Self-Discovery

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/1381.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	Slash (M/M), Hetero (F/M), Getting Together
Fandom:	One Piece (Manga)
Relationships:	Roronoa Zoro/Sanji, Roronoa Zoro/Sanji/Original Female Character, Nico Robin & Sanji
Characters:	Roronoa Zoro, Sanji (One Piece), Original Female Character(s), Nico Robin, Nami (One Piece), Monkey D. Luffy, Jinbe (One Piece), Franky (One Piece), Usopp (One Piece), Brook (One Piece), Tony Tony Chopper
Additional Tags:	Post-Wano Country Arc, Canon Compliant, Threesome - F/M/M | Female/Male/Male, Bisexual Awakening, Sexuality Crisis, Bisexual Sanji (One Piece), Gay Roronoa Zoro, Mutual Pining, Miscommunication, Angst with a Happy Ending, Sanji's Self-Worth Issues (One Piece), Crying During Sex, Love Confessions, Top Roronoa Zoro, Bottom Sanji (One Piece), First Time Bottoming, Voyeurism, Double Penetration, Cunnilingus, Blow Jobs, Anal Sex, Light Dom/Sub, Praise Kink, Possessive Behavior, Orgasm Denial, Multiple Orgasms, Overstimulation (Sexual), Aftercare
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-11-06 Words: 37,979 Chapters: 3/3

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Summary

Sanji agrees to a threesome to prove he can keep up with Zoro. He walks out the next morning without his wallet and without any idea who he is anymore. The sex was the easy part. Letting Zoro actually know him is the thing that scares him most.

Chapter 1: Threesome

The hotel bar was dimly lit, all amber glow and polished wood, the kind of place where sailors spent their berries on drinks and met temporary lovers. Sanji sat at the corner booth with perhaps the most beautiful woman he'd encountered in months (excluding Nami and Robin of course). Her raven hair cascaded over her bare brown shoulders, her lips were painted the color of expensive wine and her eyes promised him a night of passion, something he sorely needed after weeks at sea with nothing but his hand.

"Another drink, my dear lady?" he asked smoothly, already signaling the bartender.

"I think we've had enough drinks. I have a room upstairs. You interested?" She purred, trailing one finger along his collar.

Sanji's heart hammered in his chest as heat began to fill his stomach.

"Shall we?"

He stood, offering his arm like the gentleman he prided himself on being. Just then, the door slammed open with enough force to rattle bottles.

"Hey, Cook."

Sanji's eye twitched as Zoro strode in, an infuriating smirk already forming.

"Mosshead. What the hell are you doing here?"

"Drinking. Same thing as you."

Zoro's gaze slid to the woman then back to Sanji.

"Though looks like you're doing more than that."

"That's none of your business, you directionally challenged plant. Go get lost somewhere else."

"Can't. Nami said to find you and let you know the ship leaves at noon tomorrow."

"Then you've delivered your message. Now fuck off."

Zoro dropped into the booth opposite them, sprawling like he owned the place.

"Make me, Curly Brows."

Sanji's fists clenched. The woman laughed in amusement, a sound that made both men pause.

"You two know each other?" she surmised.

“Unfortunately,” they said in unison, then glared at each other.

She leaned back, studying them both with those dark, calculating eyes.

“You bicker like lovers.”

“We’re not—” Sanji started.

“The hell we—” Zoro said simultaneously.

Another laugh. She pressed herself against Sanji’s side while trailing fingers along Zoro’s shoulder.

“I have a better idea than watching you two argue all night. Why don’t you both come upstairs?”

“Both?” Sanji managed.

“A threesome,” she clarified, as if it were the most natural suggestion in the world.

“Unless you’re too intimidated by each other?”

“I’m game,” Zoro shrugged.

“Of course you are, you shameless— wait, what? You can’t be serious,” Sanji spluttered.

“Why not? Afraid you can’t keep up?”

The woman’s hand slid down his chest enticingly, fogging his brain briefly with desire.

“I can keep up with anything you can do,” Sanji responded once he came back to himself, his pride speaking before his brain caught up.

“It’s just— he’s a— I’m not— I mean, I’m—”

“Straight? So? You’ll both be focused on me anyway. Unless...” Her smile turned wicked.

“Unless you’re worried something else might happen?”

“Nothing else will happen. I’m a lover of women. *Only* women,” Sanji declared firmly.

“Then what’s the problem?”

“He’s scared,” Zoro teased as he stood up.

“I am not scared, you— Fine! Let’s go.”

~*~*~

The room was nicer than most. A large bed with burgundy sheets dominated the middle of the room. The candles were already lit and the curtains drawn, giving the room a warm glow.

Sanji would appreciate it more if Zoro wasn't standing right beside him, making him feel on edge.

The woman wasted no time, pulling her dress over her head to reveal black lace set against warm brown skin underneath that made Sanji's mouth go dry. Usually, he liked a bit more romance and foreplay than this, but he wasn't complaining either.

"Well? Are you two just going to stand there?"

Sanji moved first, crossing to her and cupping her face before he kissed her deeply. She tasted like whiskey and something sweeter. Her hands worked at his shirt buttons while he explored her mouth, her neck, the curve of her shoulder.

He heard Zoro's boots hit the floor, the rustle of clothing. He tried not to think about it.

The woman pulled back, turning to Zoro and kissing him with equal enthusiasm. Sanji watched despite himself. Zoro kissed just as hungrily as Sanji imagined he would (not that he thought about that sort of thing… much). His eyes got stuck on the way Zoro's large hand tangled in her hair, the other gripping her hip. There was nothing tentative about it. Zoro took what he wanted.

"Bed," she commanded.

What followed was a tangle of limbs and sensation. Sanji focused on her body. He kissed her breasts, her stomach and between her thighs until she gasped his name. She tasted divine. He could do this for hours and be content.

"Switch," she breathed.

Zoro took his place and Sanji moved up to kiss her mouth, swallow her moans as Zoro worked between her legs with his tongue. They found a rhythm, passing her between them, learning what made her arch and cry out. Before long, she shifted to her hands and knees, looking back at them with a sultry gaze full of lust.

"Well? Don't make me wait."

Sanji moved behind her, sliding inside her wet heat with a groan. He gripped her hips, starting to thrust. The sensation was familiar, comforting even. The push and pull of slick warmth enveloping his hard cock, the soft press of walls around him gripping and pulling him deeper. He enjoyed the give of supple hips beneath his fingertips, the way her body yielded to him, the soft muffled moans that escaped her lips with each thrust.

He tried to lose himself in it, to focus on the pleasure, on the woman beneath him, on the way her back arched as sweat began to dot her skin. His eyes traced the elegant curve of her spine, the delicate slope of her shoulders, the curtain of soft hair that fell forward as she braced herself.

But, for reasons he couldn't fathom, his gaze kept drifting upward.

Zoro was kneeling in front of the woman, her lips wrapped around him while his hand was buried in her hair, controlling the pace of her mouth with firm but careful guidance. Sanji had seen the swordsman shirtless countless times before. While he was training on deck, when they were sparring, even sleeping in the men's quarters. This was entirely different. This was Zoro in a context Sanji had never allowed himself to imagine, and the sight of him made something tighten low in his gut.

The flex of Zoro's muscles as he thrust into her mouth was mesmerizing. His abs contracted with each movement, the defined lines of his torso shifting beneath scarred skin. His shoulders were broader than Sanji had consciously registered, powerful and solid. The hand buried in the woman's hair guided her with surprising gentleness. That was the same hand that Sanji had seen grip swords with deadly precision, that had broken bones and shattered steel. There was control there in this moment, but not cruelty. It was clear from the way his fingers threaded through her locks that though he was setting the pace, he'd release her the moment she wanted him to.

Sanji's hips stuttered in their rhythm. He forced himself to look away and focus on the woman. On the way her body moved beneath him, on the sounds she was making. Still, his eyes betrayed him within seconds by sliding back to Zoro.

Why couldn't he stop looking?

The woman was beautiful, soft, receptive, everything he usually wanted, but Sanji found his attention caught by the intensity in Zoro's visible eye, the way his jaw clenched when she took him deeper, the low rumble of satisfaction that escaped his throat. There was something raw and unguarded about him like this, something Sanji had never seen before, and he couldn't tear his gaze away.

His chest felt tight and his breathing had gone shallow in a way that had nothing to do with exertion.

What the hell is wrong with me? I should be focused on her. Why am I looking at him, Sanji thought even as his eyes traced the line of Zoro's throat, the way his head tilted back slightly in pleasure.

The confusion was overwhelming, mixing with arousal in a way that made him feel unsteady and off-balance. The woman's softness and yielding warmth should have been enough to hold his attention. It had always been enough before.

So why did Zoro's presence feel like it was dominating the entire room?

"Faster," she demanded, snapping him from his distracted thoughts.

Sanji complied, his hips snapping forward.

"Harder."

He tried, but the woman still made an unsatisfied sound.

“Zoro, tell him.”

Sanji’s hips stuttered at her request, his gaze snapping to Zoro with a mixture of hesitation, curiosity, uneasiness and confusion. The swordsman stared back, some swirl of emotions in his eyes that Sanji couldn’t quite parse out. There was apprehension, but it was mixed with desire that only heightened Sanji’s own confusion and curiosity.

“Faster, Cook. She wants it harder,” Zoro said from where he knelt in front of her, his voice rough and low.

For a second, Sanji just stared at him. Then, slowly, his hips moved, driving into the woman with more force.

“That’s it. Don’t be gentle. She can take it.”

Sanji’s breath caught. Why did Zoro’s voice giving him orders make heat pool in his gut? He thrust harder still, chasing the feeling, confused by his own arousal.

“Good,” Zoro praised.

Fuck, fuck, why did that word make his cock throb?

They switched positions. Zoro fucked her from behind while Sanji lay beneath her, his cock between her breasts. He could feel the force of Zoro’s thrusts through her body.

“Touch yourself,” Zoro told him.

“What?”

“She likes watching. Touch yourself.”

Before he could think, he moved so his cock was no longer between her breasts but gripped in his hand instead. The woman moaned her approval. He stroked himself while Zoro fucked her and she kissed him messily. The whole situation was so surreal and wrong and incredibly hot that Sanji thought he might have lost his mind or was having a very strange dream.

“Both of you. I want both of you at the same time,” she gasped.

They maneuvered her between them, Sanji sliding back into her from the front while Zoro pressed his lubed fingers into her ass, stretching her until he could fit comfortably inside. The coordination required forced them close, Zoro’s chest brushing against Sanji’s, their breath mingling in the space above her head.

“Move,” Zoro ordered and Sanji did, finding a rhythm that had her screaming between them.

Zoro’s hand came around, gripping Sanji’s hip, guiding the pace. The contact sent electricity through him. Zoro’s hand was hot against his skin, slick with sweat and lube. Sanji should’ve pushed him away, but he didn’t.

“Slower. Let her feel it.”

Sanji obeyed without thinking.

He liked this, he realized with all the force of a hammer to the head. He liked being told what to do, liked Zoro's commanding tone, his firm grip, the way he took control.

But no. He was straight. This was just the situation, the intensity, the woman between them.

However, when Zoro's lips brushed his ear, Sanji nearly came on the spot.

"That's it, just like that. Deeper. She wants to feel all of you," Zoro murmured, his breath hot against Sanji's sensitive ear.

He pushed in deeper and the woman cried out, her body arching between them. Zoro's hand tightened on his hip, controlling the rhythm. Sanji found himself matching it without conscious thought.

"Good. Now faster. Make her scream," Zoro continued, his voice rough with approval.

Sanji's hips snapped forward, harder, faster. The woman did scream, a high, desperate sound that went straight to his cock. Zoro's hand moved from his hip to his hair, fingers threading through the blond strands, tugging just enough to make Sanji gasp.

"You like me telling you what to do," Zoro observed.

Sanji should have denied it, should have pulled away and made some excuse. However, his body was responding, his cock throbbing, his breath coming in short gasps as Zoro's fingers tightened in his hair.

His hips moved in rhythm with Sanji's, creating a devastating synchronization that had the woman sobbing between them.

"Angle up. Hit that spot that makes her lose her mind," Zoro commanded.

Sanji adjusted and the woman's scream confirmed he'd found it. Zoro's hand slid from his hair down his back. Sanji shuddered at the touch.

"That's it," Zoro murmured, his lips brushing Sanji's ear again.

"You're doing so good. Look how much she loves it. Look how much *you* do."

"I don't—" Sanji started, but Zoro's hand came back to his hip, pulling him in harder, and the protest died in his throat.

"Liar, but your body doesn't lie, Cook," Zoro said, something dark and knowing in his voice.

The woman was trembling between them, her hands clutching at both of them, her voice breaking on pleas.

"Please, please, I'm so close."

“Pull out,” Zoro said suddenly.

“What?” Sanji gasped.

“Pull out. Let me taste her while you fuck her.”

Sanji should have refused, should have said this was too much, too weird, but he was pulling out, his cock slick and aching. Zoro repositioned them with practiced efficiency. Sanji on his back and the woman seated in his lap with Zoro positioning himself near the end of the bed.

“Fuck her, I want to taste both of you,” he declared, looking over at Sanji with that single eye dark with heat.

Sanji’s brain short-circuited. He slid back into her and Zoro’s tongue was right there, licking around where they were joined.

“Oh *fuck*,” Sanji gasped as Zoro’s tongue dragged along the length of his cock as he thrust up.

The woman was moaning, her hands on Sanji’s chest as she moved to meet his thrusts.

Sanji couldn’t think, couldn’t process what was happening. Every thrust brought him into contact with Zoro’s mouth, sometimes just the base of his cock, sometimes his balls, sometimes the full length as he pulled out.

“You taste good together,” Zoro complimented, his voice muffled against their skin. Sanji’s hips stuttered at the words.

This had already gone way too far, but Zoro’s tongue was on his balls now, sucking one into his mouth as Sanji thrust deep into the woman and all he could do was moan.

“This is so hot. Don’t stop,” the woman gasped, looking back at where Zoro was sucking him with glazed eyes.

The swordsman pulled back slightly, his tongue tracing up Sanji’s cock as it slid out, then back down as he thrust in. The dual sensation of the woman’s tight heat and the wet heat of Zoro’s mouth was driving Sanji insane.

“Faster,” Zoro commanded.

Sanji obeyed, his hips snapping up harder, faster, chasing the sensation of the woman’s walls and Zoro’s tongue on every thrust.

“I’m— I’m going to—” the woman gasped.

“Come for us,” Zoro said, his mouth back on her clit, his hand reaching up to grip Sanji’s hip again, controlling the pace.

She did, screaming, her body convulsing between them. Sanji felt his own orgasm building, but then the woman’s hand wrapped around his cock and pulled him out of her completely.

“Not inside. Besides, I have a better idea,” she said, breathless and flushed.

Sanji’s hips stuttered, his cock throbbing with need.

“Wha—”

She and Zoro shared a long, weighted look that Sanji couldn’t read, but then the woman sank down, taking him into her mouth with a soft moan. Her tongue worked the underside of his shaft as she bobbed her head, her hand stroking the base. It was good, her mouth was warm and eager. Sanji’s hands flew to her hair, his hips thrusting gently forward.

Then Zoro was there too.

Sanji felt him before he saw him, felt the shift in the air as Zoro moved closer. Suddenly, Zoro’s mouth was on him too, his tongue joining the woman’s, tracing along the side of his shaft as she continued to suck.

No, no, no, Sanji’s mind screamed even as his body responded.

Push him away. This isn’t— I shouldn’t—

Zoro’s mouth was hot and wet and *perfect*. The heat was different, hotter somehow, more intense, and the wetness was obscene. Zoro’s saliva mixed with the woman’s as his tongue traced a slow, deliberate path up the side of Sanji’s cock. His eye locked on Sanji’s face as he worked, watching every reaction with an intensity that made Sanji’s skin prickle with goosebumps.

The sensation was overwhelming: two mouths on him, both working in tandem. The woman’s lips were soft, gentle, her suction steady and practiced. Zoro’s mouth was firmer, more demanding, his tongue rougher as it dragged along Sanji’s shaft.

Sanji felt crazy, like his skin was on fire and every nerve ending in his body had been lit up and exposed. His thighs trembled. His abs clenched involuntarily. His breathing came in short, desperate gasps that he couldn’t control.

This is wrong. This is so wrong. He’s a man. He’s Zoro. This shouldn’t feel so good.

The woman pulled back slightly, letting Zoro take the lead while her hand wrapped around the base of Sanji’s cock, stroking in rhythm with Zoro’s mouth. The combination was too much. Sanji felt the pressure building impossibly high, coiling tight in his lower belly, making his muscles lock up with the effort of holding back.

Zoro’s lips sealed around the head of his cock and the suction was devastating. It was stronger than the woman’s, more controlled, like Zoro knew exactly how much pressure to apply to make Sanji’s vision blur. His tongue swirled around the sensitive head, dipping into the slit. Sanji’s hips jerked forward involuntarily.

I need to stop this. I need to push him away.

Zoro took him deeper, his mouth sliding down Sanji's length with practiced ease. The wet heat was so intense Sanji thought he might pass out. He could feel the texture of Zoro's tongue against the underside of his cock, the way Zoro's throat opened to take him deeper, the vibration when Zoro hummed low in his chest.

It was terrifying.

Zoro's mouth on him felt better than anything he had ever experienced, even better than the woman's. Better because it was *Zoro*, because it was *his* mouth, *his* tongue, *his* eye watching Sanji fall apart with something that looked like possessiveness and hunger and—

No, don't think about it. Don't think about what this means.

Sanji's whole body was shaking now, trembling with the effort of staying upright and not collapsing under the weight of sensation. His skin felt too tight, too hot, covered in a sheen of sweat that made him feel exposed and vulnerable. Every muscle in his body was taut, straining, caught between the urge to thrust up into Zoro's mouth and the desperate need to pull away. His hands scrabbled at Zoro's shoulders, his fingers digging into solid muscle. The contact grounded him and overwhelmed him all at once.

Zoro pulled back just enough to breathe, his lips still wrapped around the head of Sanji's cock. He surprised Sanji by sucking hard, his cheeks hollowing with the effort. The woman's hand tightened around the base, stroking in perfect rhythm.

This can't be happening. This can't feel this good.

His body didn't care what he was supposed to feel. It was leaning in to Zoro's ministrations, arching into the touch, chasing the pleasure with single-minded desperation.

Zoro took him deeper again and this time Sanji felt the back of his throat. It was overwhelming, tight, hot, wet, *perfect*. Sanji's hips thrust up involuntarily, seeking more. Zoro didn't gag or pull back. He opened his throat and swallowed. The rhythmic pressure of his throat working around Sanji's cock sent shockwaves of pleasure through his entire body.

"*Fuck*," Sanji moaned.

This was insanity. He was doing this with Zoro of all people. *Zoro*. His rival, his crewmate, the man he'd spent years fighting with and against. Zoro was doing this and he was looking at Sanji through a heavy-lidded eye filled with desire towards him. Sanji couldn't deny a reciprocal desire burning through his bloodstream, keeping him locked in this moment despite his better judgement. He couldn't push him away and it scared him more than anything else.

"You're so close. Look at you. So desperate for him," the woman murmured.

Zoro pulled back, his lips releasing Sanji's cock with an obscene wet sound. Sanji nearly sobbed at the loss. Zoro soothed the ache with a slow, deliberate stripe up the underside of his shaft.

“Come on. Give it to us, Sanji,” Zoro rasped, pulling back enough to speak, his voice rough and wrecked and hungry.

He said my name. He’s looking at me like that and saying my name.

That was it. The combination of their mouths, their hands, their words, Zoro’s voice that rough saying his name – it was too much. Sanji came with a shout, his cock pulsing as he spilled across their faces, his come landing on the woman’s cheek, on Zoro’s chin, on both their lips.

For a moment, he was frozen in shock at the sight of them marked by him, both of them looking at him with dark, satisfied eyes. His body was still trembling, aftershocks of pleasure rolling through him in waves making his muscles twitch and his breath come in ragged gasps.

What did I just do? What does this mean? Why did it feel so good? Why did Zoro’s mouth feel better than—

Zoro was moving in the next second, taking Sanji’s still-hard cock fully into his mouth, swallowing around him as the last of his orgasm hit. The sensation of Zoro swallowing, of his throat working around Sanji’s oversensitive cock, sent another wave of pleasure through him so intense it bordered on pain.

Sanji’s hands flew to Zoro’s hair, gripping tight. His cock was so sensitive it almost hurt, but Zoro’s mouth was relentless, sucking and swallowing every drop like he was starving for it.

“Fuck, Zoro,” Sanji gasped loudly, his nails drawing blood as they sank into Zoro’s shoulders, his whole body shaking with overstimulation.

The greenhead pulled back slowly, his tongue dragging along Sanji’s length one last time before releasing him completely. He licked his lips, his eye dark and domineering, reminding Sanji of the demon epithet the man carried.

“Can’t waste anything. That’s your whole thing, right Cook?” Zoro said, his voice low and sultry before he used his fingers to wipe the come that was on his face off and lick his fingers clean.

Sanji felt like he was going to pass out or maybe he was already asleep and this was just a dream. He felt removed from reality, his skin tingling with the aftermath of his orgasm and arousal still heating his stomach despite the fact he’d just come harder than he ever had in his life.

The woman was watching them with an expression of wonder.

“That was something else,” she commented, looking between them with a strange light in her eyes.

Sanji was overwhelmed by sensation, emotion and the shocking realization that he’d been turned on by both of them. He’d enjoyed the woman’s mouth on him, but he’d enjoyed Zoro’s too, enjoyed Zoro *more* if he was being honest with himself.

What does that mean? What does any of this mean? he thought, panic and arousal warring inside him.

It means you're broken. It means your father was right. It means you're disgusting and wrong.

Before Sanji could process any more, Zoro was moving. He pulled Sanji close, eliminating the space between them in one fluid motion. His mouth found Sanji's, claiming it with an urgency that left no room for doubt. He stiffened at first, caught off guard by the sudden contact, his mind racing to catch up with his body, but even as his thoughts screamed in protest, his lips were already parting, already responding. He returned the kiss, melting into it despite himself.

He could taste himself on Zoro's lips, a heady reminder of what had just transpired between them, along with the sharp, bitter notes of the sake Zoro had drunk earlier that evening. The combination was intoxicating, making Sanji's head spin.

You shouldn't like this. You shouldn't want this. He's a man. You've never wanted a man before. Never even thought about…

But that wasn't quite true, was it?

How many times had he watched Zoro train, his muscles flexing, sweat glistening on his skin? How many times had he felt something twist in his gut when Zoro looked at him with that singular focus? How many times had he told himself it was just rivalry, just competition?

When they finally pulled apart, both breathing harder than before, Zoro's hand came up to cup his face with a gentleness that seemed out of place. His calloused thumb brushed across Sanji's cheekbone. Sanji's breath hitched. His skin felt too hot, too sensitive. Every point of contact between them was electric.

I can't want this. I can't want him. Not like this.

"You okay?" Zoro asked, his voice low and rough.

Sanji nodded, not trusting himself to speak. His throat felt dry, his chest constricted. If he opened his mouth, he didn't know what would come out.

The woman recovered first, propping herself up on one elbow.

"That was incredible, but I want to see something else," she purred.

Her smile was pure sin. Sanji felt alarm bells ringing in his head before she even finished her sentence.

"I want to watch you two together."

"What? No. We're not—"

“I think you are. I saw how you responded to him. How you liked when he told you what to do, how much you enjoyed his mouth.”

Sanji’s face burned.

“I didn’t—”

“You did,” Zoro interrupted quietly.

