Unmasked

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Summary

Zoro goes to the Gilded Mask to forget about the cook he can’t have. Sanji goes to finally let himself want a man without anyone finding out. Zoro has always been out. Sanji has always hidden. Behind the masks they’re Tetsu and Sora: two strangers with an instant connection neither can explain. Then the masks come off.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Chapter 1: Masquerade

The island was called Celestia, a name that promised something heavenly but delivered something far more earthly. The island seemed normal as far as the New World was concerned. No crazy warlords or despots to overthrow. The forests included a large cave system that had kept half of the crew busy. The other half of the crew stuck to the town while they waited for five days to pass and the log pose to reset.

Roronoa Zoro fell into that last category.

He walked through the dark cobblestone streets with his hands in his pockets, dressed in clothes that felt foreign on his body, a simple black T-shirt that clung to his shoulders and chest, dark jeans that sat low on his hips, boots that weren't his usual style but worked well enough. No haramaki, no swords. He'd left Wado, Kitetsu and Enma back on the ship, locked safely in his quarters. He even left his earrings behind. Going out unarmed and unadorned felt strange, but it was necessary. Tonight wasn't about being Roronoa Zoro, right hand to Emperor Strawhat Luffy. Tonight was about being just a man.

A man looking for another man.

The club wasn't hard to find once he'd asked around. Celestia was apparently known for its liberal attitudes, its vibrant nightlife and its hospitality toward those whose tastes ran counter to the mainstream. The Gilded Mask sat on a corner where two streets met, its exterior painted deep purple and gold, with ornate ironwork framing the windows and a doorman dressed in an elaborate costume with a vertical half-mask on working at the door.

Zoro approached and nodded at the man who nodded back.

"You new in town? Never seen you before."

"I'm only here for a couple days more. Heard I could come here and meet some company that suits my taste."

The man gave him a knowing smile.

"Yeah, our clientele tends to be on the… eccentric side. I'm sure you'll find what you're looking for," he explained before handing him a sleek black mask decorated with silver filigree that resembled a tiger's stripes.

"Everyone wears one inside. Keeps things interesting."

Zoro took the mask, turning it over in his hands. It would cover the upper half of his face, leaving only his jaw and mouth visible. The perfect accessory for anonymity. That wasn't something he usually valued, but ever since Wano, his prospects had been… stranger to say the least. He didn't much like his partners having some kind of expectation of who he'd be thanks to his reputation as Luffy's right hand. He preferred that they build a rapport organically rather than through newspaper clippings and bounty posters.

He tied it on, adjusting the silk ribbons at the back of his head, and stepped inside the dark room. The club hit him like a wave. Music pulsed through the space, something with a heavy bass line that he could feel in his chest layered with melodic synths that seemed to shimmer in the air. The lighting was dim, atmospheric, all deep blues and purples and occasional flashes of gold. The dance floor was packed with bodies, mostly men, moving together to the rhythm. Everyone wore masks that ranged from simple to elaborate, some covering just the eyes, others covering half the face or more. The anonymity created a kind of freedom. People touched more easily, laughed more openly, moved with less inhibition.

Zoro made his way to the bar, weaving through the crowd easily. He caught glimpses of faces, or rather half-faces, as he moved. There were women in the crowd, at least people who presented as women, but Zoro's eye focused on the men. They were of all types here. Average height, short or absurdly tall. Bodies that ranged from muscular to slim to fuller figured to portly. Hair of every color that shimmered under the lights: blond, brunette, red-haired, there were even a few other men who had green hair of the same shade or similar to his. Skin the color of porcelain shimmered with sweat under the lights, others with smooth sepia tones made blue by the strobes, there were even people who had painted their bodies shimmering gold that made them stand out in the crowd. There seemed to be no uniform dress code. Some men wore costumes like the doorman while others wore elegant outfits like this was a ballroom and others still were dressed casually like him.

It was a veritable buffet of any and every man he could possibly want.

Except for the one he really wanted the most.

The thought came unbidden, as it always did, and Zoro pushed it down with practiced ease. He was here to forget about that impossibility. He wanted to find someone who could make him stop thinking about blond hair that caught the light like spun gold, about a sharp tongue that could cut as easily as it could praise, about hands that moved with such precision and grace whether they were wielding a knife to cook or lighting a cigarette, about legs that could shatter steel and a smile that could light up a room when it was genuine, not the performative charm he used on women.

Sanji.

Even thinking his name made something twist in Zoro's chest. It was a pointless desire. Sanji flirted with every woman they met, fawned over them, fell over himself to please them. He'd never once looked at a man that way. Never once given any indication that he might be interested in anything other than the soft curves and sweet voices of the opposite sex.

Zoro had accepted that. He'd been accepting it for years now, watching Sanji chase after women while he found his own company in port towns and clubs like this one. It was fine. It had to be fine, because the alternative was pining after someone who would never want him back. He wasn't that pathetic.

He came to places like this instead, found men who could scratch the itch, make him feel good for a night, help him forget for a few hours that what he really wanted was completely out of reach.

The bartender was a tall man with dark skin and a gold mask shaped like a sun. He was shirtless with only a golden bow tie around his neck. Zoro took a moment to appreciate his muscular physique. He was smirking when he finally met his gaze.

“What can I get you?”

“Sake,” Zoro said, then reconsidered. “Actually, whiskey. Neat.”

The bartender’s smile widened.

“Good choice.”

Zoro took his drink and leaned against the bar, surveying the room. He wasn’t in a rush. The night was young and he’d learned that the best encounters came when you didn’t force them. He sipped his whiskey, letting the burn settle in his throat as he watched the crowd move and shift like a living thing.

Clubs like this weren’t his preference but he’d had to become accustomed to them in order to find partners that suited him. He’d been out for years now. It hadn’t been some dramatic spiral about his identity or desires. It was just who he was. He liked men. He’d always liked men. It was a fact about him as much as the fact that he was a swordsman. Just another facet of his personality. It wasn’t a big thing. The crew knew from day one. Anyone who asked got a straight answer and anyone who had a problem with it could take it up with his swords.

Most people didn’t have a problem with it and if they did, they kept it to themselves.

It wasn’t like he felt the need to broadcast his sex life anyway. It didn’t interfere in any way with his goals or his duties towards the crew, at least not in any meaningful way. Sure, he had his moments where his body craved to exchange touches with another. In those cases, his hand sufficed until he got to an island where he could meet a midnight lover and tide himself over until the next time.

By that token, this was familiar territory. Not this specific place, but places like it. Clubs where men came to find other men, where the rules were different, where you could be direct about what you wanted without the usual dance of courtship. He appreciated the efficiency of it (even if there were times when he wanted the dance, wanted the courtship, wanted to flirt and build to a release but only with a very specific man who’d never let that happen.)

He finished his whiskey and ordered another, settling into the rhythm of the club. He was on his third drink when he noticed the blond.

~*~*~

Sanji had been standing outside the club for ten minutes, smoking his third cigarette and trying to calm his nerves. This was stupid. This was reckless. This was dangerous.

This was exactly what he needed.

He took a final drag, stubbed out the cigarette under his shoe and approached the entrance. The doorman looked him over with an appreciative eye. Sanji had dressed carefully for this.

When he decided to come here (and it had taken a lot for him to decide to do so, three days of hyping himself up), he knew he couldn't be recognized as Blackleg Sanji. Thankfully, this club thrived on anonymity.

He traded his usual suit for something more approachable. He wore a silk dress shirt in deep blue, unbuttoned halfway down his chest, the sleeves rolled to his elbows. His black pants were tight and snug around his waist and ass. He had polished his shoes to a shine and styled his hair so it was swept back instead of covering his eye. The doorman handed him a mask, an elegant silver thing decorated with blue gems, false pearls and white feathers. He tied it on carefully, making sure it covered his eyebrows completely. No one could know it was him.

"Enjoy yourself," the doorman said with a wink.

Sanji stepped inside and was immediately overwhelmed.

The music was loud, the lights were low and everywhere he looked there were men. Men dancing, men drinking, men talking and laughing and touching. Some were clearly couples, wrapped around each other with the ease of familiarity. Others were clearly hunting, eyes scanning the crowd with predatory interest. Some, like him, seemed to be taking it all in, trying to decide what they wanted from the night.

Sanji's heart was pounding. He'd done this before, slipped away on islands to find lovers, to scratch an itch that he couldn't scratch on the ship. Women, mostly. That was safe. That was expected. But sometimes... sometimes it was men. Those encounters were always shrouded in secrecy, always tinged with shame, always followed by a vow that it wouldn't happen again.

It always did.

He made his way to the bar, needing a drink to settle his nerves. The bartender was friendly, professional and didn't ask questions when Sanji ordered a glass of wine. He took it to a corner where he could observe without being too obvious, sipping slowly and watching the crowd.

There was something intoxicating about the anonymity. Behind his mask, he could be anyone. No one here knew he was Black Leg Sanji, cook of the Straw Hat Pirates. No one knew about his reputation, his bounty, his complicated relationship with women and his even more complicated relationship with his own desires. Here, he was just another man in a mask, looking for connection.

He watched two men on the dance floor, moving together with an easy sensuality that made his chest tight. He wanted that so badly, to be able to touch another man in public, to dance with him, to kiss him without looking over his shoulder, to be free.

Like Zoro was.

The thought came despite his best effort. Sanji shoved it away immediately. He was not going to think about that stupid mosshead tonight. He was not going to think about how Zoro had come out to the crew with casual confidence, how he'd simply said "I like men" like it was

the most natural thing in the world, like it was as unremarkable as stating his favorite drink or his preferred training schedule.

He was not going to think about how jealous that had made him. How much he'd wanted to say "me too" but couldn't, wouldn't, didn't. How he'd watched Zoro walk off the ship on countless islands, watched him return hours later with that satisfied, loose-limbed ease that spoke of a night well spent, and felt something ugly and bitter twist in his gut.

It wasn't fair. It wasn't fucking fair that Zoro got to just... be. That he could flirt with men openly, could touch them in bars, could take them to bed without the crushing weight of shame that followed Sanji everywhere. That he could own his desires without apology while Sanji had to hide, had to pretend, had to bury everything so deep he sometimes forgot it was there.

Except he never really forgot. Not when Zoro was around.

Not when he watched Zoro move through their training sessions, all controlled power and lethal grace. Not when he caught glimpses of Zoro's body: the broad shoulders, the defined muscles of his back, the way his hands gripped his swords with such certainty. Not when Zoro's rare, genuine smiles made something in Sanji's chest ache with want.

He'd been half in love with Zoro for years and had buried it so deep he could almost pretend it wasn't true.

Almost.

The worst part was that it wasn't just physical attraction, though seas knew that was bad enough. It was everything else too. The way Zoro never apologized for who he was. The way he faced the world with that infuriating confidence, that absolute certainty in himself. The way he could be so casually open about something Sanji couldn't even whisper in the dark.

Sanji both loved him for it and resented him for it in equal measure.

He hated himself for the jealousy. It was petty, small and unfair. Zoro hadn't done anything wrong by being honest about who he was. If anything, Sanji should admire him for it. And he did. He admired Zoro's strength, his conviction, his refusal to hide or diminish himself for anyone. That admiration was tangled up with envy so sharp it sometimes felt like a blade between his ribs.

Zoro got to be free while Sanji was trapped. Zoro got to want openly while Sanji had to steal moments in anonymous clubs on distant islands, always looking over his shoulder, always afraid of being seen, always carrying the weight of his father's voice in his head telling him what a man should be.

And the truly pathetic part? Even here, even now, in a club full of beautiful men who might actually want him back, Sanji couldn't stop thinking about the one man he could never have. The one man who probably saw him as nothing more than a rival and a pain in the ass.

That’s why he’d come here tonight. Not just to explore the desires he kept locked away, but to find someone who could make him stop thinking about green hair, scarred skin and that rare devastating smile. Someone who could help him forget, even for a few hours, that he was in love with someone completely unattainable.

Someone who could make him feel free, the way Zoro always seemed to be.

It never worked, but he kept trying anyway.

Sanji finished his wine and ordered another and then another. By the third glass, the edges of his anxiety had softened and he felt brave enough to move away from his corner. He drifted toward the dance floor, letting the music wash over him and his body move to the rhythm. A few men smiled at him as he passed. One reached out to touch his arm, but Sanji moved away, not ready yet. He needed another drink first.

He made his way back to the bar, squeezing into a space between two men and a woman who were all wrapped around each other intimately and a pair of men who seemed to be debating whether they should get a private room upstairs.

That’s when he saw him.

Green hair. Broad shoulders. Strong jaw. A black mask that covered the upper half of his face but left his strong jawline and lips visible. He was leaning against the bar with easy confidence as if he belonged exactly where he was. There was a glass of whiskey in his hand as his gaze swept the crowd with lazy interest.

Sanji’s breath caught.

The man was gorgeous from what he could see. Rugged and masculine in a way that made his mouth go dry. There were other green-haired men in the club, he’d noticed at least two on the dance floor, but this one stood out. Something about the way he held himself, the way he occupied space like he owned it.

He looks like Zoro, Sanji thought to himself.

He immediately felt guilty for the flash of desire the thought caused in him. He was supposed to be forgetting about Zoro, not fixating on a man who reminded him of the swordsman. Still, he didn’t look away. After a moment, their eyes met across the bar.

The man’s gaze sharpened, focusing on him with sudden intensity. A slow smile curved his lips and he raised his glass in a small salute. Sanji’s heart raced as he smiled back, trying to look confident and alluring instead of nervous and desperate. The man set down his glass and pushed off from the bar, moving toward him with the kind of predatory grace that should have been intimidating but was instead incredibly attractive.

“Hey,” the man said when he reached Sanji, his voice low and rough, “you look like you could use another drink.”

Sanji glanced down at his empty wine glass.

“I could,” he admitted, “but I’m thinking of switching to something stronger.”

“Good choice.”

The man gestured to the bartender.

“What do you want?”

“Surprise me.”

The man’s smile widened. He ordered two neat whiskeys and handed one to Sanji. Their fingers brushed during the exchange. Sanji felt a spark of electricity run up his arm.

“To surprises,” the man said, raising his glass.

Sanji clinked his glass against the other man’s.

“To surprises.”

The whiskey burned going down, but it was a good burn. Sanji welcomed it, letting it fuel his courage.

“I’m— You can call me... Sora.”

“Sora,” the man repeated, like he was tasting it. “I like it. You can call me Tetsu.”

“Tetsu,” Sanji said slowly. “That’s... unique.”

“So are you.”

It was a line, obvious and unsubtle, but the way the man said it made it sound genuine. Sanji felt heat rise in his cheeks, grateful for the mask that hid his blush.

“You come here often?” Sanji asked, then immediately cringed at the cliché.

Tetsu laughed, a low rumble that Sanji felt in his chest.

“First time, actually. You?”

“Same.”

“Masquerade virgin, huh?”

Tetsu’s gaze traveled down Sanji’s body, slow and appreciative.

“I like that shirt on you. The color suits you, really goes with your eyes.”

“Thank you.”

Sanji took another sip of whiskey, using it to buy himself a moment. He wasn’t used to this, to being on this side of the flirtation with a man, to being the one pursued instead of the

pursuer. It was thrilling and terrifying in equal measure.

“You’re not so bad yourself. Though I have to say, the T-shirt is a little... understated.”

“Understated?”

“You look like you could be wearing something more... I don’t know. Impressive.”

“You saying I’m not impressive like this?”

“I’m saying you look like you’re hiding something.”

“Maybe I am.”

Tetsu stepped closer, close enough that Sanji could smell him, a scent that was clean and masculine with a hint of steel underneath.

“Maybe we’re all hiding something tonight. That’s the point of the masks, isn’t it?”

Sanji’s pulse quickened.

“I suppose it is.”

They stood there for a moment, the noise of the club fading into background static. Sanji was acutely aware of how close they were, how easy it would be to close the distance between them, how much he wanted to.

“You want to dance?” Tetsu asked.

