sanji replied, which was true enough. "You?"

"Same thing I'm always looking for." Sadaichi's smile widened. "Good company. Good conversation. Maybe more, if the chemistry's right."

Direct. Sanji could appreciate that. "And is it? The chemistry?"

"I think so." Sadaichi's gaze traveled down Sanji's body and back up, appreciative but not leering. "You're gorgeous. You've been lighting up this whole bar since you walked in. Hard not to notice."

Heat crawled up Sanji's neck. He was used to compliments, used to flirting, but this felt different. More real, somehow. Or maybe that was just the whiskey talking.

"You're not so bad yourself," Sanji said and was rewarded with a laugh.

Sanji learned that Sadaichi was a merchant, docked at this port for a few days. He'd traveled to half the islands in the Grand Line. He liked whiskey, spicy food and had opinions about the best fighting styles that Sanji found himself debating with more enthusiasm than he expected.

It was easy banter. It was comfortable. When Sadaichi's hand found Sanji's knee under the bar, he didn't move away.

"I have a room upstairs," he said eventually, voice low. "If you're interested."

Sanji's heart kicked into overdrive. This was it. The moment of truth. He could say no, could keep this at flirtation, could go back to the Sunny and pretend this night had never happened.

Or he could say yes. Could find out if this attraction to men was real, was something he wanted to pursue. He could stop wondering and start knowing.

He thought about Zoro still sitting in that corner booth. He wondered if Zoro was watching, what he'd think if he saw Sanji going upstairs with this man.

He pushed the thought away. This wasn't about Zoro. This was about Sanji figuring out who he was.

"Yeah," he decided, his mouth dry. "I'm interested."

Sadaichi's smile was triumphant. He paid their tab and led Sanji toward a door at the back of the bar, toward a staircase that led up to private rooms. Sanji followed, his pulse pounding in his ears, very carefully not looking toward the corner where Zoro sat.

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Zoro watched Sanji disappear upstairs with the dark-haired man and something ugly twisted in his gut.

Jealousy. That's what this was. Pure, irrational jealousy, and Zoro hated it.

He had no claim on Sanji. No right to feel possessive. Sanji was figuring himself out and that was good. That was healthy. The fact that it was with someone who wasn't Zoro was irrelevant.

Except it didn't feel irrelevant. It felt like watching something precious slip through his fingers before he'd ever really held it.

Zoro drained his beer and signaled for another. He should go back to the ship and hit the weights until his muscles screamed and his brain shut up. Instead, he stayed, drinking steadily, eyes fixed on that back staircase, waiting.

He told himself he was being stupid, told himself Sanji was fine, was probably having a great time, was exactly where he wanted to be. Still, some instinct Zoro had learned to trust over years told him to stay, so he waited.

When Sanji finally came back downstairs a half hour later, Zoro knew his instincts had been right.

Sanji was limping. Not obviously, most people probably wouldn't notice, but Zoro noticed everything about Sanji, had been cataloging his movements for years. Sanji's gait was off, he stepped carefully down the stairs like he was in pain. His expression was carefully blank, but Zoro could see the tightness around his eyes, the way his jaw was clenched.

Zoro was on his feet before he'd consciously decided to move, crossing the bar in long strides. Sanji saw him coming and surprise flickered across his face followed by relief and

then a desperate attempt at his usual cocky mask.

“Fancy meeting you here, mosshead,” Sanji said, voice only slightly strained.

Zoro stared at him quietly for a moment. “Are you okay?”

“Fine. Why wouldn’t I be fine?”

But Sanji’s eyes slid away, and as he shifted his weight, he winced slightly.

Anger flared hot in Zoro’s chest. “Did he hurt you? Did he—”

“It was consensual,” Sanji cut him off, voice sharp before it softened. “It was consensual. I wanted it. It just... wasn’t what I hoped it would be.”

The anger didn’t dissipate. It wasn’t directed at Sanji, but at the man upstairs who’d clearly done a shit job of taking care of him. Zoro’s hand went to his swords instinctively.

“Zoro, don’t.” Sanji’s hand caught his wrist, grip surprisingly strong. “I just want to leave.”

There was something raw and vulnerable in Sanji’s voice that Zoro had never heard before.

“Okay. Let’s go.”

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The walk back to the Sunny was quiet. Zoro stayed close, not quite touching but near enough that Sanji could feel his presence like a shield. It should have been awkward. Zoro had clearly seen him leave with Sadaichi and could guess what had happened. Instead of awkward, it was... comforting in a way.

Sanji’s body ached. Not in the good way he’d hoped for, but in a way that made him feel used and cheap. Sadaichi had been charming downstairs, but upstairs he’d been different. He’d been impatient with Sanji’s inexperience. The preparation had been cursory at best and when Sanji had tensed up, had tried to say it hurt, Sadaichi had just told him to relax and kept going.

It was consensual. At no point had Sanji told him to stop or that he didn’t want it, but it had just been... bad. It was painful and awkward and nothing like the fantasies that had been plaguing him for months.

Afterward, Sadaichi had been dismissive. He’d basically told Sanji he could see himself out, like he had been a means to an end, nothing more. It shouldn’t have stung as much as it did. Sanji had gone into this knowing it was just sex, just experimentation. Somehow it had still felt like rejection, like confirmation of every shitty thing he had ever thought about himself.

They reached the Sunny and Zoro led him to the galley. He pulled out a bottle of sake and two cups, pouring generously.

“You don’t have to—” Sanji started.

“Drink,” Zoro said. Not an order, but not a suggestion either.

The sake burned less than the whiskey had or maybe he was just getting numb.

“Want to talk about it?” Zoro asked after a long silence.

“Not particularly.”

“Okay.”

But as the silence stretched, Sanji found words bubbling up anyway. Maybe it was the alcohol. Maybe it was the way Zoro was looking at him with concern rather than pity, being present but not pushy.

“It was my first time,” Sanji admitted quietly. “With a guy anyway.”

Zoro’s hand tightened around his cup.

“Your first—” He cut himself off, jaw working. “Fuck, Sanji.”

“Yeah,” Sanji laughed, but it came out bitter. “Not exactly the magical experience I was hoping for.”

“What happened?”

Sanji shook his head, staring into his cup. The sake rippled with the slight tremor in his hands. “It doesn’t matter. It was consensual. I wanted to try it. He just... wasn’t very good. Or maybe I wasn’t. I don’t know.”

“It wasn’t you.” Zoro’s voice was hard, certain. “If someone’s first time is bad, that’s on the person who’s supposed to know what they’re doing. They’re supposed to take care of you. Make sure you’re ready. Make sure it feels good.”

Something in Sanji’s chest cracked at that. He set his cup down carefully, afraid he might drop it.

“Well, he didn’t. He barely prepped me. Just—” His voice caught. “Just enough that he could get in. When I said it hurt, he just told me to relax. Like it was my fault for being tense.”

Zoro’s knuckles went white around his cup. “That’s not how it’s supposed to work.”

“I don’t think he meant to hurt me, he was just focused on himself, on what felt good for him. Afterward...” He swallowed hard. “Afterward he couldn’t get rid of me fast enough. Like I’d served my purpose.”

“Sanji—”

“I’m fine.” But his voice cracked on the word, betraying him. “It’s fine. At least now I know that men aren’t what I thought they’d be. Or maybe I’m just not cut out for this.”

“That’s bullshit.” Zoro leaned forward, his intensity almost overwhelming. “One bad experience doesn’t define anything. That guy was an asshole who didn’t deserve you. He didn’t deserve the chance to touch you.”

Sanji looked up, met Zoro’s eye. There was something fierce and protective burning in his gaze that made Sanji’s breath catch. “You don’t have to—”

“I’m not just saying it.” Zoro’s voice was rough. “You deserve someone who cares. Someone who’ll take their time. Make sure you’re comfortable, make sure you feel good. Not some random asshole who’s just looking to get off.”