Sanji looked at him. Zoro’s expression was full of interest and heat. Sanji had never seen him look like that at anyone before, not even during any island stops or when anyone tried to pick him up at bars. Now he was looking like that at *Sanji.*

It made him feel more satisfaction than it should’ve and his chest swelled with possessive pride.

He’s looking at me like that. He wants me.

“I’m not—” Sanji weakly protested, but even he could hear how unconvincing it sounded.

Liar. You want this. You want him. You’d say yes even if she wasn’t here.

The thought petrified him.

“Try it, just once. You might like it and even if you don’t, I promise I’ll make it worth your while,” the woman coaxed.

Sanji opened his mouth, trying to come up with some excuse, some deflection, some way to pretend this wasn’t happening. His breath stuttered completely as Zoro pulled his earlobe in between his lips before his breath brushed against his ear enticingly.

“Trust me, Sanji. I’ll take care of you.”

Oh fuck. Oh fuck, I want that. I want him to take care of me. I want him to…

Heat pooled in his gut despite coming minutes earlier. His cock was already starting to fill again, responding to Zoro’s proximity, to his voice, to the promise in those words.

What’s wrong with me? I just came. I shouldn’t be able to— I shouldn’t want—

He should say no. He should laugh this whole thing off, get dressed and leave. Zoro was still looking at him with greed and a sultry promise in his gaze. Some part of Sanji, a part he’d never acknowledged, wanted to know. He wanted to know what it would feel like to have Zoro’s hands all over him, to know what Zoro would sound like when he came, to know if Zoro would be as commanding, intense and devastating as Sanji suspected he would be.

“Fine. But just— I don’t know what—” he heard himself trailing off.

Coward. You know exactly what you want. You want his mouth on you again, want his hands, want him to fuck you until you can’t think straight.

“I’ll show you,” Zoro swore and kissed him again.

It was nothing like kissing a woman. Zoro’s lips were firm, demanding, his jaw rough with stubble. His hand fisted in Sanji’s hair, tilting his head to deepen the kiss. Sanji opened for him without thinking. His hands came up to grip Zoro’s shoulders, pulling him closer instead of pushing him away. His mouth opened wider, inviting Zoro deeper. When his tongue swept inside, Sanji heard himself make a sound that was embarrassingly close to a whimper.

Zoro’s tongue explored his mouth with the same confidence he brought to everything. Zoro existed with no hesitation in anything he did, no uncertainty. He was pure, focused intent. All that focus was on Sanji.

He wants me. He’s kissing me like he’s been thinking about this. How long has he wanted this with me?

Sanji found himself kissing back harder, more desperately, his hands coming up to grip Zoro’s shoulders. The muscles there were solid under his palms, warm and alive. He could feel Zoro’s strength, the controlled power in every movement. Zoro was kissing him like he wanted to devour him whole and Sanji was letting him. More than letting him, Sanji was kissing back with equal hunger, his fingers digging into Zoro’s skin, his body pressing closer.

I’ve never wanted anyone like this. Never felt this desperate, this needy.

When they broke apart, both breathing hard, Sanji’s lips felt swollen and his face was burning. Zoro’s eye was dark with want, his gaze traveling down Sanji’s naked body with a concentration that made his skin prickle. Sanji’s cock was fully hard now and aching. He knew Zoro could see it, could see exactly how much Sanji wanted this.

“You’re thinking too much,” Zoro accused.

“I’m not—”

“You are. Stop thinking, just feel.”

Zoro’s hand cupped his cheek, his thumb brushing against Sanji’s lower lip. Sanji’s breath caught and he saw Zoro’s eye darken further at the response.

“That’s better,” the swordsman murmured before he leaned in to kiss him again.

This time it was slower, deeper. Zoro’s other hand slid down Sanji’s chest, fingers tracing the lines of muscle there with what felt like curiosity. When his thumb brushed over Sanji’s nipple, he gasped into the kiss. The sensation shot straight to his cock, making it twitch against his stomach.

Zoro’s hand continued its exploration, sliding down to Sanji’s hip then around to his ass. He squeezed, pulling Sanji closer. He felt Zoro’s cock hard and leaking as it pressed against his thigh. The knowledge that Zoro was just as hard, just as turned on, sent a surge of heat through his body.

*He wants me. He's hard for me. Not just because of the situation, not just because of the woman. He wants **me**.*

His hips rolled forward, grinding against Zoro's thigh, seeking friction. His hands slid from Zoro's shoulders down his back, feeling the flex of muscle, the heat of skin.

"On your stomach," Zoro said against his mouth.

Sanji pulled back, his heart hammering.

"What?"

Zoro's eye held his, steady and certain.

"You heard me. Lay down on your stomach. Unless you want to stop?"

It was phrased as a question, but Sanji could hear the challenge underneath.

I should stop. I should say no, get dressed and pretend this never happened.

However, his body was already moving, already lowering himself onto the bed face-down. His face burned with shame and arousal in equal measure.

"Good boy," Zoro responded.

The light compliment sent an involuntary shiver down Sanji's spine.

What the actual fuck?

Zoro's hands settled on his shoulders, warm and solid. They slid down his back slowly, almost reverently, causing Sanji's muscles to tense and jump under the touch. When Zoro's palms reached his lower back, they pressed in slightly, massaging the flesh. Sanji couldn't stop the small sound that escaped him.

"Sensitive here?" Zoro asked.

"I— I don't know."

"We'll find out."

Zoro's hands continued their exploration, moving to Sanji's hips then his thighs. Every touch was deliberate, testing, watching for reactions. When his fingers traced the crease where Sanji's ass met his thigh, Sanji's hips jerked involuntarily.

"Sensitive there too. You're so responsive. I like that," Zoro murmured.

I shouldn't like hearing that. I shouldn't want him to keep touching me, Sanji thought desperately.

"Ever done this before with a man," Zoro asked, his hands now kneading Sanji's ass, spreading him slightly to reveal the puckered pink skin hidden between. The exposure made

Sanji want to crawl out of his skin.

“No,” he answered, his voice trembling.

“Good. I want you all for myself,” Zoro replied, an undeniable air of possessiveness in his voice that made Sanji shiver again despite his better judgement.

“I said I’d take care of you, Cook, and I will. I’ll go slow, make sure you’re ready for me. I’ll make you feel so good. You’ll be addicted to me by the end of the night.”

The words sounded just as much like a threat as they did a promise.

One hand left him and Sanji heard the woman moving. Then Zoro’s hand was back and Sanji was being spread wider. He tensed as he realized what was about to happen.

It’s not too late. I can still walk away. I can still leave. Zoro will stop if I tell him to.

“Relax. I’ve got you. I’m going to take care of you, I swear,” Zoro promised, his other hand stroking Sanji’s lower back in soothing circles.

The first touch of slick fingers against his hole made Sanji tense further. It was too intimate, too vulnerable.

“Breathe,” Zoro commanded.

Sanji found himself obeying, drawing in a shaky breath. The finger pressed in slowly, carefully. Sanji’s whole body went rigid. The intrusion felt wrong, foreign, too much. His hands fisted in the sheets and he had to fight the urge to pull away. Zoro’s other hand never stopped its soothing motion on his back and his voice was steady in his ear.

“Just breathe through it. Your body will adjust.”

My body will adjust. This is normal. People do this all the time. It’s fine, Sanji repeated to himself, trying to believe it.

Gradually, the wrongness faded into something that wasn’t quite comfortable but wasn’t painful either. The finger moved in and out while Sanji found himself breathing in time with the rhythm.

“Better?”

“Yeah,” Sanji managed.

“Good. I’m gonna add another finger now.”

The second finger was more of a stretch and Sanji hissed at the burn. Zoro went slow, working him open with patient thoroughness, the hand on his back never stopping its reassuring motion. Zoro’s fingers crooked inside him, pressing against a spot that sent electricity shooting up Sanji’s spine.

“Fuck,” he gasped, his hips jerking forward involuntarily against the bed.

“There it is,” Zoro purred before he proceeded to abuse that spot with focused precision.

Every press of his fingers sent sparks through Sanji’s body, pleasure building in waves that made his toes curl. He found himself pushing back against Zoro’s hand, chasing the sensation, pride and shame forgotten in the overwhelming need for more.

“Look at you. You’re taking my fingers so well, making such pretty sounds for me,” Zoro murmured, his voice rough with arousal.

Sanji’s face burned, but he couldn’t stop the moan that escaped when Zoro added a third finger, stretching him more and pressing harder against that spot inside him.

“Please. Please, I need more. I don’t know what I need, just more. Please, Zoro. I can’t—” Sanji heard himself beg after long minutes of pleasure.

“I know what you need,” Zoro assured as he withdrew his fingers.

The loss made Sanji whimper. He heard Zoro’s sharp intake of breath at the sound. Then he felt the blunt pressure of Zoro’s cock against his entrance. It was so much bigger than fingers. Panic flared in Sanji’s chest.

That’s not going to fit. It can’t possibly fit.

“Breathe. I’ve got you. Just breathe,” Zoro commanded, one hand gripping Sanji’s hip while the other pressed against his lower back.

Sanji tried to obey, tried to relax, but his whole body was tense in anticipation. Zoro pushed forward and the stretch was more than he anticipated.

Too much. Too much, too much, too much.

The burn was overwhelming, intense in a way that made Sanji bury his face in the pillow. His body was trying to reject the intrusion. For a moment he thought he couldn’t do this, couldn’t take it. His body wasn’t made for this, but then Zoro’s hand was on his flank, stroking gently and his voice was low and steady in his ear.

“Okay, Curls?”

It was Zoro. It was Zoro inside him. Zoro, who’d been careful with his fingers, who’d found that spot that made him feel good, who was holding still now despite the tension Sanji could feel in his body. It was Zoro, who he trusted more than almost anyone else in this world. They’d been through enough shit together that Sanji didn’t think there was anyone else he’d trust with something like this. He felt his body relaxing despite the lingering anxiety. The loosening muscles caused Zoro to slip inside deeper by an inch, drawing a surprised moan from both men.

“That’s it, Sanji. You’re doing so good for me,” Zoro murmured, his voice rough with restraint.

His name again. Not Cook. Not Curly-brow. Sanji. His actual name in Zoro's voice, low and reverent and hungry, sent a shiver through his entire body. When had Zoro ever called him that before tonight? The intimacy of it made something in his chest crack open.

"Zoro," Sanji gasped, not sure if it was a plea or a prayer.

"I've got you. Just relax. Let me in."

Zoro slowly pushed in the rest of the way until he was fully seated inside. Sanji felt impossibly full, stretched beyond what he thought his body could handle. The sensation was overwhelming, bordering on too much.

"Fuck, Sanji. You feel... fuck. You're perfect," Zoro breathed.

Sanji could hear the strain in his voice, the effort it was taking him to hold still. Some distant part of him was genuinely shocked that his body was capable of accommodating such an intrusion. He could feel every inch of Zoro inside him, the thick length filling him completely, the weight of Zoro's body pressing him into the mattress. He was vaguely aware of the woman watching them, her breathing quick and shallow, but he couldn't focus on her. All his attention was on the man inside him, on the feeling of being so completely claimed.

The crew is probably at some bar right now. Luffy's eating everything in sight. Nami's probably wondering where we are. They have no idea. No idea that I'm here with Zoro's cock inside me, that I'm letting him do this to me, Sanji thought almost hysterically.

"Breathe," Zoro commanded.

Sanji realized he'd been holding his breath. He exhaled shakily and felt his body relax another fraction.

"Good. That's good, Sanji. You're doing so good."

After a moment of letting himself adjust to the new feeling, the fullness, the strange intimacy of having Zoro buried inside him, he moved his hips a little, silently urging Zoro to move.

"You want more?" Zoro asked, his voice heavy with promise.

Sanji nodded against the pillow, not trusting his voice. Zoro's hand tightened on his hip, holding him still.

"Tell me what you want. Tell me properly. Say it, Sanji."

The command in Zoro's voice sent heat pooling in his belly. He shouldn't like being ordered around like this, but he did.

"I want you to fuck me," he admitted, his voice barely above a whisper.

"Good boy," Zoro praised, pressing a kiss to the back of his neck and making Sanji's cock jerk at the words and the action.

Zoro pulled back slowly and thrust in again. This time the burn faded into pleasure, dark and intense and completely different from anything he'd ever felt before. Sanji's breath caught and his fingers curled into the sheets.

Holy shit, he thought distantly.

"Feel good?" Zoro asked, pulling out and pushing back in with the same deliberate slowness.

"Yes," Sanji gasped before he could stop himself.

"Say it again. Tell me how it feels."

"It feels good," Sanji confessed, his face burning with embarrassment and arousal.

"That's right. And you like it, don't you? You like having my cock inside you."

Sanji turned his face into the pillow, refusing to answer. He wanted to deny it, wanted to hold onto some shred of his dignity, but Zoro chose that moment to angle his hips and hit that spot inside him that made his vision swim.

"Fuck!" Sanji cried out, his whole body jerking.

"Answer me. You like it, don't you?"

Sanji whimpered and bit his lip, trying to resist, but Zoro wouldn't relent and the sparks running up and down his spine felt like electricity shooting off at his nerve endings mercilessly until he couldn't hold back. The words spilled out of him, his resistance crumbling under the onslaught of pleasure.

"Yes! I like it, okay? I like having you inside me. I like how you feel. I like how full you make me. I like — *oh shit* — it's too much. It's so good, Zoro."

"Beautiful. Taking my cock so well," Zoro murmured, his voice full of satisfaction.

Beautiful.

The word echoed in Sanji's head, making his eyes sting. No one had ever called him that. Women called him handsome, charming, sweet. But beautiful? That was different.

He liked it.

Zoro found a rhythm, deep and steady. Sanji pushed back to meet him without thinking. His body knew what to do even if his mind was still reeling. Each thrust hit that spot inside him that sent sparks up his spine. Sanji heard himself making sounds he'd never made before, desperate and eager sounds that should have embarrassed him but didn't.

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

From somewhere near the foot of the bed, Sanji heard the woman's soft moan, heard the wet sound of her touching herself as she watched them. The knowledge that she was getting off

on watching Zoro fuck him should have made him self-conscious. It only added another layer to the overwhelming sensation, the exhibitionism of being watched while he fell apart on Zoro's cock.

"Look at you. So pretty like this, so perfect. Taking everything I give you," Zoro continued, his praise relentless.

"Zoro," Sanji moaned, his voice breaking on the name.

"I know. You're doing so good for me."

The praise was breaking him down, stripping away every defense he'd ever built. He'd never known he needed this, needed to hear how good he was, how perfect, how beautiful. Every word Zoro spoke made him feel more exposed, more vulnerable, more desperate.

"Fuck, you feel good. So tight around my cock. Like you were made for this, made for me," Zoro groaned, his control starting to slip.

His hand slipped between the mattress and Sanji's body to wrap around his cock, stroking in time with his thrusts. Sanji lost all coherent thought. There was only sensation: Zoro inside him, around him, on top of him, the rough sound of his breathing, the slap of skin on skin. The way Zoro's cock dragged against that spot with every thrust, the way his hand knew exactly how to stroke him, the overwhelming fullness of being taken like this.

"You're so hard. You like this, don't you? Like having me inside you. Like being fucked," Zoro observed, his voice full of dark contentment.

"Yes! Yes, I like it. Oh god, Zoro, please," Sanji sobbed, beyond caring how desperate he sounded.

"Please what? Tell me what you need, pretty brows."

The eyebrow related nicknames had always been an insult before, but the way Zoro said it now was different. It was affectionate, possessive, intimate. It made Sanji's heart stutter in his chest.

"I need more. Please, Zoro, I need it. Harder," he demanded, his voice raw.

Zoro complied, fucking him with enough force to shake the bed. The pleasure built higher, coiling tight in Sanji's belly. Each thrust drove him closer to the edge, the combination of Zoro's cock hitting that perfect spot inside him and Zoro's hand on his cock pushing him toward something bigger than any orgasm he'd ever experienced.

"I can't— I'm going to—"

Sanji couldn't form complete sentences anymore, couldn't think past the overwhelming pleasure building.

"That's it. Let go. Come for me. Show me how good I make you feel," Zoro encouraged, his voice strained with his own approaching climax.

He'd never thought he was going to end up here, in a hotel room being fucked by a man, by Zoro of all people, and coming from this almost felt like it would solidify it in a way that even being fucked by Zoro didn't. His body didn't care what he thought. It was responding, his cock throbbing in Zoro's hand, his hole clenching around his length.

"Zoro, I'm— I'm going to—" he gasped, his voice high and desperate.

"Do it. Come for me, Sanji. Let me feel you."

The command was all it took.

Sanji came with a shout, spilling over Zoro's hand and the sheets, his body clenching around Zoro's cock. The orgasm tore through him, more intense than anything he'd ever felt. He heard himself crying out Zoro's name as pleasure whited out his vision, as every nerve in his body lit up at once. His hole clamped down on Zoro's cock, rhythmic pulses that seemed to go on forever, wave after wave of pleasure crashing over him until he couldn't breathe, couldn't think, couldn't do anything but feel.

Zoro didn't stop. He kept fucking him through it, each thrust prolonging the orgasm, drawing it out until Sanji was sobbing from it. His cock was still pulsing, still spilling, and Zoro's hand was still stroking him, milking every last drop from him while his cock continued to hit that spot inside.

"So beautiful, so fucking beautiful when you come. My perfect Sanji," Zoro groaned, his rhythm faltering.

"Zoro," Sanji whimpered, oversensitive and overwhelmed but not wanting it to stop, never wanting it to stop.

"I'm close," he warned, his voice strained.

Sanji shivered in response, a pulse of anticipation alighting his body.

"Fuck, Sanji, I'm going to— Where do you want—"

"Inside. Please. I want to feel it," Sanji heard himself say, the words escaping before he could think better of it.

Zoro's rhythm stuttered and then he was driving in deeper than before, burying himself to the hilt.

"You're going to kill me. You're so— *fuck*—"

Zoro followed moments later, burying himself deep with a guttural moan. Sanji felt Zoro coming inside him, filling him, marking him from the inside out. The sensation was indescribable. He could feel the hot pulse of Zoro's release, could feel Zoro's cock throbbing inside him, could feel the warmth spreading through his body.

The intimacy of it was staggering. This wasn't just sex. This was something else entirely, something that made Sanji's heart race and his hands shake. Zoro was inside him, had

claimed him in the most fundamental way possible, and Sanji had wanted it, had begged for it.

They collapsed together, Zoro's weight pressing Sanji into the mattress. It should have been uncomfortable, but it wasn't. It was grounding, anchoring, real in a way that made Sanji's chest tight. Zoro's breath was hot against the back of his neck, his body heavy and solid and perfect against Sanji's back.

Zoro was still inside him. Still buried deep, his come hot inside Sanji's body. Zoro's cock was softening but he made no move to pull out, just stayed there, connected, his arms wrapped around Sanji's body like he had no intention of letting go. The intimacy of it hit Sanji like a physical blow. This was real. This had happened. He'd just been fucked by Zoro and he'd loved it. He'd come harder than he ever had in his life, had begged for it, had wanted it with a desperation that terrified him.

"You okay?" Zoro murmured against his neck.

"Yeah," he managed, his voice hoarse.

Zoro pressed a kiss to the back of his neck, tender and possessive at once.

"Good. You were so fucking perfect, so beautiful. My beautiful Sanji."

The praise made Sanji's eyes sting. He'd never felt like this before, never felt so completely undone and put back together at the same time. Zoro's arms tightened around him, holding him close. Sanji realized he didn't want him to move, didn't want Zoro to pull out, didn't want to lose this connection, this intimacy.

"Stay," he whispered, not sure if he was asking Zoro to stay inside him or stay with him or just stay, period.

"I'm not going anywhere, not yet. Just breathe. I've got you," Zoro promised.

Sanji felt him shift slightly, settling more comfortably against him but still remaining buried inside. He closed his eyes and let himself feel it: the weight of Zoro's body, the fullness of having him inside, the warmth of his come, the gentle stroke of Zoro's hand on his hip, the soft press of Zoro's lips against his shoulder. This was something he'd never experienced before and now that he had, he didn't know how he'd ever live without it.

From the foot of the bed, he heard the woman's shaky exhale, heard her shifting on the mattress. She'd watched the whole thing, had gotten off on watching them together. The thought should have embarrassed him, but didn't. It felt distant, unimportant compared to what he was feeling right now.

His whole life, he'd told himself he was straight. He'd convinced himself that his interest in women was all he needed or wanted. He'd never let himself look at men that way, had never let himself acknowledge the pull he sometimes felt, but this changed everything. It wasn't just that he'd enjoyed it. It was that he'd wanted it. He'd wanted Zoro specifically. The trust required to let someone inside him like this, the vulnerability of being taken, the

overwhelming intimacy of feeling Zoro come inside him, it was more than just physical. It was something deeper, something that made Sanji's hands shake and his throat tight. He'd wanted this. Maybe not consciously, maybe not in a way he'd ever admitted to himself, probably nothing he'd discover without a push, but some part of him had wanted this.

Now, lying here with Zoro still inside him, still holding him, still murmuring soft praise against his skin, Sanji couldn't deny it anymore. He couldn't pretend this was just physical curiosity or the heat of the moment. This meant something. *Zoro* meant something to him. Now that he'd had him and knew what it felt like, he didn't know how to go back. How was he going to pretend that this hadn't happened, hadn't changed something fundamental in how he understood himself?

"Holy shit," he breathed, his voice shaking.

"Yeah," Zoro agreed, his voice rough but satisfied.

He pressed another kiss to Sanji's shoulder, then his neck, gentle and affectionate.

"You did so good, Sanji."

He'd never needed to hear that before, never craved approval like this, but hearing it from Zoro made something inside him settle. They lay there for a moment catching their breath, Zoro still buried inside him. Sanji could feel his heartbeat against his back, feel the rise and fall of his chest, the gentle stroke of his fingers on Sanji's hip.

Finally, reluctantly, Zoro pulled out and rolled to the side. The loss of Zoro inside him felt strange, almost wrong. Sanji's hole clenched around nothing and he could feel Zoro's come starting to leak out. The physical evidence of what they'd done made his face heat up, but underneath the embarrassment was something closer to acceptance. Pride, even. He'd taken Zoro, had let him come inside.

He'd just been fucked by a man, by Zoro, and he'd loved every second of it.

Sanji turned to face him and they stared at each other. Zoro's eye was dark and satisfied, his expression softer than Sanji had ever seen it. There was something in his gaze that made his breath catch, something that looked like affection and possession and promise all at once.

"So…" Zoro said.

"So," Sanji repeated, his anxiety spiking momentarily.

What if Zoro had been lying this whole time? The swordsman wasn't prone to falsehoods, he didn't see the point, but what if Sanji hadn't been as good as he'd said? What if he pushed him away or rejected him or made fun of him?

"That was everything I'd ever hoped it would be, Curls."

Sanji's breath hitched in his throat, his eyes widening, half because of the implications (Zoro had hoped he'd get to have Sanji like this? Since when? For how long?) but also at the confirmation that Sanji had been enough for him, more than enough.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

The woman laughed from her position at the foot of the bed, startling Sanji. He was ashamed to privately admit he’d forgotten she was even in the room. When was the last time that had happened? When did he last lose awareness of a woman being near him? When he was a child on the Orbit? In Germa maybe? What the hell was Zoro doing to him?

“You two are adorable. Ready for round two?”

Sanji’s spent cock twitched with interest despite his exhaustion. He looked at Zoro, who was already watching him with that dark, hungry expression that made Sanji’s pulse race. The woman reached for Sanji, her fingers trailing up his thigh, but Zoro’s hand shot out and caught her wrist. Not roughly, but firmly.