“Dance?” Sanji blinked.

“You know, move to the music. I saw you earlier on the edge of the dance floor. You’ve got rhythm.”

“You were watching me?”

“Hard not to. You’re the most beautiful man in this club,” Tetsu asserted, his smile wicked.

Sanji’s breath hitched. He’d been called beautiful before by both women and men but hearing it from this man hit differently. It felt more real somehow, more honest. He didn’t know what to make of that.

“Flattery will get you everywhere,” Sanji managed.

“Good to know.”

Tetsu held out his hand.

“So? Dance with me?”

Sanji looked at the offered hand, calloused and strong, and made a decision. He took it.

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The dance floor was packed, bodies pressed together in the dim light. Zoro led the blond, Sora he'd said his name was, into the crowd. He found a spot where they had just enough room to move. The music was different now, slower but still with that heavy bass that you could feel in your bones.

Zoro turned to face Sora and for a moment they just looked at each other. The mask hid the upper half of Sora's face, but Zoro could see his mouth, his jaw, the elegant line of his neck. He was lithe but muscular, just how Zoro liked. There was a dancer's grace in the way he held himself. The blue silk shirt hung loose on his torso but was unbuttoned halfway, allowing Zoro to see the smooth expanse of his chest, the defined muscle underneath. His pants were snug around his slender waist and tight on his pert ass. Zoro had to urge squeeze and touch but held himself back.

Sora was, without question, the most attractive man he had seen in a long time.

(The familiar shade of blond hair didn't hurt the attraction. Neither did his blue eyes which, while hard to discern in the dim strobing lights, looked similar enough to the ocean blues of the cook that Zoro couldn't help but be drawn in.)

"You going to stare at me all night or are we actually going to dance?" Sora asked.

There was a teasing lilt to his voice that made Zoro grin.

"I can multitask."

Zoro placed his hands on Sora's hips and Sora's came up to rest on Zoro's shoulders. They started to move, finding the rhythm together. It was tentative at first, both feeling out the boundaries, testing what was allowed, but within a few moments they'd found their groove.

Sora was a good dancer. Better than good. He moved with a fluid grace that was mesmerizing to watch, his hips swaying, his body responding to the music like it was a language he spoke fluently. Zoro wasn't much of a dancer himself, he had rhythm but not finesse. Sora made it easy, guiding him with subtle shifts of weight and pressure.

"You're better at this than I expected," he said, his mouth close to Zoro's ear so he could be heard over the music.

"What, you thought I'd have two left feet?"

"Something like that."

"I'm full of surprises."

"I'm starting to see that."

They danced through one song then another. With each passing minute, they moved closer together. Sora's hands slid from Zoro's shoulders to his chest, fingers splaying over the fabric of his shirt. Zoro's hands tightened on Sora's hips, pulling him flush against his body. They

were pressed together now, moving as one. Zoro could feel the heat of Sora's body through their clothes.

"You're a good dancer," Zoro complimented.

"I've had practice."

"Yeah? You do this a lot?"

Sora's expression flickered, something complicated passing over his features before he smoothed it away.

"Sometimes. When I get the chance."

There was a story there. He could tell from the way Sora said it, the careful neutrality of his tone. He didn't push. Everyone had their secrets, especially in a place like this.

"What about you? Do you... do this often?"

"Often enough," Zoro said honestly. "I like men. I don't hide it. When I'm on an island and I feel like it, I find someone. Usually works out."

Sora's eyes widened slightly.

"You're very... direct."

"No point in being anything else. Life's too short."

"That's..." Sora trailed off, and when he spoke again, his voice was softer. "That's a good way to live."

"You sound like you don't live that way."

Sora laughed, but it was a brittle sound.

"No. No, I don't."

Zoro studied him, taking in the tension in his shoulders, the way he held himself like he was ready to bolt at any moment.

"You hiding from something, Sora?"

"Aren't we all? That's why we're wearing masks."

Fair point.

The song changed again, something with a heavier beat, and the crowd around them surged. Someone bumped into Sora from behind, pushing him even closer to Zoro. The blond stumbled and Zoro caught him, his arms wrapping around him to steady him.

"Sorry," Sora said, but he didn't pull away.

“Don’t be.”

They were so closer now, close enough that Zoro could count Sora’s eyelashes, could see the faint flush on his cheeks, could feel the rapid rise and fall of his chest. Sora’s hands were on Zoro’s chest, fingers curling into the fabric of his shirt. His lips were parted slightly, his breathing quick.

There was something so familiar about him. Zoro couldn’t put his finger on it, but it made his desire for the man all the stronger.

“Tetsu,” Sora started, his voice was rough. “I…”

“Yeah?”

“I… I… I think I need another drink.”

“Good idea,” Zoro smiled.

They made their way off the dance floor, hands linked so they wouldn’t lose each other in the crowd. Zoro led them back to the bar where they ordered their final round, whiskey again, before he closed out his tab with the bartender. They found a spot at the end of the bar where it was slightly quieter and they could hear each other without shouting.

“So,” Zoro said, leaning against the bar top. “Tell me about yourself.”

Sora took a sip of his whiskey, considering.

“What do you want to know?”

“Anything. Everything. Whatever you want to tell me.”

“That’s a broad statement.”

“I’m a broad kind of guy.”

Sora laughed and this time it sounded genuine.

“Okay, let’s see. I’m a cook. I… work on a ship.”

“A cook?” Zoro’s interest sharpened as a flash of a familiar blond chopping vegetables expertly crossed his mind. “What kind of ship?”

“The kind that travels a lot. We go all over, see different islands, meet different people. It’s a good life. Mostly.”

“Mostly?”

Sora’s expression shuttered again.

“It has its complications.”

“Like?”

“Like... like not being able to be myself all the time. I… I feel like I have to hide parts of who I am because it’s easier than dealing with the questions or the judgement. My crew is great, don’t get me wrong, they’re practically my family. I just… it’s hard, I guess, for me to be... open and honest with them about certain things.”

Zoro nodded slowly.

“Sounds lonely.”

“It can be,” Sora’s voice was barely above a whisper.

They were quiet for a moment, the weight of that confession hanging between them. Sora seemed to shake himself, forcing a smile.

“What about you? What do you do?”

“I’m a swordsman. Not carrying my swords tonight though.”

“A swordsman?” Sora’s gaze traveled over Zoro’s body, reassessing. “I can see that. You have the build for it.”

“Yeah?”

“Definitely. All that muscle doesn’t come from nowhere I suppose.”

Sora’s hand reached out, almost unconsciously, and touched Zoro’s bicep. His fingers traced the curve of muscle through the fabric of the shirt. Zoro felt his skin heat under the touch.

“You must train a lot.”

“Every day,” Zoro said, his voice rougher than he intended. “Discipline is important.”

“I bet you’re very disciplined.”

There was something in the way Sora said it, a hint of suggestion that made Zoro’s pulse quicken.

“When I need to be.”

Sora’s hand was still on his arm, fingers now tracing idle patterns.

“And when you don’t need to be?”

“Then I do whatever the hell I want.”

Sora’s smile turned wicked.

“I like that answer.”

They both sipped their drinks, staring at each other over the rim. Zoro held his liquor well, but the alcohol was loosening them up, lowering inhibitions, making everything feel easier and more possible. They talked about inconsequential things, favorite foods, worst hangovers, scars they'd collected over the years. Sora had a quick wit and a sharp tongue. He made Zoro laugh more than he'd expected. There was something familiar about the way they bantered, like they'd done this before, but Zoro couldn't put his finger on why.

"You're funny," he said at one point.

"You sound surprised by that."

"I am, a little. Pretty and funny is a rare combination."

Sora paused at that.

"You think I'm pretty?"

"I think you're fucking gorgeous."

"You can't even see half my face," he protested.

"Exactly and I already think you're gorgeous. I bet if I saw your whole face, you'd knock me out."

The bluntness of it seemed to catch Sora off guard. He blinked, his mouth opening and closing, and for a moment he looked almost vulnerable. Then he recovered, that teasing smile sliding back into place.

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

"Just 'not so bad'?"

"Fishing for compliments?"

"Maybe."

Sora leaned in closer, his voice dropping to a purr.

"Fine. You're incredibly attractive. You have a body that looks like it was carved from stone. Your voice does things to me that I'm not going to admit out loud. The way you look at me makes me feel like I'm the only person in this entire club. Is that what you wanted to hear?"

Zoro's breath caught.

"Yeah, that works," he replied lowly.

They were close again, the space between them charged with electricity. Zoro could see the rapid flutter of Sora's pulse in his throat, could smell the faint scent of his cologne mixed with whiskey and something uniquely him. He wanted to close the distance, to kiss him.

He had felt attraction to one night stands before, but never anything like this. This was something entirely different, something that went beyond the physical and into territory he'd never explored. There was a dark part of him that wanted to possess Sora, to claim every inch of him and never let go. He wanted to memorize the curve of Sora's neck, the sound of his breathing, the way his eyes darkened when their gazes locked. The intensity of it should have scared him, should have sent him running in the opposite direction. He didn't know where this was coming from. This primal, overwhelming need to keep Sora close, to mark him as his own, but he didn't feel the need to deny the urge. Instead, he found himself leaning into it, letting it wash over him like a wave he had no intention of fighting.

His eyes lingered on Sora's blond hair as strands began falling into his face. He reached out unconsciously and brushed the locks back, revealing the decorated jewels on his mask, hiding away the top half of his face. Even without seeing half of him, he really was fucking gorgeous. Sora's breath caught at the action, but he didn't pull away. Zoro let his hand linger as he cupped his cheek, thumb brushing over his jawline and goatee. Sora's eyes fluttered close at the touch.

"This is going to sound weird, but I feel like… I… I've never wanted something so much," the blond confessed, opening his eyes to reveal raw desire with a hint of fear in those ocean blues.

"I know. I've never felt like this either," Zoro replied.

"This is crazy. I don't even know you. I shouldn't be feeling like this."

"You know enough."

"Do I?"

"You know I think you're gorgeous. You know I want you. You know I'm not going to push you into anything you don't want. What else do you need to know?"

"I don't know. Your favorite color? Your birthday? Whether you're a morning person or a night owl?"

"Green. November eleventh. Night owl. Your turn."

"Blue. March second. Morning person."

"There. M'not a stranger anymore. You know my favorite color."

That startled a laugh out of Sora.

"That's a terrible argument."

"But it worked."

"…Maybe."

They sat there for a moment, the noise of the club a distant hum. Zoro's hand was still on Sora's face. He leaned into the touch like he was starved for it. There was something achingly vulnerable about the gesture and it made Zoro's gut even tighter with desire.

"Come here," Zoro said softly.

Sora shifted from his seat and moved to stand between Zoro's legs. He spread his thighs to make room and Sora settled against him, sitting on the stool with his back to Zoro's chest. He wrapped his arms around Sora's waist, pulling him close. The blond melted into the embrace with a sigh.

"This okay?" Zoro asked.

"More than okay."

They stayed like that for a while. Zoro could feel the tension slowly draining from Sora's body, could feel him relaxing into the embrace. His hands started to wander, nothing overtly sexual, just gentle touches. He traced the line of Sora's collarbone, the curve of his shoulder, the flat plane of his stomach. Sora's breathing deepened as he tilted his head back against Zoro's shoulder.

"You're good at this," Sora murmured.

"At what?"

"Making me feel safe."

Zoro's arms tightened around him.

"Good."

Sora turned slightly, shifting so he was facing Zoro more directly. They were so close now, their faces inches apart. Zoro could see Sora's lips parted, feel the brush of his breath on his face, see the blue gems of his mask catching the strobing lights as their little corner periodically dimmed to zero visibility before the lights hit them again.

"Tetsu," Sora whispered.

"Yeah?"

"I think I want to kiss you."

"Then kiss me."

Sora closed the distance between them. Their lips met in a kiss that was soft and tentative at first, then deeper and more urgent. Sora's hands came up to cup Zoro's face while his hands slid down to grip Sora's hips. The kiss was heat and need and a desperate kind of hunger that Zoro felt in his bones.

When they finally broke apart, both of them were breathing hard.

“Fuck,” Sora said eloquently.

“Yeah.”

“We should... we should probably...”

“There are private rooms upstairs,” he suggested.

“Yeah. Upstairs.”

Despite their words, neither of them moved. They stayed there wrapped around each other, stealing kisses and touches. Sora shifted again, this time standing between Zoro’s spread legs. Zoro’s hands immediately went to his ass, gripping and kneading. Sora made a soft sound of pleasure, his head falling back.

“You like that?” Zoro asked, his voice rough.

“Yes.”

Zoro pulled Sora closer, until their hips were pressed together. He could feel Sora’s arousal through his pants, could feel his own responding in kind. He leaned in, pressing his lips to Sora’s throat, then his jaw, then the sensitive spot just below his ear.

“You taste good,” Zoro murmured against Sora’s skin.

“Tetsu...”

Zoro’s tongue traced the shell of Sora’s ear and the blond shuddered. His hands were in Zoro’s hair now, gripping tight as his hips were moving in small, unconscious circles. The friction of their bodies pressed together, even through layers of fabric, sent heat spiraling through his core. He could feel Sora hardening against him and his own cock responded eagerly, straining against the confines of his pants.

Zoro bit down gently on Sora’s earlobe drawing a gasp. He felt Sora’s hips pushing forward, seeking more contact. The movement was desperate and needy.

“Fuck, that’s—”

“Good?”

“Really good.”

Zoro licked the spot he’d bitten, soothing it, then moved to Sora’s neck. Sora’s pulse raced under his lips and his whole body was trembling. His hands on Sora’s ass tightened, pulling him even closer. He began to move his hips in deliberate circles, grinding against Sora’s hardness.

Sora’s response was immediate and overwhelming. He made a sound that was almost a whimper, his body responding with desperate eagerness to every touch, every movement. His hands pulled at Zoro’s shirt, needing to feel more skin, more contact. He rocked his hips

forward, then back, matching Zoro's rhythm, their bodies moving together in an intimate dance.

"You're so responsive," Zoro murmured against Sora's neck.

Sora pressed himself closer to Zoro in response, grinding against his thigh, seeking friction and contact with an almost frantic need.

Zoro's hands slid down to grip Sora's hips, controlling the movement, setting a slower, more deliberate pace even as Sora tried to move faster. The tension built between them, the heat of their bodies, the friction of fabric against fabric, the desperate need radiating from Sora's every movement.

"We need to go upstairs," Sora gasped, his voice strained and breathless.

His cock was fully hard now, pressed against Zoro's, and every grind sent sparks of pleasure through him.

"*Now*. Before I lose my mind."

"You sure?"

"I've never been more sure of anything."

Zoro pulled back to look at him. Sora's mask was slightly askew, his hair mussed, his lips swollen from kissing. He looked thoroughly debauched and Zoro wanted to be the one to finish the job.

"Okay," Zoro said. "Let's go."

They made their way through the club, hands linked. Zoro led them to the stairs at the back where a discreet sign indicated private rooms were available on the third floor. They climbed the stairs and with each step, Zoro could feel the anticipation building.

On the third floor was a small reception area with another attendant, this one a milky skinned brunette in an elaborate feathered mask that resembled a black swan.

"Private room, gentlemen?" she asked with a knowing smile.

"Yeah," Zoro said.

"How long?"

"All night."

She handed them a key.

"Room seven. Down the hall, last door on the right. There are supplies on the nightstand and refreshments in the mini-fridge. Enjoy yourselves."

They found the room easily. Zoro unlocked the door and pushed it open, revealing a space that was surprisingly luxurious. There was a large bed with silk sheets, soft lighting, a small sitting area with a mini-fridge and a door that presumably led to a bathroom. On the nightstand was a tray that had an assortment of oils, lubricants and condoms. It was clean, elegant and clearly designed for exactly what they were about to do.

Sora stepped inside, looking around with wide eyes.

“This is... nice.”

“Yeah.”