“Yeah, well.” Sanji looked away, unable to hold that intense gaze. “Not sure where I’m going to find that.”

Zoro was quiet for a long moment. When he spoke again, his voice was softer. “You’ve been questioning things? Your sexuality?”

Sanji sighed in response before nodding.

“I think I might be bi. I’m attracted to women, I know that. But men...” He thought about Zoro, about the dreams, about the way his pulse raced during their fights. “Yeah. Men too.”

“And you came to that bar to figure it out.”

“Yeah.” Sanji poured himself more sake, needing something to do with his hands. “I’ve been... confused. For months. Maybe longer. There’s this—” He stopped himself before he could say ‘person.’ “I started noticing men the way I notice women. I needed to know if it was real or just... I don’t know. Curiosity.”

“And now?”

“Now I know it’s real. The attraction is real.” Sanji’s voice dropped. “The sex just sucked.”

“I’m sorry your first experience was shit.”

Sanji huffed a laugh. “Me too.”

They drank in silence for a while. Sanji felt the sake smoothing his edges, making the ache in his body more distant. Zoro kept pace with him and gradually the tension in Sanji’s shoulders eased. At some point, they’d shifted closer on the bench, their knees almost touching.

“Why were you there?” Sanji asked eventually. “At the bar.”

Zoro shrugged. “Same reason I always go. To drink, relax. Bars and clubs are good for that. When we’re in ports and I need space, I usually look for places like that.” Zoro’s eye met his. “I’m gay, Sanji. Have been for years. Thought you knew.”

“I knew. I just... didn’t think about it much.” A lie. He’d thought about it constantly, especially lately. “Does the crew know?”

“I never made a secret of it.” Zoro poured them both more sake. “It was easier than I thought it’d be. Coming out.”

“When did you know?” Sanji asked. “That you were gay?”

Zoro considered. “Always, I think. But I didn’t have words for it until I was a teenager. I grew up in a dojo full of guys. I kept noticing them in ways that felt different from how the other students talked about girls. First time I kissed a guy, I was fourteen. It just... clicked.”

“Was it good? Your first time?”

“The kiss was. The sex...” Zoro grimaced. “First time’s usually awkward. But he was patient. Made sure I was okay. That’s the difference. He cared about my experience, not just his own.”

Sanji absorbed that, the contrast stark against his own experience. “I don’t know why I expected it to be different. I don’t even know him.”

“You expected basic human decency. That’s not too much to ask.” Zoro’s hand moved, almost unconsciously, until his fingers brushed Sanji’s. “You deserved better than what you got tonight.”

The touch sent electricity up Sanji’s arm. He didn’t pull away. “I have... issues. With self-worth. Always have.”

Zoro’s eye sharpened. “Because of your family.”

It wasn’t a question. They all knew bits and pieces of Sanji’s past: the abuse, the rejection, the way his biological family had treated him like garbage. Sanji had never talked about it in detail, but the crew had figured out enough after Whole Cake.

“Yeah.” Sanji’s voice was barely above a whisper. “I know, logically, that I’m worth something. That I’m a good cook, a decent fighter. That the crew values me. But there’s this voice in my head that says I’m not enough. That I’m fundamentally broken. And tonight just... confirmed it.”

“You’re not broken.” Zoro’s hand covered his fully now, warm and calloused and steady. “You’re one of the strongest people I know. And I don’t just mean fighting.”

Sanji looked at their hands, at the way Zoro’s fingers curled around his. “You don’t have to __”

“I’m not just saying it,” Zoro repeated. “I mean it. You’re strong, Sanji. You survived hell and came out the other side still able to care about people. Still able to feed everyone, to protect the crew, to be kind even when the world’s been shit to you. That’s not broken. That’s fucking incredible.”

Something hot and tight lodged in Sanji’s throat. He blinked rapidly, refusing to let tears fall.

“Any asshole who makes you feel less than that isn’t worth your time.”

They sat like that for a long moment, hands clasped on the table, the weight of Zoro's words settling into Sanji's chest. It felt like something was shifting between them, some fundamental change in their dynamic that Sanji couldn't quite name.

"Thank you," Sanji said finally. "For tonight. For listening. For not judging."

"Never." Zoro's thumb brushed over Sanji's knuckles, a gesture so gentle it made Sanji's breath catch. "You can always talk to me. About anything."

"Even about being attracted to men?"

"Especially about that." Zoro's smile was small but genuine. "I know what it's like. The confusion, the fear. Wondering if you're normal, if you're broken. You're not alone in this."

Sanji felt something in his chest ease, a tension he hadn't realized he'd been carrying. "It's scary. Not knowing. Feeling like I'm figuring out who I am all over again."

"That's normal. Sexuality's complicated. You don't have to have it all figured out right now." Zoro squeezed his hand. "Take your time. Experiment if you want. Just... be safe and don't settle for assholes who don't treat you right."

"Noted."

They talked through the night. About sexuality, about the crew, about their dreams and fears. Zoro told him about other experiences he'd had, good and bad, about learning to be comfortable in his own skin. Sanji talked about his confusion, his fear, the way he'd been raised to think there was only one way to be a man.

Slowly, the hurt from earlier faded. Not gone, but manageable. Zoro was here, he understood and he wasn't judging him. Zoro was just present, solid and steady and real.

At some point, Sanji's head ended up on Zoro's shoulder. He wasn't sure how it happened, just that the sake coupled with the whiskey from earlier had made him loose and tired. Zoro was warm and comfortable. He didn't push him away, just adjusted so Sanji could rest more comfortably.

"You're not as much of an asshole as you pretend to be," Sanji mumbled.

"Don't tell anyone. I have a reputation."

Sanji smiled against Zoro's shoulder. "Your secret's safe with me."

When Sanji finally stood to go shower and sleep, he swayed slightly. Zoro steadied him with a hand on his elbow, then his waist, keeping him upright.

"Thanks," Sanji said quietly, looking up at Zoro. They were close, closer than they'd ever been outside of a fight. Sanji could see the flecks of gray in Zoro's eye, could feel the warmth radiating from his body. "For tonight. For everything."

“Anytime, cook.” Zoro’s hand lingered on his waist for a moment longer than necessary. “I mean it. Anytime you need to talk, I’m here.”

The way Zoro said it, the intensity in his eye, made Sanji believe him. Something warm and hopeful bloomed in his chest despite the hurt.

As Sanji walked away, he felt Zoro’s gaze on his back. For the first time that night, the ache in his body felt less like pain and more like a reminder that he was alive. That he’d survived. That maybe, just maybe, there were better experiences waiting for him.

Chapter 2: Temptation

The week after the bar incident, Zoro couldn't stop thinking about it.

About Sanji, limping down those stairs with hurt in his eyes. About the way he'd opened up over sake, vulnerable in a way Zoro had never seen. About the fact that Sanji was bi, was interested in men, was no longer the impossible fantasy Zoro had resigned himself to.

About the fact that Sanji's first experience with a man had been terrible and he deserved so much better.

Zoro tried to focus on training. On his swords, on his goals, on anything other than the cook who'd somehow become even more distracting than usual, but his mind kept drifting.

He'd catch himself watching Sanji in the galley. Would see him laughing with Nami or arguing with Luffy and wonder if he was okay, if he was still processing what had happened.

They hadn't talked about it again. They'd fallen back into their usual routine of bickering and competing, but something had shifted. There was a new awareness between them, a change that hadn't been there before. Or maybe it had always been there and Zoro was just allowing himself to notice it now.

"You're distracted," Nami observed one afternoon, finding him on deck staring into space instead of training.

"I'm thinking."

"That's new." She grinned at his glare. "What about?"