“No,” he said, his voice low and possessive.

The woman blinked in surprise, then her lips curved into an amused smile.

“No,” she asked, raising an eyebrow.

“He’s mine now. You can watch if you want, but you don’t touch him anymore.”

Zoro’s gaze stayed on Sanji as he spoke, heavy and full of lust, sending heat flooding through his body. He should protest, argue that Zoro didn’t get to just claim him like that, but the possessiveness in Zoro’s voice and the way he was looking at him like he’d fight anyone who tried to take him away made Sanji’s cock throb with renewed interest.

What the fuck is wrong with me? Why does that turn me on so much? Sanji wondered.

The woman laughed, delighted rather than offended.

“Well, well. Someone’s territorial.”

Zoro finally looked at her, his expression softening slightly.

“You good with that?”

She settled back against the pillows, her hand sliding between her own legs.

“More than good. I don’t mind watching. You two put on quite a show. I think I’ll enjoy this even more,” she purred.

Zoro’s attention turned back to him. The focus made Sanji feel like he was the only person in the world. Zoro moved him so he was on his back before settling between his legs causing Sanji’s breath to quicken.

“You okay with this?” Zoro asked quietly, his hand cupping Sanji’s face.

He swallowed hard. He should say no, should insist they include the woman if only so he could maintain the pretense that this was a threesome, just casual sex with a stranger. The truth was he didn't want her touching him right now either. He wanted Zoro. Only Zoro.

"I'm okay with it," he heard himself say, his voice barely above a whisper.

Zoro's expression softened further, warmth flickering in his eye.

"Good, because I've been wanting to get you alone all night."

Zoro kissed him slow and deep, causing his thoughts to scatter. This kiss was different from the others. It was more focused, more intimate somehow. It was like Zoro was trying to memorize the taste of him. When they broke apart, Sanji was breathing hard, his cock fully hard again despite having come twice already. Zoro's hand wrapped around it, stroking slowly. Sanji couldn't bite back the moan in response.

"Every time I touch you, you light up. It's beautiful, Sanji. You're beautiful," Zoro murmured, his voice full of wonder and desire.

"Zoro," Sanji gasped, his hips rocking into his grip.

"I know, pretty brows. I've got you."

Zoro kissed down his jaw and his neck, finding the sensitive spot behind his ear that made him shiver.

"Gonna take such good care of you. Gonna make you feel so good again."

From the foot of the bed, the woman made a soft sound of approval.

"God, the way you look at him. Like he's the only thing in the world that matters."

Zoro didn't respond to her, his attention completely focused on Sanji. His hand continued its slow, maddening stroke while his mouth worked its way down Sanji's body. When he reached Sanji's nipple, he sucked it into his mouth. Sanji cried out, his back arching off the bed. He lavished attention on the other nipple, teeth grazing the sensitive flesh.

This is insane. I shouldn't be this turned on already, shouldn't want him this badly, Sanji thought desperately.

Zoro's mouth continued its journey downward, kissing and licking and biting until Sanji was trembling with need. When Zoro's tongue traced the line of his hip, his cock jerked, leaking steadily.

"Zoro, please."

"Please what, beautiful? Tell me what you want."

Sanji's face burned with embarrassment, but the words spilled out anyway.

“I want... I want you inside me again. I want to feel you.”

Zoro’s eye darkened with hunger.

“Yeah? Even though you’re probably sore? Even though you should rest?”

“I don’t care,” Sanji retorted. He didn’t care about the soreness, didn’t care that his body was protesting. He just wanted Zoro again.

Zoro kissed him, hard and domineering. He reached for the oil they’d used earlier, slicking his fingers. When he pressed one inside Sanji’s entrance, he gasped at the intrusion. He was tender and sensitive, but the pleasure was immediate and overwhelming.

“Still so tight, even after I’ve fucked you,” Zoro murmured, working his finger deeper.

Sanji moaned, his hips rocking down onto Zoro’s finger.

“More. I can take more,” Sanji demanded.

Zoro added a second finger, scissoring them, stretching Sanji open. When he found Sanji’s prostate, Sanji cried out, his whole body jerking.

“There it is. I’m gonna hit it with every thrust when I’m inside you. I’m gonna make you come just from me fucking you. You’re gonna fly so high you forget your own name,” Zoro promised darkly.

“Zoro, please,” Sanji gasped.

The swordsman pulled his fingers out and lined himself up. When he pushed inside, Sanji’s breath caught at the fullness, the stretch, the perfect feeling of being claimed by Zoro again.

“Fuck, you feel good, so tight and perfect,” Zoro groaned, bottoming out.

He started moving, slow and deep, each thrust deliberate and controlled. Sanji wrapped his legs around Zoro’s waist, pulling him closer, needing to feel every inch of him.

“Look at me,” Zoro commanded and Sanji’s eyes snapped to his face.

“That’s it. I want to watch you fall apart on my cock.”

Zoro’s gaze was almost too much. Sanji felt exposed. He was certain Zoro could see right through him to all the things Sanji was trying not to feel.

“So beautiful like this. Taking me so well. My perfect Sanji,” Zoro murmured, his pace increasing.

Sanji’s body responded easily to Zoro’s words, his cock throbbing and his hole clenching around Zoro’s length.

From the foot of the bed, the woman moaned softly.

“God, you two are perfect together. The way you move. The way you look at each other. It’s beautiful.”

Sanji barely heard her, his entire focus was on Zoro: the way his muscles flexed with each thrust, the heat in his eye, the way his lips parted slightly as pleasure built, the way he said Sanji’s name like it was something precious.

“Harder. I can take it. Give me more,” he demanded, his nails digging into Zoro’s shoulders.

Zoro’s grin was sharp and hungry.

“Greedy,” he teased but he obliged, his hips snapping forward with more force, driving deeper and hitting that perfect spot inside Sanji with every thrust just like he promised he would.

Sanji cried out, his head falling back against the pillows. The pleasure was overwhelming. He was going to come again, just from this.

I’ve never been like this, never wanted someone this badly. What is he doing to me? Sanji thought through the haze of pleasure.

“That’s it. Let me hear you. Let me hear how good I make you feel,” Zoro encouraged, his voice rough.

“Fuck, Zoro, it’s so good. You feel so good inside me,” Sanji gasped, beyond caring how desperate he sounded.

“Yeah?”

“I love it. I love how you feel. I love...”

He cut himself off, terrified of what he’d almost said. Still, Zoro’s expression softened, something warm and tender flickering in his eye. Zoro leaned down, kissing him deeply.

“I know, beautiful. I know. I’ve got you.”

The tenderness in Zoro’s voice, combined with the relentless pleasure of his thrusts, pushed Sanji over the edge. He came with a broken cry, his body clenching around Zoro, his cock pulsing untouched between them. Zoro fucked him through it, his pace never faltering, prolonging Sanji’s orgasm until he was practically screaming. After another few thrusts, Zoro buried himself deep with a groan, filling Sanji once more.

They stayed locked together, breathing hard, foreheads pressed close. Zoro kissed him soft and tender, making Sanji’s heart skip a beat.

“You’re incredible. You know that?”

He didn’t know what to say to that, didn’t know how to process the affection in Zoro’s voice, the way he was looking at Sanji like he was something precious. The woman made a satisfied sound from her position at the foot of the bed.

“That was beautiful, but I think you two have more in you yet.”

Zoro pulled out carefully and Sanji winced at the loss. His body was sore, aching, but he was already thinking about the next time, about feeling Zoro inside him again.

He knew he had a pretty good stamina, women had complimented him for it before, but this was different. Zoro was awakening a hunger in him that seemed insatiable and he didn’t know what to do with it.

They rested for a while, all three of them pulled into a light doze. Zoro held him close, his hand stroking gently up and down Sanji’s spine while the woman rested on Zoro’s other side.

After some time, Sanji woke again and felt his body stirring. His cock was showing interest despite everything and when Zoro’s hand wrapped around it, stroking slowly, he moaned.

“Again?” Zoro asked, amusement in his voice.

“Shut up,” Sanji muttered, but there was no heat in it.

“You’re insatiable, pretty brows, but I’m not complaining.”

Sanji’s mind was spinning. He’d come three times already and his body was already preparing for more.

It’s because it’s Zoro, because it’s him specifically. Not just any man, but him, a small voice in his head whispered.

The realization was scary. He was getting too deep. Once they crossed the threshold of this bedroom and returned to the Sunny, what was he expecting to happen then? When he was around their friends, their family, chasing their dreams? He needed some semblance of who he was to remain. He couldn’t let this thing with Zoro tear it away completely. He had to get some control back somehow.

“Zoro, I... what if...” Sanji trailed off, not sure how to ask but knowing he needed to.

“What if what, beautiful? Tell me what you’re thinking.”

Sanji’s face burned with embarrassment.

“What if... what if she... I mean, could she...”

He gestured vaguely toward the woman, unable to form the words. Zoro’s eye narrowed slightly, understanding dawning.

“You want her involved?”

“Maybe? I just... I want to see if...”

He couldn’t finish the sentence, couldn’t articulate what he was trying to test. He needed to know if he still wanted women, whether this thing with Zoro was just circumstance or

something more. Zoro was quiet for a moment, his expression unreadable. Then he looked at the woman.

“You up for that?”

She smiled, her eyes lighting up.

“Absolutely. What did you have in mind?”

Sanji swallowed hard.

“Maybe... maybe she could... ride me? While you...”

He couldn’t say it, couldn’t voice the image in his head. Zoro’s expression darkened with hunger.

“You want me to fuck you while you fuck her?”

Sanji nodded wordlessly.

“Okay, we can do that,” Zoro decided after a moment.

Relief and anticipation flooded through Sanji. The woman straddled his lap and Sanji’s hands automatically went to her hips as she sank down onto his cock. The sensation was warm and wet and familiar. Sanji moaned at the feeling. This was what he knew, what made sense to him: a woman’s body, soft and curved and inviting, responding to his touch in ways he understood instinctively. He knew how to please women, how to read their sighs and movements, how to make them gasp his name.

He could feel the heavy feeling of Zoro’s gaze on them as the woman’s hands pressed into his chest, gyrating her hips against his as their bodies met.

The woman rode him sensually and Sanji’s hips rocked up to meet her. It felt good, to his quiet relief. He still wanted this.

“You look good like this, buried inside her, but you’re going to look even better when I’m buried inside you,” Zoro murmured in his ear.

He was hyperaware of Zoro’s movements even with the woman in his lap. He unconsciously tracked him as he moved to the space between Sanji’s legs, his body partly covered from Sanji’s line of sight by the woman. Still, when Zoro’s slick fingers pressed inside him, stretching him open again, Sanji’s whole body lit up in a way it hadn’t with just the woman.

Oh.

Oh no.

The difference was stark and undeniable. Being inside the woman felt good, but having Zoro’s fingers inside him felt right in a way that made Sanji’s heart race and his hands shake.

“Ready for me, beautiful?” Zoro asked, his fingers working Sanji open with practiced ease.

“Yes! Yes, please,” Sanji gasped.

Zoro pulled his fingers out and lined himself up. When he pushed inside, Sanji cried out at the intense sensation.

“Fuck, you’re so tight like this. Can feel you clenching around me,” Zoro groaned.

“You two are so hot. I knew I made the right choice picking you,” the woman moaned, her hands braced on Sanji’s chest as she continued to ride him while Zoro began to thrust. The two motions were sending him into a spiral, his vision swimming as his body thrummed with passion and lust.

“How does it feel, pretty brows? Being fucked from both sides? Being used like this?” Zoro asked, his voice dark and possessive.

“It feels good, so good,” Sanji gasped.

The woman’s movements, Zoro’s thrusts, the overwhelming sensation of being filled and filling at the same time. It should have been perfect, the ultimate fantasy, but Sanji’s body knew the truth. What he really wanted was just Zoro. The woman was pleasant, enjoyable even, but she wasn’t what made Sanji’s heart race, wasn’t what made him feel like he was coming apart at the seams.

I’m in so much trouble, he thought desperately.

“You’re so good, taking both of us. My perfect Sanji.”

The possessiveness in Zoro’s voice drew a small whimper from him. His cock throbbed inside the woman, pleasure building toward a crescendo that threatened to overwhelm him. Just as Sanji felt himself approaching the edge, Zoro’s movements slowed, then stopped entirely.

“Wait, not yet,” he declared, his hands gripping Sanji’s hips firmly.

“I was so close...” he whined, his body trembling with need.

“I know, beautiful. But I want to see your face properly, want to watch you while I’m inside you, want to see every expression.”

The woman lifted herself off Sanji’s aching cock with a knowing smile, settling beside them. Zoro carefully pulled out, causing Sanji to gasp at the emptiness.

“On your back,” Zoro ordered, already guiding the woman into position. She obeyed with a cheeky grin.

“Come here, Curls. I want you between us.”

Sanji was moving before his mind could catch up. The woman lay down on the mattress beneath him and Sanji found himself settling between her legs again, his cock still desperately hard. Zoro was pressed against his back, his chest flush against Sanji as he wrapped one arm around Sanji's waist and buried the other in his blond hair, angling his head so he was meeting Zoro's gaze. Sanji leaned into his touch without thinking.

"Your body knows what it wants now. It knows you belong to me," Zoro murmured appreciatively.

The words made his cock throb.

"Fuck her, show her how good you can be, but keep your eyes on me."

Sanji pushed inside of her without hesitation. She moaned and wrapped her legs around him, pulling him closer. She was warm and familiar, but Sanji's attention was elsewhere, already anticipating what came next. Zoro kept their gazes locked as his slick fingers pressed inside Sanji even though he was already loose and open from before.

"So eager for me. Your body just keeps wanting more," Zoro murmured, his eye never leaving Sanji's face.

Sanji didn't look away or break the intensity of Zoro's stare even as he moved inside the woman, even as she gasped and clutched at his skin. All he could see was Zoro. All he could feel was Zoro's fingers working him open, stretching him, getting him ready. Then Zoro pulled his fingers out and positioned himself. Sanji felt the blunt pressure of his cock against his entrance. Their eyes stayed locked as Zoro pushed inside. The eye contact made it unbearably intimate. Zoro was watching every flicker of emotion cross his face, seeing the exact moment pleasure overwhelmed him, witnessing his complete surrender. Sanji was buried inside the woman, but he still couldn't look away from that intense gray eye. The woman moaned beneath him, her body warm and welcoming, but it was Zoro's gaze that held Sanji captive. Zoro's cock filling him perfectly. Zoro's hand in his hair, keeping their eyes locked together.

Sanji rocked his hips forward, driving deeper into the woman. She cried out, her hands clutching the sheets. Sanji's attention was split, half on the pleasure of being inside her and half on the overwhelming sensation of Zoro inside him. All of it was filtered through the intensity of Zoro's unwavering stare.

"That's it. Just like that. You're doing so good, beautiful," Zoro encouraged, his hands gripping Sanji's hips, controlling the pace.

Every time Sanji thrust into the woman, Zoro's cock dragged over his prostate, sending sparks of pleasure through him. The duality was maddening, overwhelming, perfect.

"Harder," the woman gasped beneath him.

Sanji started to comply, his eyes beginning to drift down to where their bodies joined, but Zoro's hand immediately caught his chin, forcing his gaze back up.

“Eyes on me,” Zoro commanded, his grip on Sanji’s hips tightening.

“And not too hard. You’re still sensitive. Don’t want you hurting yourself. Just nice and steady, pretty brows.”

Sanji’s breath caught. Even in the middle of this, Zoro was taking care of him and watching him. Always watching.

He cares. He actually cares about me. This isn’t just about getting off for him, Sanji realized, his chest tightening as he held Zoro’s gaze.

“I can’t,” Sanji gasped, his voice breaking.

He tried to look away, overwhelmed by the intimacy of being so thoroughly seen, but Zoro’s hand in his hair kept him locked in place. Zoro’s eye searched his face, drinking in every detail.

“Keep looking at me. Let me see you.”

The woman was moaning beneath him, her body responding to his thrusts, but Sanji could only focus on Zoro’s gaze.

“You’re so beautiful like this, caught between us, taking what you need. You’re being so good for both of us,” Zoro murmured, his eye never leaving Sanji’s face.

Even as Zoro said that, Sanji could see the possessiveness burning in that single gray eye, could feel the way Zoro’s grip tightened, the way his thrusts became more demanding, more claiming. Zoro didn’t really want to share Sanji. He was doing this because Sanji asked but he didn’t want this.

The realization sent a thrill through him. Zoro wanted him, exclusively. He wanted to keep him all to himself. Sanji could see it all written plainly in the way Zoro looked at him.

I want that too. I want to be his. Only his, Sanji thought, the truth crashing over him as he stared into Zoro’s eye.

The woman came with a cry, her body clenching around Sanji’s cock. The feeling caught him by surprise, drawing a deep moan from him as he felt his own orgasm building relentlessly.

“Zoro, I’m gonna...”

“I know, pretty brows. Let go. Come for me.”

Sanji pulled out and barely needed to stroke himself before he came with a broken moan, his eyes locked on Zoro’s, spilling across the woman’s chest and stomach as pleasure whited out his vision. Zoro held his gaze captive, watching every moment of Sanji’s unraveling with fierce satisfaction. Somehow that made it more intense.

Zoro followed moments later, his fingers digging into Sanji’s hips as he buried himself deep, his eye still locked on Sanji’s face. He watched Zoro’s expression shift, the way his jaw

clenched, his pupil dilated and his lips parted on a groan. The feeling of Zoro coming inside him while maintaining that unbroken eye contact was more intense than his own orgasm had been.

They collapsed together, all three of them breathing hard. The woman made a satisfied sound, stretching languidly.

“You two are incredible,” she murmured.

After a moment, Zoro carefully pulled out and Sanji winced at the motion. His body was thoroughly used now, aching and sore, but satisfied in a way he’d never experienced before.

Still, his mind was reeling. The experiment had backfired spectacularly. He’d thought maybe being with the woman again would remind him of what he liked, ground him in his familiar desires. Instead, it had only made it clearer that what he wanted was Zoro.

I’m so fucked. Completely and utterly fucked.

Zoro left the bed briefly to go to the bathroom and returned with a clean cloth and bowl of water. He cleaned them all up with efficiency, his touch careful and tender. When he was done, he pulled Sanji against his chest. He went willingly, needing the closeness, the comfort. The woman curled up on Sanji’s other side, but there was distance now, a clear boundary. She was there, but she wasn’t part of what was happening between them.

“You two are something special. I hope you know that,” she said softly.

Sanji didn’t know what to say to that.

“Sleep. We’ll figure everything out later,” Zoro commanded gently, his hand stroking Sanji’s hair.

Sanji’s eyes drifted closed. His body was exhausted, his mind spinning, but wrapped in Zoro’s arms, he felt safe.

This changes everything, Sanji thought as sleep pulled him under.

He didn’t know if he was ready to face the prospect just yet, but he didn’t think he was going to have a choice soon.

~*~*~

When Sanji woke, sunlight was streaming through the curtains. He blinked groggily, his body protesting as he tried to move. Every muscle ached and his ass was sore in a way that made him wince.

Worth it, his traitorous mind supplied immediately.

He looked around the room. Zoro was still asleep beside him, one arm draped possessively over Sanji’s waist. But the woman...

Sanji sat up carefully, looking around. Her dress was gone. Her shoes. All her belongings. It was her hotel room but one wouldn't know it given only his and Zoro's clothes remained, folded neatly on the end of the bed unlike the trail they'd left on the floor last night.

"Zoro. Zoro, wake up," Sanji coaxed, shaking his shoulder.

The swordsman blinked awake, his eye focusing on Sanji's face.

"She's gone."

"What?"

Sanji gestured around the empty room.

"The woman. She's gone."

Zoro sat up, looking around. He glanced at his green robe, pants, haramaki, sash and swords sitting at the end of the bed. He let Sanji go before his hand went to his pants, checking the pockets.

"She's gone and so are our wallets," he grumbled but there was amusement in his voice.

Sanji's eyes widened and he scrambled for his own pants, finding the pockets empty. He slumped back against the bed with a groan.

"Damn. She really played us."

"Yep."

"I can't even be mad. That was well executed. We were completely… distracted," Sanji admitted, running a hand through his disheveled hair.

"Do you actually care?" Zoro asked, his eye fixed on Sanji's face.

Sanji considered that. His wallet had maybe 10,000 berries. Zoro's probably less. In exchange, he'd had the best sex of his life and discovered something about himself he'd never expected.

"Not really," he admitted.

"Good."

Zoro reached for him, but Sanji's hand shot out, pressing against his chest. The movement made him wince. His entire body was sore, muscles he didn't even know he had protesting the motion. His ass ached, a deep, persistent throb that reminded him of everything they'd done.

"Wait. We should talk about this first."

Zoro's eyebrow raised.

“Talk?”

“Yeah. Talk. About what happened and what it means.”

Even as he said it, Sanji was acutely aware of Zoro’s warm skin under his palm, the solid muscle, the way his heart beat steady and strong. Zoro’s hand covered Sanji’s, holding it against his chest.

“What’s there to talk about?”

“Everything! We can’t just keep doing this without thinking about it.”

“Why not?”

“Because it’s crazy. This is crazy.”

Sanji tried to pull back, but Zoro’s other hand came up to cup his jaw, thumb brushing over his cheekbone. The gentle touch sent a shiver through him.

“We should stop to think clearly about what happened.”

“I am thinking clearly. This is the clearest I’ve been in a long time,” Zoro retorted, his eye dark with intent.

“We— mmph.”

Zoro kissed him, slow and deep, cutting off Sanji’s protest. He meant to push him away, meant to insist they talk first, but his hands were already sliding up Zoro’s chest to his shoulders, pulling him closer instead. When they broke apart, Sanji was breathing hard, his resolve crumbling.

“We need to talk,” Sanji tried again, but his voice was weak.

“Okay, we’ll talk,” Zoro said.

Sanji blinked at him in surprise at the easy acquiesce.

“But let me hold you while we do.”

Sanji hesitated before nodding in agreement. Zoro pulled him against his broad, scarred chest. Sanji went willingly, needing the closeness despite his confusion.

“Talk, Cook,” Zoro prompted.

“This doesn’t change anything between us,” Sanji started.

“Liar,” Zoro murmured, his lips brushing Sanji’s temple.

“I’m serious. We can’t just... this was just sex. Just physical.”

Zoro’s hand stroked down Sanji’s spine, soothing and possessive at once.

“It didn’t feel like ‘just sex’ to me.”

“What else would it be?”

“I don’t know. You tell me.”

Zoro pulled back slightly, looking at Sanji’s face.

“Did it feel like ‘just sex’ to you?”

Sanji opened his mouth to say yes, to maintain the lie, but the words wouldn’t come.

“I don’t know,” he admitted quietly.

“That’s okay. We don’t have to figure it all out right now,” Zoro reassured him, his hand coming up to cup Sanji’s face.

“We should at least talk about what happens next,” Sanji insisted.

“What do you want to happen next?” Zoro countered, his thumb stroking Sanji’s cheekbone.

Sanji’s breath caught. What did he want? He wanted more of this, more of Zoro, more of the way Zoro made him feel. Admitting that felt like stepping off a cliff.

“I don’t know,” he said again, his voice barely above a whisper.

Zoro leaned in, his forehead resting against Sanji’s.

“Yes, you do. You’re just scared to say it.”

“I’m not scared,” he protested weakly.

Zoro kissed him again, soft and sweet.

“It’s okay to be scared, Sanji. This is new. It’s different, but that doesn’t make it wrong.”

“How can you be so calm about this? Doesn’t it freak you out?”

“No. I’ve wanted this for a long time.”