Zoro closed the door behind them and locked it. The click seemed to echo in the quiet room. They stood there for a moment suddenly uncertain. The club had provided a kind of momentum. Here, in the quiet intimacy of the room, everything felt more real.

“So,” Sora said, turning to face Zoro. “We’re really doing this.”

“We don’t have to,” Zoro said, even though every fiber of his being was screaming at him to touch, to take, to claim. “We can just talk or get more drinks or—”

Sora crossed the distance between them in two strides and kissed him, hard and desperate. Zoro responded immediately, his arms wrapping around Sora and pulling him close. They stumbled backward until Zoro’s back hit the wall. Sora pressed against him, their bodies aligned from chest to hip.

“I want this,” Sora said against Zoro’s lips. “I want you. I don’t want to think anymore. I just want to feel you.”

They lost themselves in it, in the kissing, the touching, the desperate need to be closer. Zoro’s hands roamed over Sora’s body, mapping the planes and curves, learning what made him gasp and what made him moan. Sora’s hands were equally busy, sliding under Zoro’s shirt to touch bare skin, nails dragging lightly over his abs. His fingers lingered on the scar on his chest, hidden beneath his shirt.

“Dueling accident,” Zoro explained shortly before kissing Sora again.

They stumbled toward the bed, hands grasping at each other. Zoro’s fingers found the buttons of Sora’s silk shirt, working them open with surprising dexterity. He pushed the fabric off Sora’s shoulders, letting it fall to the floor, revealing a lean, toned torso that made his mouth water.

Sora’s hands tugged at Zoro’s shirt, trying to pull it up, but Zoro caught his wrists gently.

“Leave it,” he said, his voice rough. “I want to focus on you.”

“But—”

“Trust me. I’ll make you feel good.”

A shiver ran through Sora's body and he pulled Zoro back in for a desperate kiss. They fell onto the bed together, a tangle of limbs. Zoro rolled them so he was on top, settling between Sora's legs. They were still wearing their masks. He could see Sora's eyes through the holes, dark with desire. Something about the anonymity of it made everything feel more intense.

Zoro kissed his way down the other man's neck, biting and sucking, leaving marks that would be visible tomorrow. Sora arched into it, his hands in Zoro's hair, encouraging him. Zoro moved lower to Sora's bare chest, taking a nipple into his mouth and sucking hard. He bit down gently and Sora's whole body jerked.

"You like that?"

"*Yes*."

Zoro lavished attention on Sora's chest, moving from one nipple to the other, using his teeth and tongue until the blond was writhing beneath him. He moved lower, kissing down the center line of Sora's stomach, dipping his tongue into his navel, before his kisses led him to Sora's jeans.

Just before he could go any further, he felt a touch squeezing insistently at his shoulder.

"Wait. I just... I need to say something."

Zoro looked up at him, his expression questioning.

"Are you okay?"

Sora bit his lip, suddenly uncertain.

"I've done this before. Hookups, I mean. With men. I'm not... I'm not new to this." He paused, struggling with the words. "But this feels different. You feel different. I don't know if I'm supposed to say that or if it's too much, but I… that's just how I feel."

"Different how?" Zoro asked, his eye searching Sora's face.

The other man let out a shaky laugh.

"I don't know. I just met you tonight and I already feel more connected to you than I have with anyone else I've been with. It's stupid, probably. I'm probably coming on too strong and scaring you off."

Zoro moved back up Sora's body, settling beside him so they were face to face. His hand came up to cup Sora's jaw, thumb brushing over his cheekbone.

"You're not scaring me. I feel it too."

"You do," Sora questioned hopefully.

Zoro's expression was serious, almost vulnerable.

“I don’t know what it is. Don’t really understand it. But I’m not gonna waste time overthinking it.” He leaned in, pressing a soft kiss to Sora’s lips. “We’ve got tonight and I want to make the most of it.”

Tension seemed to melt away from Sora’s shoulders at his words.

They kissed again, slower this time, more tender. Zoro poured everything he was feeling into it: the desire, but also the strange sense of connection, the feeling that this was more than just physical attraction. When they broke apart, Sora was smiling.

“Okay. I’m ready.”

“You sure?”

“I’m sure.”

Zoro kissed him once more, then resumed his journey down Sora’s body. He unbuttoned Sora’s slacks and pulled them down along with his underwear, revealing his cock, hard and leaking. He pulled off the man’s pants and briefs completely, leaving Sora bare beneath him while Zoro remained clothed. The contrast sent a thrill through him, Sora exposed and vulnerable while Zoro stayed covered, in control.

He took a moment to appreciate the man’s muscular legs. He wondered if he was a martial artist. Desire overtook curiosity as he wrapped his hand around Sora’s cock, stroking slowly. Sora’s hips bucked up into the touch.

“Sensitive,” Zoro observed, his voice rough with want.

“It’s been a while,” Sora admitted, his voice strained.

“I’ll take care of you,” he promised.

Zoro wanted to take this man apart, wanted to learn every sound he could make, every way his body responded, wanted to be the one to give him this.

He leaned down and took Sora into his mouth. The sound Sora made was almost a sob. The taste of him flooded Zoro’s senses, salt and musk and something uniquely *him*. He groaned around him, the vibration making Sora’s strong thighs tremble on either side of his head.

He worked him slowly, using his tongue and lips and just a hint of teeth, learning what Sora liked. He catalogued every gasp, every twitch of his hips, every time his fingers tightened in the sheets. Sora was responsive, his body arching and twisting. Zoro fucking *loved* it.

“Oh god, Tetsu. That feels so good. Fuck,” Sora gasped.

Zoro pulled off with a wet sound, his lips slick and swollen.

“You taste good.”

He licked a stripe up the underside of Sora’s cock, slow and deliberate, watching the way Sora’s stomach muscles jumped.

“Don’t stop. Please don’t stop.”

The desperation in Sora’s voice made Zoro’s cock throb. He took him back into his mouth, deeper this time, relaxing his throat and taking him all the way down. Sora’s hand came to rest on the back of his head. Not pushing, just holding, like he needed to touch Zoro as much as Zoro needed to taste him.

He hollowed his cheeks and sucked hard. Sora’s whole body went taut. His thighs were shaking now and his breathing was ragged. Zoro could feel the tension building in him. He pulled back, swirling his tongue around the head, then took him deep again, setting a rhythm that had Sora writhing.

“Fuck, fuck, *fuck*,” Sora chanted, his voice breaking.

Zoro hummed around him, the vibration making Sora cry out. He loved this, loved the weight of Sora’s cock on his tongue, the way he could feel every pulse and twitch, the way Sora’s body responded to every little thing he did. He slid one hand up Sora’s thigh, feeling the muscle trembling beneath his palm, then moved it to cup his balls, rolling them gently.

Sora made a sound that was almost a whimper.

“Shit, I can’t take it. It’s too much,” he whined.

Zoro pulled off just enough to speak, his breath hot against Sora’s wet cock.

“You can. You’re doing so good for me.”

He licked at the slit, tasting pre-come. Sora’s hips jerked up at the sensation.

“I’m close,” Sora whimpered, his voice desperate.

Zoro pulled off again. Sora made a sound of protest that went straight to Zoro’s cock.

“Not yet,” Zoro said, his voice rough. “I want to make this last.”

“You’re evil.”

“You’ll thank me later,” he replied cheekily.

He looked up at Sora’s face. The half of it he could see was flushed red, eyes dark and glazed with pleasure, lips parted as he panted. Zoro felt a surge of possessive satisfaction. He didn’t know where this was coming from. Sure, he felt happier with a sense of control during these kinds of encounters, but he wasn’t usually this possessive. There was something about Sora that was sending that part of him into overdrive.

Mine, something in him growled. *I’m the one making him look like this.*

Zoro pressed a kiss to the inside of Sora's strong thigh then bit down gently, making him gasp. He could feel Sora's pulse racing beneath his lips, could smell the arousal on his skin. He wanted to devour him.

He went back to work, taking Sora into his mouth again but slower this time, teasing. He'd take him deep, then pull back to just the tip, swirling his tongue around the head before taking him down again. Sora was making these desperate little sounds, his hand tightening in Zoro's hair. He felt drunk on it, on the power of it, on knowing that he could do this to someone, could make them fall apart like this.

"Please," Sora gasped. "Tetsu, please, I need…"

Zoro pulled off, his hand replacing his mouth, stroking slowly.

"What do you need? Tell me."

"I need to come. Please let me come."

The begging caused some ravenous beast caged in his chest to purr with satisfaction. It made him feel powerful, needed and wanted in a way that went beyond just physical. He leaned down and licked at Sora's balls, then lower to the sensitive skin behind them and Sora's whole body jerked.

"Fuck! Tetsu, that's so *good*."

Zoro did it again, his tongue exploring, tasting, while his hand kept up that slow, torturous stroke on Sora's cock. Sora was trembling all over now, his thighs shaking, his breath coming in short, desperate gasps. Zoro could feel how close he was, could feel the tension coiled tight in his body, ready to snap.

"You're so fucking beautiful like this," Zoro said, his voice rough with arousal. "All spread out for me. All mine."

"Yes," Sora gasped. "Yours. I'm yours."

Something in Zoro's chest tightened at those words as he stared up at the man, all strung out on pleasure. He took Sora back into his mouth, deep and fast now, no more teasing. He wanted to feel Sora come apart, wanted to taste it, wanted to be the one to give him this release.

Sora's hand tightened in his hair, his hips starting to move, fucking up into Zoro's mouth. Zoro let him, relaxing his throat, taking everything Sora gave him. The sounds Sora was making were desperate now, broken little gasps and moans that made Zoro's cock ache.

"I'm— Oh god, I'm— Tetsu, I'm gonna—"

Zoro pulled off just enough to speak, his hand stroking fast now.

"Come for me. Let me taste you."

He took Sora back into his mouth, all the way down, and sucked *hard*. Sora's whole body went rigid, his back arching off the bed.

"Fuck, fuck, *fuck*! Tetsu, I'm—"

His words dissolved into a broken cry as he came, hot and thick down Zoro's throat. Zoro groaned around him and swallowed it all down. The taste of him flooded Zoro's senses. A primal and possessive feeling roared to life in Zoro's chest.

He didn't pull off. He kept sucking, kept swallowing, working Sora through his orgasm and then beyond it. Sora was making these desperate, overwhelmed sounds, his thighs trembling violently on either side of Zoro's head, but he couldn't stop, didn't want to. That hungry beast inside him had finally been fed and the satisfaction of it was intoxicating.

He'd done this. He'd made Sora fall apart. He'd taken him to pieces and swallowed down every drop of his pleasure. Even as that beast settled, temporarily sated, it was already stirring again, wanting more. More of Sora's taste, more of his sounds, more of the way his body responded to Zoro's touch.

"Tetsu," Sora gasped, his voice wrecked. "Too much."

Zoro sucked harder, hollowing his cheeks, trying to draw out every drop. Sora's whole body jerked. He must be tipping into the realm of oversensitivity by now, but Zoro couldn't make himself stop. He wanted to devour him, wanted to consume every part of him until there was nothing left but this: Sora spread out beneath him, completely undone, completely his.

"*Tetsu*," Sora said again, more urgently this time. His hand tightened in Zoro's hair, pulling. "Stop. I'm too— I can't anymore. Need a break."

Zoro gave one last, lingering suck, then reluctantly pulled off. He looked up at Sora's blushing face and felt a surge of greed. He'd done that. He'd reduced this beautiful, sharp-tongued man to a trembling, oversensitive mess. He wanted to do it again and again and again.

He pressed a kiss to the inside of Sora's thigh, then licked his lips, savoring the lingering taste.

"You taste so fucking good," Zoro said, his voice rough and dark. "Could do that all night."

Sora let out a breathless, overwhelmed laugh.

"You're going to kill me."

"What a way to go though."

Zoro moved back up Sora's body, kissing him deeply. Sora could probably taste himself on Zoro's tongue. The thought made his cock throb painfully. They kissed for a long moment, hands roaming, bodies pressed together, before Sora pushed at Zoro's shoulders.

"My turn," Sora said, his voice rough and determined. "I want to taste you too."

“Yeah?”

Sora looked up at him, his eyes dark with hunger.

“I want to make you feel as good as you made me feel.”

They switched positions, Sora pushing Zoro onto his back and settling between his legs. He made quick work of Zoro’s jeans and underwear, leaving him in only his T-shirt. Zoro’s cock sprang free, hard and heavy and aching. Sora looked at it with undisguised hunger—and then froze.

“Fuck, you’re big,” he commented, almost reverently. His eyes widened slightly, taking in the considerable length and girth.

“That a problem?”

“I... no. No, I like it,” Sora admitted, shyly biting his lip. He looked up at Zoro through his lashes. There was an eagerness in that look that made Zoro’s breath catch, thought there was also a hint of uncertainty. “I’ve just never... you’re bigger than anyone I’ve...”

“We’ll take it slow,” Zoro said, his voice surprisingly gentle. “You set the pace.”

Sora nodded, then leaned back down. He wrapped his hand around Zoro’s cock, stroking experimentally, getting a feel for the weight and thickness of him. Zoro groaned at the sensation. Sora leaned down and licked a stripe up the underside, from base to tip. Zoro’s whole body went taut.

“Sensitive,” Sora said, echoing Zoro’s earlier observation.

“Shut up and suck me.”

Sora grinned, wicked and beautiful, and then took Zoro into his mouth.

Holy fuck.

The heat of Sora’s mouth was overwhelming. It was wet, hot and perfect. Sora took him in slowly, carefully, relaxing his throat around Zoro’s girth. He managed to take him about halfway before he felt the head of Zoro’s cock hit the back of his throat and he had to pull back, gasping slightly.

“Easy,” Zoro murmured, his hand gentle in Sora’s hair. “Just like that. You’re doing great.”

Sora tried again, this time taking a breath before attempting to go deeper. He got a little further, but the sheer size of Zoro seemed to make it challenging. He gagged slightly, his eyes watering, and pulled back again, coughing softly.

“Fuck, sorry,” Sora said, his voice rough.

“Don’t apologize. You’re perfect. Just take your time.”

Sora stroked Zoro with his hand while he caught his breath, then leaned back down. This time he was more confident, taking Zoro in and working his way down gradually, inch by inch. His jaw stretched around the thickness. The sight of it was intense, making heat pool in Zoro's belly as his cock throbbed against Sora's tongue.

"That's it," Zoro groaned. "You're doing so good. Taking me so well."

Sora shivered a little at the praise. He pulled back slightly, then tried again, pushing himself a little further each time. On the fourth attempt, he managed to take Zoro deeper, his throat relaxing around the considerable girth. He held him there for a moment, swallowing around him. The sensation made Zoro's hips jerk involuntarily.

"Fuck, Sora, that's so— *fuck*," he groaned.

Sora pulled back, gasping for air, his lips already swollen and wet. He dove back down, taking Zoro deep. Zoro's hips bucked up involuntarily again, but Sora didn't gag or pull away, he took everything Zoro gave him, his eyes watering slightly but his determination unwavering. The realization made something animalistic roar to life in Zoro's chest.

"You're so fucking big," Sora gasped between attempts, his voice filled with awe and desire. "I love it. Love how much you stretch my mouth."

Sora set a rhythm, bobbing his head, using his hand on what he couldn't fit in his mouth. His other hand cupped Zoro's balls, rolling them gently. Zoro thought he might actually die from how good it felt. Every nerve ending in his body was focused on the wet heat of Sora's mouth, the suction, the way his tongue worked the underside of Zoro's cock, the sight of those swollen lips stretched around his girth.

"You're fucking amazing at this," Zoro groaned, his voice rough.

Sora hummed around his cock and the vibration made Zoro's toes curl. He looked down and the sight nearly undid him. Sora between his legs, lips stretched obscenely around his cock, mask still in place, blond hair falling over his face looking like some kind of debauched angel. His eyes were half-lidded with pleasure, like he was getting off on this, like sucking Zoro off was exactly what he wanted to be doing.