About how I want to hunt down the guy who hurt Sanji and cut him into pieces. About how I want to show Sanji what it should be like with someone who actually cares. About how I've been in love with him for years and just realized I might actually have a chance.

"Nothing important," Zoro replied.

Nami didn't look convinced, but she let it drop.

The thoughts kept circling though. Obsessive. Intrusive. Zoro had never been one for overthinking. He preferred action, decisiveness, but this felt too important to rush into, too fragile.

The thing was, Zoro didn't just want to fuck Sanji. He wanted more. He wanted to take him apart slowly, carefully, and put him back together. He wanted to show him how good it could be with someone who was paying attention, who cared about his pleasure as much as their own. He wanted to keep him.

But that was selfish. Sanji was just figuring himself out. He didn't need Zoro's feelings complicating things, didn't need the pressure of Zoro's desire.

Except... what if Zoro could give him something good? A better experience, with someone who'd actually take care of him? Someone who'd make sure he felt safe and wanted and good?

It would still be half-selfish. Zoro couldn't pretend otherwise. He wanted Sanji, had wanted him for years, but it would also be for Sanji. To give him what he deserved.

The idea took root and wouldn't let go.

By the end of the week, Zoro had made his decision.

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Sanji was in the galley prepping dinner when Zoro found him. He'd been expecting this, in a way. They'd been dancing around each other all week and something had to give eventually.

"Cook. Got a minute?"

Sanji looked up from the vegetables he was chopping. Zoro stood in the doorway, his expression serious, and Sanji's pulse kicked up.

"Sure. What's up?"

Zoro stepped inside and closed the door. He leaned against it, arms crossed. "I've been thinking about what happened. At the bar with that guy."

Sanji's hands stilled.

Here it comes. He's going to give me some lecture about staying away from places like that, tell me how stupid it was. Or worse, he's going to say he can't look at me the same way anymore.

"Zoro, we don't have to—"

"Let me finish." Zoro's eye was intense, pinning him in place. "You deserved better than what you got. You should've had someone who'd take care of you. Someone who'd make sure you felt good. And I... I want to offer that. If you're interested."

Sanji's brain short-circuited. "You want to... what?"

Sanji's heart completely stopped. For one perfect, crystalline moment, everything in the world narrowed down to those words.

Then reality crashed back in, cold and brutal.

Oh.

Oh, of course.

The disappointment was so sharp it felt like a physical wound. Sanji's brain caught up with what Zoro was actually saying and the hope that had flared so bright guttered out like a candle in the wind.

Zoro felt sorry for him. Poor Sanji, who'd gotten fucked badly by some asshole at a bar. Poor Sanji, who didn't know what he was doing, who'd limped back downstairs looking pathetic and used. Of course Zoro would offer to fix it. That's what Zoro did. He protected people. He solved problems.

"You're offering to fuck me out of pity?" Sanji's voice came out sharper than he intended, defensive.

"It's not pity," Zoro protested. Sanji looked away, his jaw tightening. "I want to give you a better experience." Zoro pushed off the door and took a step closer. "With someone who cares. Who'll make sure you're ready, that it doesn't hurt, that you actually enjoy it."

Someone who cares. The words should have been comforting. Instead, they felt like salt in a wound. Zoro cared about all of them, about the crew, about his nakama. This wasn't special. This wasn't what Sanji wanted it to be.

Zoro just wanted to give him a pity fuck. Make sure the poor confused bisexual had a decent experience so he wouldn't be traumatized. How noble. How fucking charitable.

The absolute worst part was that Sanji wanted to say yes anyway.

Even if it was just pity, even if Zoro only wanted his body and nothing else, it would still be Zoro. It would still be those hands on him, that mouth, that focused intensity turned on Sanji for however long it lasted. And god, Sanji wanted that so badly that the pure temptation of it hurt worse than Sadaichi's rough treatment had.

He was utterly pathetic. Here he was ready to take whatever scraps Zoro would give him just because he was desperate and in love and so fucking lonely.

"How is that not pity," Sanji retorted. He needed to hear Zoro admit it, needed to confirm what he already knew so he could make his peace with it.

"Because I don't pity you, Sanji. I care about you. I have for a long time. And yeah, I want you. But more than that, I want you to have good memories. To know what it's supposed to be like."

"You... care about me?"

"Yeah."

"And you want me?"

"Yeah."

The words should have meant something, but Sanji had heard variations of that before from women who wanted the fantasy of the gentleman cook, from men at the bar who'd wanted a pretty face and a willing body. Want was cheap. Want was easy. Want didn't mean anything beyond the physical.

Zoro wanted him, wanted to fuck him, wanted to give him a "good experience" like some kind of sexual charity case. Zoro wanted to fix him, not keep him.

And Sanji was going to say yes because he was weak and desperate and this was probably the closest he'd ever get to having what he really wanted.

If he couldn't have Zoro's heart, he'd take his body. He'd take whatever he could get and pretend it was enough.

"For how long?"

Zoro's expression flickered. "Does it matter?"

"Yeah, it fucking matters." Sanji set down his knife before he cut himself. "Because I've been losing my mind over you for months, and if you're just offering this because you feel bad for me—"

"Months?" Zoro's eye widened.

Sanji looked away, silently cursing himself. The words had spilled out before he could stop them. But he might as well lay it all out there, let Zoro know exactly what he was getting into: that Sanji had feelings, real feelings, and this was going to hurt him in ways Zoro probably couldn't imagine.

(But he was going to do it anyway because he was a lovesick fool.)

"Why do you think I was at that bar?" Sanji's voice cracked. "I was trying to figure out if what I feel for you is real or just some weird fixation. Trying to see if I'm actually attracted to men or if it's just you."

"And?"

"It's not just you. I'm definitely bi." Sanji laughed, a little hysterical. "But you're still the one I can't stop thinking about. So if you're offering this because you feel sorry for me, I need you to not. Because I don't think I can handle that."

Liar, his brain whispered. *You'll handle it. You'll take it and pretend it's enough and break your own heart in the process because you're too weak to say no.*

But he needed to hear Zoro say it. Needed to know for certain that this was just physical, just Zoro being a good friend, just—

Zoro crossed the distance between them in two strides. He caught Sanji's face in his hands, somehow both rough and gentle at the same time. "I've wanted you for years, cook. Years. I never said anything because I thought you were straight. But now..." His thumb brushed

Sanji's cheekbone. "Now I'm saying it. I want you. Not because I feel sorry for you, but because I can't fucking stop thinking about you."

Sanji's breath caught. "Years?"

"Years."

Years. He said years. But that doesn't mean… It could still just be physical, wanting someone's body for years doesn't mean feelings are involved, does it?

But then Zoro was kissing him and Sanji's brain went offline entirely.

It was nothing like kissing Sadaichi had been. This was fire and want and years of tension finally breaking. Zoro kissed like he fought: intense, focused, overwhelming. His hands were in Sanji's hair, tilting his head to deepen the kiss, and Sanji made a sound he'd be embarrassed about later.

When they finally broke apart, both breathing hard, Zoro rested his forehead against Sanji's.

"So is that a yes?" Zoro asked, voice rough.

"To what, exactly?"

"To letting me take you out, show you how it should be, make you feel good."

Sanji's hands had found their way to Zoro's chest, could feel his heart pounding. "This is a terrible idea."

I'm going to fall even harder. This is going to ruin me. When it's over and you go back to just being my crewmate, I'm going to have to pretend I'm fine even though I'm breaking apart.

"Probably."

"We're going to complicate everything."

"Maybe."

"I want to do it anyway."

I'm selfish and desperate and I'll take whatever pieces of you I can get, even knowing it won't be enough.

Zoro's smile was fierce. "Good."

~*~*~

They decided to go out. Off the ship, away from the crew's prying eyes. Sanji wanted to keep this private and Zoro understood. This thing between them was too new, too fragile to expose to the crew's inevitable commentary.