Sanji pulled back, staring at him in shock.

“Wait, what?”

“I’ve wanted you for a while. Since Thriller Bark, at least,” Zoro admitted, his eye locked on Sanji’s face.

“That’s... that’s not possible. That was years ago.”

“I know.”

“But you… You never... you never said anything.”

Zoro’s hand slid into Sanji’s hair, fingers tangling in the blonde strands.

“Of course I didn’t. You would have kicked my ass if I’d tried anything. You were so determined to only want women that I figured I didn’t have a chance. When the woman offered that threesome… It was selfish, but I got an opportunity I never thought I’d have and I took it. I’ve been wanting to touch you, to taste you, to be inside you for so fucking long. You have no idea,” Zoro said, his voice rough with emotion.

Sanji’s whole body was trembling.

“I don’t... I don’t understand. You could’ve said something. You *should’ve* said something.”

“Would you have listened? Would you have believed me if I’d told you I wanted you? Would you have been open to seeing if you could want me back? Would any of this have happened if that woman hadn’t been here as a buffer?” Zoro asked gently.

Sanji thought about it, thought about how he’d been before last night, how convinced he’d been of his own heterosexuality. He’d never let himself look at men that way, never let himself acknowledge any attraction, so if Zoro had come to him before last night...

“No, I wouldn’t have been open to it,” he admitted.

“Exactly, but now you know. Now you’ve felt it and you can’t deny it anymore.”

Zoro kissed him again, deeper this time. Sanji reciprocated for a moment before he pulled back, his anxiety ratcheting up.

“Zoro, I don’t know if I can do this. I don’t know if I’m ready for... whatever this is.”

“You don’t have to be ready, you just have to be willing to try and see where this thing goes,” Zoro said, his hands framing Sanji’s face.

“But what if... what if I’m not... what if I can’t...”

“Can’t what? Can’t want me? Can’t be with me? I think we both know that’s not true,” Zoro replied, his thumb brushing over Sanji’s lips.

“The crew—”

“Will deal with it. They’re our family. They’ll understand.”

“But what if they don’t? What if they think it’s weird, or wrong, or...”

“Then they’ll suck it up and get over it. I don’t care what anyone thinks. I want you, Sanji. I’ve wanted you for years. I’m not going to let anyone make you feel bad about this.”

Sanji’s eyes widened at the vehemence in his voice.

“You really mean that?”

“Every word.”

Zoro kissed him again, slow and deep and full of promise.

“I want you, pretty brows. I want to keep doing this with you. I want to see where it goes. I want to make you feel good every single day if you’ll let me.”

“Every day,” Sanji asked shakily.

“Every day. I want to wake up with you, fall asleep with you, touch you whenever I want, kiss you whenever I want, fuck you whenever you’ll let me.”

“You’re insane,” he murmured, a blush coloring his cheeks.

“Maybe, but you want it too. Don’t you, beautiful,” Zoro asked, leaning into his ear so the words brushed against it softly.

He couldn’t help the shiver that went down his spine as he felt Zoro’s tongue brush against the sensitive shell. His body melted into the other man’s despite his lingering doubts.

Fuck, when did he become so easy?

“This is a bad idea,” he mumbled.

“Probably, but you’re going to say yes anyway,” Zoro replied confidently.

“You’re so fucking arrogant.”

“Maybe, but you love it.”

Zoro sucked on the sensitive spot behind his ear before kissing down his jaw, his neck, his collarbone.

“You love how I take control. Love how I make you feel. Love how I know exactly what you need.”

Love.

That was a terrifying thing to say. Especially because Zoro might be right. Sanji might actually love all those things. Knowing Sanji’s heart, before long those wouldn’t be the only things he loved when it came to Zoro.

“I don’t...” he tried to protest one last time, but Zoro’s lips drew in a mouthful of flesh on his neck, sucking and biting at the skin and making the words dissolve into a moan.

“Don’t lie to me, Sanji. Don’t lie to yourself. You want this. You want me. Just admit it,” Zoro murmured against his skin.

“I... I want you. Okay? I want you. Happy?”

“Getting there.”

Zoro pulled back to look at him, his eye dark with desire and something deeper.

“But I want more than that. I want you to say you’ll give this a chance. That you’ll let me keep touching you, keep making you feel good. That you won’t run away when we get back to the ship.”

Sanji’s heart was pounding. This was it, the moment of decision. He could say no, could insist this was just a one-time thing, could go back to pretending he didn’t want Zoro. But he’d be lying and they both knew it.

“Okay, I’ll... I’ll give it a chance,” Sanji heard himself say before he could dwell on it any further.

Zoro’s expression softened, something warm and tender flickering in his eye.

“Yeah?”

“I don’t know what this is or where it’s going, but... I want to find out.”

Sanji’s voice was shaky, but he meant it. Zoro kissed him again, deep and claiming.

“Good, because I’m not letting you go, pretty brows. You’re mine now.”

“I’m not a possession,” Sanji weakly protested.

“You’re not, but you’re mine anyway and I’m yours. If you want me.”

Sanji’s breath caught.

“You’re... you’re mine?”

“Always have been. Just took you a while to figure it out.”

Sanji’s vision blurred, his throat tight with emotion.

“You’re such an asshole.”

Zoro grinned, sharp and pleased.

“Yeah, but I’m your asshole now.”

Sanji laughed, the sound breaking on a sob.

“This is so crazy.”

Zoro pulled him close, holding him tight.

“But it could be good, right? This thing between us?”

“Yeah, it could be good,” Sanji acknowledged, his face buried in Zoro’s neck.

They stayed like that for a long moment, just holding each other. Sanji’s mind was still spinning, still trying to process everything that had happened, everything that was happening.

“We should probably get back to the ship. They’re going to wonder where we are,” the blond said eventually.

“Let them wonder. We’ve got time,” Zoro murmured, his hand stroking down Sanji’s spine.

“Moss,” he retorted warningly.

“Okay, okay.”

Zoro pulled back, his hand cupping Sanji’s face. He leaned in and kissed Sanji one more time. The kiss was slow and deep, full of all the things they hadn’t said yet, all the feelings they were still figuring out. When they broke apart, Sanji was breathless, his heart racing.

“We should go,” he said, but he didn’t move.

“Yeah,” Zoro agreed, but he didn’t let go.

They stayed like that for another moment, just looking at each other. Then, reluctantly, they started getting dressed.

Sanji’s body protested every movement, sore and aching in ways that made him wince. Underneath the discomfort was satisfaction, pride, the knowledge that Zoro had done this to him, had claimed him, had made him his.

I’m in so much trouble, but I don’t care. I want this. I want him.

They made their way out of the hotel, into the bright morning sunlight. The port town was bustling with activity, people going about their day, completely unaware of what had happened in that room upstairs.

“Ready to face the crew?” Zoro asked, his hand finding Sanji’s.

Sanji looked down at their joined hands, then up at Zoro’s face.

“No, but I’ll do it anyway.”

Zoro’s grin was sharp and pleased.

“That’s my cook.”

“Come on. Let’s go before I change my mind,” Sanji said, tugging Zoro forward.

They walked through the town together, hands linked, heading back toward the ship. Back toward their crew, their family, their future.

Sanji didn’t know what that future held, didn’t know how the crew would react, how they’d navigate this new dynamic, how they’d make it work. However, for the first time in his life he was willing to find out. Whatever this was between him and Zoro, it was worth it.

Chapter 2: Running

The Thousand Sunny came into view as they rounded the final corner of the port town, her lion figurehead gleaming in the morning sun. Sanji's steps slowed involuntarily, his hand still linked with Zoro's. He felt something cold settle in his stomach.

Reality.

The night in the hotel room had felt like a dream, something separate from his actual life. Now they were walking back to the ship, back to their crew, back to everything that was normal and familiar. Except nothing felt normal anymore. Zoro's hand was warm in his, solid and real. Sanji could still feel the ache in his body, the soreness that reminded him of everything they'd done. Everything he'd let Zoro do to him.

What the hell was I thinking?

"We should probably let go before we get to the ship," he suggested quietly, his voice sounding strange to his own ears.

Zoro's hand tightened slightly before releasing. They walked the rest of the way in silence, the space between them feeling both too close and too far. When they reached the gangplank, Sanji stopped, turning to face Zoro.

"We shouldn't tell them," he said quickly.

Zoro's eye studied him. Sanji felt exposed under the scrutiny.

"You want to keep it quiet?"

"Everything's so new. We don't even know what this is yet. We should just... keep it between us for now. Figure things out first," Sanji explained, the words tumbling out.

He watched Zoro consider this, his breath held in anticipation for what he'd say.

"Okay. We won't say anything yet," Zoro decided finally.

Relief flooded through Sanji, though he couldn't quite identify why. Maybe because keeping it secret meant he could pretend it hadn't happened. Maybe because telling the crew would make it real in a way he wasn't ready for.

"Okay," he echoed.

They stood there for another moment, the morning sun warm on their faces, the sounds of the port town waking up around them. He wanted to say something else, wanted to acknowledge what had happened between them, but the words wouldn't come.

"I should go check on the galley, make sure everything's still in order," Sanji said instead.

“Yeah, I should probably get some training done.”

There was another pause, weighted and awkward.

“So... I’ll see you later?”

Zoro’s eye held his. Sanji saw something flicker there. Disappointment? Frustration? Still, Zoro just nodded.

“Yeah. Later.”

Sanji turned and walked up the gangplank, his heart pounding as he resisted the urge to run. He didn’t look back, didn’t let himself see if Zoro was watching him go. He focused on putting one foot in front of the other, on getting to the galley where he could be alone and think.

The ship was quiet, most of the crew asleep or just waking. Sanji made his way to his domain, his body moving on autopilot. When he finally reached, he slipped inside and closed the door behind him before he leaned against it and let out a shaky breath.

What did I just do?

Sanji walked towards the table on unsteady feet and sat down heavily, his hands trembling as he ran them through his hair. The morning light filtered through the small porthole, casting everything in a soft glow that felt wrong somehow. It was too peaceful, too normal.

Nothing about what Sanji was feeling was remotely normal. He could still his skin thrumming with the feeling of Zoro’s hands on his body. Could still hear his voice, rough and commanding, in his ear. Could still remember the way it felt to let Zoro take control, to beg for more.

It was the woman, Sanji told himself firmly.

It only happened because she wanted to see it and I would never deny a woman her desires. She was the one who suggested it, who made it happen. I was just going along with what she wanted.

Even as he thought it, he knew it was a lie. The woman had been there, yes, but by the end of the night, Sanji had barely been aware of her presence. It had been Zoro he’d been consumed by. Zoro’s hands, Zoro’s mouth, Zoro’s cock inside him.

Sanji’s face burned with shame at the memory. Not only had he let Zoro fuck him, he begged for it, wept over it.

He stood abruptly, pacing the space of the galley. His body ached with every movement, a constant reminder of what had happened. His ass was sore, his muscles protesting, and there were marks on his hips and his neck from where Zoro’s fingers had gripped him and his teeth and lips had been.

Sanji caught sight of himself in the small mirror mounted on the wall and stopped. He looked the same as always. Same blond hair, same visible eye, same face. He felt fundamentally different, like something inside him had shifted and he couldn't shift it back. He caught a glimpse of an angry red bruise on his neck from where Zoro had sucked at the skin and felt shame settle deep inside of him. Underneath the shame was something else, something that made his stomach twist and his cock twitch with interest despite his exhaustion.

Memory. Desire. The ghost of pleasure so intense it had made him sob. Images flooded his mind before he could stop them.

Zoro's fingers spreading him open. Zoro's voice praising him, calling him beautiful. Zoro's cock filling him so perfectly it had made his vision blurry.

Sanji sat back down heavily, his head in his hands.

He'd never thought of Zoro that way, never consciously considered him as anything other than a rival, an annoyance, someone to fight with and compete against. However, in that hotel room, something had changed. Sanji had started seeing him differently. The way he moved, the intensity in his eye, the careful way he touched despite his domineering attitude. There had been softness there, affection, devotion. Sanji had responded to it. He'd wanted it.

That was the part that scared him the most. Not that it had happened, but that he'd wanted it so badly. That he'd surrendered so completely to Zoro's touch. That he'd begged and whined and pleaded for more. That's not who he was. He was charming, suave, a ladies' man and a gentleman who wined and dined and doted on women in public and in the bedroom he was just as generous. He was the one in control when it came to sex. He was the one who had women begging him for more. With Zoro, all of that had dissolved.

What does that make me? What does it mean that I wanted that?

He didn't have answers. He just had the memories playing on repeat in his mind, the ache in his body and the growing certainty that he couldn't face Zoro right now. He couldn't look him in the eye and pretend everything was normal. So he wouldn't. He'd avoid him. Just for a little while, just until he figured out what all of this meant.

Just until he could breathe again without remembering what happened between them.

~*~*~

The first day was easy.

Sanji stayed in the galley preparing meals with meticulous focus. He chopped vegetables with precision, seasoned dishes with care and kept his hands busy so his mind wouldn't wander. When Zoro appeared for breakfast, the last to arrive as usual, Sanji made sure to be facing the stove.

"Morning, Cook," Zoro greeted, his voice neutral.

"Morning," Sanji replied without turning around.

He could feel Zoro's gaze on him, heavy and questioning. Sanji didn't turn or meet his eye. He kept preparing food, kept moving, kept his attention anywhere but on the man. After a long moment, Zoro sat down wordlessly with the rest of the crew.

Sanji's hands were shaking as he plated the food.

He didn't look Zoro's way once throughout the rest of the day.

~*~*~

The second day was harder.

Sanji woke early and threw himself into prep work. He kneaded bread dough with more force than necessary, his knuckles white as he worked the mixture and got some frustration out. The repetitive motion should have been soothing, but all it did was give his mind space to wander back to the hotel room. Back to Zoro's hands on his body, Zoro's voice in his ear, the overwhelming sensation of being completely claimed.

He was on deck by mid-morning, chain-smoking and watching the horizon. He was on his fourth cigarette when he heard footsteps behind him. Heavy, deliberate footsteps that he recognized immediately. His heart started pounding. Panic flared in his chest, sharp and immediate. He stubbed out his cigarette and walked away quickly.

"Sanji," Zoro called after him.

He pretended not to hear, disappearing below deck before Zoro could catch up. His heart was pounding so hard he could hear it in his ears, his palms sweating as he forced himself not to run. He felt like a coward, but he couldn't stop himself. He locked himself in a storeroom and leaned against the door, breathing hard.

I'm not ready. I can't face him yet.

~*~*~

By the third day, the crew was starting to notice.

Sanji had perfected the art of being wherever Zoro wasn't. When Zoro was on deck, Sanji was in the galley. If Zoro invaded the galley, Sanji slipped into the infirmary to escape him. If Zoro was in the bunkroom, Sanji retreated to the aquarium. Zoro usually took double shifts on night watch, so he went to the men's bunkroom to sleep when he was sure Zoro was on duty. He timed his movements carefully, always keeping distance between them. However, the crew wasn't blind.

"Are you and Zoro fighting?" Nami asked as Sanji delivered her midday snack.

Her voice was casual, but her eyes were sharp.

"No more than usual," he replied smoothly, forcing a smile as he handed her the plate of petit fours.

“It seems different. You’re avoiding him,” she pressed, leaning forward a little to maintain eye contact.

“I’m not avoiding anyone,” he said, pouring all his usual charm into his voice.

Nami gave him a doubtful look.

“I’m just busy. You know how it is. Three meals a day for this crew plus snacks plus Luffy being… Luffy, it all takes planning.”

He flashed her his most dazzling smile, the one that usually made her roll her eyes fondly. Nami’s expression didn’t soften. She studied him for a long moment, her gaze searching. Sanji looked away and then immediately regretted it. It felt like an admission.

Nami’s smile suddenly turned sly.

“*Sanji,*” she said, drawing his name out playfully. His heart thud in his chest with a pang of both arousal (he couldn’t help it) and fear.

“You wouldn’t be lying to me, would you?”

“Wh— what?”

“Because that wouldn’t be like you.”

“No, I… I… I’m…”

Nami took another step towards him, her eyebrow raised knowingly.

“I… I think Robin is calling me.”

Nami frowned a little.

“I don’t hear anything.”

“Well, you know how strong my lady radar is. I better not keep her waiting. Enjoy the snack, dearest.”

Sanji turned to flee the map room as quickly as he could.

“Sanji?” Nami called before he could leave entirely.

He turned to face her reluctantly. Nami’s face betrayed concern, making him feel even more guilty than he already did for lying.

“If something happened—”

“Nothing happened. Everything’s fine. I promise,” he interrupted.

The lie tasted bitter on his tongue, but he forced himself to keep smiling. Nami didn’t look convinced, but after a moment, she sighed and let it drop.

When he left, Sanji's hands were shaking so badly he almost dropped Robin's snacks, but at least Nami didn't know the truth.

~*~*~

The fourth day, Luffy cornered him.

Sanji was restocking the pantry when their captain appeared in the doorway, his usual cheerfulness replaced with concern.

"Sanji, did something happen with Zoro?" Luffy asked bluntly, tilting his head.

"Nothing happened," he said, the lie coming easier now. He kept his back to Luffy, organizing cans with unnecessary focus.

"But you're not talking to him and he's been really grumpy. He wouldn't even let me nap on him as long as I usually do. Not even Chopper made him smile."

Sanji's chest tightened at the mention of Zoro's mood. Guilt twisted in his stomach, sharp and painful, like a knife being slowly turned. He could feel the weight of it settling over him, heavy and suffocating. The cook's hands clenched involuntarily at his sides as he tried to push down the feeling, but it only seemed to grow stronger, more insistent. He knew he was at least partially responsible for whatever dark cloud was hanging over the swordsman.

"We're fine, Luffy. Just… give us some space. You know how we are. We're always bickering," Sanji replied, forcing lightness into his tone.

"It doesn't feel like bickering. It feels... sad," Luffy said, frowning.

The word hit Sanji like a punch to the gut. Was that what he was feeling about all of this? Sadness? He turned the emotion over in his mind. Guilt was easy to identify. It sat heavy in his chest like a stone. Shame, fear and desire were familiar companions, emotions he'd wrestled with his entire life. He knew their shapes, their textures, the way they twisted in his stomach and clawed at his throat.

Sadness though? Sadness was something else entirely. Sadness would imply that he missed Zoro, that he missed the warmth of his skin and the quiet intimacy they'd shared in the darkness. It would mean he missed what they'd shared that night in that hotel room, the vulnerability, the connection, the way Zoro had looked at him like he was something precious. Sadness would mean that his feelings went deeper than simple arousal, deeper than physical need or momentary weakness.

Sanji didn't think he could face that right now. Maybe not ever.

"We're fine, I promise. Nothing going on between us will affect the crew. Now go on, I need to finish this before I start dinner prep."

Luffy lingered for another moment, clearly unconvinced. Sanji reached into the pocket of his apron and produced a bag of dried meat.

“Here, munch on this until dinner time.”

Luffy’s eyes lit up and he took bag before he wandered off. Sanji leaned against the pantry shelf, his forehead pressed to the cool wood.

What am I doing? What the hell am I doing?

~*~*~

The fifth day, Sanji found himself on deck watching Zoro work out. He should’ve walked away but he found he couldn’t. He told himself he wasn’t watching, that he was just taking a smoke break on the upper deck and happened to be standing where he had a full view of the main deck.

Zoro had stripped down to just his pants, his chest bare and gleaming with sweat in the sunlight. He was doing one-armed pull-ups on the rigging, his muscles flexing with each controlled movement. Up, down. Up, down. The rhythm was hypnotic.

Sanji’s eyes traced the lines of Zoro’s body without his permission: broad shoulders tapering to a narrow waist, the defined muscles of his back shifting and bunching with each pull, the flex of his bicep as he lifted his entire body weight with seemingly effortless strength. Sweat ran down the groove of his spine, catching the light.

Heat pooled low in Sanji’s belly, unwelcome and undeniable. His cock stirred in his pants, responding to the sight of all that masculine strength on display and the memory of what it felt like to have those muscles surrounding him, holding him down, moving inside him.

It confused him. He’d always been attracted to women and their softness, their curves, the gentle swell of breasts and hips. To delicate hands and sweet voices and the way they moved with fluid grace. Everything about women had always made sense to him, had always felt *right* in a way he understood. This was different. This was hard planes instead of soft curves, rough calluses instead of smooth skin, raw strength instead of gentle yielding. Despite that, his body wanted it anyway, wanted *him*.

Sanji’s cigarette trembled slightly between his fingers as he remembered the hotel room. The way Zoro’s body had looked in the candlelight, all that controlled power coiled and ready. The way his muscles had shifted as he moved, as he’d positioned himself behind Sanji, as he’d...

Sanji had been transfixed watching Zoro’s body move, the flex and release of his muscles, the casual display of strength, the way he’d commanded the space around him with nothing but presence and physicality. He still was.

Zoro shifted to two-armed pull-ups now, his pace increasing. His abs contracted with each lift, the defined ridges of muscle standing out in sharp relief. His pectorals flexed while his forearms were corded with tension. Sanji’s mouth went dry.

He wanted to touch, wanted to run his hands over all those hard muscles, feel them shift beneath his palms. He wanted to dig his fingers into those shoulders while Zoro fucked him,

wanted to feel that strength holding him down, claiming him, making him beg for more.

He shook his head, sucking hard on his cigarette as he tried to banish the thought. He glanced down and grimaced. His cock was half-hard now, pressing against his pants in a way that would be obvious if anyone looked.

This was everything he'd walked away from. This body. This man. This overwhelming, terrifying want that didn't make sense but consumed him anyway.

Zoro was right there, close enough to touch if Sanji just crossed to the main deck. Close enough to grab and kiss and beg to take him somewhere private.

Sanji was standing here half-hard, wanting him desperately... Panic fluttered in Sanji's chest. Small at first, then growing. He still wanted Zoro's body. Still wanted those hands on him, that strength surrounding him, that overwhelming presence claiming him completely.

His breath caught as Zoro suddenly looked up and caught his eye, suspended midair while in the middle of his set. Sanji found himself trapped there for a moment, unable to look away. He could read all of Zoro's emotions in his eyes.

Frustration clear as day in the hard set of his jaw and the tension around his eyes. Anger, maybe. Something sharp and defensive in the way his shoulders had gone rigid. Underneath it all, buried beneath those easier emotions, was something that looked like hurt. Raw, genuine hurt. The kind that came from being ignored by someone who mattered to you, from reaching out and finding nothing but empty air.

Sanji's stomach twisted with guilt so intense it made him nauseous. He'd done this. He'd put that look on Zoro's face.

Sanji's cigarette burned down to the filter between his fingers, forgotten. He barely noticed the heat against his skin until it singed him. He stubbed it out with shaking hands and turned away from the deck, forcing himself to walk back to the galley with measured steps.

His legs carrying him below deck even as everything in him screamed to stop, to turn around, to apologize. Every step felt like wading through deep water. His body moved on autopilot while his mind raged against itself, a civil war between what he should do and what he was capable of doing.

The want followed him inside, settling heavy and aching in his gut. He went back to prep work, his hands shaking slightly as he julienned vegetables, trying desperately not to think about what he'd just felt.

He spent the rest of the day in the galley, deep cleaning the entire kitchen from top to bottom. He scrubbed counters until his knuckles ached, organized spice jars by color and then by alphabetical order, polished every pot and pan until he could see his reflection in the bottoms. He kept his hands busy so he wouldn't have to think about the look in Zoro's eyes.

~*~*~

The sixth day, Zoro decided he was done waiting. Sanji was in the galley cleaning up after dinner when Zoro appeared in the doorway.