Zoro had hooked up with plenty of guys before. Good-looking guys, skilled guys, guys who knew what they were doing. This felt different. This felt deeper for some reason that he didn't understand. Why did he want this man so badly? What was it about him? He didn't get why his chest felt tight and his gut flared with warmth every time Sora looked at him with those achingly familiar blue eyes, why he wanted to possess this man completely, why one night didn't feel like it would be enough.

Zoro felt his cock throbbing in Sora's mouth, close to a release. The blond pulled off with a wet sound, gasping for breath. His lips were swollen and red, spit-slick and obscene. Zoro wanted to kiss him so badly it hurt.

"Not yet," Sora said, throwing Zoro's words back at him. "I want to make this last."

“Evil,” Zoro said, but he was smiling.

Sora grinned and leaned back down, this time focusing on the head of Zoro’s cock. He swirled his tongue around it, dipping into the slit, before he took him deep again, all the way down. This time he managed it more easily, his throat relaxed and ready, before he held Zoro there, swallowing around him.

Zoro’s hand came up to tangle in Sora’s hair. Not pushing, just needing the connection.

Sora worked him with single-minded devotion, alternating between deep, throat-fucking strokes and teasing attention to the head. He was cataloguing Zoro’s reactions, learning what made him gasp, what made his hips buck, what made his grip tighten in Sora’s hair. He was using that knowledge ruthlessly, building Zoro’s pleasure higher and higher until he was trembling with it.

“Sora, you’re so good. That’s perfect, you’re perfect. Taking all of me like that.”

Sora pulled off again. Zoro made a sound of protest. Sora grinned up at him teasingly then leaned down to mouth at Zoro’s balls. He sucked one into his mouth, rolling it gently with his tongue.

“*Fuck*,” Zoro groaned.

Sora hummed in pleasure before he took Zoro’s cock into his mouth again. He sucked hard, hollowing his cheeks, taking him deep with practiced ease now. Zoro’s vision went white at the edges.

“I’m close,” Zoro warned, his voice strained.

Sora didn’t pull off. He took Zoro deeper, relaxing his throat completely, and looked up at him with those dark, hungry eyes. The message was clear.

That was all it took.

Zoro’s orgasm hit him with the force of a sea train. His whole body went rigid, his hand tightening in Sora’s hair and he came hard, spilling down Sora’s throat. Sora swallowed it all, sucking and swallowing until Zoro was completely spent.

The satisfaction was primal, overwhelming. That beast inside him roared in triumph. He’d marked this man, claimed him, filled him with his come. Sora had taken it all, swallowed it down like it was exactly what he wanted. The possessive satisfaction of that was almost as intense as the orgasm itself.

Mine. He’s mine.

Sora pulled off slowly, licking his lips. Zoro watched him with dark, hungry eyes. The blond looked debauched, his lips swollen and red, his mask slightly askew, his eyes glazed with arousal. He looked perfect and Zoro wanted more.

The realization hit him like a punch to the gut. He'd just come harder than he had in a long time. That beast inside him should have been sated, but if anything, it was more ravenous than before, prowling and hungry and demanding *more*.

He wanted to fuck Sora, wanted to be inside him, wanted to feel him clench around his cock, wanted to make him fall apart again, wanted to possess him completely, in every way possible.

What was it about this man that made Zoro feel like this?

He didn't understand why the need was this intense, but he knew with absolute certainty that he needed Sora. One night wasn't going to be enough. A hundred nights might not be enough. He had him tonight though and he was going to have him in every way he could.

Sora crawled back up his body and they kissed again. Zoro could taste himself on Sora's tongue, and it was intoxicating. They rolled together, hands and mouths everywhere, until Zoro was on top again.

"I want to fuck you," Zoro said, his voice rough. "I want to be inside you."

Sora's eyes darkened.

"Yes, please."

Zoro placed another kiss to Sora's lips before glancing over to the tray on the nightstand. He grabbed a bottle of lube and the right size condom, setting them on the bed beside them.

"How do you want me?" Sora asked.

Zoro's mind went blank for a moment, overwhelmed by the possibilities.

"Hands and knees. I want to see you like that."

Sora shivered and then rolled over, getting into position. Zoro took a moment to just look at him. the bare expanse of his back, smooth and pale in the dim light. The curve of his spine leading down to his ass. The muscles shifted beneath his skin as he adjusted his position. Zoro ran his hands over Sora's bare back, down to his ass, squeezing and kneading. Sora pushed back into the touch and Zoro spread him open, revealing his hole.

"Fuck, you're perfect."

"Tetsu, please."

"I've got you."

Zoro leaned down and licked a stripe over the puckered skin, causing Sora's whole body to jerk in surprise.

Zoro did it again, then again, using his tongue to tease and explore. He took his time, savoring the taste, the intimacy of it. He licked and sucked, occasionally pulling back to bite

gently at the curve of Sora's ass before returning to his hole.

Sora was making the most incredible sounds, gasping and moaning, his hands fisting in the sheets. His thighs were trembling and Zoro could see he was getting hard again.

"Tetsu, that feels amazing."

Zoro hummed in satisfaction and continued his work, using his tongue to open Sora up, to make him relax and melt into the sensation. He was thorough, patient, taking genuine pleasure in every gasp and moan he drew from Sora's lips.

After several long minutes of Sora trembling and gasping, Zoro pulled back and reached for the lube. He slicked up his fingers, then pressed one against Sora's hole. It slid in easily, Sora being relaxed from Zoro's mouth. Still, he worked his finger in slowly and carefully.

"More," Sora said, his voice shaky. "I can take more."

Zoro added a second finger, scissoring gently to stretch him.

"You doing okay?"

"Yeah, I just—" Sora paused. There was something vulnerable in his voice when he continued. "I've never had someone as big as you before. I'm a little nervous."

"Hey," he said softly, leaning over to press a kiss to Sora's spine. "I'm not going to hurt you. I promise. We'll take as much time as you need."

"Okay." Sora's voice was small. "Okay, I trust you."

Those words hit Zoro harder than they should have. This beautiful stranger trusted him, was vulnerable for him, and Zoro was going to make damn sure he deserved that trust.

He worked his fingers slowly, carefully, adding more lube when needed. When he added a third finger, Sora tensed slightly. Zoro immediately stilled.

"Breathe," he advised gently. "Just breathe for me."

Sora took a shaky breath and Zoro felt him relax around his fingers. He moved them slowly, carefully, searching. When he found Sora's prostate, the blond gasped.

"There," Sora breathed. "Right there."

Zoro massaged the spot gently and Sora's whole body shuddered.

"That feel good?"

"*Yes*."

Zoro kept it up, building Sora's pleasure. He wasn't rushing this. He wanted Sora to feel nothing but pleasure, wanted to make this perfect for him. His fingers worked steadily,

stretching and preparing him, occasionally brushing over that spot that made Sora gasp and tremble.

“You’re doing so good,” Zoro murmured. “Taking my fingers so well. You’re perfect, Sora.”

Sora made a broken sound, his hips pushing back against Zoro’s hand.

“I’ve got you. I’m going to make this so good for you.”

He added more lube, working a fourth finger in slowly. Sora was panting now, his body trembling, but he was relaxed, open, taking everything Zoro gave him.

“Tetsu,” Sora said, his voice thick with emotion. “Thank you. For being so careful with me.”

Zoro’s chest felt tight.

“Of course. You’re—” He paused, searching for words. “You’re special. I want this to be good for you.”

Sora was quiet for a moment, and when he spoke again, his voice was soft.

“I’m really glad I met you tonight.”

“Me too,” Zoro said.

He meant it with an intensity that surprised him. Sora shifted, turning to look over his shoulder at Zoro. His eyes were dark and soft, filled with something that looked almost like affection.

“Tetsu, before we do this, I want to see you. Really see you.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.” Sora carefully pulled away from Zoro’s fingers, turning to face him. He reached up to touch his mask. “I want to take these off. I want to see your face when you’re inside me.”

Zoro’s heart was pounding.

“You sure?”

“I’m sure.” Sora’s hands were trembling slightly as he reached for the ribbons at the back of his head. “I want to see you. All of you.”

“Okay,” Zoro said, his voice rough.

Sora untied the ribbons slowly, then pulled the mask off, revealing his face inch by inch.

Zoro’s world tilted on its axis.

He knew that face. He knew those eyebrows, that jawline, that mouth. He’d seen them every day for years.

“Cook?” he said, his voice barely above a whisper.

Sanji (because it *was* Sanji, it was fucking *Sanji,* and Zoro was such an idiot for not realizing it sooner) froze completely. His eyes went wide, pupils dilating with shock.

“What?”

Zoro reached up, pulled off his own mask with trembling fingers and watched as recognition crashed over Sanji’s face like a wave.

“Moss?”

Chapter 2: Masks Off

Zoro and Sanji stared at each other in shock. The greenhead's mind was reeling, trying to reconcile the man he'd been with all night with the cook he'd been fighting with for years. He felt like an idiot for not realizing it sooner. The mask covered half Sanji's face, including his eyebrows. His hair was slicked back and not falling into his eyes, at least before they got into the bedroom and it became a mess. Downstairs, with the music, Sanji's voice didn't register as familiar to him. In the room with their… activities, well he'd never heard Sanji sound like this.

Still, he felt like a dumbass for not realizing. The clues were there. He was a cook on a ship, but his thighs showed clear signs that he fought frequently with his legs. His birthday was March 2nd, his favorite color was blue, he was a morning person.

(And he should've known that the only man who would've awoken a hunger like this inside of him would've been Sanji, even if he didn't know it was him.)

Zoro hadn't ever conceived of seeing Sanji in a place like this. As far as he knew, Sanji was one of the straightest men he'd ever met. Beyond that, Sora had been much more… relaxed than he'd ever been as Sanji. More hesitant and shy and yet less wound up and on edge.

That was Sora, but the man in front of him looked like he was about to shatter, panic flooding his features.

"No," Sanji breathed, already scrambling backward on the bed.

"Cook…"

"No, no, no, this can't be happening."

"Cook, wait."

"I have to go."

Sanji was off the bed in an instant, looking around wildly for his clothes. His hands were shaking so badly he could barely pull his shirt on.

"I have to leave. This was a mistake, this was such a fucking mistake. So stupid."

Zoro stood up before his brain could catch up with his body, moving to intercept him.

"Cook, just wait a second."

"No!" Sanji's voice cracked. He clutched his pants to his chest like a shield, backing toward the door. "I can't do this. You don't understand."

“Then help me understand.” Zoro took a careful step forward, hands raised placatingly. “Just talk to me.”

“There’s nothing to talk about!” Sanji was at the door now, reaching for the handle. “This was supposed to be anonymous, it was supposed to be safe, and now you know, and I can’t… I can’t do this.”

Zoro moved quickly, placing his hand flat against the door to keep it closed.

“I’m not letting you run.”

“Get out of my way.” Sanji’s voice was rising, edged with hysteria. “I need to leave.”

“No.” Zoro kept his voice calm, steady. “Not like this. Not when you’re panicking.”

“I’m not panicking!” Sanji was definitely panicking. His breathing was too fast, his face flushed and his whole body was shaking. “I just need to get out of here.”

“Cook. *Sanji*.” Zoro reached out slowly, telegraphing the movement, and placed his free hand on Sanji’s shoulder. “Breathe.”

Sanji jerked away from the touch like he’d been burned.

“Don’t touch me! Don’t— you can’t just—” He pressed his hands to his face, his pants falling to the floor. “Oh god, oh god, what did I do? What the fuck did I do?”

“We didn’t do anything wrong.”

“Didn’t do anything—” Sanji’s laugh was sharp and broken. “I just fucked my crewmate! I had your cock in my mouth. I let you… *do* things to me and now you know that I’m bi and you’re going to tell everyone.”

“I’m not going to tell anyone.”

Sanji’s hands dropped from his face, his expression wild.

“You expect me to believe that? You’re going to hold this over me. You’re going to tell the whole crew that I’m— that we—”

“I’m not going to do anything.” Zoro kept his voice level, his hand still on the door. “I’m not going to tell anyone and I’m not going to use this against you. I just need you to calm down and listen to me.”

Sanji was pacing now, three steps one way, three steps back, like a caged animal.

“I can’t be here! Everyone’s going to know, they’re going to figure it out. I’m not ready.”

“No one’s going to know unless we tell them.”

“You don’t know that! Someone could have seen us come up here together. Someone could —” Sanji’s breathing was getting faster, more ragged. “And you’re going to tell them anyway. You’re going to—”

He made another lunge for the door, regardless of being only half-clothed, trying to duck under Zoro’s arm. Zoro caught him gently around the waist, pulling him back.

“Stupid fucking Mosshead! Let me go!” Sanji struggled against him, though notably not with his full strength.

“I can’t.”

“Zoro, please. Just let me go,” Sanji begged desperately.

Zoro turned Sanji to face him, keeping his grip loose enough that Sanji could break free if he really wanted to, but holding him to his chest nonetheless.

“I can’t let you run away from this.”

“Why not?” Sanji’s voice broke on the words. “Why do you even care? This is perfect for you, isn’t it? You can use this against me, you can make me do whatever you want, you can threaten to out me.”

“You know me better than that. I would never do that to you. Never.”

“I know!” Sanji’s voice cracked, tears spilling over. “I know, but I can’t think straight right now, I can’t—”

He cut himself off, pressing his hands to his face again as his body trembled against Zoro’s chest.

“Hey, Look at me.”

“I can’t.”

“Yes, you can.”

Zoro relinquished his hold on Sanji’s waist and reached up slowly, giving him time to pull away. When he didn’t, he cupped his face with both hands gently.

“I’m not lying to you. I’m not playing games. I’m sure as hell not going to tell anyone anything.”

Sanji was trembling under his touch. He dropped his hands to reveal the tears streaming down his face.

“You’re just saying that because—”

“I’m saying it because it’s true.” Zoro’s thumbs brushed away Sanji’s tears. “I’ve wanted you for so long. Finding out that the man I’ve been falling for all night is *you*? That doesn’t make

me want you less. It makes me want you more.”

Sanji’s breath hitched at that, staring at Zoro with those wide blue eyes.

(He should’ve recognized those eyes the moment he saw them.)

“You’re lying,” Sanji protested.

“I’m not.”

“You have to be. We fight all the time, you can barely stand me.”

“Is that what you think?” Zoro asked quietly.

“I—” Sanji faltered, his certainty wavering. “We’re always arguing.”

“Because I don’t know how else to get your attention.” The admission came out rougher than Zoro intended. “Watching you flirt with every woman we meet drives me insane. I didn’t know how to tell you that I want you to look at me like that.”

Sanji was staring at him, his expression one of total disbelief.

“You... what?”

“I want you, Sanji. I just didn’t think you’d ever want me back.”

“That’s— You can’t just—” Sanji shook his head, but he didn’t pull away from where his face was still cradled between Zoro’s hands. “You’re just saying that because we had sex, because you feel like you have to.”

Zoro leaned in closer, his forehead almost touching Sanji’s.

“This isn’t about the sex. This is about you. It’s always been about you.”

“But—” Sanji’s voice was small, broken. “But what if you’re lying? What if this is just— what if you’re going to use this against me?”

“Sanji.” Zoro’s voice was soft but firm. “You know me. You’ve known me for years. Have I ever lied to you about something that mattered?”

“…No.”

“Have I ever used anything against you? Really used it against you?”

“No,” Sanji answered, his voice barely a whisper.

“Then why would I start now? Why would I do that to you when I care about you this much?”

Sanji was trembling, his eyes searching Zoro’s face.

“I know you’re scared, but I won’t hurt you. I swear on my honor as a swordsman, I won’t.”

Zoro leaned in and pressed a soft kiss to Sanji’s forehead. The gentle touch seemed to break something in Sanji. His hands came up to grip Zoro’s wrists, not pulling away but holding on like the touch was the only thing keeping him grounded.

“What if we just ruined everything? The crew... I can’t…”

“Nothing is ruined. The crew is fine, this doesn’t have to change anything for them.”