Plus, Zoro wanted to do this right. He wanted to take Sanji on an actual date, even if neither of them was calling it that.

They met at a restaurant Sanji had been eyeing since they'd docked. It was upscale but not pretentious, with a menu that made Sanji's eye light up. Zoro had cleaned up, traded his usual haramaki for actual pants and a shirt that didn't have sword oil stains. Sanji had dressed up too in a suit that fit him perfectly and made Zoro's mouth go dry.

"You look good," the swordsman said as they were seated.

Sanji's cheeks pinked. "You too. Didn't know you owned clothes without holes in them."

"I have depths."

"Apparently."

They ordered with Sanji getting half the menu because he wanted to try everything, Zoro getting whatever had the most protein. The food was excellent and the conversation flowed easily. They'd been crewmates for years, they knew how to talk to each other, even if most of that talk was usually insults.

This felt different though, softer. Zoro found himself telling Sanji about his childhood, about Kuina, about things he rarely discussed. Sanji talked about the Baratie, about Zeff, about learning to cook and fight and survive.

"I never thanked you," Sanji said eventually, twirling wine in his glass. "For the other night. For taking care of me."

"You did actually."

"Still. It meant a lot." Sanji's eye met his. "You mean a lot."

Zoro's chest tightened. "Yeah. You too."

After dinner, they found a bar. It was more of a club with a dance floor and pulsing music than the queer bar had been. Zoro ordered beer and Sanji got something fruity and complicated. They loitered at the bar for a while, have a couple drinks while trying to talk over the music.

"Dance with me," Sanji said eventually after his second drink.

Zoro raised an eyebrow. "I don't dance."

"Liar. I saw you at the other bar. You were moving to the music."

"That's different from dancing."

"Come on, Moss. Live a little." Sanji's smile was challenging. Zoro had never been able to resist a challenge from him.

“Fine. But if I step on your feet, that’s on you.”

The dance floor was crowded, bodies moving together in the dim lighting. Sanji led him to a spot near the edge, then turned and pulled Zoro close. His hands settled on Zoro’s shoulders and Zoro’s found Sanji’s waist as they moved.

Zoro wasn’t a great dancer, but he had rhythm, years of sword training had given him that. Sanji moved like water, fluid and graceful, making it easy to follow. They found a rhythm together, bodies pressed close. Zoro forgot about everyone else in the room.

“You’re better at this than you pretended,” Sanji said, lips close to Zoro’s ear.

“You bring it out in me I guess.”

Sanji pulled back enough to meet his eye. The look on his face made Zoro’s breath catch. It was want, affection and something deeper, something that matched the feeling in Zoro’s chest.

The music shifted to something slower and Sanji’s arms slid around Zoro’s neck. They were barely moving now, just swaying together. Zoro could feel every point of contact between them like a brand.

“Zoro,” Sanji breathed.

“Yeah?”

“Kiss me.”

So Zoro did.

~*~*~

Kissing Zoro on the dance floor was different from kissing him in the galley. It was more public for one. Sanji didn’t care. He was done hiding, done pretending he didn’t want this. He could indulge this for one night. Zoro’s mouth was hot and demanding, his hands tight on Sanji’s hips, and Sanji melted into it.

The kiss deepened, Zoro’s tongue sliding against his. Sanji made a sound that could be classified as a moan. His cheeks flared with heat but Zoro’s body was pressed against his and the music pulsing around them, so he couldn’t bring himself to care too much. His fingers tangled in Zoro’s hair, holding him close. He tugged the strands a little meanly and Zoro’s grip on his hips tightened in response.

When they finally broke apart, both breathing hard, Zoro’s eye was dark with want.

They made their way back through the crowd, Zoro’s hand never leaving the small of Sanji’s back. The possessive touch sent heat pooling in his gut. When they reached a booth, Zoro slid in first and Sanji followed without hesitation, pressing close.

“Come here,” Zoro demanded, pulling Sanji practically into his lap.

Sanji went willingly, shifting so he was half-sitting on Zoro's thigh, his legs thrown over Zoro's lap. It was intimate, closer than they'd ever been outside of a fight, and Sanji's heart was racing.

"This okay?" Zoro asked, one hand settling on Sanji's hip, the other on his thigh.

"More than okay."

Sanji leaned in and kissed him again.

This kiss was slower than the one on the dance floor, but no less intense. Zoro's hand slid up from Sanji's hip to his waist, thumb stroking the strip of skin where his shirt had ridden up. The touch sent shivers through Sanji's body and he pressed closer, his hand coming up to cup Zoro's jaw.

"You taste good," Zoro murmured against his mouth. "Like that fancy drink you ordered."

Sanji bit down gently on Zoro's lower lip, drawing a soft groan from the man, the sound vibrating through both their chests before he pulled Sanji fully into his lap. Now Sanji was straddling one of Zoro's thighs, and the friction was delicious and maddening all at once. He could feel Zoro's arousal pressing against his hip, could feel his own cock hardening in his pants.

"Fuck," Sanji breathed. "Zoro—"

"I know." Zoro's hands were everywhere now. His waist, his back, sliding down to grip his ass and pull him closer. "I know, Curls."

They kissed again, deeper this time, all pretense of restraint gone. Sanji's fingers tangled in Zoro's hair, tugging slightly, and Zoro's responding growl went straight to Sanji's cock. He shifted in Zoro's lap, seeking friction, and Zoro's grip on his ass tightened.

"You're going to kill me," the greenhead warned against his mouth.

"Good way to go," Sanji replied.

Zoro laughed, the sound rough and warm, and kissed him again. His hand slid up under Sanji's shirt, calloused fingers tracing patterns on his skin, and Sanji arched into the touch. Every point of contact felt electric, overwhelming in the best way.

"People are staring," Zoro murmured, though he didn't sound like he cared.

Sanji glanced around without pulling away from Zoro. A few patrons were indeed watching them. Some with interest, some with knowing smiles, some with clear envy, some with disgust. His eye caught on a familiar face across the room and his stomach dropped. Sadaichi. The man from upstairs, the one who'd left him feeling used and hollow.

For a moment their gazes locked and Sanji saw the recognition flash across Sadaichi's face too. The man's expression shifted to surprise, then something that looked like regret or maybe just wounded ego. He looked away first.

Sanji didn’t care. He turned back to Zoro and kissed him again, deeper this time, fiercer.

Sadaichi had been nothing but a moment of disappointment and pain. Zoro was everything. Zoro’s hands tightened on his hips like he understood, like he knew exactly what Sanji needed in that moment: passion, intention, being chosen.

“Let them stare,” Sanji replied when they broke apart. “Don’t care.”

“No?” Zoro’s smile was sharp and possessive. “Good, because I’m not done with you yet.”

He pulled Sanji into another kiss, this one slow and thorough, like he was trying to memorize the taste of Sanji’s mouth. His hand slid up Sanji’s back, under his shirt, fingers tracing the line of his spine. Sanji shivered and pressed closer, his own hands exploring Zoro’s shoulders, his chest, the hard muscle of his arms.

“You’re so responsive,” Zoro said, lips moving to Sanji’s jaw, then his neck. “Every touch, every kiss, you react like you’ve been waiting for this.”

“I have been,” Sanji admitted, tilting his head to give Zoro better access.

Zoro bit down gently on the junction of Sanji’s neck and shoulder causing Sanji to gasp, his hips jerking involuntarily. “Fuck, Zoro.”

“Like that?” Zoro did it again, then soothed the spot with his tongue.

Sanji’s breathing was ragged now, his cock hard and aching in his pants. “You’re going to leave marks.”

“Good. Want everyone to know you’re taken.”