“Cook, we need to talk,” the swordsman said by way of greeting.

“I’m busy,” Sanji replied without looking up from the dishes, his hands moving mechanically through the soapy water.

“*Sanji*.”

The way Zoro said his name made something clench in his chest, but he forced himself to keep scrubbing the plate in his hands.

“I said I’m busy.”

He heard Zoro take a step into the galley and panic flared inside him, sharp and immediate. He whipped around to face him and held up a hand defensively to stop him from getting closer.

“Don’t. Just— don’t,” Sanji warned.

Zoro’s eye searched his face. Sanji saw the brief flash of hurt before the frustration intensified.

“You promised. You promised you wouldn’t push me away,” Zoro said quietly, his voice rough.

“I’m not—”

“You are. You’ve been avoiding me for almost a week. You won’t look at me, won’t talk to me, won’t even be in the same room as me if you can help it.”

Guilt crashed over Sanji like a wave, threatening to drown him in its cold, suffocating depths. He wasn’t as stringent about vows as Zoro was. Hell, the mosshead treated promises like they were sacred oaths carved in stone. Still, Sanji wasn’t the type to break his promises. He prided himself on being a man of his word, someone people could rely on when it mattered most.

He also knew he had a bad habit of letting his fear take over his reason. It was something he’d struggled with for years, that gnawing anxiety that crept in when things got tough. Fear had a way of clouding his judgment, making him second-guess himself and act on impulse rather than logic. That fear had taken over the second he saw the Sunny come into view while he still held the weight of Zoro’s hand in his own. It overrode everything else, including his promise.

“I need time,” Sanji defended, his voice barely above a whisper.

“How much time?” Zoro asked, an edge to his voice.

“I don’t know.”

“That’s not good enough.”

“It has to be. I can’t— I don’t know what you want from me.”

“I want you to talk to me. I want you to stop running. I want you to keep the promise you made because from where I’m standing, it looks like you’re trying to pretend it never happened,” Zoro said, taking another step forward.

“I didn’t ask for this! I didn’t ask to feel like this! To want…” He cut himself off, his face burning.

Zoro’s expression shifted, something vulnerable flickering across his features before his jaw tightened.

“You think I don’t know that? You think I don’t know how scared you are?” Zoro asked, his voice quieter now.

“Then why are you pushing me about this?” Sanji demanded, his voice cracking.

“Because I’m scared too! I knew this might happen, but I did it anyway and now…” he stopped, his hands clenching into fists at his sides.

Sanji stared at him, his heart pounding.

“What do you mean you knew?”

Zoro let out a harsh breath, running a hand through his hair.

“I knew there was a risk that you might panic. That if you ever gave me the time of day at all, you might decide it was too much. That’s part of why I was careful and didn’t say anything about how I felt for so long. I *knew* that if I pushed too hard too fast, you would run.”

He looked at Sanji and the pain in his eye was unmistakable.

“And you did, just like I was afraid you would.”

The guilt that had been building in Sanji all week crashed over him with crushing force.

“Zoro—”

“I’m not saying this to make you feel bad. I’m saying it because I need you to understand. I took a risk. I knew what I was risking and I did it anyway because I thought— I *hoped* that you felt the same way,” Zoro interrupted, his voice tired.

“I do feel— I mean, at the time I— I don’t know— I just don’t know.”

Sanji sighed in frustration, most of which was directed at himself. He hated feeling so helpless and out of control. His fingers dove into his hair involuntarily, pulling at the strands enough to make his scalp sting in an attempt to ground himself. The sharp pain was a welcome distraction from the chaos swirling in his mind, the thoughts that wouldn’t stop

racing no matter how hard he tried to silence them. He could feel his pulse hammering in his temples, his jaw clenched so tight it ached.

Get it together, he told himself, even as his hands trembled slightly when he finally released his grip on his hair.

“I just— I need—”

“You need time,” Zoro finished, his voice flat.

“*Yes*.”

They stared at each other for a long moment, the tension thick enough to cut.

“How much time, Sanji? How long am I supposed to wait while you figure out if I’m worth the risk?”

“That’s not fair,” Sanji replied, his voice shaking.

“Isn’t it? Because from where I’m standing, it feels pretty accurate.”

Sanji’s throat tightened. He wanted to argue, wanted to explain, but the words wouldn’t come. Zoro was right. That’s exactly what he was doing: weighing the risk, trying to decide if what he felt for Zoro was worth the fear, the shame, the uncertainty.

“I’m sorry. I just need—”

“Time. I know. You’ve said that.”

He turned toward the door and panic flared in Sanji’s chest unbidden.

“Zoro, wait,” he implored.

The swordsman turned to give him an expectant look, his dark eye searching Sanji’s face for an explanation maybe, or an apology. Sanji opened his mouth to say something. What? He wasn’t sure. An excuse? A justification for his behavior? Some half-baked reason that would make this whole mess make sense?

No words escaped his lips. It was like it all got stuck in his throat, tangled up with everything else he couldn’t say, wouldn’t say. The silence stretched between them, heavy and uncomfortable. Zoro nodded to himself as if confirming some thought he’d privately had, some theory about Sanji that this moment had just proven true. His expression was unreadable, but there was a flicker of disappointment or resignation on his face.

“I can’t keep watching you run from me every day. So, take your time. Figure out what you want. When you’re ready to stop running, you know where to find me.”

He left without another word, the door closing behind him with a quiet click. Sanji stood alone in the galley, his hands shaking so badly he had to set down the plate before he dropped it.

The guilt was overwhelming now, crushing him under its weight. Even feeling the guilt and the pain and the desperate urge to run after Zoro and apologize, he couldn't make himself move. The fear was still there, still dominating everything else. Fear of what it meant to want Zoro, to need him. The fear of what his crew would think, what Zeff would think, what it meant about who Sanji was.

Until he could face that fear, he couldn't face Zoro.

He stood alone in the cramped galley, his shoulders hunched and trembling. The dim overhead light flickered occasionally, casting harsh shadows across the worn countertops and stained metal surfaces. He gripped the edge of the sink with white-knuckled hands, staring at his distorted reflection in the tarnished faucet, and hated himself for being such a coward. The shame burned in his chest like acid, eating away at whatever dignity he thought he had left. He should have spoken up. He should have done something, *anything*, but instead he'd just stood there, frozen and silent, while everything fell apart around him.

Now Zoro was gone.

He should've been happy, relieved even, but the only thing he felt was his heart breaking into a thousand tiny pieces. This was supposed to be the moment he'd been waiting for, the outcome he'd worked so hard to achieve. Yet instead of triumph or satisfaction, all he could feel was an overwhelming emptiness spreading through his chest. The weight of it was almost unbearable. He had no one but himself to blame for how things had turned out, and that realization stung more than anything else. Every choice, every decision, every word he'd spoken or left unspoken had led him to this exact moment of hollow victory.

~*~*~

Zoro stopped approaching him after that. He didn't try to corner Sanji in the galley or catch him alone, didn't follow him with hope in his eye. Sanji felt the difference keenly.

At breakfast, Zoro sat at the table with his usual plate of food, but his eye tracked Sanji's movements through the galley. Not with longing but with something closer to assessment. It was clinical, detached, like he was cataloging every movement Sanji made as he refused to look his way.

His hands shook as he poured coffee. The pot rattled against the rim of Nami's cup and he had to steady it with both hands to avoid spilling it. When he plated breakfast, he fumbled the garnish twice.

Stop looking at me, Sanji thought desperately, his chest tight.

When he finally risked a glance toward the table, Zoro was watching him. Their eyes met and Sanji's breath caught. His heart hammered against his ribs. Every instinct screamed at him to look away, to run, to escape that steady gaze, but he couldn't move.

Zoro didn't look away either. He didn't smile, didn't scowl, didn't show any of the hurt or frustration or hope that had been written across his face for the past week. He just looked for a long moment. Then he returned his attention to his food, dismissing Sanji entirely.

Sanji's brows scrunched in a bit of confusion, but Zoro was already engaged in conversation with Franky, listening intently to something the cyborg said. His whole body was relaxed, his expression open and easy like nothing was wrong, like Sanji hadn't just spent a week tearing them both apart.

For days, Zoro had been pursuing him and Sanji had been running. He'd even been using that pursuit as justification.

I'm avoiding him because he won't leave me alone. I'm keeping distance because he keeps pushing, he thought.

Now there was nothing to run from. Zoro had stopped chasing. Without that external pressure, without that pursuit to resist against, Sanji was left alone with the truth he'd been trying so desperately to avoid.

Sanji wanted Zoro.

He wanted Zoro's hands on him, wanted his voice in his ear, wanted to feel claimed and possessed and *wanted* in a way that made his entire body ache with need.

And he'd thrown it away.

Fuck.

Things didn't get any better after the realization.

Sanji was a complete wreck in the days that followed. He burned the rice, something he hadn't done since he was a child at the Baratie. The smell of scorched grains filled the galley and he had to throw out the entire pot and start over, his hands shaking so badly he could barely hold the spoon.

He dropped a knife and nearly sliced his own foot. The blade clattered against the floor and Sanji stared at it for a long moment. He forgot to add salt to the soup. He over-seasoned the vegetables. He plated Nami's breakfast with the garnish on the wrong side (a tiny detail that no one else would notice, but made Sanji want to scream).

Every time he turned around, Zoro was there doing something else.

Living.

Existing.

Moving on.

At breakfast, Zoro sat with Robin and Franky, his posture relaxed in a way that made Sanji's chest tighten. He was telling some story about a bar fight from before he'd joined the crew, his voice steady and amused. Robin was laughing, her hand covering her mouth in that elegant way she had.

Zoro looked fine. Not at all like someone carrying the weight of heartbreak. It was like he hadn't spent two years wanting someone who was too much of a coward to want him back even after giving him hope that he did. Sanji watched from the galley doorway, something cold clawing at his throat.

Part of him had expected that Zoro would still be hurt, still be waiting, still be *something* other than this easy normalcy.

Instead, Zoro was laughing at something Franky said as he reached for his coffee with the same casual confidence he always had. Sanji had to turn away before anyone noticed him staring.

By mid-morning, Sanji was burning another pot.

This time it was the sauce for lunch, a delicate reduction that required constant attention. He'd turned away for just a moment, lost in his thoughts, and when he looked back the bottom of the pot was scorched black.

"Fuck," he hissed, yanking it off the heat.

The acrid smell filled the galley and he had to open all the windows, his hands trembling as he scraped the ruined sauce into the trash.

Get it together. You're better than this.

But he wasn't. Not right now. Every time he closed his eyes, he saw Zoro's face. Saw that easy calm. That complete lack of... anything. Zoro had stopped fighting for him and Sanji didn't know how to feel about it.

At dinner, Zoro sat between Usopp and Brook.

Usopp was in the middle of one of his elaborate lies. Something about fighting a sea king the size of an island with nothing but a slingshot and his wits. His hands were gesturing wildly, his voice rising and falling with dramatic emphasis. Zoro was listening, his eye focused on Usopp's face, a small smirk playing at the corner of his mouth. When Usopp got to the part about riding the sea king like a surfboard, Zoro huffed a quiet laugh.

"That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard," he replied, but there was no heat in it, just amusement.

"It's true! I swear on my name as a brave warrior of the sea!" Usopp protested.

"Sure it is. And I'm the King of the Pirates," Zoro said, reaching for his sake.

"Yohoho! Our swordsman has jokes!" Brook laughed, his skeletal hand slapping the table.

Zoro's smirk widened slightly, and he took a long drink.

Sanji watched from his position at the stove, supposedly focused on plating the next course. His hands were shaking so badly he nearly dropped the plate.

Zoro's smiles were already so rare. Sanji hadn't seen it in days, a result of his own actions, and now it was back. Now that he'd given up on Sanji. The panic in his chest was a living thing now, clawing up his throat, making his chest tight and his vision blur at the edges.

He'd thought Zoro would wait, would keep pushing, would refuse to let Sanji run. Instead, Zoro had done exactly what Sanji asked for. He'd given him space and time. Meanwhile, he was moving on, living his life like Sanji was just another crewmate. Nothing special. Nothing worth fighting for.

Sanji bit his lip and turned away, shoving down every bit of emotion before it could show on his face.

~*~*~

The absolute worst was when he happened upon Jinbei and Zoro sparring together.

Sanji had been on his way to deliver dessert to Nami and Robin when he spotted them on the main deck. He stopped mid-step, the tray balanced perfectly in his hands, and watched.

Zoro moved with fluid precision, his swords flashing in the afternoon sunlight. Jinbei countered with fishman karate, his movements powerful and controlled. They circled each other, testing, probing for weaknesses. It was beautiful to watch. The way Zoro's muscles coiled and released with each strike. The way his feet shifted across the deck with perfect balance. The way his face was set in concentration, his eye tracking Jinbei's every movement.

Sanji had seen Zoro fight countless times. He'd watched him train and had admired his dedication and skill, had sparred with him too many times to count. That's what this was. Friendly, competitive training that pushed both fighters to improve. The kind where they grinned at each other after a particularly good exchange, where they called out encouragement and corrections.

The kind Sanji and Zoro used to do.

They used to spar all the time. Nearly every day actually. It had been the way they connected, the way they pushed each other, the way they showed respect. Sanji had always looked forward to the challenge of matching himself against Zoro's strength. To the satisfaction of landing a solid kick. To the grudging acknowledgment in Zoro's eye when Sanji pulled off something particularly impressive. Since that night, since Sanji had started avoiding him, they hadn't sparred once.

Now Zoro was sparring with Jinbei instead.

He watched as Zoro blocked a strike and countered with a sweep of his blade. Jinbei dodged, laughing and said something Sanji couldn't hear. Zoro's mouth quirked in what might have been a smile. It was easy, comfortable, like they'd been doing this for years. Envy twisted in Sanji's gut, sharp and ugly.

That should be me.

He should be the one out there trading blows with Zoro. He should be the one making Zoro smile like that. He should be the one Zoro sought out when he wanted to train.

He wasn't because he'd pushed Zoro away, had avoided him, had made it clear he didn't want anything to do with what had happened between them. Zoro had found someone else to fill at least this space.

The envy deepened, spreading through Sanji's chest like poison. It wasn't just about the sparring. It was about everything the sparring represented. Connection. Trust. Friendship. All the things Sanji had thrown away. Jinbei said something else and Zoro actually laughed, a real laugh, not just a huff of amusement. The sound carried across the deck and Sanji felt something crack inside his chest.

Sanji had been so easy to set aside. So easy to move on from. Nothing worth fighting for. Nothing worth keeping around. Just another person who'd walked away and Zoro had shrugged and found someone else to fill this particular need rather than come to Sanji.

Of course he did. Why wouldn't he? I gave him nothing but rejection and distance. Why would he want to keep trying?

Zoro blocked another strike, his movements sharp and controlled. There was no hesitation in him. No sadness. No lingering hurt. Just focus and strength and that easy camaraderie with Jinbei that made Sanji want to scream. He was nothing to Zoro, just a convenient fuck, just someone to pass the time with. The pain of it was worse than Sanji had expected. Worse than the panic, worse than the fear, worse than the shame.

This was a real, tangible loss. The loss of something he'd valued more than he'd realized. The loss of a connection he'd taken for granted. The loss of a friendship that had meant everything, even before it had become something more.

He couldn't watch anymore, couldn't stand there and witness Zoro laughing with someone else, sparring with someone else, being *happy* with someone else while Sanji fell apart inside.

He turned away, his vision blurring slightly, and started down the stairs that led to where Nami and Robin were sunbathing. He needed to get away. He would deliver this dessert and retreat to the galley where he could pretend everything was fine.

He made it down two steps before he slipped.

The world tilted violently. The tray flew from his hands, desserts scattering. Sanji's arms windmilled, trying to catch his balance, but his momentum was already carrying him forward. He was going to fall down the stairs.

The realization flashed through his mind with crystal clarity. He was going to fall, it was going to hurt and be the embarrassing cherry on top of this shit sundae.

Before he could tumble, strong arms caught him.

Sanji gasped, his body jerking to a stop mid-fall. He was suspended in the air, held against a solid chest. For a moment, he couldn't process what had happened. Then he looked up. Zoro's face was inches from his own. And the expression there—

Oh.

Pure panic. Pure fear.

Zoro's eye was wide, his pupil blown, his face pale beneath his tan. His arms were locked around Sanji like iron bands, trembling slightly with the force of how tightly he was holding on.

They were frozen like that, Sanji cradled in Zoro's arms, both of them breathing hard. Sanji could feel Zoro's heart pounding against his side, could see the way Zoro's throat worked as he swallowed.

Zoro's eye traveled over him urgently, searching Sanji's limbs, his head, his body, looking for injuries with an intensity that bordered on frantic. His gaze moved quickly, desperately, like he needed to confirm that Sanji was whole, that nothing was broken, that he was truly okay.

Suddenly, Sanji remembered.

Kuina.

Zoro had told him about her in the early months of their voyage during one of their late-night conversations. His childhood friend. His rival. The girl who'd promised to become the world's greatest swordsman alongside him. The girl who'd fallen down the stairs and died.

No wonder Zoro looked so terrified.

"I'm okay," Sanji whispered, his voice barely audible. His hand lifted almost without conscious thought, reaching up to cup Zoro's cheek.

"Zoro, I'm okay. Nothing's broken. I'm fine."

Zoro's eye snapped to his face. Sanji saw the fear there, raw and vulnerable and so unlike the swordsman he knew.

"I'm right here. I'm fine, I promise. You caught me in time," Sanji continued softly, his thumb brushing across Zoro's cheekbone.

For a moment, they stayed like that: Sanji's hand on Zoro's face, Zoro's arms still locked around him, both of them suspended in this intimate, fragile moment.

He could see the fear slowly fading from his eye, before Zoro's expression shuttered completely. He set Sanji down on the deck carefully, his hands lingering for just a moment before he pulled away.

"Be more careful," he said gruffly, his voice rough.

He turned and walked away. He didn't look back, just walked back toward where Jinbei was waiting, his shoulders tense, his hands clenched at his sides. Sanji stood there, his legs shaking, his heart racing.

The desserts were ruined, scattered across the deck in a mess of cream and fruit and broken porcelain. Sanji couldn't bring himself to care.

Zoro had caught him. He had moved faster than Sanji had ever seen him move, had crossed the distance between them in a heartbeat, had caught him before he could fall and looked *terrified* at the thought of Sanji getting hurt. Part of it was likely trauma from Kuina, but more than that, Zoro still cared. At least enough to not want Sanji to fall down the stairs.

It was such a small thing. Such a basic thing. Of course Zoro would catch a crewmate who was falling. That's what nakama did. But the fear in his eyes hadn't been the fear of a crewmate watching another crewmate fall. That had been something deeper. Something more visceral. Something that looked like the fear of losing someone you—

Sanji cut the line of thought off before it could finish.

It didn't matter that Zoro had caught him. Didn't matter that he'd looked scared. Didn't matter that his hands had trembled when he'd set Sanji down. He'd still walked away, still left Sanji standing there alone, still went back to Jinbei, back to his new sparring partner, back to the life he was building without Sanji in it.

~*~*~

Four days.

It'd been four days since Zoro had stopped trying. Four days since that look of resignation had settled over his features like a death shroud. Four days of watching Zoro move through the ship like Sanji didn't exist, like they'd never touched, like that night in the hotel room had been nothing but smoke.

Sanji was exhausted. A bone-deep, soul-crushing exhaustion that left him staring at his reflection in the galley's polished counters and not recognizing the hollow-eyed man staring back. He couldn't keep doing this. He couldn't keep running.

The realization hit him during breakfast prep one morning, his hands moving on autopilot as he diced onions. The knife slipped, just enough to nick his finger, and he watched the blood well up with a strange detachment.

I'm going to lose him if I don't do something. I'm going to lose him and it will be my own fault.

The thought was clarifying in the terror it induced.

He finished breakfast service in a daze, barely registering the crew's chatter whether it was Luffy's enthusiastic praise, Nami's concerned glances or Robin's thoughtful gaze. He cleaned

the galley with mechanical precision when everyone cleared out, his mind already racing ahead to what he needed to do.

He knew Zoro's routines by heart, a by-product of living on a ship and being the cook responsible for tracking everyone down when it was time to give out snacks or drinks. After breakfast, Zoro napped under the mikan trees, catching up on sleep he missed from pulling double duties on night watch. Luffy and Chopper usually joined him for those naps. When he woke, he'd workout or train with Jinbei. After that, he usually would take another nap, but he'd do so in the aquarium since Luffy, Usopp and Chopper would be up to their shenanigans and making too much noise on deck. The aquarium was one of the quieter spaces on the ship, peaceful and hypnotic in a way the Crow's Nest wasn't during daylight hours.

Sanji's feet carried him there almost without conscious thought, his heart hammering against his ribs with each step. The corridor leading to the aquarium felt impossibly long, each footfall echoing too loud in his ears.

He could do this. He had to do this. He'd talk to Zoro, tell him he was sorry, tell him he wanted… he wanted him.

He rounded the corner and stopped.

Through the window in the door of the aquarium, he could see Zoro lying across the long couches. The blue light from the tanks washed over him, making him look almost ethereal. His head was cushioned by his hands while his eye was closed and his swords were sitting on the couch next to him.

He looked peaceful.

Sanji froze.

What was he supposed to say?

'Sorry I broke my promise'? 'Sorry I'm a coward'? 'Sorry I can't handle what I feel for you'?

His throat closed up and his hands started shaking. Any words he could've come up with scattered like leaves in a storm. What if Zoro doesn't want him anymore? What if he already ruined everything? What if Zoro looks at him with that same resignation, that acceptance that Sanji wasn't worth the effort?

The panic hit him like a physical blow. His vision tunneled. His chest constricted. He couldn't breathe, couldn't think, couldn't do anything but turn and flee. He didn't remember the walk back through the corridors, didn't remember his feet carrying him away from the aquarium, away from Zoro, away from the one thing he wanted most in the world.

All he knew was that he was running again.

And he hated himself for it.

~*~*~

The storage room was dark and cool, tucked away in a forgotten corner of the ship where supplies were kept for emergencies. Sanji stumbled inside and let the door swing shut behind him, plunging himself into near-total darkness.

The first sob caught him by surprise.

It tore out of his chest like something physical, raw and jagged and painful. His legs gave out and he sank to the floor, his back against a crate, his hands coming up to cover his face.

Coward. Fucking coward. You had one chance and you ran. You always run. You're nothing but a failure of a man.

The tears came hot and fast, streaming down his face, soaking into his hands. He couldn't stop them or control the way his body shook with the force of his crying, the way his breath came in hitching, broken gasps. His hands moved to his hair, fingers tangling in the blonde strands before he pulled hard. The pain was sharp and grounding but not nearly enough to distract from the agony in his chest.

You're destroying this. You're destroying something that could be the best thing that ever happened to you because you're too scared to face it.

He pulled harder, felt strands give way, felt the sting across his scalp. It didn't help. Nothing helped.

Zoro deserved better than this, better than him. He deserved someone brave enough to stand beside him. Someone who doesn't run every time things get hard. Someone who can look him in the eye and say 'I want you' without falling apart.

Sanji curled in on himself, drawing his knees to his chest, making himself as small as possible in the darkness. His whole body trembled with the force of his sobs, his throat raw from crying, his chest aching with each breath.

He had him. He had someone who looked at him like he mattered. Like he was worth something. Like he was more than just a failure, a disgrace, a mistake. Instead of cherishing it, instead of holding it tight with both hands so it didn't flutter away, he ran from it.

The self-loathing was a living thing inside him, clawing at his insides, making him want to tear himself apart. He pressed his forehead to his knees and let himself break completely, let the darkness swallow his sobs, let himself drown in the shame of his own cowardice.