Zoro pressed another kiss to Sanji’s temple, then his cheek.

“You don’t know that,” Sanji rebutted.

His voice was softer now, less panicked.

“Maybe not.” Zoro’s lips brushed against Sanji’s jaw. “But I’m willing to take that risk. Are you?”

Sanji’s breath hitched as Zoro’s mouth moved to his neck, pressing gentle, reassuring kisses to his pulse point just beneath his silk collar.

“Zoro...”

“I want you, Sanji.” Zoro’s hands slid from Sanji’s face to his neck, his thumbs rubbing soothing circles. “Not just for sex. Not just for tonight. I want *you*.”

Sanji pulled back to stare at him, as if gauging the veracity of his words.

“How can you want me when I’m such a mess?”

“Because you’re strong, talented and passionate. Because you care about everyone even when you pretend not to. Because you’re one of the only people I can trust to have my back, to fight as my equal. Because you’re gorgeous. You’re one of the most beautiful men I’ve ever seen.”

Sanji was staring at him with a mixture of disbelief and desperate hope, tears still streaming down his face, but his breathing was starting to slow.

“I’m sorry. I know you wouldn’t out me or use this against me. I was panicking and my brain wouldn’t listen to what I know is true.”

Zoro’s thumb brushed away another tear.

“It’s fine. I’m not going anywhere,” he replied, leaning in to kiss him softly, just a faint brush of lips, but Sanji still shivered at the action.

The blond made a small sound, something between a sob and a laugh. “This is crazy. We shouldn’t be doing this.”

“Do you want this?”

“I shouldn’t—”

“Don’t think about what you *should* be feeling. Do you want this?”

Sanji stared at him, tears clinging to his eyelashes and his blue eyes shining with so many emotions Zoro couldn’t read them all. When Sanji answered, his voice was barely audible.

“Yes.”

“Then the rest is just noise.”

Zoro kissed him again. This time when their lips met, Sanji kissed back. It was tentative at first, still fragile with fear, but as Zoro’s hands slid down to his waist, pulling him closer, he kissed back with more fervor, his hands clutching at Zoro’s t-shirt desperately.

Zoro moved to his jaw, then his neck, pressing kisses that were both tender and heated. Sanji’s head fell back, giving Zoro better access as a soft moan escaped his lips. Zoro’s hands tightened on Sanji’s waist. When they broke apart, both breathing hard, Sanji seemed to have completely calmed down.

“I’m probably going to panic again and I can’t promise I’ll be ready to tell anyone anytime soon,” Sanji admitted quietly.

“I’m not asking you to.” Zoro’s hand tightened on the back of Sanji’s neck. “I’m just asking you to stay. To give this a chance. To give us a chance.”

Sanji was quiet for a long moment, his eyes searching Zoro’s face. Then, slowly, he nodded.

“Okay,” he whispered. “Okay, I’ll stay.”

The relief that flooded through Zoro was almost overwhelming.

“But if you’re lying to me or if this is some kind of joke—”

“It’s not. I swear to you, what I feel is real.”

“I want to believe you. I want this to be real.”

“Let me prove it to you.”

Zoro leaned in and kissed him again. Sanji responded with equal intensity. Zoro tilted his head, deepening the kiss into something much more passionate than before. Sanji’s mouth opened under Zoro’s, his tongue sliding against his in a way that made heat pool low in his belly.

They stood there for a while, lips locked and the heat between them building with every passing second. Zoro’s tongue traced along Sanji’s lower lip before delving deeper still. Sanji made a soft sound of pleasure that went straight to Zoro’s cock, which was still half-hard.

Their breathing grew heavier as the kiss intensified, each exhale mingling with the other's in the charged air between them. Half-naked bodies pressed close together as if they couldn't bear even an inch of distance between them, skin against skin, heartbeat against heartbeat. The heat radiating from their bodies seemed to fill the entire room. Sanji's hands slid from Zoro's broad shoulders to his chest, fingers tracing the defined muscles and old scars that mapped out years of battles and training, then down to his waist, pulling him impossibly closer. Every point of contact between them felt like lightning, sending shivers down their spines despite the warmth.

Both men groaned deeply as their sensitive groins pressed firmly against the other's, the heat between them intensifying with every movement. Their half-hard, leaking members brushed together, creating waves of delicious friction that sent shivers coursing through their bodies. Each subtle shift and roll of their hips amplified the sensation, drawing out breathless gasps and low moans as they lost themselves in the intimate contact, their arousal building steadily with every passing moment. Time seemed to stand still in that moment, the rest of the world fading away until there was nothing but the two of them and the connection sparking between their intertwined forms.

They rested their foreheads against each other when they finally pulled away, both of them breathing heavy.

"I mean it, Sanji. I want this. I want you. However I can have you," he told him, his voice rough with desire.

"I want you too," he breathed against Zoro's lips.

"Then have me."

~*~*~

They stumbled backward toward the bed, their feet tangling together as they moved, still kissing deeply, still touching everywhere they could reach, unable to break apart even for a moment. The air between them felt electric, charged with years of unspoken tension finally finding release. When the back of Sanji's legs hit the edge of the mattress, they fell together onto the soft surface, the sudden shift in balance making them laugh breathlessly against each other's lips. This time there was no hesitation, no uncertainty, no second-guessing what they both wanted. Sanji couldn't stop touching him. His hands roamed across broad shoulders, down a strong back, mapping every curve and plane like he was trying to memorize the feeling through his fingertips alone.

Now that he knew, now that the masks were off and the truth was laid bare between them, he couldn't keep his hands to himself. His fingers traced the familiar scars on Zoro's chest, mapping territory he'd memorized from afar but never dared to touch. This was Zoro. Zoro, who he'd been fighting with and fighting beside for years, through countless battles and impossible odds. Zoro, who he'd secretly wanted for so long he'd almost convinced himself it wasn't real, that the longing was just a trick of proximity, of shared danger, of too many nights sleeping back-to-back under foreign stars. Zoro, who apparently wanted him back with the same desperate intensity, if the way he was gripping his waist was any indication.

Zoro flipped them over so Sanji was on top of him, straddling his hips. He looked down at the swordsman and found himself trapped in Zoro's gaze. Without the mask obscuring his features, he could see everything with startling clarity. The scar over Zoro's eye, pale and jagged. The intensity in that silver orb pierced right through him, making his breath catch in his throat. The way his lips were slightly swollen and reddened from kissing, parted just enough to reveal shallow breaths. The sharp angle of his jaw, the flush spreading across his cheekbones, the way a few strands of green hair fell across his forehead. He was beautiful, devastatingly so, and Sanji had been an idiot for not seeing it sooner.

He still couldn't believe that Tetsu, the man who had drawn him in so easily with that confident smile and that piercing eye, who called him pretty like it was the most natural thing in the world, who had made him feel so safe and protected almost instantly from the moment they met, the one who took such careful time and consideration to make sure everything felt good for him, who was so attentive to every little reaction and response. That man was Zoro. Brutish, stoic, perpetually sweaty and smelly, hopelessly directionally challenged Zoro who got lost walking in straight lines, who communicated primarily in grunts and single syllables, who wouldn't know romance if it walked up and stole all three of his swords right from their sheaths.

The night had proved that there was more to Zoro than Sanji had ever imagined.

He leaned down and kissed him, slow and deep. Zoro's hands slid beneath the hem of his shirt to grip his bare hips. Sanji could feel Zoro already hard again beneath him. The knowledge sent a thrill through him. He glanced down at Zoro's half-hard member. He'd caught glimpses in the bath before, but never when he was erect. He was the biggest Sanji had ever taken and he was both undeniably aroused by the prospect and nervous. Zoro had prepared him thoroughly before his freak out, but they hadn't gotten to the part where he had actually been inside him. Sanji found that he wanted it even more than he had before.

He ground down against Zoro's hard member, drawing a groan from Zoro that lit a fire in him. That had been happening all night. He had gained an inordinate amount of pleasure drawing out Tetsu's sounds, his groans, his curses, his praises. He had felt drunk on it all and been mystified why this encounter with a stranger was affecting him like this. Now he knew better.

It was because it was Zoro. Maybe some part of his soul recognized the other man and drew him towards him like a moth to a flame.

Sanji's hands trembled as they moved across Zoro's chest, fingers tracing the defined muscles beneath warm skin. He gasped softly at the sensation. It had been so long since he'd been able to touch someone like this, freely and without rushing. His palms ran over Zoro's shoulders, mapping the solid strength there, then down his arms, feeling the corded muscle flex beneath his touch.

"Seas," Sanji breathed, his fingers finding the scars that marked Zoro's body. He traced them reverently, like he was reading a story written in his skin. Each one was a testament to Zoro's strength, his dedication, his unwavering resolve. Sanji leaned down to kiss one, then another, his lips following the path his fingers had taken.

Zoro’s breath hitched beneath him and Sanji made a small needy sound in response. He couldn’t seem to stop touching, his hands roaming restlessly across Zoro’s back, feeling the muscles shift and move beneath his palms. His touch was almost desperate, like he was afraid Zoro might disappear if he wasn’t constantly in contact.

“You’re so...” Sanji started, but couldn’t find the words. Instead, he let his hands speak for him. He grabbed the neglected lube bottle and poured some in his hand before he wrapped his fingers around Zoro’s hardening cock.

He stroked slowly, deliberately, feeling it grow fully hard in his palm. The weight and girth made Sanji’s breath catch. Glimpses were nothing compared to this. This was Zoro, fully aroused, and Sanji found himself in awe of him. His hand looked almost small wrapped around Zoro. He stroked again, watching Zoro’s reaction. The satisfaction that flooded through him at Zoro’s groan was intoxicating.

He stroked with both hands, one wrapped around the shaft while the other explored, learning the weight and feel of him. His touch was almost worshipful and he couldn’t seem to stop the small needy sounds escaping his throat.

He shifted his position, needing more contact. He ground his hips down against Zoro’s and the friction made him gasp, his own hardness sliding against Zoro’s as they moved together. Zoro’s hands gripped his hips, helping him move, and Sanji whimpered at the touch.

He continued to grind against Zoro, their cocks sliding together, the lube and pre-come making the friction slick and perfect. Sanji’s hands roamed over Zoro’s chest and shoulders, unable to settle, needing to touch everywhere at once. He was gasping with each movement, his body responding to every sensation with an intensity that surprised him.

“You’re so responsive,” Zoro murmured, his lips finding Sanji’s neck.

“Only for you,” Sanji admitted, the words tumbling out before he could stop them. “Fuck, Zoro, I need you.”

He pulled Zoro closer, kissing him desperately, like he was drowning and Zoro was air itself. Their mouths moved together with increasing urgency as they continued to grind against one another, their bodies finding a rhythm that felt right. Every thrust, every roll of hips felt like it had been written into their very DNA, like they were made for this very moment.

“You still wanna fuck me, Mosshead?” Sanji murmured against Zoro’s lips, his breath hot and ragged, voice rough with desire and anticipation.

“You still want it?” Zoro growled back, his grip tightening possessively on Sanji’s hips.

Sanji kissed him deeper in response. They kissed for a long time, exploring each other’s mouth. It was different now that they knew who the other was. Every touch felt more significant, more weighted with history. Sanji thought about all the times they’d fought, all the times they’d stood back to back in battle, all the times he’d watched Zoro train and felt that confusing mix of admiration and desire.

Sanji made Zoro sit up and he finally pulled the t-shirt off of him, revealing his scarred chest. He was sure that had he taken it off earlier, he would've realized Tetsu was Zoro from the scars alone.

Sanji's breath caught as his fingers found the familiar landscape of scars, each one a map of battles they'd fought, of dangers they'd survived. His hands trembled as they traced the lines, following the story written in Zoro's skin. Sanji's chest tightened with the weight of the years of watching from a distance, the longing he'd buried, but here with Zoro's scarred chest beneath his palms, with the man's real face finally visible in the lamplight, all his carefully constructed walls were beginning to crumble.

"I've watched you train sometimes. I'd tell myself I was just... I don't know, assessing the competition or something. But really I just wanted to look at you."

Zoro's expression softened.

"I knew."

Sanji's eyes widened.

"You knew?"

"I could feel you watching. I didn't know why, but I liked it. You'd start to look away and I wanted to keep your attention, so I'd start a fight."

"And I'd take the bait because I wanted to keep being around you but fighting felt safer than… this."

Sanji shook his head at their past antics.

"We're both idiots."

"Probably."

Sanji leaned down and kissed Zoro's chest, working his way down deliberately. He wanted to taste every inch of him, to memorize the feel of his skin, to make up for all the lost time they'd spent dancing around each other. He took his time, savoring each moment, lavishing attention on Zoro's nipples with his tongue until they were hard peaks. He traced the defined ridges of Zoro's abs with open-mouthed kisses, feeling the muscles twitch and tense beneath his lips. His hands mapped out the broad expanse of his chest and shoulders as his mouth continued its journey downward, following the tantalizing V of muscle that led down to his cock, kissing and nipping at the sensitive skin along his hip bones.

Sanji took Zoro's cock back in his hand, stroking slowly, his fingers wrapping around the heated length. Zoro was hard and leaking, his body responding eagerly to Sanji's touch. He felt a surge of satisfaction knowing he had this effect on the swordsman. He leaned down, his blonde hair falling forward to frame his face, and licked the head with the flat of his tongue, tasting the bead of precome that had gathered there. The salty-sweet flavor made him hum with approval as he savored the moment.

“Fuck,” Zoro hissed.

Sanji took him into his mouth, his lips stretching over his considerable girth. It felt different this time knowing that it was Zoro. Zoro’s cock in his mouth, Zoro’s hands in his hair, Zoro’s voice saying his name. It made everything more intense, more real, more meaningful. The weight of that knowledge settled over him like a warm blanket and he found himself wanting to savor every second of this.

He worked Zoro with his mouth and hand, taking him deep, using all the tricks he knew, every technique he’d learned and perfected through numerous anonymous encounters. His tongue traced along the underside, mapping every ridge and vein, swirling around the head in slow, teasing circles that made Zoro’s thighs tense beneath his palms, while his hand stroked what he couldn’t fit in his mouth in a steady, rhythmic motion, twisting slightly at the base for added stimulation. He hollowed his cheeks and sucked hard, creating an intense pressure and suction that made Zoro’s breath hitch audibly and his fingers tighten in Sanji’s hair. He pulled back slowly to tease the sensitive tip with feather-light licks and gentle kisses, his tongue flicking against the slit before tracing the ridge of the head.

He felt an almost desperate need to impress Zoro, to blow his mind completely, to make him want to keep Sanji around for more than just this one night, to prove beyond any doubt that he was worth it, that he could offer something no one else could, that he was irreplaceable. This wasn’t just about pleasure, it was about making himself indispensable, about embedding himself so deeply in Zoro’s memory that the swordsman would crave this again and again.

Zoro was vocal, groaning and cursing under his breath in that rough, gravelly voice that sent shivers down Sanji’s spine, his hips moving in small, involuntary thrusts that Sanji eagerly encouraged, relaxing his throat and opening up to take him deeper, fighting back his gag reflex through sheer determination and practice. The sounds coming from above him were addictive. Every grunt, every sharp intake of breath, every muttered curse was like a drug coursing through Sanji’s veins.

He loved it, loved the raw power he had in this moment, loved the way Zoro fell apart for him piece by piece, loved knowing that he was the one making Zoro lose control like this, that he could reduce this strong, stoic, seemingly unshakeable man to a desperate mess with nothing but his mouth and hands.

“Curls, I’m going to come.”

Sanji pulled off, his lips swollen and slick. He looked up at Zoro through his lashes, his heart pounding.

“Not unless you’re inside me,” he said, his voice rough from their activities.

Zoro’s eye darkened, something possessive and tender flickering across his face.

“Come here.”

Zoro pulled him into a deep kiss, tasting himself on Sanji’s tongue. His hands roamed over Sanji’s back, pushing his shirt off his shoulders before removing it completely. When they

broke apart, Zoro's expression was serious.