The words sent a thrill through Sanji. Taken. Zoro wanted people to know he was taken. Did that mean he wanted to keep him? That he wanted people to know Sanji was his? But no, this was just sexual, right? Even if it was, Zoro still wanted him enough to make sure people knew. The possessiveness should have bothered him, but instead it made him feel wanted, claimed in a way that was intoxicating.

They kissed again, hands wandering, bodies pressed close. Sanji could feel Zoro’s cock hard against him, could feel the way Zoro’s breathing had gone ragged. His own arousal was becoming painful, the need building with every touch, every kiss.

“Zoro,” Sanji gasped, pulling back just enough to meet his eye. “I need— We need to—”

Zoro’s pupil was blown wide, his face flushed.

“Yeah, we do.

“I got a room at a hotel. Just in case,” Sanji admitted, his voice rough. “I figured if I left that up to you, we’d never get there.”

Zoro rolled his eye but his smile was sharp and predatory.

“Smart.” His hands slid down to Sanji’s hips, holding him steady. Zoro kissed him again, quick and hard. “Come on. Before I decide to fuck you right here in this booth.”

The words sent heat flooding through Sanji’s body. He climbed off Zoro’s lap on shaky legs and Zoro stood, immediately pulling him close again. They made it to the bar long enough to pay their tab, Zoro insisting on covering it despite Sanji’s protests, and then they were leaving, Zoro’s hand possessive on the small of Sanji’s back as they navigated through the crowd.

The night air was cool against Sanji’s flushed skin, but it did nothing to calm the heat building inside him. Zoro’s hand never left him, sliding from his back to his hip, fingers slipping under the hem of his shirt to touch bare skin.

“How far?” Zoro asked.

“Two blocks.” Sanji leaned into him as they walked. “Close. I made sure it was close.”

“Good.”

They walked quickly, the tension between them building with every step. Zoro kept touching his back, his hip, his waist, his ass like he couldn’t help himself. Like he needed the contact as much as Sanji did. Sanji kept leaning into those touches, kept pressing closer, until they were practically stumbling down the street together.

When they reached the hotel, Zoro crowded him against the wall in the lobby, kissing him deep and thorough while they waited for the elevator. Sanji didn’t care that people were watching, didn’t care about anything except the feel of Zoro’s mouth on his and the solid weight of his body pressed close.

The elevator dinged and they stumbled inside. The moment the doors closed, Zoro had Sanji pressed against the wall, one hand braced beside his head, the other on his hip.

“You sure about this?” Zoro asked, his eye searching Sanji’s face. “Once we start, I don’t know if I’ll be able to stop.”

Sanji pulled him into a kiss. “I’m sure.”

“Tell me if you want to stop,” Zoro said against his mouth. “Anytime. I mean it.”

“I won’t want to stop.”

“Tell me anyway.” Zoro kissed him again, deep and demanding. “Promise me.”

“I promise.” Sanji’s hands slid under Zoro’s shirt, mapping the hard muscle of his stomach, his chest. “Now stop talking and kiss me.”

Zoro did, pressing him against the elevator wall, one thigh pressed between Sanji’s legs. The friction was perfect and maddening. Sanji couldn’t stop the moan that escaped him. Zoro swallowed the sound, his kiss turning more demanding, more possessive.

The elevator dinged again and they stumbled out into the hallway. Sanji's hands were shaking as he fumbled for his key card, anticipation and nerves warring in his gut. Then Zoro's hands were on his hips, his mouth on Sanji's neck, and the nerves faded under the weight of want.

"Which room?" Zoro asked, voice gruff against Sanji's skin.

"End of the hall." Sanji finally got the key card out and nearly dropped it. "Fuck, I can't—My hands won't—"

Zoro took the card from him, his touch gentle despite the hunger in his eye.

"I've got you."

He miraculously found the room, unlocked the door and pulled Sanji inside.

The moment the door closed behind them, Zoro was on him again, kissing him deep and thorough, walking him backward toward the bed. Sanji went willingly, his hands already working at the buttons of Zoro's shirt, needing to feel skin against skin.

"You sure?" Zoro asked one more time, pulling back just enough to meet Sanji's eyes.

"Yes." Sanji cupped his face, holding his gaze. "I've never been more sure of anything."

Zoro's expression softened, something tender breaking through the hunger. "Okay, cook. I've got you."

Sanji believed him.

Chapter 3: What It Should Be

Zoro had imagined this more times than he could count, but reality was better than any fantasy.

Sanji was eager and making these little sounds that went straight to Zoro's cock. His hands were everywhere: in Zoro's hair, on his shoulders, across his chest. It was like he couldn't decide where to touch first, like he wanted to memorize every inch of Zoro's body through his fingertips.

"Slow down," Zoro murmured against his mouth, catching Sanji's wrists gently. "We've got time."

"Don't want slow. Want you." Sanji's voice was already wrecked, pupils blown wide with desire.

"You'll get me, but we're doing this right." Zoro pulled back enough to meet Sanji's eyes, holding his gaze. "This is about you, about making you feel good. So we're taking our time."

Sanji's expression flickered with surprise then something soft and vulnerable that made Zoro's chest ache. "Okay," he breathed.

Zoro kissed him again, slower this time. He mapped the shape of Sanji's mouth with his tongue, learning the taste of him. When he bit down gently on Sanji's lower lip, the blond gasped and pressed closer.

He walked Sanji backward toward the bed, hands working at the buttons of his shirt with deliberate slowness. Each button revealed more skin and Zoro traced his fingers over every new inch. His fingers explored the hollow of Sanji's throat, the sharp lines of his collarbones, the lean muscle of his chest and abs. Sanji returned the favor, fingers fumbling slightly with Zoro's clothes. Soon they were both shirtless, skin against heated skin.

Zoro took a moment to look. Sanji was beautiful. He was all lean muscle and elegant lines, his chest rising and falling rapidly with his breathing. A flush was spreading down from his face to his chest and Zoro wanted to trace it with his tongue.

"You're staring," Sanji pointed out, though his voice held no real complaint.

"Can't help it. You're fucking gorgeous."

Zoro pushed him down onto the bed and followed him, settling his weight between Sanji's legs. The friction of their bodies pressed together made them both groan. Sanji's hands found Zoro's shoulders and back, mapping muscle and scars with reverent touches.

"You're not so bad yourself, Moss."

Zoro kissed down his jaw, his neck, finding the spot just below his ear that made Sanji gasp and arch up. “Sensitive there?” Zoro murmured, then bit down gently.

“Fuck, apparently.”

Zoro filed that information away and kept exploring. He kissed along Sanji’s collarbones, sucking marks into the skin. Sanji would see these tomorrow and remember what they did. The thought sent a possessive thrill through him. He worked his way down to Sanji’s chest, to the dip of his sternum, then paused at his nipples.

When he flicked his tongue over one, Sanji arched up with a moan that went straight to Zoro’s cock.

“Fuck.”

“Like that?” Zoro did it again, then took the nipple between his teeth and tugged gently.

“I think so, yeah.”

Zoro lavished attention on both nipples, alternating between his mouth and his fingers, until Sanji was writhing beneath him and making the most incredible sounds.

He kissed his way down Sanji’s stomach, feeling the muscles jump and flex under his mouth. Sanji’s abs were defined, a testament to all the fighting and training. Zoro traced each ridge with his tongue. By the time he reached the waistband of Sanji’s pants, the cook was panting, his hands fisted in the sheets.

Zoro paused, looking up at Sanji. “Can I?”

“Please,” Sanji breathed.

Zoro made quick work of Sanji’s belt and zipper, pulling his pants and underwear down in one smooth motion. Sanji’s cock sprang free, hard and flushed dark, curving up toward his stomach. Pre-cum beaded at the tip and Zoro’s mouth watered at the sight.