He didn't know how long he stayed like that. Time lost meaning in the darkness. All he knew was the pain in his chest, the tears on his face, the crushing weight of everything he'd lost.

The sound of the door opening barely registered.

"Sanji?"

Robin's voice was soft, concerned. He heard her footsteps, felt her presence as she knelt beside him in the darkness.

“Oh, Sanji,” she murmured.

There was such gentle sadness in her voice that it made him cry harder.

Robin settled beside him, her back against the same crate, her shoulder touching his. She didn’t try to make him look at her, didn’t try to force him to talk. She just sat with him in the darkness, a quiet presence that somehow made the pain a little more bearable. They sat in silence for a long time. Sanji’s sobs gradually subsided into quiet tears, then into shaky breathing, then into exhausted stillness.

“I was looking for extra medical supplies. Chopper asked me to check the emergency stores. I heard you from the corridor,” Robin said eventually, her voice conversational.

Sanji said nothing. His throat was too tight, his shame too heavy.

“You don’t have to tell me what’s wrong, but I think you need to tell someone. Keeping it inside is only making it worse.”

“I can’t,” Sanji whispered.

“Can’t? Or won’t?”

The question was gentle but pointed.

“Both,” he admitted.

Robin was quiet for a moment.

“Does this have to do with Zoro?”

Sanji’s breath hitched. His hands clenched into fists against his knees.

“I’ll take that as a yes. I’ve known for a while there’s something going on between you two. I’m not blind and neither is half the crew. The way you two look at each other, the way you’ve been avoiding each other lately, it’s not exactly subtle.”

“You don’t understand,” Sanji said, his voice breaking.

“Then help me understand.”

Sanji shook his head, fresh tears burning behind his eyes.

“I can’t— I don’t know how to…”

“Start with what hurts most. I find it’s more useful to rip the bandage off such wounds. Get it over with, so to speak.”

Maybe it was the darkness. Maybe it was the exhaustion. Maybe it was because it was Robin asking or maybe it was the fact that he was tired of carrying this alone. Either way, he turned to face her slightly before starting to speak.

“I’m losing him, it’s my fault and I don’t know how to stop it,” Sanji whispered.

Robin’s hand found his in the darkness, her fingers warm and steady.

“Tell me,” she requested.

So he did.

The words came haltingly at first, then in a rush. He told her about the hotel room, the threesome and the way Zoro made him feel things he’d never felt before. He told her about the panic, the fear, the running. He told her about watching Zoro withdraw, about the resignation in his eye, about the way Sanji had tried to approach him in the aquarium and failed. When he finally fell silent, his throat raw and his eyes burning, Robin squeezed his hand gently.

“Sanji, can I tell you what I think,” she asked, her voice warm with understanding.

He nodded, not trusting his voice.

“I think that you’re not just afraid of being with a man. I think you’re afraid of how much you care about him. You’ve known Zoro for how long now? Two years? Nearly three? You’ve fought beside him, argued with him, trusted him with your life. You’ve built a friendship with him, a connection that existed long before that night in the hotel room.”

“That’s what makes this so terrifying,” Sanji whispered.

“Yes, because you’re not losing a casual lover. You’re losing someone who knows you. Really knows you. The way you think, the way you move, the little things that make you who you are.”

Sanji felt tears sliding down his face again.

“Have you ever known a woman the way you know Zoro? Have you ever let a woman see you the way Zoro sees you?” Robin asked gently.

“No,” Sanji admitted, his voice barely audible.

“And has any woman ever known you the way Zoro knows you? Not your secrets, I’m not talking about knowing everything about your past. I’m talking about the small things. The way you take your coffee. The way you move when you’re tired. The way your voice changes when you’re worried about someone.”

“No,” he whispered again.

“That’s why this loss feels so deep. It’s not just about attraction. It’s not just about physical intimacy or sexuality or any of the things you’ve been telling yourself. It’s about losing someone who sees you, truly sees you, and still wants you.”

Sanji’s chest felt like it was cracking open.

“I’ve never—” he started, then stopped. He took a deep shaking breath before continuing.

“With women, I always knew what to do. I knew how to act, even if it’s been admittedly over the top sometimes. I knew what to say, how to woo a woman, how to make her feel special, even if it was just for a night. It was like playing a role. Not like it was something I was masking myself with, more like it just was… easier, comfortable. But with Zoro—”

“You can’t hide behind any script or template of what you should do or who you should be. He knows you too well and brings out too much of who you really are,” Robin finished.

“Yeah,” Sanji breathed.

“And that terrifies you, because if he knows you that well and still chooses to walk away, it means the real you isn’t enough. Perhaps you’re pushing him away so you won’t have to face that prospect one way or another.”

Sanji made a sound that was half-sob, half-laugh.

“You’re really good at this.”

Robin let out a short laugh.

“I’ve faced my own crisis of romance and self-worth when Franky and I first became interested in one another. It was quite the time of reflection and introspection. It was not fun but it was valuable experience clearly,” Robin said, a smile in her voice.

They were quiet for another long moment as Sanji wiped his face clean of the tear tracks and stretched his legs out so they wouldn’t cramp.

“Sanji, can I ask you something?”

“Might as well.”

“What are you more afraid of? Being with a man? Or being with someone who knows you well enough to hurt you?”

The question hit him like a physical blow. He sat with it, turning it over in his mind, examining it from every angle.

“The second one,” he finally admitted.

“I think— I think I’ve been focusing on the first one more, because it’s easier to be afraid of what people will think than to be afraid of…”

“Of being vulnerable, of giving someone the power to destroy you.”

“He already has that power, that’s what scares me. He’s had it for a while now and I didn’t even realize it until now,” Sanji whispered.

“I’m going to tell you something and I need you to really hear it.”

Sanji glanced over in the darkness, scrunching his brows at the seriousness in her voice.

“Okay.”

“Fear is stealing your happiness. Your trauma, everything your family did to you, everything you’ve survived, it’s trying to convince you that you don’t deserve this. That you’re not worth loving. That anyone who sees the real you will reject you,” Robin started, her voice firm but kind.

Sanji’s hands clenched into fists, not denying her words.

“But Zoro has seen the real you. He’s seen you at your worst. He’s seen you panic and run and push him away. Despite all that, he left the door open for you to go to him when you’re ready. He still wants you even if you’ve convinced yourself of the opposite. He’s been patient with you, gentle with you, even when you’ve hurt him.”

“I know and that makes it worse because I keep hurting him anyway,” Sanji said, his voice breaking.

“Because you’re afraid and that’s understandable, but Sanji, you have to decide which emotion you’re going to serve. Fear or love.”

The words settled over him like a weight.

“You can let your fear win. You can keep running, keep pushing him away, keep protecting yourself from the possibility of being hurt. You’ll be safe, but you’ll also be alone. You’ll spend the rest of your life wondering what might have been if you’d just been brave enough to stay.”

Sanji felt fresh tears sliding down his face.

“Or, you can choose love. You can choose to be vulnerable, to let him in, to risk being hurt. It’s terrifying, I know it is, but the depth of your fear tells me something important.”

“What?”

“It tells me how much you love him. You don’t fear losing something you don’t care about. The fact that you’re this terrified means what you have with Zoro is real. It’s deep. It matters,” Robin said gently.

Sanji looked away as he pressed his hands to his face, his whole body shaking with fresh tears.

“You deserve happiness, Sanji. You deserve to be loved by someone who sees all of you and chooses you anyway. Zoro is offering you that. The question is: are you brave enough to accept it?”

“I don’t know if I am,” Sanji admitted.

“Then start small. You don’t have to have all the answers right now. You don’t have to stop being afraid. You just have to decide that your fear isn’t going to make your choices for you anymore.”

She squeezed his hand again in encouragement.

“Talk to him, tell him what you told me, tell him you’re scared, tell him you’re sorry, tell him you want to try. He’ll meet you halfway, I know he will, but you have to take the first step.”

Sanji sat with her words, feeling them settle into his bones. The fear was still there and it probably always would be, but underneath it he could feel something else, something that felt dangerously close to hope.

“What if I mess it up again?” he whispered.

“Then you apologize, try again and keep trying. That’s what love is, Sanji. It’s not about being perfect. It’s about choosing each other even when it’s hard.”

She stood, her hand slipping from his. He heard her moving toward the door before she paused.

“Sanji?”

“Yeah?”

“For what it’s worth, I think you’re braver than you know. Don’t let your fear convince you otherwise,” she advised, warmth in her voice.

The door opened, letting in a sliver of light, then closed again, leaving Sanji alone in the darkness. This time, the darkness didn’t feel quite so suffocating.

This time, he could see a way forward.

He just had to be brave enough to try.

Chapter 3: Acceptance

Sanji waited until nightfall to make his move.

He'd spent the hours after his conversation with Robin thinking about what she'd said about choosing love over fear, about how Zoro had been patient with him, had given him space, had left the ball in Sanji's court rather than pushing.

He'd lived so much of his life ruled by fear, running from some emotion or memory, crafting his entire personality around masking the darkness within himself. He couldn't do that now with Zoro. He didn't think he'd survive his own cowardice if he pushed Zoro away completely.

Zoro hadn't thrown him away, Sanji had run and Zoro had let him go, waiting to see if Sanji would come back.

Well, I'm coming back. No more running. No more waiting for him to chase me. It's my turn to act, he thought as he lay in his bunk, listening to the crew settle into sleep around him.

Luffy's snores filled the room. Usopp muttered something in his sleep. Chopper shifted in his hammock. The familiar sounds of his crewmates sleeping should have been comforting, but tonight they just reminded him of what he needed to do.

He needed privacy for this, needed to know they wouldn't be interrupted or overheard.

Sanji's hands clenched into fists beneath his blanket as he thought about what he was about to do. The fear was still there, fear of vulnerability, fear of what it meant to want a man, fear of everything this relationship represented about himself. More than all of that was the fear of losing Zoro entirely.

Robin's words echoed in his mind.

You have to decide which emotion you're going to serve. Fear or love.

Sanji took a deep breath and made his choice.

He slipped out of his bunk as quietly as he could, his heart hammering against his ribs. The ship was dark and peaceful, the only sounds the creaking of wood and the gentle lap of waves against the hull. His Observation Haki confirmed what he already knew: Zoro was in the Crow's Nest, awake and alone. The Crow's Nest was Zoro's space the same way the galley was his. Zoro took most watches during the night and caught back up on sleep with his naps throughout the day. As a result, the Crow's Nest was his sanctuary. Going there now felt even more significant.

Sanji walked across the deck with purpose, his steps steady despite the trembling in his hands. He paused at the base of the ladder, looking up at the structure above. For a moment, the fear tried to reassert itself. His mind offered him a dozen reasons to turn back, to wait, to

run again. Then he thought about Zoro's face when he'd walked away. The hurt. The resignation. The way Zoro had stopped trying because Sanji had made it clear he didn't want to be chased.

Sanji began to climb.

His hands shook as he gripped each rung, but he didn't stop or hesitate. This was his choice. He was done waiting for courage to find him, he was going to act despite the fear.

Robin was right. I don't have to stop being afraid. I just have to stop letting fear make my choices, he thought as he climbed higher.

The Crow's Nest was dimly lit when Sanji emerged through the hatch. Moonlight spilled in through the windows and Zoro had lit a couple of lanterns that hung against the walls, giving the space an orange-blue glow. Zoro's futon was spread out in the corner where he slept during night watch, blankets arranged neatly.

The swordsman was doing sit-ups in the middle of the room, his shirt off and his swords resting against the benches. He paused mid-rep, his eye narrowing.

"What do you want?" he asked, his voice cold and guarded.

It was nothing like the warmth Sanji had heard in it ten days ago. For a moment, he couldn't speak. He swallowed hard and forced himself to continue.

"I need to talk to you."

"Now you want to talk?"

Sanji's hands clenched into fists as he grounded himself.

"Please. Just... let me explain."

Zoro stared at him for a long moment, something hard and hurt flickering in his eye. After a while, he stood and moved to lean against the wall, putting distance between them. Still, he met Sanji's eyes head on. His arms were crossed, his expression closed off, but he hadn't left the room.

"Talk."

Sanji took a shaky breath.

"I'm sorry."

"For what? For avoiding me? For breaking your promise?"

"All of it, but mostly for letting fear make my choices instead of choosing you."

"Why did you run? You promised me you wouldn't and then you did it anyway. Didn't take you for a liar, Cook," Zoro demanded.

“I was scared. I’ve spent my whole life thinking I was one thing, and then you— you made me feel—” He broke off, his hands shaking.

“I’ve been trying to convince myself it was a mistake, that I don’t want you, that it was just the situation, just the woman, anything but the truth,” Sanji continued, his voice raw.

“And what’s the truth?” Zoro’s voice was dangerously quiet.

Sanji met his eye.

“That I can’t stop wanting you. I think about you constantly. Every time I see you, I want to... I’m terrified of what it means, of being this person. But… but I’m more terrified of losing you.”

Zoro’s expression didn’t change.

“You’ve had ten days to figure that out. Ten days of making me feel like I was nothing to you.”

“I know and I’m sorry, I just… I didn’t know how to—”

Zoro pushed off the wall, taking a step closer.

“How to what? How to admit you want me? How to stop lying to yourself?”

Sanji’s hands came up to grip his own hair in frustration and anxiety.

“Yes, okay? I’ve been lying to myself because the truth is too fucking scary!”

“What’s scary about it? What’s so terrifying about wanting me that you had to spend a week and a half running away?”

“Because I’m not supposed to want this! I’m not supposed to want a man! I’m supposed to love women, I’m supposed to be—”

Zoro stepped closer again, his eye blazing.

“Supposed to be someone you’re not? Supposed to deny what you feel because it doesn’t fit some idea of who you think you should be?”

“Yes! Because if I admit I want you, if I admit I—” he cut himself off, but Zoro heard it anyway.

“If you admit you what? Say it,” he pushed, his voice having dropped lower, something dangerous and desperate creeping in.

“If I admit I’m falling for you, then I have to accept that I’m… that I’m not…”

Zoro closed the remaining distance between them, standing close enough that Sanji could feel his body heat.

“Not straight? So what? Who cares?”

“I care,” Sanji exclaimed, his voice breaking completely.

“I care because I don’t know how to be this person! I don’t know how to want a man and still be me.”

Zoro’s hands came up to grip Sanji’s shoulders firmly.

“You *are* still you, Curls. Wanting me doesn’t change that.”

“It changes everything,” Sanji said, tears burning in his eye.

“And it’s not— it’s not even just about wanting a man. It’s about—” his voice cracked and he had to stop to breathe.

“It’s about what?” Zoro asked, his voice softer now but still demanding.

“It’s about letting you in, letting you close enough to really know me, to see me past all the... airs and the masks. If you actually *see* me, all of it, the broken parts, the damage, everything they did to me...”

His hands shook as he spoke, fingers curling into fists at his sides.

“You’ll understand why they were right, why I’m not worth keeping around. That’s what happens when someone really knows you. They see the truth and they leave. Or worse, they use it to hurt you,” he continued, his voice cracking completely, barely a whisper.

His breath came in ragged gasps now, his whole body trembling.

“My family knew me. They *saw* me. That’s how they broke me. If you see everything I am underneath... You’ll realize I’m not enough. You’ll see what they saw. You’ll understand why they— why I deserved—”

“Stop,” Zoro said sharply, his grip tightening on Sanji’s shoulders.

Sanji couldn’t stop. The words kept coming, desperate and terrified.

“I know it’s not logical, okay? I know you haven’t given me any reason to think you’d reject me, but it’s not about logic. It’s about what happens when someone truly *knows* you. When they see past the charm and the smiles and the cooking and they see what’s underneath. When they see the scared stupid kid who’s nothing but a failure—”

“Did I do something?” Zoro interrupted, his voice rough with something that might have been hurt.

“Did I give you some reason to think I’d look at you and decide you weren’t enough? That I’d see you and reject you?”

“No. No, you didn’t. You’ve been— you’ve been patient and careful,” Sanji said immediately, shaking his head.

“Then why would you think that?” Zoro demanded.

“Because that’s what vulnerability *is* for me!” Sanji’s voice rose, desperate.

“Every time I’ve let someone see me, really see me, it’s been used against me. My father locked me away because I was weak. My brothers beat me because I cried. Now this? Wanting a man? Falling for someone like you? It’s terrifying. It’s like a double-edged sword. Being known, being truly known — it’s a trap. It’s how they hurt you. It’s how they—”

His voice broke completely and he couldn’t continue.

Zoro’s expression shifted, the anger bleeding into something softer, something that looked almost like pain.

“Sanji, I’m not them,” he said quietly.

“I know you’re not, but knowing it and *believing* it are two different things. I’ve been so scared that if you really knew me, if you saw all the broken pieces, you’d realize I’m not worth...”

“Not worth what? Not worth wanting? Not worth keeping?” Zoro asked, his voice gentle now.

Sanji nodded, unable to speak. Zoro was quiet for a long moment. When he spoke again, his voice was steady but there was an edge of vulnerability in it.

“You really thought that? That I’d see you, all of you, and walk away?”

“I was terrified of it, I still am, but I’m more terrified of losing you without even trying. I’m sorry I let fear decide for me instead of choosing you. I can’t change the time we’ve lost. I can’t undo the ten days I made you wait, but I want to make up for it. I want to try to be here. I can’t promise I won’t be afraid. I can’t promise I’ll be good at this or that I won’t panic sometimes, but I don’t want to run anymore. I want to choose you, even when I’m scared. *Especially* when I’m scared.”

Zoro stared at him, something raw and vulnerable flickering across his face.

“You’re choosing me?” he asked, his voice barely above a whisper.

“I’m choosing you,” Sanji confirmed, his voice shaking.

He met Zoro’s eye directly.

“I’m yours. I’ve been yours since that night in the hotel room. I was too afraid to admit it, too afraid to let you really have me, but I’m done running from it.”

“You hurt me,” Zoro admitted quietly, his voice rough.

The words made Sanji's heart clench painfully.

"You promised you wouldn't run from me and then you did. You made me wait and hope and wonder if you'd ever come back."

"I know, I'm so sorry."

"I don't want your apology. I want…"

"What? What do you want?" Sanji asked desperately.

"I want you to be mine. I want you to stop fighting this and just let yourself have it, have *me*," Zoro said, his voice rough with emotion.

"I'm trying. I'm here. I came to you. I'm telling you things I've never told anyone. I'm— I'm terrified of what happens when you really know me, but I'm doing it anyway."

Zoro's hands moved to cup Sanji's face, his touch gentle despite the intensity in his eye.

"You think I don't already know you? You think I haven't been seeing you for two years? I know you're scared. I know you're damaged. I know your family fucked you up in ways that are going to take years to heal from."

He leaned closer, his forehead almost touching Sanji's.

"I want you anyway. Not despite those things. Just you. All of you. The broken pieces and the scared parts and everything you think makes you not enough."

Sanji's breath hitched, tears spilling over.

"I don't know if I can believe that yet," he whispered.

"Then I'll keep showing you until you do, but you have to let me. You have to stop running. You have to choose to be here, even when you're scared."

"I'm here. I'm choosing you," Sanji said, his voice shaking but certain.

"Good," Zoro said, his voice dropping to something possessive and absolute.

"Because I'm not letting you go. Not now. Not after everything. You're mine, Sanji. You've been mine since that night and I'm done being patient."

He kissed Sanji hard, swallowing Sanji's gasp of surprise. For a moment, he was frozen and then he melted.

His hands came up to clutch at Zoro's shirt, his mouth opening under Zoro's, a desperate sound escaping his throat. He kissed back with the same desperate hunger he'd shown in the hotel room, all his resistance crumbling in an instant.

Yes, this is what I need, something in Sanji's chest sang.

Zoro pulled back just enough to speak, his breath hot against Sanji's lips.

"I'm not letting you run anymore."

Sanji's breath caught as Zoro's fingers worked his belt buckle open.

"You came to me. You admitted you want this. Now you're going to feel it. You're going to feel exactly what you've been running from."

His hands moved to the button of Sanji's pants and Sanji shuddered, his body already responding, heat pooling low in his belly.

"When I'm done with you, you're going to understand exactly what it means to be mine," he finished, his voice dropping to something dark and possessive.

He kissed Sanji again, hard and claiming. His hands came up automatically, gripping Zoro's shoulders and he kissed back. It felt like something he'd been missing for a week finally clicked back into place. Zoro's hands slid under his shirt and Sanji couldn't think anymore. He could only feel.

"You want this. Your body knew even before you would admit it," Zoro murmured against his lips.

He started unbuttoning Sanji's shirt with deliberate slowness.

"We can't do this here. Someone might hear us," Sanji said weakly.

"Then you'll have to be quiet," Zoro replied, pushing the shirt off Sanji's shoulders.

The cool air hit his skin, making him shiver. Or maybe it was Zoro's hands sliding over his chest, his stomach, his sides.

"Please…"

"Please what? Please stop? Or please don't stop?" Zoro asked, his eye meeting Sanji's.

Sanji's breath came in shallow gasps. He wanted... god, he wanted so much, too much. He wanted Zoro's hands on him, wanted to feel what came next, wanted to surrender to this completely. The words caught in his throat, but his body answered for him, leaning into Zoro's touch. Zoro's hands moved to his pants, unbuttoning them with the same deliberate slowness that made Sanji's pulse race.

"I'm going to make you admit it. I'm going to make you admit you want this, that you want me," Zoro swore, his voice dark with promise.

Zoro pushed his pants down, leaving Sanji standing in just his underwear. Sanji didn't protest, didn't want to. He stepped out of his pajama bottoms and kicked them aside without prompting.

Zoro's hands ran up his thighs, lingered on his ass before dragging up the sides of his chest beneath his t-shirt. He shivered as his fingertips traced the defined planes of Sanji's back. He wasn't as buff as Zoro, but he wasn't a small man either. Still, Zoro's hands felt big against him, calloused and strong and deadly. Yet, he was touching him with a softer touch than he'd usual attribute to Zoro.

It made his stomach clench with need.

"On your knees," Zoro commanded.

Sanji's eye widened, but not in protest. In anticipation. In the thrill of being told what to do, of surrendering control to someone he trusted completely.

"What?"

"You heard me. On your knees."

Sanji could have refused. Zoro wouldn't push him if he did, he could feel it in his bones, but that wasn't what Sanji wanted. He wanted this. The knowledge that he could refuse but didn't want to made it easier to sink down to his knees on the hard floor.

"Good," Zoro praised.

The word sent heat flooding through Sanji's entire body.

Zoro unbuttoned his own pants, freeing his cock. Sanji's mouth went dry at the sight. He'd never done this before. He'd given oral to plenty of women before, but the mechanics were totally different with a man.

His heart hammered against his ribs as he stared at Zoro's cock, half-hard and flushed and right there in front of his face. Anticipation and nervousness tangled together in his chest at the newness of it, the vulnerability of being on his knees before Zoro, the intensity of wanting this so badly it made him shake.

"I don't— I've never—" he started, his voice shaking.

"I'll help you. Just open your mouth," Zoro assured, his voice gentler than before.

His hand came to rest on the back of Sanji's head, warm and grounding. Sanji's lips parted automatically. He felt Zoro's cock press against them. The first touch of heated skin against his mouth made him flinch slightly, but Zoro's hand steadied him.

"Easy. Just take what you can. Don't force it," Zoro murmured.

Sanji opened wider and Zoro guided himself inside slowly. The weight of him on Sanji's tongue was overwhelming. It was heavy and warm and utterly foreign. The taste was different than he'd expected, salt and musk and something distinctly Zoro that made his head spin.