"I'm going to prepare you again," he said.

"You already—"

"I don't care. I need to make sure I'm not going to hurt you."

"I can take it," Sanji protested, his ego flaring.

"You said I'm bigger than you've had before. Forget about your pride, I'm doing this right."

Sanji's chest tightened at the care in Zoro's voice, at the unexpected tenderness behind those gruff words. There was something almost protective in the way Zoro looked at him, his silver eye serious and focused. He nodded and let Zoro guide him onto his back. The sheets were cool against his heated skin as he lay back on the mattress.

The greenhead settled between his legs, his calloused hands warm on Sanji's thighs as he positioned himself. Zoro paused for a moment, looking down at him with an intensity that made Sanji's breath catch. Zoro leaned forward and pressed a soft kiss to his lips.

"You're so fucking beautiful."

He blushed in response.

"Sh— shut up."

Zoro smirked at the reply before he reached for the lube. He slicked his fingers generously, making sure they were thoroughly coated. The wet, slick noise seemed amplified in the stillness, broken only by their heavy breathing.

"Spread your legs for me," Zoro said, his voice low and commanding.

Sanji obeyed, feeling exposed and vulnerable in the best way. His heart hammered against his ribs as Zoro's lubed fingers traced around his entrance, teasing but not entering yet. The anticipation made him shiver.

Zoro started with one finger, sliding it in easily. Sanji was still loose from before, but Zoro took his time anyway, working him open carefully. He watched Sanji's face intently, cataloging every micro-expression, every hitch of breath.

"You're doing so good," Zoro murmured, his voice rough with desire, each word dripping with intensity. "Taking my fingers so well. So perfect for me."

Sanji felt heat rise to his cheeks, a flush spreading across his face and down his neck before shame flooded in like a tidal wave, and he looked away, unable to meet Zoro's gaze any longer.

"Shut up, you don't have to narrate everything," Sanji muttered, though his voice wavered and betrayed how affected he actually was. "It's embarrassing when you say it out loud like

that.”

“I want to.” Zoro’s finger curled, lingering on the edges of his sweet spot. “You like hearing it, don’t you? How good you are for me.”

“I don’t,” Sanji tried to deny, but his body betrayed him, clenching around Zoro’s finger. “You’re being ridiculous, mosshead.”

Zoro added a second finger, stretching him carefully. Sanji bit his lip to keep from making a sound. The stretch felt too good, but he didn’t want Zoro to know how much it affected him.

“You’re so responsive,” he said, his eye dark with hunger.

“Every time I touch you here—”, he pressed against Sanji’s sweet spot, causing his hips to jerk involuntarily, “—you clench around me. Your body knows what it wants even if you won’t admit it.”

“S-Stop being such a — *ah* — such a pathetic bastard,” Sanji gasped, his hands fisting in the sheets. “You sound like you’re reading from a— *fuck*— a bad romance novel.”

“Do I?” Zoro’s voice was amused now, almost teasing. He added more lube and worked his fingers deeper, scissoring them to stretch Sanji further. “Then why are you getting harder?”

Sanji’s face burned in response.

“Fuck you.”

“Soon,” Zoro added a third finger. Sanji tensed a little at the increased stretch. Zoro immediately stilled, his free hand stroking Sanji’s thigh soothingly. “Breathe for me. You’re doing so well, Sanji.”

“Stop—” Sanji’s voice cracked. “Stop saying shit like that. It’s weird.”

“Is it?” Zoro’s fingers moved again, working him open with maddening patience. “Because your cock is leaking all over your stomach. Seems like you like it when I tell you how good you are.”

“I don’t,” Sanji insisted, but his voice was weak, unconvincing even to his own ears. “You’re just— you’re being a sentimental asshole and—”

“And you love it.” Zoro’s voice was knowing, almost smug. He thrust his fingers deeper, finding that spot inside Sanji again and making him see stars. “You were such a good boy when you had that mask on. Didn’t argue, didn’t deflect. Just took everything I gave you and begged for more.”

Sanji’s breath caught. “I’m not— I don’t—”

“You can’t hide from me now, Sanji.” Zoro added more lube, working a fourth finger against Sanji’s entrance. “I can see your face, see how much you want this. How much you want me to tell you how perfect you are.”

“Shut up,” Sanji said, but there was no heat in it. His defenses were crumbling, piece by piece. “You don’t know what you’re talking about, you stupid shitty swordsman.”

“Don’t I?” Zoro pushed the fourth finger in carefully and Sanji whimpered at the stretch. “Then why do you clench around me every time I compliment you? Why does your breathing change? Why do you look at me like that?”

“Like what?” Sanji demanded, trying to summon some of their usual antagonism, but his voice came out breathy and desperate instead.

“Like you’re starving for it.” Zoro’s fingers moved inside him, stretching him, preparing him. “Like you need to hear how good you are. How beautiful. How well you take me.”

Sanji felt something crack open inside him, all his carefully constructed defenses shattering. He couldn’t keep fighting it, couldn’t keep pretending he didn’t want exactly what Zoro was offering.

“Yes,” he admitted, his voice small and broken. “Yes, I—fuck, yes. I want it. I want to hear it.”

“There you are.” Zoro’s expression softened, something tender and possessive flickering in his eye. “That’s my good boy. It’s so much better when you stop fighting it.”

The praise washed over Sanji like warm honey, sweet and intoxicating, and he went pliant beneath Zoro, all resistance melting away like ice under the summer sun. His body relaxed incrementally, muscles loosening one by one, opening up further for Zoro’s fingers as he felt himself surrender completely. The tension he’d been holding in his shoulders dissipated, his breathing deepened and he let himself sink into the sensation. Every word of encouragement from Zoro stripped away another layer of his defenses, leaving him vulnerable and exposed in the best possible way.

“That’s it,” Zoro murmured, working his four fingers deeper, stretching Sanji thoroughly. “Just like that. You’re doing so well for me, Sanji. So fucking perfect.”

Sanji whimpered, his hands reaching for Zoro, needing to touch him, to anchor himself. “*Please*.”

“I know what you need.” Zoro’s voice was rough with desire and affection. “You need to hear how good you are. How beautiful you look like this, spread open for me. How much I love watching you take my fingers.”

“Yes,” Sanji breathed, his eyes fluttering closed. “Yes, please, more.”

“You’re perfect, Sanji. So fucking perfect,” Zoro murmured, his voice rough with desire and admiration. His fingers moved inside him, massaging his prostate with rhythmic strokes that sent waves of pleasure coursing through Sanji’s body.

“Look at you, taking four fingers so beautifully. You’re already open and ready for me.” Zoro’s breath was hot against Sanji’s ear as he continued, his words dripping with promise

and need. “You’re going to take my cock so well, aren’t you? Going to be so good for me, so perfect. I can feel how much you want this, how much you need it.”

Sanji moaned, his hips rocking into the sensation, chasing the pleasure Zoro was giving him. Every touch sent electricity coursing through his body, igniting nerves he didn’t even know existed.

The praise kept coming in a steady stream, each word dripping with sincerity and desire. Sanji drank it in greedily, let it fill all the empty spaces inside him that had been hollow for far too long. He’d spent so much of his life starving for this kind of affection, this kind of validation, and now that he had it, he couldn’t get enough. Zoro’s voice wrapped around him like a warm blanket, making him feel seen and wanted.

“Zoro, I need you inside me,” Sanji breathed, his voice wrecked.

Zoro withdrew his fingers slowly and Sanji whimpered at the loss.

“I’ve got you. I’m going to take such good care of you.”

He watched Zoro reach for a condom, rolling it on before slicking himself with more lube. He positioned himself between Sanji’s legs, the head of his cock pressing against Sanji’s entrance.

“Look at me,” Zoro commanded. Sanji’s eyes snapped to his. “I want to see your face when I’m inside you.”

Zoro pushed in slowly and Sanji gasped at the stretch. Even with all the preparation, Zoro was thick, filling him in a way that bordered on overwhelming. Zoro paused, giving him time to adjust.

“Breathe. You’re doing so well. Taking me so perfectly.”

“It’s so much,” Sanji whimpered, his hands clutching at Zoro’s shoulders.

“I know, but you can take it. You’re so strong, so beautiful like this.”

Zoro pushed in another inch and Sanji’s back arched. “That’s it. Let me in. Let me have you.”

There was something ravenous in Zoro’s eye, something that wanted to devour Sanji whole, to possess him completely. Sanji wanted it too, wanted to be consumed, wanted to belong to Zoro in every way possible.

“More,” Sanji gasped. “Give me more.”

Zoro pushed in deeper, inch by inch, giving Sanji time to adjust to the stretch and fullness. He watched Sanji’s face intently, searching for any sign of discomfort, until he was fully seated inside of him. They both groaned at the sensation of being connected like this. Sanji was a little shocked that Zoro had actually fit inside of him and that it didn’t hurt. There was pressure, yes, and a burning stretch that made him feel impossibly full, but no pain. The

shock eventually turned to pride at being able to take him so completely and affection for Zoro preparing him so thoroughly and patiently.

Zoro started to move, slow and deep. He established a steady rhythm, pulling back halfway before pushing forward again. The pace was torturous in its restraint, each movement calculated to draw out the sensation and build the tension between them. He kept his eye locked on Sanji's face, watching every expression that flickered across his features, every gasp that escaped his parted lips, every flutter of eyelashes. His hands roamed over Sanji's body, fingers trailing across heated skin, from the curve of his shoulders to the dip of his waist, down to his trembling thighs. Zoro's grip tightened as he moved, leaving marks that would remind Sanji of this moment long after it ended.

"So good for me," Zoro praised. "Taking my cock so well. You were made for this, weren't you? Made for me."

"Fuck, yes," Sanji moaned, his head falling back.

"Look at me," Zoro commanded and Sanji forced his eyes open.

The eye contact was intense, almost too much to handle without looking away. Sanji felt vulnerable in a way he'd never been before under that unwavering stare, not even in the heat of battle or in his darkest moments. Zoro's gaze was full of heat and affection, a raw honesty that left no room for pretense or the usual banter they hid behind. It made Sanji's chest tight with emotion, his heart pounding so hard he was certain Zoro could hear it. There was something terrifying and exhilarating about having someone look at him like he was the only person in the world that mattered.

Zoro's pace increased gradually, building momentum with each movement, his thrusts becoming harder, deeper, more insistent. The rhythm between them intensified as Zoro maintained his focus. He shifted Sanji's legs with ease, pushing them towards his chest until he was bending him nearly in half. The new angle changed everything, the penetration deeper than before. The shift made Sanji cry out sharply, his voice breaking with surprise and overwhelming sensation. Zoro was hitting his prostate with every thrust now, each movement unrelenting, targeting that sensitive spot with almost calculated accuracy. The pleasure building to heights that left Sanji trembling beneath him, caught between the urge to push away and pull closer.

"Fuck, you're flexible," Zoro groaned, pushing Sanji's legs further back. "I can get so deep like this."

Sanji whimpered, his body folding easily under Zoro's overwhelming strength. The swordsman's powerful hands gripped his knees with an intensity that left marks, anchoring him in place. He'd never been taken like this before, never been so thoroughly possessed by another person. The sensation was almost too much to bear. Zoro was everywhere. Inside him, around him, consuming him completely. Every nerve ending in Sanji's body felt electrified, hypersensitive to every touch, every movement, every breath against his skin.

"Please," Sanji gasped, his voice breaking with desperate need. His fingers clutched at the sheets beneath him, knuckles white with the effort. "Please, Zoro, harder."

Zoro shifted again, carefully adjusting his grip and hooking Sanji's legs over his broad, muscular shoulders. Light burst behind Sanji's eyelids as pleasure shot through his entire body like lightning. Zoro fucked him harder now, finding a rhythm that was relentless and unforgiving, his hips snapping forward with controlled power that spoke to his incredible physical discipline and strength. Each thrust hit that perfect spot inside him with devastating precision, sending waves of sensation radiating outward through every nerve ending. Sanji could do nothing but take it, surrendering completely to the onslaught of pleasure, his body pliant and open, trusting Zoro entirely as he lost himself in the overwhelming sensations that threatened to consume him whole.

"That's it," Zoro growled, his voice rough and possessive. "Take it. Take everything I give you."

"Zoro, it's so deep," Sanji moaned in pleasure, his voice breaking on the words. "I can feel you everywhere."

"Yeah? You're gonna feel me for days," Zoro promised darkly, punctuating his words with a particularly hard thrust that made Sanji cry out. "Every time you move, every time you sit down, you'll remember this. You're mine, Sanji. All mine."

"Yours," Sanji sobbed, tears of overwhelming pleasure streaming down his flushed cheeks. "Only yours. Always yours."

There was something animalistic in the way they moved together now, something raw and primal. Their bodies found a rhythm that was both fierce and natural, driven by an instinct that went beyond conscious thought. Beneath the desperate need that consumed them both, there was tenderness. Zoro's calloused hand cupped Sanji's face with surprising gentleness, his thumb brushing over his cheekbone in a gesture so intimate it made Sanji's breath catch. He leaned down to kiss him between hard thrusts, his lips claiming Sanji's in a way that was somehow both gentle and sweet despite the intensity of their coupling, the contrast making Sanji dizzy.

"I've got you," Zoro murmured against his lips, his voice rough and breathless. "I've got you, Sanji. You're so good. So perfect for me. My perfect cook." The words were punctuated by deep, steady thrusts that hit that spot inside him with devastating accuracy.

The praise combined with the relentless stimulation of his prostate was too much, overwhelming his senses completely. Sanji felt his orgasm building, pleasure coiling tight in his belly like a spring wound too far, threatening to tear him apart from the inside out. His fingers clawed at Zoro's shoulders, his back arching off the bed as he could practically taste the ecstasy just on the edges of his control.

"I'm close," he gasped. "Zoro, I'm so—"

"Come for me," Zoro commanded, his hand wrapping around Sanji, stroking him in time with his thrusts. "Let me feel you come on my cock. Show me how good I make you feel."

Sanji came with a shout, his whole body going rigid as pleasure crashed over him in waves. His cock pulsed in Zoro's grip, spilling over his stomach as his inner muscles clenched

around Zoro. The orgasm seemed to go on forever, each wave more intense than the last, leaving him gasping and trembling.

“Fuck, Sanji,” Zoro groaned, his rhythm faltering. “You feel so good when you come. So fucking tight.”

Zoro’s pace became erratic, his thrusts harder and more desperate. Sanji could feel him getting close, could see it in the tension of his jaw, the way his eye had gone dark and unfocused.

Zoro came with a shout, burying himself deep inside Sanji, his body trembling with the intensity of his release. His fingers gripped Sanji’s hips tightly as wave after wave of pleasure coursed through him, filling the condom. Sanji let his legs fall back to the mattress and wrapped his arms around Zoro’s shoulders instead, holding him through his orgasm, his fingers threading through the short hair at the nape of his neck. He could feel every shudder that ran through Zoro’s frame, every pulse and twitch of muscle as the swordsman’s climax washed over him. Sanji’s own breathing was still ragged, his body still buzzing with the aftermath of his own release, but he focused on Zoro in this moment, on grounding him, anchoring him as pleasure pulled him under.

Zoro stayed buried inside him, his breathing ragged and hot against Sanji’s neck.

“Not done with you yet,” he murmured after a minute or two, his hips beginning to move again, slow and deliberate despite having just come. The drag of him inside Sanji’s oversensitive body sent shockwaves through his system.

“Wha—” Sanji gasped. Every nerve ending felt raw, exposed. The sensation of Zoro moving inside him was almost too much. “Zoro, I can’t.”

“Shh.” Zoro’s hand came up to cup his face, thumb brushing over his cheekbone. “You can take it. I know you can. Just breathe for me, beautiful.”