“You’re gorgeous,” Zoro said, wrapping a hand around the base. Sanji’s cock was hot and heavy in his palm. When he stroked slowly from base to tip, Sanji made a choked sound.

“You can’t just say…” Sanji’s protest died when Zoro squeezed gently.

“I can because you are.” Zoro stroked again, watching the way Sanji’s hips jerked involuntarily. “And I’m going to make you feel so good.”

Sanji, for his part, was pretty sure he was going to die tonight. Zoro’s hand on him was perfect. It was rough and calloused while his grip was firm and steady, applying exactly the right pressure. Really, it was the way Zoro was looking at him that really undid him. It was like Sanji was something precious, something to be savored and worshipped.

He didn’t want to get sucked in. He tried to remind himself this was just Zoro’s attempt to fix him, just pity or at the most, long-held carnal desire. Zoro didn’t feel the depth of emotion for

Sanji that he held for him.

The way Zoro looked at him and touched him was making it hard to hang on to that knowledge.

“Moss,” Sanji gasped. “You don’t have to—”

“I want to.” Zoro’s eye met his, intense and dark with desire. “I’ve wanted to taste you for years. So unless you’re going to tell me to stop...”

“Don’t stop. Please don’t stop.”

Zoro’s smile was wicked and predatory. He lowered his head and licked a stripe up the underside of Sanji’s cock, from base to tip, and Sanji’s vision whited out for a moment.

Zoro did it again, then swirled his tongue around the head, lapping up the pre-cum that had gathered there. “You taste good,” he murmured. “Better than I imagined.”

Before Sanji could try to formulate a response to that, Zoro took him into his mouth.

His back arched off the bed, a strangled moan tearing from his throat. Zoro’s mouth was hot and wet and perfect, taking him deep. Sanji’s hands flew to Zoro’s hair, tangling in the short strands. He tried not to pull, tried not to thrust up, but it was so hard when Zoro was doing that with his tongue.

“Fuck, fuck, *Zoro*.”

Zoro hummed around him, the vibration sending sparks up Sanji’s spine. He worked Sanji with his mouth and hand in tandem, finding a rhythm that had his toes curling and his thighs trembling. When he pulled off to lick another stripe up the underside, then sucked just the head while his hand worked the shaft, Sanji nearly came right there. Zoro pulled off for a moment, his hand still working him.

“You taste so fucking good,” Zoro said, voice rough. “Could do this for hours. Watch you fall apart on my tongue.”

“Won’t last hours,” Sanji panted, already feeling the pressure building at the base of his spine. “I’m already close.”

“Then come. We’ve got all night.” Zoro took him deep again, relaxing his throat. Sanji felt the head of his cock hit the back of Zoro’s throat.

The sensation was overwhelming. Zoro’s mouth was so hot, so perfect. The way he was looking up at Sanji through his lashes, like he was enjoying this as much as Sanji was, was what finally pushed him over the edge.

Sanji’s orgasm hit like a wave, pleasure crashing through him in pulses. He came down Zoro’s throat with a cry, his whole body tensing. Zoro swallowed around him, drawing it out, milking every last drop until Sanji was oversensitive and shaking.

When Zoro finally pulled off, his lips were swollen and slick. His eye was dark with satisfaction. He crawled back up Sanji's body and kissed him. Sanji could taste himself on Zoro's tongue.

"Good?" the swordsman asked, though the smug satisfaction in his voice said he already knew the answer.

"Understatement." Sanji's voice was completely wrecked. "Give me a second and I'll return the favor."

"No rush. We've got time."

Regardless, Sanji was already pushing at Zoro's shoulders, rolling them so Zoro was on his back.

"My turn," he said, the hunger in his voice surprising Zoro.

Still, the swordsman welcomed it.

Watching Sanji work his way down his body was its own kind of torture. He took his time, kissing and licking and biting, leaving marks that Zoro would feel for days. He paid special attention to Zoro's scars, tracing them with his tongue like they were something beautiful instead of reminders of battles won and lost.

When he finally got Zoro's pants off and wrapped a hand around him, Zoro had to grit his teeth to keep from coming immediately. The sight of Sanji's elegant hand wrapped around Zoro's cock was almost too much.

"You're big," the cook said, almost conversational, stroking slowly from base to tip. "Bigger than Sadaichi. I didn't do this with him, so I guess in some ways, you're my first too." Zoro choked on a groan at the words, pre-cum leaking from the slit. Sanji swiped his thumb through it, spreading it around the head.

"You don't have to do this if you don't want to."

"I want to." Sanji's eye met his, challenging. "Unless you're going to tell me I can't?"

"Fuck no."

Sanji's smile was triumphant. He lowered his head and licked the pre-cum from the tip of Zoro's cock, causing Zoro's hips to jerk involuntarily.

"Shit, sorry."

Sanji just hummed and did it again, then took the head into his mouth. He wasn't as practiced as Zoro, but what he lacked in experience he made up for in enthusiasm. He worked Zoro with lips and tongue and hand, experimenting, paying attention to what made Zoro's breath hitch and his muscles tense.

"That's it," Zoro groaned. "Just like that, Cook."

Sanji took him deeper, relaxing his jaw, and Zoro felt the head of his cock hit the back of Sanji's throat. When Sanji swallowed around him, Zoro's control nearly shattered.

"Fuck, Sanji."

Sanji pulled off with a wet pop, stroking Zoro's cock with his hand. "You taste good," he said, voice rough. "Want more."

Then he took Zoro deep again, and this time when he swallowed, Zoro's hips jerked up involuntarily. Sanji didn't pull away, just took it, and that was what did it.

Zoro came with a groan, pleasure whiting out his vision. He felt himself pulse in Sanji's mouth, felt Sanji swallow it down. The sensation was so intense he thought he might black out.

When Sanji finally pulled off, looking pleased with himself, Zoro pulled him into a kiss. "Holy shit," he breathed against Sanji's mouth.

They lay together for a while, catching their breath, hands wandering lazily. Zoro traced patterns on Sanji's ribs, his hip bones, the V of muscle that led down to his groin. Sanji's cock was already starting to fill again and Zoro felt his own interest stirring despite having just come.

"Ready for more?" Zoro asked, wrapping a hand around Sanji's half-hard cock and stroking slowly.

Sanji's breath hitched. "Yeah. If you are."

"I'm going to need to prep you. It's going to take time." Zoro rolled them so he was hovering over Sanji, settling between his legs. "I'm going to make you come at least once more before I fuck you. Is that okay?"

Sanji's pupils dilated, his cock hardening fully in Zoro's hand. He didn't know why Zoro would expect any answer other than an affirmative in response. He was more turned on than he'd possibly ever been in his life.

He was half convinced he was going to wake up back in his bunk on the Sunny, his cock hard and leaking in his pajama pants, disappointed at all of this having been a dream.

But Zoro's hands on him felt real. His lips against his felt real. The anticipation coursing through his veins as he watched Zoro retrieved lube and condom from the hotel's dresser drawers felt real.

"On your back or your stomach?" Zoro asked, settling between Sanji's legs.

"Back. I want to see you."

Zoro's expression softened. He leaned down and kissed Sanji, slow and deep, before pulling back. "It might sting or burn a little from the stretch, but it shouldn't hurt. If it does, don't just try and endure it. Tell me if anything feels wrong."

Sanji nodded in reply. Zoro gave him a look in response.

“I mean it, Curls. None of your self-sacrificial bullshit. I want it to be good for you and I can make it be, but you need to let me know if it’s too much.”

Sanji felt a rush of affection mixed with arousal. Zoro was taking this so seriously. He was committed to taking care of him. Whether or not he loved Sanji the way he loved him, he knew Zoro cared for him and that was more than Sanji had felt before from any of his other sexual partners.