His jaw stretched to accommodate Zoro's girth and Sanji's hands came up instinctively to grip Zoro's thighs for balance. He felt completely out of his depth, vulnerable in a way he'd never experienced before.

"That's it. Just like that. You're doing so good."

The praise sent heat flooding through Sanji's body and he felt his own cock twitch with interest. He tried to move his head, uncertain of the rhythm, but Zoro's hand tightened slightly in his hair.

"Just relax your jaw and let me guide you."

Sanji did as he was told, surrendering control. Zoro started to move his hips in shallow thrusts. The slide of his cock over Sanji's tongue was strange, intimate and overwhelming. Sanji's eyes watered slightly as Zoro pushed a little deeper. He had to fight the urge to pull back.

"Breathe through your nose and hollow your cheeks a little," Zoro instructed.

Sanji followed the direction, adjusting his technique, and was rewarded with a low groan from Zoro that made his own cock leak steadily. He was achingly hard from being on his knees, having Zoro's cock in his mouth.

He liked the weight of Zoro on his tongue, liked the way Zoro's hand felt in his hair guiding him, liked the sounds Zoro made when he did something right. He liked being the one to give pleasure to Zoro instead of just receiving it.

"Eyes open, Curls. Look at me while you suck my cock."

Sanji's eyes opened, meeting Zoro's gaze. The intensity there made his whole body flush with heat. Zoro was watching him with such focused desire and possessive hunger that he felt stripped bare despite still wearing his underwear and shirt.

"You look so perfect like this. So beautiful with your mouth full of me," Zoro murmured, his hips moving in a steady rhythm.

Sanji whimpered around him, the praise making his head spin. The action drew a groan from Zoro, spiking his own pleasure even more. His jaw was starting to ache, his throat working to accommodate Zoro's length, but he didn't want to stop. He wanted to make Zoro feel good, wanted to hear more of those rough sounds of pleasure.

Zoro's hand controlled the depth and pace, guiding Sanji's head with firm pressure. Sometimes shallow, letting Sanji breathe and adjust. Sometimes deeper, making Sanji's throat work to accommodate him, making his eye water and his breath come in desperate gasps through his nose. Sanji moved his tongue as best he could throughout, trying to offer what pleasure he could even as Zoro took the lead.

"You're doing so good. Taking me so well. My perfect Sanji," Zoro praised, his voice strained.

The possessive words made Sanji's cock throb almost painfully. He could feel pre-come leaking from the tip, soaking into his underwear, evidence of how much his body was responding to this.

Zoro's cock hit the back of his throat and Sanji gagged, his hands tightening on Zoro's thighs. Instead of pulling back, Zoro held him there for just a moment, letting him adjust, before easing off.

"Relax your throat. Don't fight it. Just let it happen," Zoro instructed.

Sanji tried, forcing himself to relax, and the next time Zoro pushed deep, it was easier. Still overwhelming, still making his eye water, but easier. The groan Zoro let out made it worth it. His own arousal was undeniable. He never imagined that giving a blowjob could make him this desperate or turned on. There was something about the act of pleasing Zoro that was intoxicating.

"Fuck, your mouth feels so good," the greenhead breathed, his hips stuttering slightly.

Sanji moaned around him, the vibration making Zoro's grip tighten in his hair. He was learning the rhythm now, learning what made Zoro's breath catch, what made his thighs tense under Sanji's hands. He hollowed his cheeks more, sucked harder and was rewarded with a low curse.

"Fuck, that's it. Just like that. You're a natural at this."

He'd never felt this vulnerable, this exposed, but he also felt powerful in a strange way. He had Zoro trembling, had him cursing and losing control. Sanji was doing that to him.

Zoro pulled out suddenly. Sanji gasped for air, his lips swollen and wet, his jaw aching. He looked up at Zoro with wide eyes, uncertain if he'd done something wrong.

"Stand up," Zoro commanded, his voice rough with barely restrained desire.

Sanji's legs were shaking as he stood. Zoro immediately pulled him close and kissed him hard. Sanji could feel Zoro's cock hard and wet against his groin, slick with his saliva.

"You want more. I can see it in your eyes," Zoro said against his lips, his hands sliding down to grip Sanji's ass.

Sanji's whole body was trembling now, caught between arousal and desperate need. He did want more. He wanted everything Zoro would give him.

Zoro walked him until his back was against the walls of the Crow's Nest before he turned him around, pressing his face against the wood panels. Sanji's hands came up automatically to brace himself. His heart was pounding so hard he thought it might burst from his chest. Zoro pulled down his underwear, exposing him completely. The cool air hit his skin, making him shiver.

"I've been patient," Zoro said, his hands spreading Sanji's ass cheeks.

“I gave you a week to figure things out. You came back to me. You want this, I know you do.”

He heard Zoro rustling around for a moment before he felt his fingers return, slick with oil as they pressed against his entrance.

“But I need to hear it from you,” Zoro continued, one finger pushing inside causing Sanji to gasp.

“I need you to tell me what you want. What this means to you. All of it.”

Sanji’s forehead pressed against the cool wall, his breath coming in short, ragged gasps as Zoro worked him open with patient thoroughness. The contrast between the cold surface and the heat coursing through his body was dizzying, grounding him even as he felt like he might float away from the intensity of it all. Every nerve ending felt alive, sparking with electricity that made his skin hypersensitive to every touch, every brush of Zoro’s skin against his own.

The swordsman’s calloused fingers moved with surprising care and precision, each movement deliberate and measured, as if he were learning Sanji’s body the way he’d mastered his swords: with focus, dedication and an almost reverent attention to detail. One finger became two, scissoring and curling inside him with practiced ease, stretching and stroking with a rhythm that was both torturous and perfect. Then three, stretching him slowly, preparing him with an attentiveness that made Sanji’s knees weak and his legs shake uncontrollably. The careful, methodical way Zoro took his time made it somehow more intense, more overwhelming than if he’d rushed.

Every curl of those thick fingers hit somewhere deep inside that made his eyes hooded with desire, drawing out broken sounds he couldn’t quite suppress no matter how hard he bit his lip. Whimpers and gasps escaped him unbidden, echoing softly in the room. He couldn’t find it in himself to be embarrassed by the desperate noises spilling from his throat.

Zoro’s free hand gripped his hip firmly, steadying him, anchoring him to reality, keeping him in place as he trembled against the wall. Those strong fingers dug into his skin possessively, hard enough to bruise, leaving marks that Sanji knew he’d feel tomorrow. Marks he wanted, marks that would remind him of this moment, of Zoro’s hands on him, of belonging to someone in a way he’d never belonged to anyone before.

Even as pleasure built inside him, Sanji’s mind raced with the weight of what Zoro was asking.

Tell me what you want... what this means to you.

The words tangled in Sanji’s throat, too big and too complicated to articulate. How could he explain the contradictions? That he wanted Zoro’s dominance but also his tenderness, that he needed to be controlled but also cherished, that he wanted to be held and claimed and wanted? That he wanted to feel loved and cared for? This was about so much more than physical desire, but he didn’t know how to separate the threads of need and fear and longing and love into something coherent.

Zoro's fingers withdrew completely, drawing a sound of protest from him, before he turned Sanji to face him roughly. He pulled the t-shirt he was wearing off and threw it somewhere behind him before he pulled him back into a harsh kiss, his teeth scraping his bottom lip as he held him close.

"Bend over the bench," Zoro commanded, gesturing to one of the sturdy wooden seats.

Sanji moved on shaking legs, his body responding to the command. He turned and braced his hands on the bench, the worn wood solid beneath his palms. The position left him exposed, his ass presented to Zoro, his face turned to the side against the cool surface. There was a thread of shame that ran through him at the position but also a bolt of anticipation.

Sanji heard clothes rustling as Zoro took off his boots and pants, throwing them in the same direction as Sanji's shirt. His haramaki landed further down the bench to settle beside where he'd rested his sword belt for the night.

Zoro stepped closer to him, allowing him to feel the heat of his body as well as the brush of Zoro's open robe against his skin. He spread Sanji's cheeks. He felt the blunt pressure of Zoro's cock against his entrance and his whole body tensed a little against his will.

"Relax. Let me in," Zoro advised, one hand gripping Sanji's hip.

Sanji forced himself to breathe, to relax, to remind himself that he wanted this. Zoro pushed inside slowly. Sanji's mouth fell open in a silent gasp. The stretch, the burn, the overwhelming fullness was too much and not enough all at once.

"Fuck, you feel so good. So tight around me," Zoro breathed, bottoming out.

Sanji couldn't respond, could barely breathe. His hands were pressed flat against the bench, his whole body trembling.

"You okay?" Zoro asked, his voice softening slightly.

Sanji nodded, not trusting his voice.

"Good, because I'm not stopping until you tell me what I need to hear."

Zoro started to move, but not the way Sanji expected. The thrusts were shallow, maddeningly slow, barely pulling out before pushing back in. The angle was different like this, more primal with Sanji bent over the bench and Zoro standing above him than what they'd done in that hotel room, but it was nowhere near enough.

He couldn't stop the moans spilling from his lips, but they were frustrated, desperate sounds. He needed more, needed it harder, faster, deeper. He pushed his hips back, trying to meet Zoro's thrusts, trying to take him deeper, trying to create the friction his body was screaming for. Zoro's hand tightened on his hip immediately, holding him still.

"Did I say you could set the pace? Stay still for me," Zoro chastised, his voice dark and commanding.

“Zoro, please,” Sanji whimpered, his fingers curling against the bench.

“Please what?” Zoro asked, deliberately slowing his thrusts even further, pulling back until just the head of his cock remained inside.

“More. I need more,” Sanji gasped.

“Then tell me what I want to hear. Tell me what this means to you, what you want from me, from us.”

Sanji’s mind scrambled for words, but they wouldn’t come. How could he explain that he wanted Zoro’s touch because it made him feel safe? That he wanted to cede control of his own body to Zoro because it quieted the voice in his head that said he wasn’t good enough? That this was about trust and vulnerability and something that felt dangerously close to love, but he was terrified to name it?

“I— I can’t—” Sanji stammered, frustration mixing with desperation.

Zoro resumed the shallow, torturously slow thrusts. Sanji felt like he might lose his mind. His cock was hard and leaking in the air between his body and the bench, getting no friction. Zoro’s hand slid around to wrap around his cock and Sanji nearly sobbed with relief.

“You’re leaking everywhere. So desperate already,” Zoro murmured, his thumb brushing over the head, spreading the wetness.

Zoro stroked him in time with those maddeningly slow thrusts. Sanji felt his orgasm building, felt himself getting close to the edge.

Finally. Finally he was going to—

Zoro’s hand stopped completely and pulled away.

“No,” Sanji gasped in protest, the word torn from him before he could stop it.

“Not yet. Not until you give me what I’m asking for.”

Sanji’s cock throbbed uselessly, denied the touch it needed. He was so close, right on the edge when Zoro had stopped. He could still feel the impending orgasm tingling at the edges of his control. Driven by pure desperation, Sanji tried to reach down with one hand to stroke himself, to give himself the relief Zoro was denying him.

Zoro caught his wrist mid-motion, his grip firm but not painful.

“Absolutely not,” he said, his voice dropping to something dangerous.

“What—”

“Hands on the bench. I didn’t give you permission to touch yourself.”

“Zoro, please, I need—”

“I know what you need,” Zoro interrupted, guiding Sanji’s hand back to the bench.

“But you’re going to wait. You’re going to take what I give you until you can tell me what this means to you.”

Sanji whimpered but obeyed, gripping the bench with both hands, his knuckles white. The words were right there, tangled up with fear and need and emotions too complicated to separate. He knew what he felt, knew he wanted Zoro in ways that went far beyond physical desire, but articulating it felt impossible.

“You touch yourself without permission again and we stop completely. Understand?” Zoro warned.

“Yes,” Sanji gasped.

“Good boy,” Zoro murmured.

The praise sent a shiver down Sanji’s spine even as his body screamed for more.

The slow torture continued. Zoro moved inside him with deliberate, measured thrusts, hitting that spot inside that made stars burst behind Sanji’s eyes but never quite giving him enough stimulation to push him over the edge. His own cock hung heavy and neglected between his legs, leaking steadily, throbbing with need. The cool night air kissed his overheated skin, making him hyperaware of every point of contact: Zoro’s hands on his hips, the rough wood beneath his palms, the stretch where their bodies joined.

“You feel that? This is mine now. You understand me,” Zoro asked, his voice dark and possessive.

Sanji shuddered violently in reply, his ass clenching around Zoro involuntarily as a moan crossed his lips. The words to respond tangled in his throat, caught between what he felt and what he could articulate.

“That’s it. Let me hear you. Let me hear how good this feels,” Zoro encouraged.

“Zoro,” Sanji gasped, his hips trying to push back again before he remembered and forced himself to stay still. His thighs trembled with the effort of restraint, muscles burning from holding position.

“Tell me you want this. Tell me you want my cock inside you,” Zoro demanded, his pace increasing slightly but still not enough.

“I can’t,” Sanji whimpered.

Not because the words weren’t true, but because saying them felt like admitting something he didn’t have language for. His body betrayed him anyway, clenching around Zoro in desperate need.

“Yes, you can. Say it.”

“I... I shouldn’t...”

The protest was weak, meaningless. He did want it, but wanting it meant something more complicated than simple desire, something that twisted through his chest and made his heart race with more than just arousal.

“You can and you will. Say it,” Zoro commanded, his hand coming down to grip Sanji’s hip harder, fingers digging into flesh hard enough to bruise.

Sanji tried to bite the words back, but they were torn from him by the relentless pressure, the aching emptiness when Zoro pulled back, the overwhelming fullness when he pushed in.

“I want it. God, I want it.”

“Want what?” Zoro pressed, his thrusts slowing again as punishment for the incomplete answer.

“I want your cock inside me,” Sanji gasped.

The admission sent heat flooding through him. His whole body felt like it was burning from the inside out, every nerve ending sparking with sensation.

“There you go,” Zoro said, but he didn’t sound satisfied.

“But that’s just your body talking, isn’t it? That’s just physical need.”

Sanji’s breath caught. What more could Zoro possibly want from him?

“Tell me you want me. Not just sex. Not just my cock. *Me*,” Zoro demanded, his voice dropping lower.

“I... I can’t say that.”

Saying it meant acknowledging the depth of what he felt. That depth was vast, terrifying and impossible to put into words. His feelings were a knot he couldn’t untangle: desire and fear and need and doubt all wound so tightly together he didn’t know where to begin pulling them apart. Zoro’s thrusts slowed to almost nothing, barely moving inside him. The loss of friction made Sanji want to sob.

“You can. You just don’t want to. But you’re going to.”

“Zoro…” His voice broke on the name. He wanted to explain that it wasn’t about not wanting to, it was about not knowing how, but even those words eluded him. Zoro seemed to know even without him saying so.

“Stop overthinking everything, Cook. Tell me you want me. Tell me I’m the only one you want. Tell me you need me,” Zoro demanded, each word punctuated by a shallow thrust that made Sanji’s whole body shake and his cock leak another desperate drop.

Sanji tried to avoid it, tried to give him something less vulnerable, something easier to articulate.

“I want you inside me.”

“That’s not what I asked. Tell me you want me. All of me. Not just this.”

Sanji’s resistance was crumbling, worn down by the relentless physical denial, the overwhelming need, the way Zoro’s voice commanded him to surrender everything.

“I want you. Only you. I need you,” Sanji admitted, his voice barely above a whisper.

The words felt inadequate, too simple for the complexity of what churned inside him, but they were all he could manage.

“Say it again, louder. Tell me you can’t imagine being with anyone else,” Zoro commanded, his thrusts picking up slightly, rewarding the confession.

“I can’t imagine anyone else. Just you. It’s only ever been you,” Sanji continued, his voice breaking.

The truth of it overwhelmed him. Not just the words themselves, but everything they represented. Something in Zoro’s breathing changed, becoming rougher and more affected.

“How long have you wanted this? Wanted me?” Zoro asked.

“Since... Since that night in the hotel,” Sanji replied, his voice hoarse and wrecked.

His body was trembling now, caught between the physical need and the emotional exposure, every muscle taut with tension.

“Liar,” Zoro accused, slowing down again and prompting Sanji to quickly try to rectify things.

“I don’t know. I don’t know how long. I didn’t realize until then. I don’t… weeks, months… I just don’t know,” Sanji admitted.

The feelings had been there, building beneath his awareness. He didn’t know when they started or why, but they were there.

“And when did you stop being able to hide it?” Zoro pressed.

Sanji whimpered, couldn’t answer, couldn’t admit that truth. Not because he was unwilling, but because he didn’t know how to articulate the moment when everything had shifted, when denial had become impossible. The memory was there, vivid and overwhelming, but translating it into words felt beyond his capability.

“Answer me,” Zoro growled, his hand tightening on Sanji’s hip, fingers pressing into the bruises already forming there.

The first moment crashed over him. That hotel room, kneeling behind the woman, trying desperately to focus on her softness, her yielding warmth. But his gaze had kept drifting upward to Zoro. The flex of Zoro's muscles as he thrust into her mouth had been mesmerizing. His abs contracting with each movement, the defined lines of his torso shifting beneath scarred skin. His shoulders, powerful and solid.

Sanji's chest had tightened watching him. The intensity in Zoro's visible eye when she took him deeper, the low rumble of satisfaction that escaped his throat. It was raw and unguarded in a way Sanji had never seen before. His hand buried in her hair, guiding her with surprising gentleness despite the deadly precision Sanji had seen those same fingers use to grip swords and shatter steel. There was control there, but not cruelty.

The confusion had been overwhelming, mixing with arousal until he couldn't separate them. The woman should have been enough to hold his attention. Women had always been enough before, but Zoro's presence had dominated the entire room.

"It was… it was when…" Sanji gasped now, his voice breaking as a blush colored his cheeks. He felt too embarrassed to say the words even though he had Zoro literally inside of him. It still felt too crude to admit any of that. Zoro's thrusts became shallow, prompting him to continue despite the tears pricking at his eyes.

"The moment I saw you in that room. I couldn't stop looking at you. Your body, your face, the way you moved. I couldn't fake it anymore. I couldn't pretend I wasn't watching you instead of her. But it wasn't just that. It was— it was when you called me beautiful and pretty and good. When you kissed me like you meant it. When you held me like I was something worth wanting, worth keeping. When I realized you didn't just want to fuck me, you wanted *me*. And I— I couldn't— I couldn't hide it anymore," Sanji finally managed, his whole body shaking.

"I couldn't pretend I didn't want you, that I didn't need you, that I wasn't falling so hard I couldn't breathe. It was you. From that first moment I couldn't stop watching you, to every moment after when you showed me I was worth wanting and every moment before that I didn't even register when it was happening: it was always you. I just wanted you. I still just want you and it scared me so I ran but I just want you, Zoro. I want you so bad."

The words tumbled out in a rush, imperfect but as close as he could get to the truth of how his attraction had become attachment, how his physical desire had become an emotional need, how everything he'd tried to deny had become impossible to hide the moment Zoro had shown him genuine devotion.

The admission seemed to shatter something in both of them. Zoro's breathing was ragged now, his control clearly fraying. Sanji could feel it in the way Zoro's fingers trembled slightly against his skin, in the hitch of his breath, in the barely restrained power in each thrust.

Before Sanji could say anything else, Zoro pulled out and spun him around. Sanji's back hit the wooden wall of the Crow's Nest, the rough boards pressing against his skin. Zoro lifted him and Sanji's legs wrapped around his waist automatically. The wall behind him provided leverage as Zoro pinned him there, supporting his weight easily with one arm while the other

guided his cock back inside. Sanji cried out at the new angle. This position was more intimate, face to face.

“I *do* want you, Sanji. Only you.”

He shivered involuntarily at the use of his name as Zoro thrust into him, finally pushing in deep.

“I’m going to show you how much. I’m going to take you apart,” Zoro promised, his eye never leaving Sanji’s face as starlight carved harsh shadows across his features.

Sanji’s hands gripped Zoro’s shoulders. He was completely at Zoro’s mercy in this position. The realization made his cock leak steadily between them. Zoro started to move again, his hips driving up into Sanji with more powerful thrusts than before. Sanji’s body melted a little in relief at finally getting what he wanted. He couldn’t stop the sounds spilling from his lips. Moans, gasps, broken pleas for more.

“You’re so beautiful like this. Taking me like this, it’s perfect,” Zoro murmured.

The praise made Sanji’s chest tight with emotion he couldn’t name. He shouldn’t like this, shouldn’t want to hear Zoro call him beautiful, call him perfect, but he did. Zoro adjusted his grip, lifting Sanji higher. Sanji’s flexibility allowed his legs to slide up, resting on Zoro’s shoulders. The new position folded him nearly in half and the angle made Zoro’s cock hit even deeper.

“Fuck,” Sanji gasped, his head falling back against the wall.

“Eyes on me. Look at who’s making you feel this good,” Zoro commanded.

Sanji forced his head back up, meeting Zoro’s gaze. The intimacy of it was overwhelming. Being held like this, folded and exposed, unable to look away from Zoro’s face. Zoro continued with relentless thrusts from this new angle. The prostate stimulation was intense and perfect and Sanji was absolutely desperate. His cock was trapped between their bodies, getting some friction but not nearly enough and he couldn’t do anything about it.

“Please let me come,” Sanji whispered, stray tears of pleasure streaking down his face.

“Not yet. Not until you admit you want me. Not just my cock. Me,” Zoro said, his thrusts becoming harder and faster.

“I already said—”

“Tell me one more time. Who do you belong to,” Zoro demanded, his voice rough.

“You. I belong to you. Please, I can’t... I need...” Sanji cried out, completely undone.

“What do you need?” Zoro pressed, his eye blazing as he looked at Sanji.

“You. I need you. All of you. Everything. Please let me come,” Sanji begged, his voice breaking on the words.

“Say my name. Say you want me,” Zoro demanded.

“I want you, Zoro. I want you so much it scares me,” he gasped, the words torn from him.

Something shifted in Zoro’s expression, softening slightly as his hand came up to cup Sanji’s face.

“Don’t be scared. I’ve got you. I’ll always have you,” Zoro swore, his voice gentler.

The tenderness in his voice, combined with the relentless pleasure, broke something in Sanji. More tears spilled down his cheeks and he couldn’t stop them.

“Please, Zoro, I need to come,” he begged again, his whole body trembling.

“Come for me. Right now. Come for me, beautiful,” Zoro commanded, his voice dropping to something primal.

The permission crashed through him like a lightning strike.

His cock had been completely untouched this whole time, just hard and leaking between them, denied any direct stimulation. Still, the orgasm started deep inside, borne of pure pleasure from the angle Zoro was hitting his prostate at with every thrust. His whole body convulsed, hips trying to thrust but held in place by the position and Zoro’s grip on his thighs.

He came in waves, each thrust from Zoro extending the pleasure, drawing it out until Sanji thought he might shatter from the intensity. His cock erupted between them without a single touch, spilling in long, overwhelming pulses that seemed to go on forever.

His vision whited out with the intensity of it, his whole body shaking, convulsing, completely overwhelmed. It felt like his entire body was coming, like his heart and his cock and his mind all shattered at once. The orgasm was longer, more intense than anything he’d ever experienced, amplified by the denial, the emotional confession, the complete helplessness of his position.

Tears streamed down his face. He couldn’t tell if they were from pleasure or emotion or the overwhelming relief of finally being allowed to come. The emotional component was as powerful as the physical one. He’d given something to Zoro he didn’t think he could give, admitted things he’d been terrified to say. Zoro had caught him, held him through it, made him feel safe even as he fell apart.