Sanji whimpered, his body trembling uncontrollably as Zoro continued those slow, steady thrusts. It was overwhelming, the oversensitivity making every movement feel magnified a thousand times over. Each drag of Zoro’s length sent sparks shooting through his nervous system, making him gasp and clutch at Zoro’s shoulder. Zoro was patient though, almost maddeningly so, his pace measured and deliberate, giving Sanji’s overwrought body time to adjust to the sensation.

“That’s it,” Zoro praised softly, his voice a low rumble that vibrated through Sanji’s chest. “Just feel it. Don’t fight it. Let your body get used to it.”

Sanji tried to focus on breathing, on relaxing the tension coiled tight in his muscles. Zoro’s hands were steady on his hips, grounding him, anchoring him to the moment.

Slowly, impossibly, the discomfort began to shift. The sharp edge of oversensitivity gradually dulled, the overwhelming sensations becoming more bearable. It was transforming into something else entirely, something that made Sanji’s toes curl and his back arch. Pleasure began to build again, wave by wave, different from before. It was deeper, more intense,

radiating from his core outward. Sanji's breath hitched as he realized what was happening, as his body began to chase that feeling instead of shying away from it.

"See?" Zoro's voice was rough with satisfaction, tinged with a possessive edge. "I told you. Your body knows what it needs. You just had to trust me. Your body was made for this. Made for me."

Zoro's rhythm shifted, slowing down deliberately. Each thrust was deep and purposeful in a way that made Sanji's breath catch in his throat. His hands were everywhere, seemingly unable to settle, cupping Sanji's face with surprising tenderness, threading through his hair and tugging gently, tracing the sharp line of his jaw with calloused fingertips that left trails of fire in their wake.

"Look at me," Zoro said softly, his voice rough with emotion.

Sanji's eyes fluttered open, meeting Zoro's gaze head-on. There was heat there, raw and burning and impossible to ignore, but also wonder, like he couldn't quite believe this was real.

"You're so beautiful," Zoro said, his voice rough with emotion. "My beautiful Cook. Do you know that? How fucking beautiful you are?"

Sanji felt tears prick at his eyes.

"I mean it." Zoro's hips rolled in a deep thrust that made Sanji gasp. "The way you look right now, with your hair all messed up and your lips swollen from kissing me, the way you're looking at me. Fuck, Sanji. You're perfect. And you're mine."

The possessiveness in Zoro's voice sent a shiver through Sanji's entire body.

"Yours," he breathed.

"That's right." Zoro leaned down to kiss him, deep and claiming. "Mine. My pretty Cook. My Curls. My Sanji. All mine."

They kissed as they moved, long, deep kisses that stole Sanji's breath and made his head spin. Zoro's tongue explored his mouth with the same thorough attention he gave to everything else. Sanji couldn't get enough.

"I'm going to keep you," Zoro murmured against his lips. "Going to take care of you. Make you feel good every single day. Gonna give you everything you deserve."

"Zoro..."

"Never letting you go," he continued, his thrusts steady and deep. "You're mine now, Sanji. Mine to protect. Mine to pleasure. Mine to love."

The tears spilled over, tracking down Sanji's temples. He didn't know if they were from pleasure or emotion or a combination of everything he was feeling. Zoro kissed them away, his lips gentle against Sanji's skin.

“I’m here,” Zoro murmured. “I’m right here with you. Always.”

Sanji couldn’t speak. His throat was too tight, his chest too full. All he could do was hold on to Zoro and feel the slide of skin against skin, the heat of Zoro’s body covering his, the stretch and fullness of Zoro inside him, the steady rhythm that was building something profound in his core.

“You’re doing so good,” Zoro praised, his hand sliding down to rest against Sanji’s ribs, feeling the rapid rise and fall of his breathing. “Taking me so well. So perfect for me.”

Sanji whimpered at the praise, his body arching into Zoro’s with desperate need. The sound that escaped his lips was raw and unrestrained, a mixture of pleasure and longing that seemed to come from deep within his chest. He wrapped his legs around Zoro’s waist, causing the angle to shift slightly. Zoro adjusted his position and suddenly he was hitting that spot inside him with every thrust, the one that made stars burst behind his eyelids and sent shockwaves of sensation radiating through his entire body. Each movement was as if Zoro had mapped out every nerve ending and knew exactly how to make him fall apart. Sanji’s fingers dug into Zoro’s shoulders, clinging to him like an anchor as wave after wave of intense pleasure washed over him.

“There,” Sanji gasped. “Right there, don’t stop.”

“I’ve got you,” Zoro said, maintaining the angle. “Going to make you feel so good, beautiful. Going to take care of you just like this.”

Sanji was drowning in sensation. Every nerve ending felt like it was on fire, every touch magnified a thousand times. He could feel everything: the slide of Zoro’s cock inside him, the warmth of Zoro’s breath on his face, the weight of Zoro’s body pinning him to the mattress.

“Let go,” Zoro murmured, his lips brushing against Sanji’s ear. “Stop thinking. Just feel. Be here with me.”

Somehow, that permission was all Sanji needed. He let go of the thoughts, the worries, the fear. He let himself sink into the sensation, into the moment, into Zoro. The world narrowed to just the two of them, everything else fading into insignificance. There was only the rhythm of their bodies moving together in perfect sync, the ragged sound of their breathing filling the air between them and the intoxicating taste of Zoro’s mouth when they kissed.

Sanji felt himself floating, completely untethered from reality, disconnected from everything except the white-hot pleasure building steadily in his core. His mind was blissfully blank. There was no past, no future, no fear or shame or doubt. There was only Zoro inside him, around him, consuming him completely.

“That’s it,” Zoro praised, his voice low and rough. “You’re so perfect like this, so open for me. So beautiful. My beautiful Curls.”

Sanji’s hands clutched desperately at Zoro’s shoulders, his back, his sides, anywhere he could reach. His legs around Zoro’s waist pulled him impossibly closer. There was no such thing as

close enough, not now, not when every nerve ending in his body was screaming for more.

The pleasure was building, different from before. It was deeper, more intense, radiating from his core outward. His cock was hard and leaking between them, but Zoro didn't touch it. Somehow that made everything more intense.

"You're going to come for me," Zoro said and it wasn't a question. His voice was low and rough, edged with certainty and something darker, more possessive. "Going to come just from this, from me inside you. From me taking care of you."

His fingers tightened on Sanji's hips, holding him steady, keeping him exactly where Zoro wanted him. His pace increased, still controlled but with more force behind each thrust. Each movement was angled perfectly to keep making Sanji see stars. He moaned helplessly in response, the sound breaking and desperate as it tore from his throat. His body clenched around Zoro's member, pulling him deeper, as his legs tightened and writhed uselessly around Zoro's waist. His fingernails dug into Zoro's skin, leaving crescent marks across his forearms and his shoulders, trying to anchor himself against the overwhelming sensations flooding through him.

"You're so close, Sanji. I can feel it," Zoro murmured, his breath hot against Sanji's sweat-dampened skin.

Sanji gasped sharply as Zoro took one of his legs from his waist and lifted it high into the air before pushing the other leg towards Sanji's chest, adjusting their position. The new angle allowed him to slip impossibly deeper into him, reaching places that made Sanji's body start to quiver. He could practically feel him in his stomach, he was so deep, stretching and filling him completely.

Zoro leaned over and pressed a soft, reverent kiss to the inside of Sanji's ankle. It was a tender gesture, surprisingly gentle and almost romantic, an action completely incongruous with the rough, relentless way he was ploughing into him. The contrast between the gentle affection and the raw intensity sent more shivers racing up Sanji's spine. Still, it only made his desire ratchet even higher, his body responding eagerly to every thrust, every touch, every breath shared between them.

Sanji felt like he was coming apart at the seams. Every nerve ending seemed to be firing at once, sending jolts of electricity racing along his spine and radiating outward to his fingertips and toes. His breathing came in ragged gasps, his chest heaving as he struggled to maintain any semblance of control over his own reactions.

The pleasure was too much, too intense, like waves crashing over him one after another, building and building with relentless force. Each surge seemed more powerful than the last, threatening to pull him under completely. He felt dizzy, disoriented, as if the bed beneath him had disappeared and he was floating in some vast, endless ocean of sensation. His muscles tensed and released in rhythmic spasms, his body no longer entirely his own to command.

"Zoro, I—" Sanji's words dissolved into a broken moan as Zoro hit that spot inside him again, harder this time.

“That’s it. Let me hear you. Let me hear how good I make you feel,” Zoro growled, his grip on Sanji’s lifted leg and his knee tightening possessively, fingers digging into sensitive skin as he moved.

Sanji couldn’t hold back anymore. The sounds spilling from his lips were desperate, needy, completely uninhibited. Each thrust drew out another broken moan, another gasp of Zoro’s name. He’d lost all sense of restraint, all pretense of control. There was only sensation, only heat, only the overwhelming feeling of Zoro consuming him entirely.

“I love watching you fall apart like this. Love hearing those pretty sounds you make. You’re so fucking beautiful.”

The praise washed over Sanji, pushing him closer to the edge.

“Zoro, I’m—”

“Come for me,” Zoro said, his voice rough with his own need. “Let me see you fall apart.”

The orgasm hit him like a tidal wave, starting deep in his core and radiating outward until his entire body was consumed by it. His cock pulsed between them as he spilled across his stomach and chest, hot and slick. The orgasm was deep and intense, seeming to go on and on in waves that left him gasping and shaking. Every nerve ending felt electrified, sparking with aftershocks that made his toes curl and his fingers clutch desperately at Zoro. He heard himself cry out, heard Zoro’s name torn from his throat in a broken, desperate sound, but it sounded distant, like it was coming from someone else entirely.

His vision whited out for a moment, everything dissolving into pure sensation as his body arched off the bed, spine bowing as pleasure crashed through him relentlessly. He couldn’t breathe, couldn’t think, couldn’t do anything but feel as the waves kept coming, each one stealing his breath and leaving him trembling in their wake.

“Fuck, Sanji,” Zoro groaned, his rhythm faltering. “I can feel you clutching me so tight.”

Sanji was still in the throes of his orgasm when he felt Zoro’s movements become more erratic. Through the haze of his own pleasure, he managed to focus on the swordsman’s face, watching the way his expression shifted from controlled to desperate as he chased his own orgasm.

“Zoro,” Sanji gasped, his voice wrecked. “Take off the condom.”

Zoro’s eye went wide.

“Want to feel all of you. Come inside me, please.”

Zoro pulled out quickly, his hands shaking as he removed the condom and tossed it aside. Then he was pushing back in. The sensation was overwhelming with nothing between them now, just skin on skin. Sanji could feel everything with an intensity that made his head spin.

“Oh fuck,” Zoro groaned, his body shuddering as he resumed his thrusts. “Sanji, you feel—”

“Come for me,” Sanji whispered. “Fill me up. Want to feel it.”

That was all it took. Zoro’s eye went wide, his body tensing, every muscle in his powerful frame going taut as a bowstring. Then he was coming with a broken, guttural groan that sounded like Sanji’s name torn from the depths of his chest.

The sensation was overwhelming, all-consuming, beyond anything Sanji had ever experienced. He felt Zoro’s cock pulse and twitch inside him as he thrust his release into him, felt each individual throb and spasm, the rhythm of it matching the frantic beating of his own heart. It was so different without the condom, so much more intense, more intimate, more real than anything they’d shared before. He could feel the warmth spreading inside him like liquid fire, could feel every drop of Zoro’s release coating his sensitive inner walls, claiming him, marking him from the inside out.

The sensation triggered another wave of his own orgasm, sending shockwaves of pleasure coursing through his entire body. His muscles tensed and released in perfect rhythm, his body clenching rhythmically around Zoro’s pulsing cock. Each contraction seemed to intensify the pleasure for both of them, creating a feedback loop of ecstasy that left him gasping and trembling.

“That’s it,” Zoro groaned, still pumping into him, pushing his release in deeper. “Take it all, Sanji. Take all of me. You’re mine. All mine.”

Sanji whimpered, his body shaking as the dual sensations overwhelmed him: his own prolonged orgasm and the feeling of Zoro’s release flooding into him. The heat was incredible, the pulsing of Zoro’s cock inside him sending aftershocks through his entire body.

They stayed locked together as they came down, both of them shaking and gasping for breath. Zoro’s forehead was pressed against Sanji’s, their lips barely touching, sharing the same air. Sanji could feel Zoro’s heartbeat against his chest, racing just as fast as his own.

“Holy fuck,” Sanji finally managed to whisper, his voice shaking.

Slowly, carefully, Zoro pulled out, and Sanji gasped at the sensation, at the feeling of Zoro’s come starting to leak out of him. It was obscene, intimate and perfect. Sanji found he didn’t want to clean it away. He wanted to keep this evidence of their connection for as long as possible.

Zoro collapsed beside him before immediately gathering him into his arms. Sanji went willingly, tucking his face against Zoro’s neck and trying to remember how to breathe normally. He could still feel the warmth inside him, could feel the wet slide of Zoro’s release between his thighs, and it made him shiver with residual pleasure.

He felt wrung out, completely spent, but in the best possible way. His body was loose and sated, every muscle relaxed.

“You okay,” Zoro asked softly, his hand running soothing circles on Sanji’s back.

Sanji tried to form words, but all that came out was a soft, breathy giggle. His mind felt like cotton, thoughts floating away before he could grasp them. Everything was warm and soft and perfect.

“Sanji?” Zoro’s voice sounded amused.

Sanji giggled again, burying his face against Zoro’s chest. He felt drunk, not from alcohol but from pleasure, from the overwhelming intensity of what they’d just shared. His body was boneless, his mind blissfully empty of everything except the sensation of Zoro’s arms around him and the lingering warmth inside him.

“You okay there?” Zoro asked, though Sanji could hear the smile in his voice.

He nodded, still giggling softly. He tried to say something, but his brain wouldn’t cooperate. Words felt impossible. All he could do was smile and press closer to Zoro’s warmth.

“Fuck,” Zoro said, sounding both satisfied and a little awed. “I really did a number on you, huh?”

Sanji made a soft, happy sound that might have been agreement. His fingers traced lazy, nonsensical patterns on Zoro’s chest, and he couldn’t stop the dopey smile spreading across his face.

Zoro chuckled, the sound rumbling through his chest. “Never seen you this quiet before. It’s kind of nice.”

Sanji wanted to protest, wanted to say something sharp and witty, but all that came out was a contented sigh. His mind was floating somewhere far away, untethered and blissful.

“Come on,” Zoro said gently, shifting to sit up. “Let’s get you cleaned up.”

Sanji made a soft noise of protest, not wanting to move, not wanting to leave this perfect bubble of warmth and safety. Zoro scooped him up anyway, one arm under his knees and the other supporting his back, lifting him like he weighed nothing.

“I’ve got you,” Zoro murmured, carrying him toward the bathroom.

Sanji let his head rest against Zoro’s shoulder, still smiling, still floating. He felt safe in Zoro’s arms, cared for in a way he’d never experienced before.

The bathroom was spacious, with a large tub that Zoro began filling with warm water. He set Sanji down gently on the edge of the tub, keeping a steadying hand on his shoulder.

Sanji watched Zoro through half-lidded eyes. Everything felt soft around the edges, dreamlike. He was vaguely aware of the mess between his thighs, the evidence of what they’d done, the soreness in his ass and all over his body, but he couldn’t bring himself to care. He just wanted to keep feeling this good, this safe, this cherished.

When the tub was full enough, Zoro helped him in, guiding him carefully. The warm water enveloped Sanji like a hug and he sighed contentedly, sinking deeper. Zoro climbed in behind

him, pulling him back against his chest.

“There we go,” Zoro said softly, reaching for a washcloth.

Sanji let himself be taken care of, his mind still too hazy to do much more than exist in the moment. Zoro’s hands were gentle as he cleaned him, washing away the sweat and come with careful attention. He was thorough but tender, his touch reverent in a way that made Sanji’s heart ache.

“You’re so beautiful like this,” Zoro murmured, pressing a kiss to Sanji’s temple. “All soft and happy. Wish I could keep you like this forever.”