He leaned up and pressed a kiss to Zoro’s lips. “I promise, Mosshead.” Zoro reciprocated the kiss before coaxing him to lay back against the pillows.

Sanji opened his thighs, allowing Zoro to settle between them. He eased up a little, letting him put a pillow under his hips to make sure the angle was right.

He watched with nervous anticipation as Zoro slicked his fingers with lube, warming it between his palms. He traced one finger around Sanji’s hole, not pushing in yet, just circling. The sensation was strange but not unpleasant. Sanji forced himself to breathe and release the tension from his muscles.

“That’s it,” Zoro murmured. “Just relax for me.”

He pressed the tip of one finger inside slowly, watching Sanji’s face. It felt strange. Not bad, just unfamiliar. Different from last time when Sadaichi had rushed through this part, shoving his whole finger inside with little care or restraint. Zoro was taking his time, working the finger in slowly, letting Sanji adjust.

“Okay?”

“Yeah. Keep going.”

Zoro pushed in further, his finger crooking like he was looking for something. Sanji’s brows furrowed and he opened his mouth, intending to ask him what he was doing, if he somehow managed to get lost in Sanji’s ass too. His words were stolen by a gasp as pleasure shot through him so intense he nearly came off the bed.

“There it is,” Zoro said, satisfaction in his voice. He hit that spot again and Sanji shivered helplessly in response, his cock leaking pre-cum onto his stomach.

“*Fuck*, what— What is that?”

“Your prostate. Feels good, doesn’t it?”

“Fuck, that’s an understatement.”

Zoro kept working that spot, building the pleasure slowly until Sanji was a mess of sensation. He withdrew his hand and added more lube before he started to work a second finger in alongside the first. The stretch burned, but in a good way. Zoro scissored his fingers, stretching him open and drawing a moan from Sanji.

“You’re so fucking beautiful like this,” Zoro murmured, watching Sanji’s face. “All spread open for me.”

Sanji’s cheeks burned at the compliment.

“I’m not—”

“Yeah, you are. You’re fucking gorgeous.”

He shook his head in response, heat pooling in his gut at the pleasure he was getting from Zoro’s fingers.

“Zoro, please. I need more.”

“Not yet. I need to make sure you’re ready.” Zoro added a third finger, working it in slowly. The stretch was more intense now, but he was also hitting Sanji’s prostate again, keeping the pleasure building.

“Please,” he gasped. “Zoro, now.”

“Not yet,” he repeated, causing Sanji to whine in protest, something he’d be embarrassed by later. “Besides, I want to taste you first.”

Before Sanji could process that, Zoro was pulling his fingers out and lowering his head. His tongue replaced his fingers, licking over Sanji’s hole. The cook’s mind went completely blank.

Zoro’s tongue was hot and wet, circling his rim before pressing inside. The sensation was so intimate, so intense, that Sanji felt tears prick his eyes. No one had ever done this for him. No one had ever taken such care, had ever wanted to taste him like this.

“Zoro,” Sanji moaned, his voice breaking.

Zoro pulled back just enough to speak. “You taste so good,” he said, voice rough. “Could eat you out for hours.”

He dove back in, his tongue working inside, licking and sucking and driving Sanji out of his mind. When he added his fingers back, working in tandem with his tongue, Sanji couldn’t hold back.

His orgasm hit without warning, pleasure ripping through him so hard he couldn’t breathe. He came untouched, his cock pulsing and spilling onto his stomach. Zoro kept working him through it, drawing it out until Sanji was oversensitive and shaking.

For a moment, Sanji existed only in sensation, in pleasure and relief and overwhelming gratitude all tangled together as he floated back down to earth. His body was still trembling, his chest heaving. He was vaguely aware of Zoro’s touch gentling against him, coaxing him through the aftershocks with reverent fingers and soft kisses.

He had no clue how he was meant to give this up after tonight.

Zoro was just as filled with emotion. Watching Sanji come apart was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. His face was flushed, his mouth open on a silent cry, his whole body quivering with pleasure. Zoro worked him through it, slowing his movements as Sanji came down, before he crawled back up to kiss him.

“You okay?” Zoro asked, wiping the tears from Sanji’s cheeks.

“Better than okay.” Sanji’s voice was completely wrecked, his visible eye glazed with pleasure. “That was... fuck. I didn’t know it could feel like that.”

Zoro felt a surge of possessive satisfaction. He was doing this. He was making Sanji feel this good. He was making him forget about that asshole who hurt him, replacing those memories with something better.

He rolled on a condom, slicked himself up generously and positioned himself at Sanji’s entrance.

“Ready?”

“Seas, yes. Please, Zoro.”

Zoro pushed in slowly, watching Sanji’s face for any sign of discomfort. Sanji’s expression was tight, but not pained, just overwhelmed. His mouth was open, his breathing rapid and his hands clutched at Zoro’s shoulders.

“Breathe,” the greenhead murmured. “Just breathe for me.”

Sanji took a shaky breath, his muscles relaxing and allowing Zoro to sink in a little further. The heat and tightness were incredible. It took all of Zoro’s control not to just thrust in all the way. But this was about Sanji, about making him feel good.

He paused when he was halfway in, letting Sanji adjust. “Okay?”

“Yeah. Keep going. Want all of you.”

Zoro pushed in the rest of the way slowly until he was fully seated. They both groaned at the sensation. Sanji was so tight around him, so hot. Zoro had to close his eye and count to ten to keep from coming immediately.

“You feel amazing,” he praised, his voice strained. “Is it okay for you?”

“You’re so big. Feels so full,” Sanji panted.

“Good full or bad full?”

“Good. So good. Move, please move.”

Zoro started to move, slow and careful, watching Sanji’s reactions closely. He was attentive to every subtle shift in Sanji’s expression, every catch of breath, making sure he was reading the signals correctly. He pulled out almost all the way, pausing for just a heartbeat at the

edge, then pushed back in, setting a steady, measured rhythm. Each movement was intentional, building gradually as he gauged Sanji's comfort and response, adjusting his pace accordingly.

When he angled his hips just right and hit Sanji's prostate dead-on, Sanji cried out sharply, his voice breaking with pleasure. His nails dug into Zoro's broad shoulders hard enough to leave crescent-shaped marks that would still be visible tomorrow, a reminder of this moment etched into his skin.

"There, fuck, right there."

Zoro adjusted his angle and thrust again, shifting his hips just slightly to the left until he found the perfect position. Now he was hitting that spot with every stroke, each thrust deliberate and precise. Sanji was making the most incredible sounds. They were raw and unfiltered. Gasps that caught in his throat, moans that seemed to come from somewhere deep in his chest and broken pleas that dissolved into incoherent syllables. His voice cracked on Zoro's name. Zoro wanted to memorize every single one of those sounds, commit them to memory so he could replay them later when they were apart.

"You're so tight and perfect," Zoro groaned. "Look at you. You're taking me so well. This is how it should be for you every time. This is how good you should feel."

"So good, Zoro. You're so good," Sanji moaned helplessly, clinging onto Zoro as he continued to thrust into him.

"Is this what you needed?"

"Yes! It's so— fuck, Zoro, I need you."

"You have me. I'm right here."

"Need you all the time. Don't wanna let go," Sanji whined in response, his nails digging into Zoro's skin. "Please, don't let me go."

Zoro pressed a fierce kiss to Sanji's lips. "I won't," he promised. "Just stay with me, Cook. I'll give you what you need."

"Harder," Sanji gasped. "Please, Zoro, harder."

Zoro increased his pace, thrusting deeper with more urgency and intensity. Sanji's legs wrapped tightly around his waist, pulling him closer with surprising strength. The cook's heels dug into the small of Zoro's back, urging him on. The new angle let Zoro go even deeper than before, hitting spots that made Sanji's breath catch in his throat. They both groaned at the overwhelming sensation, their voices mingling together in the heated air between them. Zoro's grip on Sanji's hips tightened as he maintained the relentless rhythm, sweat beading on his forehead from the exertion.