Sanji made a pleased sound, leaning back into Zoro’s touch. He felt cherished, precious, like something worth protecting. It was overwhelming in the best way.

Zoro cleaned himself quickly then held Sanji for a while, both of them soaking in the warm water. Sanji’s mind was starting to clear slightly, thoughts beginning to form again, but he was still floating, still wrapped in that post-orgasmic bliss.

“Think you can stand?” Zoro asked eventually.

Sanji nodded though he wasn’t entirely sure. Zoro helped him out of the tub, steadying him when his legs wobbled. He dried them both off with soft towels, his movements efficient but gentle.

“Come on,” Zoro said, guiding him back to the bed. “Let’s get you comfortable.”

They collapsed onto the mattress together. Sanji immediately curled into Zoro’s side, seeking his warmth. Zoro’s arms came around him, holding him close. Sanji felt himself starting to drift. They dozed like that for a while, tangled together, neither quite asleep but both floating in that peaceful space between waking and dreaming. Gradually, Sanji felt his mind clearing, the haze lifting as he came back to himself. The euphoria was fading, replaced by a deeper, more grounded sense of contentment.

He became aware of Zoro’s heartbeat under his ear, steady and strong. Of the rise and fall of Zoro’s chest with each breath. Of the weight of Zoro’s arm around his waist, holding him close.

“Hey,” Zoro said softly. “You back with me?”

Sanji nodded against his chest. “Yeah. Sorry, I... that was intense.”

“Don’t apologize.” Zoro’s hand rubbed soothing circles on his back.

Sanji felt heat rise to his cheeks. Now that his mind was clearer, embarrassment was starting to creep in. “I must have looked ridiculous.”

“You looked happy,” Zoro said firmly. “And beautiful. That’s exactly how I hoped I’d make you look.”

Sanji buried his face against Zoro's chest, overwhelmed by the tenderness in his voice. They were quiet for a moment before Sanji spoke up again.

"We should probably talk about this. About... what happens now."

"Yeah," Zoro agreed. "We should."

But neither of them moved, neither wanting to break the intimacy of the moment. Finally, Sanji pulled back slightly so he could see Zoro's face.

"I… I like you, as more than just a friend or crewmate, but I don't know how to do this," he admitted quietly. "I've only ever had one-night stands with guys. I don't know how to have a relationship like this."

"We'll figure it out," Zoro said.

"But what if—" Sanji stopped, struggling to find the words. "What if I'm not good at it? What if I fuck it up?"

"You won't."

"You don't know that."

"I know you," Zoro said, his eye intense. "And I know this is real. What we have, what we feel, it's real, Sanji. I've been half in love with you for years."

Sanji's breath caught.

"Years?"

"Yeah. Since... I don't even know when it started. I knew for sure by Thriller Bark but I think it started before that. Either way, somewhere along the way, you stopped being just my rival and became... more. I never thought I had a chance with you though, so I never said anything."

"I thought the same thing," Sanji whispered. "I've wanted you for so long, but I thought you'd never look at me that way. You're so confident, so comfortable with who you are, and I'm just... I'm a mess."

"You're not a mess." Zoro's hand came up to cup his face. "You're perfect. And I meant what I said earlier. I want to keep you. I want to take care of you, make you feel good, protect you —"

"I don't need protecting," Sanji interrupted, his defenses rising automatically. "I'm not weak. I don't need you to take care of me like I'm some damsel in distress."

"That's not what I meant."

"Then what did you mean?"

Zoro was quiet for a moment, choosing his words carefully.

“I meant that I want to be there for you. I want to make your life easier when I can. I want to be the person you come to when things are hard. I want to cherish you, Sanji. Not because you’re weak, but because you’re precious to me.”

Sanji felt his throat tighten. Part of him wanted to keep arguing, to maintain his independence, to prove he didn’t need anyone. Another part of him, a part he’d been suppressing for years, wanted exactly what Zoro was offering. He wanted to be cherished, to be cared for, to let someone else carry some of the weight he’d been bearing alone.

“Look, I appreciate the sentiment,” Sanji said, pulling away slightly and reaching for his clothes. “But I’m fine on my own. I always have been. I don’t need—”

“Sanji.”

“What?” He turned back, defensive. “You want me to suddenly become dependent on you? That’s not who I am.”

“I never said that.”

“You implied it.” Sanji’s voice took on that sharp edge it got when he was uncomfortable. “All this talk about taking care of me, protecting me. It sounds like you think I can’t handle myself.”

Zoro sat up, his expression patient but firm. “That’s not what I’m saying and you know it.”

“Do I?” Sanji busied himself with finding his underwear, anything to avoid looking at Zoro. “Because from where I’m standing, it sounds like you want to turn me into some kept thing. I’m not going to be that for anyone.”

“Sanji, look at me.”

“I’m looking.”

“No, you’re not. You’re staring at the wall behind me.” Zoro’s voice was gentle but unyielding. “You’re running. I want to know why.”

“I’m not running. I’m being realistic.” Sanji finally looked at him, his expression guarded. “This was... it was good. Really good. But let’s not pretend it’s going to be some fairy tale. People don’t just stay. They leave. They always leave.”

“Is that what you think I’m going to do?”

“I think it’s what happens,” Sanji said flatly. “Eventually.”

Zoro was quiet for a moment, studying him. “That’s not an answer.”

Sanji felt something crack inside his chest at the steady way Zoro was looking at him. He turned away again, wrapping his arms around himself.

“I don’t know if I can let myself have this,” he said quietly, the defensiveness draining from his voice.

“Why not?”

“Because—” Sanji stopped, swallowing hard. He wanted to deflect, to get angry, to do anything but say the words that were clawing at his throat. “It’s complicated.”

“Try me.”

“You wouldn’t understand.”

“Maybe not, but I’d like to.”

Sanji’s hands clenched into fists. He could feel Zoro waiting, patient and immovable as stone. Part of him wanted to lash out, to say something cruel enough to push Zoro away before Zoro could leave him first. Another part, the part that was terrified and exhausted from holding everything in, wanted to break.

“I’ve spent so long being strong,” Sanji finally said, his voice barely above a whisper. “Being independent. Being the one who takes care of everyone else. If I let myself lean on you, if I let myself need you like this...” He trailed off, unable to finish.

“Then what happens?” Zoro prompted gently.

“What happens if you leave?” Sanji countered, the words tumbling out before he could stop them. “What happens if this doesn’t work out? What happens if I let myself fall for you completely and then you decide this was a mistake, that I’m not worth the hassle of keeping secret, that—”

“Sanji—”

“I don’t think I’d survive it,” Sanji continued, his voice breaking. “I know that sounds dramatic, but I’m serious. I’ve never... I’ve never let anyone in like this. And the thought of losing you, of having this taken away...” He wrapped his arms tighter around himself. “I’m terrified.”

Zoro reached for him, but Sanji held up a hand, not quite ready to be touched.

“Because this is real,” Sanji said, his eyes glistening. “And that makes it so much scarier than any one-night stand. With those, there were no expectations. No future. No possibility of real loss. But this... you... it feels so different. Even when you were just Tetsu to me, this felt more important and significant than any other fling I’ve had with another man. It felt real. I don’t know how to keep being that vulnerable and not completely fall apart, especially not when there’s every chance this thing between us doesn’t last.”

“You’re not going to lose me,” Zoro said firmly.

“You can’t promise that.” Sanji’s voice was hollow.

“Maybe not,” Zoro conceded. “But I can promise that I’m going to try my hardest to make this work. I can promise that I want you, that I care about you, that I’m not going anywhere unless you tell me to leave.”

Sanji was quiet for a long moment, processing that. Then he said, “There’s something else we need to talk about.”

“What?”

“I’m not ready to come out. I know you’re open about who you are, and I admire that, but I can’t... I’m not there yet. Maybe I never will be. Is that a dealbreaker for you?”

Zoro was quiet and Sanji’s heart sank. He’d known this would be a problem. How could it not be? Zoro deserved someone who could be with him openly, not someone who had to hide because they were too much of a coward for anything else.

“It bothers me a little,” Zoro said finally. “I won’t lie about that. I wish we could be open about this, but it doesn’t bother me enough to walk away.”

Sanji looked up at him, surprised. “Really?”

“Really. I’d rather have you in secret than not have you at all. I’ll wait until you’re ready. However long that takes.”

“But what about in the meantime? We’d have to hide, steal moments when we can. That’s not fair to you.”

“Let me decide what’s fair to me.”

Zoro reached for Sanji again and this time he let him pull him to the bed so his back was pressed against Zoro’s chest.

“I’m choosing this, Sanji. I’m choosing you,” Zoro whispered into his ear before he pressed a kiss to his cheek.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry I can’t give you more. I’m sorry I’m such a coward.”

“You’re not a coward.” Zoro pulled him closer, holding him tight. “You’re brave as hell. It takes courage to even admit what you want, to let yourself have this. Don’t diminish that.”

Sanji turned in his arms and buried his face against Zoro’s chest, overwhelmed by emotion. They held each other for a long time, neither speaking, just breathing together.

“So what do we do now?” Sanji asked.

“We figure it out as we go,” Zoro said. “We take it one day at a time. We steal moments when we can. We don’t let anyone else dictate what this is or how we do it.”

“That sounds... complicated.”

“Everything worth having is complicated.”

Sanji smiled despite himself. “When did you get so wise?”

“I’ve always been wise. You just never noticed.”

“Liar.”

Zoro grinned, then leaned in to kiss him. It was soft and sweet, full of promise and affection. When they pulled apart, Sanji felt steadier, more grounded.

“We should probably try to get some sleep,” Zoro said. “Dawn’s coming soon.”

“Yeah,” Sanji agreed, but he didn’t move, didn’t want to let go of this moment.

They stayed tangled together, trading soft kisses and gentle touches. Sanji felt safe in Zoro’s arms in a way he’d never felt before, like he could finally be himself without fear or shame.

“Zoro?” Sanji said sleepily.

“Yeah?”

“Thank you. For wanting me. For making me feel like I’m not broken.”

Zoro’s arms tightened around him.

“You’re not broken, Sanji. You’re perfect exactly as you are.”

Sanji felt tears prick at his eyes, but this time they were from gratitude, from relief, from the overwhelming realization that he was allowed to have this. He was allowed to be happy.

They slept together as the sky outside began to lighten, neither quite ready to face reality but both knowing they’d have to eventually. For now, though, they had this: this moment of peace, of connection, of being exactly who they were with each other.

When they finally woke, the sun was starting to rise, painting the sky in shades of pink and gold. Zoro stirred first, his arms still wrapped around Sanji.

“We should probably head back,” he said reluctantly.

Sanji nodded against his chest. “Yeah. The crew will wonder where we are.”

They got dressed slowly, neither of them wanting to break the spell. Sanji put on his blue silk shirt, buttoning it up this time, while Zoro pulled on his t-shirt and jeans. They looked at each other and Sanji felt a pang of sadness. Here, in this room, they could be themselves. Out there, they’d have to pretend this never happened.

“Hey,” Zoro said, stepping close. He cupped Sanji’s face in his hands and kissed him, slow and deep. “This isn’t over.”

“I know,” Sanji whispered against his lips. “I just... I wish we didn’t have to hide.”

“Me too. But I’ll take you however I can have you,” Zoro assured, his thumb brushing over Sanji’s cheekbone.

He kissed Zoro again in response, trying to memorize the feeling, the taste, the warmth of him. When they finally pulled apart, he felt steadier.

“Okay. Let’s go.”

The club was quieter now, the crowd thinned out as dawn approached. A few stragglers remained on the dance floor, swaying to slower music or passed out on couches, but most of the patrons had already left. Zoro and Sanji made their way downstairs, their shoulders brushing occasionally, neither quite ready to stop touching.

At the entrance, they paused. The street outside was empty, the sky a pale gray-blue. Reality was waiting for them out there, the ship, the crew, the need to pretend.

“We should go back separately,” Sanji said quietly. “Just in case.”

Zoro nodded, though his jaw tightened. “Yeah. You go first. I’ll wait a few minutes.”

Sanji hesitated, then reached out and squeezed Zoro’s hand. “Thank you. For tonight. For... everything.”

“Don’t thank me,” Zoro said, his voice rough. “I wanted this just as much as you did.”

“I know. But still.” Sanji smiled, small and genuine. “I’ll see you back at the ship.”

“Yeah.”

Sanji forced himself to let go and walk away. He could feel Zoro’s gaze on his back the entire time, a physical weight that made his skin prickle with awareness. He didn’t look back. If he did, he wasn’t sure he’d be able to leave.

The walk back to the docks felt surreal, like moving through a dream. The island was still mostly asleep, the streets empty except for the occasional early riser preparing to open their shop. Sanji’s footsteps echoed on the cobblestones, too loud in the quiet morning.

His body ached in the best way, a pleasant soreness that reminded him of Zoro’s hands, Zoro’s mouth, Zoro inside him. Every step sent a small thrill through him, a physical reminder of what they’d shared.

What the hell did I just do?

The question rose unbidden, but it wasn’t accompanied by the panic he might have expected. Instead, there was a strange sense of calm, of rightness, even as his mind tried to process the enormity of what had happened. He’d had sex with Zoro multiple times. He’d let Zoro see him at his most vulnerable, had begged for it, had come apart in his arms. Through it all, Zoro had been tender and fierce, possessive and gentle, exactly what Sanji needed without him even having to ask.

You're perfect.

So good for me.

You're mine.

The memory of Zoro's voice sent heat flooding through him even now. He'd never felt so wanted, so cherished, so completely *seen* by another person. But that was the problem, wasn't it? In that private room, with the door locked and the world shut out, they could be whoever they wanted. Sanji could be the man who wanted another man, who craved Zoro's touch, who fell apart under his praise. Zoro could be the man who wanted to take care of him, protect him, keep him. Out here, in the real world, they were just crewmates, rivals, the cook and the swordsman who bickered constantly and pretended they couldn't stand each other.

Except Sanji couldn't pretend anymore. Not really.

He couldn't unknow what Zoro's skin felt like under his hands, couldn't unhear the sounds Zoro made when he came, couldn't forget the way Zoro had looked at him like he was something precious. The mask had been removed, literally and figuratively, and there was no putting it back on. Everything had changed. The realization settled over him like a weight. He'd crossed a line tonight that he could never uncross. Whatever happened next, whether this became something more or remained a secret they carried, he would never be able to look at Zoro the same way again.

The terrifying part was he didn't want to. He wanted more of this. More of Zoro's hands on him, more of those heated looks, more of feeling like he mattered to someone in a way that went beyond friendship or crew loyalty. He wanted to be wanted like that again, to feel that safe and desired and *right*. Wanting it meant risking everything. His place on the crew, his carefully constructed facade, the safety of his closet. It meant trusting Zoro not just with his body but with the most vulnerable parts of himself. It meant letting someone in, really in, and that was more terrifying than any enemy they'd ever faced.

What have I gotten myself into?

The question should have filled him with dread. Instead, as Sanji climbed aboard the Thousand Sunny and made his way to the men's bunkroom, he felt something else entirely.

Hope.

Dangerous, fragile, terrifying hope.

He changed into his usual clothes, splashed water on his face, and stared at his reflection in the mirror. He looked the same as always: same blond hair, same face, same carefully maintained appearance, but something fundamental had shifted inside him, realigned in a way he couldn't quite name.

The sun was fully up now, golden light streaming through the porthole. Soon the crew would wake, and he'd have to put on his usual mask of the flirtatious cook who fawned over women and traded insults with the swordsman. He'd have to pretend nothing had changed.

But as Sanji made his way to the galley to start preparing breakfast, he couldn’t help but eagerly look forward to the next time he and Zoro were able to be alone like that again.

This was going to be difficult. Complicated. Frustrating, probably. Still, Sanji decided then and there that it was worth it. He’d spent so long hiding parts of himself, so long pretending. Maybe it was time to let himself have this one thing, even if he had to keep it secret.

End Notes

Suspend your disbelief

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