"Touch yourself," Zoro said. "Want to see you come on my cock."

Sanji wrapped a hand around his cock, stroking in time with Zoro's thrusts. The pleasure was overwhelming, building higher and higher with every thrust. Zoro was hitting his prostate with every stroke, sending sparks of pleasure through his entire body. Sanji felt like he was going to fly apart.

"Zoro," he gasped. "Zoro, I— Fuck, it's so good."

"That's it," Zoro groaned. "Let me hear you. Want to hear how good I'm making you feel."

"So good, so fucking good." Sanji was babbling now, words spilling out without thought, tumbling from his lips in a breathless rush. His mind had gone hazy, unable to form coherent sentences anymore. "Never felt like this, never— oh, Zoro."

His fingers clutched desperately at Zoro's shoulders, nails digging into warm skin as waves of sensation rolled through him. Every nerve ending felt like it was on fire, sparking with electricity. "Don't stop, please don't stop."

Zoro thrust harder, deeper, his hips snapping forward with increasing urgency. Sanji could feel the pressure building at the base of his spine, coiling tighter and tighter like a spring wound to its limit. His cock was leaking pre-cum over his hand, making the slide slick and perfect, and every thrust pushed him closer to the edge. The sensation was overwhelming, bordering on too much, but he craved more.

"You're mine," Zoro growled, his voice rough and possessive, dripping with need. His fingers dug into Sanji's hips hard enough to leave bruises. "Mine, Sanji. No one else gets to touch you like this. No one else gets to see you fall apart."

Sanji's breath hitched at the words, heat flooding through him in waves that left him dizzy and desperate. The claiming tone in Zoro's voice made something primal stir deep in his chest, something that recognized and responded to the raw possession in those words.

"Yours," Sanji agreed breathlessly, the word tumbling from his lips without thought. "All yours, only yours. Always."

Zoro's rhythm was relentless now, pounding into him with powerful thrusts that drove the air from his lungs. Every movement sent shockwaves of pleasure radiating through Sanji's body. He could feel his orgasm building like a storm on the horizon. It was different from the others they'd shared tonight, this was deeper, more intense, like it was coming from his very core. This wasn't just physical pleasure, it was something that reached into his soul, claiming every part of him.

"Zoro," he gasped. "Zoro, I'm going to— I'm—"

"Come for me," Zoro demanded. "Want to feel you come on my cock."

Sanji's orgasm hit like a freight train barreling down the tracks at full speed. Pleasure crashed through him in devastating waves, so intense he couldn't breathe, couldn't think, couldn't do anything but feel every nerve ending in his body light up like fireworks. His vision went white at the edges as the sensation overwhelmed him completely. He came hard over his hand

and stomach, his whole body tensing and arching off the bed, muscles locked tight as the release tore through him. His toes curled, his fingers clenched in the sheets.

Through it all he could hear himself saying something, words tumbling out without permission, without conscious thought.

“Love you. Fuck, I love you, Zoro. I love you so much.”

Zoro’s rhythm faltered for just a heartbeat and Sanji’s eyes flew open wide, horror flooding through him like ice water even as pleasure continued to pulse through his trembling body in relentless waves. He’d just— he’d said— oh god, what had he done? The words had slipped out in the heat of the moment and now they hung in the air between them like a confession he could never take back.

Zoro was still moving, still fucking him steadily through the aftershocks that made his legs shake and his breath hitch. His large hands gripped Sanji’s hips firmly, possessively, keeping him in place. His expression was intense but not angry or disgusted like Sanji had feared. His eye was dark and burning with something Sanji couldn’t quite identify but felt all the way down to his bones. It was fierce and obvious in the set of his jaw, in the way he looked at Sanji like he was seeing him for the first time.

“Say it again,” Zoro demanded, thrusting deeper.

“I—” Sanji’s voice broke. “I love you. I love you, Zoro.”

Zoro groaned low and deep, the sound rumbling from his chest as he thrust hard and deep one final time, his own orgasm hitting him like a tidal wave. Sanji felt him pulse and throb inside, felt the way Zoro’s whole body went rigid and tensed above him, muscles locked tight as pleasure overtook him completely.

Zoro collapsed on top of him, all that solid weight pressing Sanji into the mattress, both of them breathing hard and ragged, their chests heaving as they tried to catch their breath. Sweat slicked their skin where their bodies pressed together and Sanji could feel Zoro’s heartbeat hammering against his own ribcage.

Still, an undercurrent of fear ran through him that he couldn’t ignore. Not after what he’d just confessed. Whatever happened next, he had no idea. Zoro was holding his heart in his hands, and he’d either crush it or keep it safe.

Zoro’s mind was reeling, thoughts spinning in a dozen different directions at once. Sanji loved him. He’d actually said it out loud and meant it. Zoro could see it in his face, clear as day, could feel it in the way Sanji was holding him, arms wrapped tight around his back like he never wanted to let go. The words hung in the air between them, heavy with meaning and possibility. But was it real or just the sex talking? Were the endorphins and pleasure flooding through both their systems making Sanji say things he didn’t actually mean, things he might regret once the haze lifted and reality came crashing back in?

Zoro pulled out carefully, as gently as he could manage. He got up and disposed of the condom before reaching for a towel. He took his time cleaning them both up, his hands

moving slowly, almost reverently, across Sanji's skin. The cook's body was still flushed and warm beneath his touch. Sanji was quiet now, so unlike his usual self, watching him with an expression that was painfully vulnerable and uncertain, like he'd just laid his heart bare and was waiting for Zoro to reject him, to laugh it off or pretend he hadn't heard.

"We should talk," Zoro said, settling back on the bed.

"Yeah." Sanji's voice was small. "We should."

They settled facing each other on the mattress, the space between them feeling both too close and impossibly far. Sanji looked small in a way that made Zoro's chest ache, so full of fear and dread that it seemed to radiate off him in waves. His shoulders were hunched inward, protective, and his hands trembled slightly where they rested in his lap.

The usual spark in his eyes had dimmed. Zoro wanted to pull him close and never let go, to wrap his arms around him and promise that everything would be okay, but they needed to be clear about what this was. They needed to talk first, to lay everything out in the open before they crossed a line they couldn't uncross. No matter how much his instincts screamed at him to comfort, to protect, they had to do this right.

"Did you mean it?" Zoro asked. "What you said."

"Yes," he admitted, his voice barely above a whisper. "I know it's too soon, and I know this was supposed to just be about giving me a better experience, but—"

"I love you too."

Sanji's head snapped up as his eyes widened in shock. "What?"

"I love you. I have for years." Zoro reached out and cupped Sanji's face in his hands. "I didn't say it earlier because I wasn't sure if you were just caught up in the moment. But if you meant it—"

"I meant it." Sanji's eyes were bright with unshed tears. "I've been falling for you for months. I just didn't let myself acknowledge it before because I didn't think you'd ever feel that way about me."

"I do. I love you," Zoro replied, pressing their foreheads together.

Sanji felt an overwhelming sense of relief roll through him at the words as he leaned into Zoro's touch.

"So what now," the swordsman asked.

"Now we figure it out. Together."

"Yeah, we can do that."

"The crew's going to have opinions."

“Let them.” Zoro pulled him close and Sanji went willingly, tucking his head in the crook of Zoro’s neck. “You deserve good things, Sanji. I’m going to make sure you get them.”

“You already did.” Sanji’s arms tightened around him. “This was... everything I didn’t know I needed.”

“Good. Because I’m not done with you yet.”

“Oh?”

“We’ve got all night. And I plan to use it.”

Sanji pulled back enough to meet his eyes, his smile wicked.

“Then what are you waiting for?”

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