Zoro followed moments later, his hips stuttering erratically, his rhythm completely lost as he buried himself as deep as he could possibly go and came inside Sanji with a low, guttural groan that seemed to be ripped from the very depths of his chest, completely overwhelmed by the intensity of Sanji’s response and the raw, unfiltered emotion crackling between them like electricity. His fingers dug into Sanji’s hips with bruising force, holding him in place as wave after wave of pleasure crashed over him, each one more intense than the last, leaving him trembling and gasping for air. His entire body shuddered as he rode out the aftershocks, his forehead dropping to rest against Sanji’s shoulder blade as he struggled to catch his breath.

They stayed like that for a long moment, frozen in the aftermath, both breathing hard and ragged, their chests heaving with the effort of drawing air into their lungs. Their bodies remained pressed together intimately, skin against skin, the heat between them still palpable and electric. Sanji's legs rested on Zoro's broad shoulders, trembling slightly from the exertion and the intensity of what they'd just shared as they came down from their shared high. Sweat glistened on their flushed skin, catching the dim light and making them both shine. Their hearts hammered in sync, a rapid drumbeat that echoed through their bodies, gradually slowing as reality began to creep back in around the edges of their awareness.

Slowly, carefully, with the kind of tenderness that contradicted his usual roughness, Zoro lowered Sanji's legs with gentle hands and pulled out, drawing a soft, breathy whimper from the cook. The loss of contact made Sanji shudder, his body still hypersensitive and tingling from the aftermath. He set Sanji gently on his feet, steadying him with firm, warm hands on his waist, his calloused fingers splaying possessively across the cook's flushed skin.

Sanji's legs immediately gave out beneath him, his muscles still trembling and weak from the overwhelming pleasure that had completely undone him. Zoro caught him, his reflexes as sharp as ever. He pulled him close and held him steady against his chest, one strong arm wrapping around Sanji's waist while the other came up to cradle the back of his head, fingers threading through sweat-dampened blonde hair.

"I've got you," he murmured and Sanji believed him.

Zoro guided Sanji to sit on the benches. He went willingly, his body still trembling with aftershocks. He felt wrung out, exhausted and more vulnerable than he'd ever felt in his life.

"Stay here," Zoro said before he walked away briefly.

Sanji sat there, his mind spinning as he tried to process what had just happened. He'd admitted it. He'd admitted he wanted Zoro, that he wanted this. There was no taking it back now.

Zoro came back into view with a wet cloth and a bottle of water. He cleaned Sanji up with gentle efficiency. The tenderness of it made Sanji's chest tight.

"Drink," Zoro said, offering him the water bottle.

Sanji drank deeply, his hands shaking slightly as he held the bottle, the cool water sliding down his parched throat. He could feel Zoro's gaze on him the entire time, watching him with that intense focus that made his skin prickle with awareness. When he was done, Zoro took the bottle from him with careful fingers and set it aside on the benches.

Before Sanji could protest or fully catch his breath, Zoro was kissing him again, deep and claiming, his mouth hot and insistent. One hand cupped the back of Sanji's head, fingers threading through his sweat-damp hair, while the other gripped his hip possessively. Sanji's body responded immediately despite his exhaustion, as if it had been conditioned to react to Zoro's touch. His cock, which had only just softened moments ago, started to harden again, pressing against his own thigh with renewed interest.

Zoro's hands were touching him again, exploring him with deliberate, practiced movements that felt both achingly familiar and thrillingly new. Those calloused fingers, roughened from years of gripping sword hilts and training until his palms bled, traced intricate patterns across his skin, leaving trails of molten heat in their wake. Every touch sent electric shivers cascading down Sanji's spine, igniting nerves he didn't even know existed, awakening sensations that made his entire body hum with awareness.

He couldn't stop the sounds spilling from his lips. Soft gasps and quiet moans escaped despite his best efforts to maintain some semblance of composure, some shred of dignity. His breath came in short, uneven bursts as Zoro's touch grew bolder, more confident, more demanding. The swordsman's fingers moved with purpose now, mapping every dip and curve, every sensitive spot that made Sanji's muscles tense and his back arch involuntarily. Zoro was learning him, memorizing him, claiming every reaction like it was a victory hard-won. He pulled away after a long while. Sanji's chest heaved as he caught his breath, his lips tingled and his whole body felt like it was on fire.

"Come here," Zoro said softly, taking Sanji's hand.

He guided him toward the corner where his futon was spread out, the quilted bedding a stark contrast to the hard bench and rough walls. Sanji watched, transfixed, as Zoro slipped off his robe and spread it over the futon, creating a softer surface. The muscles in Zoro's back shifted and flexed with the movement. Sanji found himself staring at the hard planes of his body, his broad shoulders, the defined muscles of his arms, the ridges of his abs.

When did he start finding that attractive? He'd always liked soft curves, the gentle give of a woman's body. There was nothing soft about Zoro. He was all hard edges and raw strength, yet Sanji couldn't look away.

Zoro gestured for him to lie down. The bedding was warm from his body heat and familiar with his scent. Zoro settled between his legs, the futon giving slightly under their combined weight. He kissed him thoroughly, his tongue sliding against Sanji's in a way that made his toes curl. When he pulled back, his eye was dark with desire and something deeper.

"I'm going to make love to you and you're going to tell me what you want, what you *feel*. No running. No hiding. Just you, me and the truth."

He reached between them, his large hand wrapping around Sanji's cock, stroking slowly. Sanji gasped at the touch, his hips jerking involuntarily. His hands were so big and strong. His fingers were calloused from years of sword work. They were rough against Sanji's sensitive skin, but it felt impossibly good.

"You're already hard for me again," Zoro noted.

Sanji's breath hitched. There was no denying it, no pretending this was anything other than what it was: desperate want for this man above him. Zoro kissed him again, slow and deep, before pulling back to meet his eyes.

"Tell me what you're afraid of."

The question caught Sanji off guard. Not a command to stop being afraid or even a reassurance, but an invitation to speak about it.

“I— What if— What if this isn’t real? What if you think you want me, but you don’t really know me? What if you see the real me and change your mind?”

Zoro positioned himself at Sanji’s entrance, the head of his cock pressing against him. Sanji’s breath caught and his eyes fluttered at the feeling. He was still sensitive from before, but he could already feel his muscles reacting, trying to draw Zoro back in.

“Look at me.”

Sanji’s visible eye met Zoro’s. The intensity there made his chest tight.

“Keep your eyes on me. I want to see everything you’re feeling.”

He pushed inside slowly, inch by inch, and Sanji couldn’t look away even if he’d wanted to. The stretch was familiar now but still overwhelming in the best possible way. It made his breath catch in his throat and his fingers grip tighter against the fabric beneath him. Zoro’s eye never left his face, watching every expression that crossed it, every reaction, every flutter of Sanji’s eyelashes.

“Fuck. Zoro,” he moaned.

“I’ve got you. Just feel it. Feel me.”

He bottomed out and held there perfectly still, giving Sanji time to adjust to the fullness, to the stretch, to the overwhelming sensation of being completely filled. The moment felt suspended in time as their breathing synchronized. His hand came up slowly to cup Sanji’s face with careful deliberation, his calloused fingers gentle against Sanji’s flushed skin, his thumb brushing across his cheekbone.

“You’re so beautiful like this. Open for me. Trusting me.”

The words hit something raw inside him. Being called beautiful while so completely exposed, so utterly vulnerable, had his defenses cracking under the weight of being *seen* like this.

“I do trust you,” he whispered.

A tear slipped free, trailing down his temple. Zoro’s thumb caught the tear, brushing it away.

“I know you do. I need you to trust something else. Trust that I know who you are, that I’ve known for a long time.”

Zoro started to move. The rhythm was slow and deep. His strength was evident in the way he held himself above Sanji, the muscles in his arms flexing as he supported his weight. Sanji found himself staring at Zoro’s scarred chest, the hard planes and defined muscles, the way his abs contracted with each movement. His fingers flexed against the robe under him,

tingling with the need to run his fingers over his skin, but he held himself back. Zoro shifted his weight to one arm and took Sanji's hand, guiding it to his chest.

"Touch me. I want your hands on me."

Sanji's fingers splayed across Zoro's chest, feeling the warmth radiating from beneath his skin, the steady, rhythmic beat of his heart pulsing against his palm. He could feel every rise and fall of Zoro's breathing, slow and deep, each inhale drawing in the salt-tinged air around them. The heat between them was a living thing that seemed to wrap around them. Starlight filtered through the windows of the Crow's Nest, painting silver across Zoro's sweaty shoulders and chest. The rest of the ship was dark and silent below them, the world sleeping while they existed in this small pocket of intimacy suspended high above everything else.

He traced the lines of muscle with tentative fingers, fascinated by the hardness, the unyielding strength beneath warm skin. He liked the power wrapped around every cord of muscle, the way it felt solid and unbreakable under his touch. The definition, the ridges and valleys that mapped out each individual muscle group created a landscape entirely different from anything he'd explored before.

He didn't understand it. He still wanted women, still found them beautiful, still felt that pull. He wanted this too. The two desires didn't cancel each other out, but they didn't make sense together either. What did that make him? Was he broken somehow? A fraud?

Zoro's hips rolled as he thrust into him, the motion fluid and controlled. It made Sanji gasp sharply, his breath catching in his throat.

"Tell me what you're thinking," Zoro said quietly.

"I don't understand how I can want both women and you. It doesn't make sense. What does that make me?"

"Someone who wants what he wants. You're choosing me, that's what matters. You're here with me."

The acceptance and possessiveness in Zoro's voice, the lack of judgment, it was almost too much to bear.

"Tell me what you want, Sanji. Not just physically. Tell me what you really want."

"I want— I want you."

"What else?"

"I want—"

Sanji's mind scattered as Zoro's thrusts continued, each one sending sparks of sensation through his body. Heat pooled low in his belly and his cock leaked between them as Zoro continued to move inside of him.

"I want— *ooh*—"

Zoro hit something inside of him that sent a rush of heat spreading through his veins. His toes curled and his fingers dug into Zoro's chest at the feeling.

"Tell me," the swordsman coaxed gently, still moving, still filling him up so deliciously that Sanji could barely get the words out.

"I want... this to be... real. I want you to keep me," he gasped finally.

Zoro's expression softened, something fierce and tender crossing his face.

"Then let me tell you something."

Zoro stilled completely, buried deep inside him. The sudden absence of movement made Sanji whimper.

"I've wanted you for two years, Sanji. Ever since Thriller Bark."

Sanji's eyes widened at that.

Zoro had told him as much in that hotel room, but for some reason, it got cast aside in the spiral of his panic. He couldn't quite believe it then and he was sure he did now. His doubt must've shown on his face because Zoro leaned down to kiss him, biting his lip admonishingly in the process.

He adjusted his angle slightly, then thrust back inside, hard and precise. Sanji cried out at the feeling, his body accepting Zoro now like it was craving him.

"That moment when you offered yourself up to Kuma," Zoro continued, his voice low and rough as his hips continued to move in deliberate strokes now.

"You were ready to die in Luffy's place."

Thrust.

"Everything I'd been feeling before then clicked."

Thrust.

Sanji couldn't breathe, couldn't think. The combination of Zoro's words and the feeling of him moving inside, filling him so completely, so perfectly snatched away his thoughts.

"Couldn't let you get hurt any more than I could give Luffy up."

His rhythm picked up, his thrusts more deliberate with each roll of his hips.

"So I took that burden instead. Took all that pain."

His hips rolled, grinding deep inside Sanji, the friction and pressure drawing out a long, desperate moan from somewhere deep in Sanji's chest.

"When I woke up, you were standing over me with this look on your face I couldn't read."

“Zoro—” Sanji’s voice broke on his name, cracking with raw emotion.

Zoro’s hand came up to cup Sanji’s face, thumb brushing tenderly across his cheekbone, his hips never stopping or slowing their pace.

“I realized I was in love with you.”

Tears started to slip down Sanji’s face, hot and unbidden, his chest heaving with emotion he couldn’t contain anymore.

“How can you—” Sanji gasped, his words briefly stolen by a particularly delicious thrust that hit him just right, making stars burst behind his eyelids.

“You don’t know— you don’t know what I’m really like. All the ugly parts, all the—”

“I know you better than you think.”

Zoro thrust again, hitting that spot perfectly again, that place inside that made Sanji see white. Sanji’s whole body trembled with the pleasure of it, overwhelmed and undone.

“Looking back, I could see it all. How my feelings grew. How they changed from respect to something deeper.”

“Please,” Sanji begged, his voice raw and wrecked.

He wasn’t sure what he was begging for anymore. For Zoro to stop talking? To keep going? To fuck him harder? To say he loved him again?

“It started during Arlong Park.”

Zoro’s rhythm built, faster now and more intense, more purposeful. Each thrust drove deeper, harder, claiming Sanji in a way that felt both physical and emotional.

“That talk we had at the banquet. The way you looked at me.”

Sanji sobbed, the sound torn from his throat. His hands clutching desperately at Zoro’s shoulders, feeling the powerful muscles shift and flex beneath his trembling fingers with each movement, each thrust that drove him closer to the edge.

“Little Garden solidified it.”

His hips moved in devastating strokes, each one deliberate and precise, as he drove into him with an intensity that left them both breathless. The rhythmic motion grew more urgent with every passing moment, their bodies moving together in perfect synchronization. The sound of skin against skin filled the Crow’s Nest, echoing off the wooden walls and mixing with their ragged breathing and soft moans of pleasure.

“The hunting contest. The way we pushed each other.”

Sanji could barely hear him over the rush of blood pounding in his ears, the sound like crashing waves drowning out everything else. The pleasure was building and building, wave after wave, each one stronger and more intense than the last, threatening to sweep him away completely.

“I couldn’t stop thinking about you after that.”

“Stop talking,” Sanji whispered.

He didn’t mean it. He needed to hear this even as it terrified him, but it was so much.

“Alabasta. Skypeia. Long Ring Long Land.”

Each island name was punctuated by a powerful thrust. The pace left him gasping and disoriented, his thoughts scattering like leaves in a storm.

“Every island, every fight, every moment, I was falling deeper.”

The rhythm was relentless now, pounding into him with an intensity that left him breathless. Zoro’s cock dragged across his prostate with every deliberate stroke, sending shockwaves of pleasure radiating through his entire body. Each thrust hit that perfect spot inside him, making his nerves sing with sensation. Sanji’s vision blurred with tears and pleasure, his eyes losing focus as the feelings became too intense to process.

“By Water 7, I knew exactly what I felt for you, but I didn’t accept it yet.”

“What if… you’re wrong? What if there’s something... you haven’t seen,” Sanji wondered aloud, his voice barely coherent.

Zoro drove in deep and stayed there, his hips grinding in slow circles as his cock rubbed insistently against that spot inside Sanji that had his whole body trembling and stars bursting behind his tightly shut eyelids. The pressure was overwhelming, a constant friction that built with every subtle movement of Zoro’s hips. Sanji’s fingers clawed at Zoro’s skin, his breath coming in short, desperate gasps as the sensation threatened to consume him entirely. The heat between them was almost unbearable, sweat slicking their skin as Zoro maintained that maddening angle without mercy.

“Then I’ll love that too, because it’s part of you, Prettybrows.”

He started thrusting again, harder this time, more vigorous. The change in intensity made Sanji cry out. His breath came in shaky gasps. Confusion and fear and desperate hope were warring in his chest. Zoro’s hand slid down between their bodies and wrapped around Sanji’s cock, his palm providing perfect friction.

“I’m not going anywhere,” he promised as he stroked in time with his thrusts.

“I’ve wanted you for years. I’ll want you for the rest of my life.”

“How can you know that?” Sanji asked, his voice breaking.

“Because I’ve had years to think about it.”

Thrust.

“Years to watch you and want you.”

Stroke.

“And know exactly what I’m choosing.”

The dual sensation of Zoro’s hand on his cock and Zoro’s cock inside him was overwhelming. Sanji’s body arched, seeking more, *needing* more. Zoro’s hand started stroking faster, matching the rhythm of his thrusts. Sanji’s body responded immediately as pleasure sparked through his nerves.

“You’re close. I can feel it.”

“*Yes*. Please, I need—”

“First, tell me what’s really scaring you.”

Zoro’s hand slowed deliberately, his hips slowing too. The sudden decrease in stimulation made Sanji whimper in frustration, his body trembling on the edge.

“I’m afraid— afraid of how much I— I want this, want you.”

Zoro’s thumb swept over the head of his cock making Sanji’s hips bucked, seeking more of Zoro’s touch.

“What if— What if I let myself have this and then I lose it?”

“You won’t.”

“You can’t promise that,” Sanji rebutted, tears streaming down his face now.

“People leave. People always—”

“I’m not people, I’m me,” Zoro corrected firmly as he thrust deep and hard as if to punctuate his words.

“And I’m telling you right now, I’m not leaving.”

Another deep, hard thrust.

“Not today, not tomorrow, not ever.”

His hand resumed stroking and his hips resumed their rhythm. Building and building.

“You’re stuck with me, Sanji.”

The deep, rolling thrusts sent sparks of electricity up and down his spine. Sanji lost himself in the pleasure of it. His heart was full of emotions and his body was burning with desire. It was all so overwhelming. Zoro's hand. Zoro's cock. Zoro's voice. Zoro's words.

It was too much and not enough.

"Do you remember that time on Punk Hazard?"

Zoro's hips were still moving. The devastating strokes made it hard to think or breathe. Sanji blinked through his tears, confused by the change in subject and barely able to hold onto Zoro's words through the pleasure.

"When you were in Nami's body? You were so careful with it."

Another thrust. Sanji gasped sharply, his breath catching in his throat. The movement leaving him momentarily stunned and unable to react.

"You were so protective of her even though you were freaking out and pulling your whole simp gag."

Zoro's rhythm built again, steady and relentless, each thrust more insistent than the last. The sound of their bodies coming together, wet and loud, echoed through the space, obscene in the quiet of the Crow's Nest. The slap of skin against skin reverberated off the wooden walls, punctuated by ragged breathing and barely suppressed moans that seemed to hang in the air between them.

"I watched you be careful, but still determined to get the job done."

Sanji couldn't focus, couldn't process Zoro's words. His mind was a haze, thoughts fragmenting and scattering. The pleasure was building too high, mounting with an intensity that made it impossible to concentrate on anything else. Every nerve ending felt electrified, every sensation amplified beyond reason. Whatever Zoro was saying to him right now was lost in the overwhelming rush of feeling coursing through his body.

"I thought that's who he really is."

Thrust.

"Under all the flirting and simping and the bravado."

Thrust.

"That's the real Sanji."

More tears spilled down Sanji's cheeks.

"Zoro—"

"You cooked all that food for everyone afterwards."

His hips moved faster, harder.

“And all those Marines were falling over themselves for you.”

Sanji’s breath came in ragged gasps. His body trembling.

So close, he was so close.

“I hated it. I wanted to grab you close and tell those Marines to back off, tell them that you’re *mine*.”

His hand stroked faster and his hips thrust harder.

“They all saw what I see.”

Thrust.

“How beautiful you are.”

Thrust.

“How good you are.”

Sanji sobbed. The combination of pleasure and emotion too much.

“But they don’t know how deep your heart is.”

Zoro’s eye locked on his.

“That’s what I love about you.”

“Stop talking,” Sanji begged again even as his body curled closer to Zoro like a flower to the sun.

“I have tons of moments watching you and falling more in love with you.”

His cock hit Sanji’s prostate with every thrust, sending waves of pleasure coursing through his entire body. Each movement angled just right to strike that sensitive spot again and again. His hand worked Sanji’s cock with perfect pressure, firm but not too tight, stroking in long, steady motions. The timing was flawless. His hand moved in sync with his hips, creating a symphony of sensation that had Sanji gasping for breath.

“You asked how I can love you? That’s how. Because I’ve seen you.”

Sanji’s vision blurred. His body trembling uncontrollably.

“And I love what I see.”

Sanji’s chest heaved with sobs. His whole body shaking.

His hand moved faster on Sanji's cock. His calloused palm provided perfect friction against Sanji's heated skin. His hips angled to perfectly hit Sanji's prostate in thrusts that were powerful and deep and relentless.

"Zoro, I'm— I'm gonna—"

"Let go for me." Zoro murmured.

The orgasm started in his chest. Not his groin. Not his cock. Deep in his chest where his heart was pounding against his ribs like it was trying to break free.

It spread outward like a wave. Rolling through his ribs. Down his spine. Into his limbs. Filling every nerve ending with white-hot pleasure. His whole body began to shake with the intensity of it. Trembling uncontrollably as the sensation built and built and built.

When he came, it wasn't explosive. It was devastating.

A broken sob tore from his throat as his release hit him. Tears streaming down his face in hot, uncontrollable rivers. His cock pulsed in Zoro's hand, spilling between them, but that was almost secondary to the emotional tidal wave crashing over him.

"Zoro. *Zoro*, I—" he sobbed, the name breaking apart in his mouth.

Zoro followed moments later, his hips stuttering as he came deep inside Sanji, a low groan rumbling through his chest. He didn't pull away. He stayed buried inside him, his hand coming up to cradle the back of Sanji's head, keeping their foreheads pressed together.

"I've got you. I've got you, Sanji. Let it out."

Sanji's sobs turned deeper, more uncontrolled, his whole body shaking so violently that Zoro had to wrap both arms around him to keep him steady. His hands clawed at Zoro's back, his shoulders, anywhere he could reach, desperate for something solid to hold onto.

The fear was shifting, transforming into something else. The weight of everything he'd been suppressing, the denial, the shame, the desperate want, was all pouring out. Underneath it all he could feel something close to acceptance beginning to take root.

"I can't— I don't—" Sanji gasped between sobs, his voice breaking.

"Shh. You don't have to say anything. Just breathe. I've got you."

Sanji couldn't breathe. His chest was too tight, his throat too constricted. He buried his face in Zoro's chest, his body curling into him, seeking shelter.

Zoro held him through it, his arms solid and warm around Sanji's trembling body. He didn't try to stop the breakdown, didn't tell Sanji to calm down or pull himself together. He just held him, one hand cradling the back of his head, the other stroking up and down his spine in slow, soothing motions.

"That's it. Let it all out. I'm right here. I'm not going anywhere."

Sanji sobbed harder at the words, his fingers digging into Zoro's shoulders. Slowly, gradually, the sobs began to subside. The fear was still there, as was the growing acceptance. Alongside it was a sense of relief and hope that maybe, just maybe, he could believe this was real.

Eventually, Zoro pulled out, making Sanji whimper at the loss, before he immediately gathered him close again. Sanji's body was still shaking even though his sobs had turned to quieter hiccups.

"Hold on for a second."

He reached for something, Sanji couldn't see what through his tears, and then there was the gentle touch of a cloth against his skin.

Zoro cleaned them both, wiping away the evidence of their joining with a carefulness that made Sanji's chest ache. He reached for the water bottle again and urged Sanji to drink. After Sanji had his fill and nudged the bottle away, Zoro pulled his robe over them both, creating a cocoon of warmth in the cool night air of the Crow's Nest.

"There. You're safe here."

He cradled Sanji against him on the futon, their bodies fitting perfectly in the space Zoro had created. Sanji lay against him quietly as stray silent tears still slipped past his eyes. Zoro's hand rubbed slow circles on Sanji's back.

"Just breathe with me. In and out."

Sanji tried to match his breathing to Zoro's, tried to find some kind of rhythm in the chaos. It took several minutes, but he managed to ease his hitching gasps into shaky breaths.

"That's good. You're doing so good."

"I'm sorry. I don't know why…" Sanji choked out, his voice raw and broken.

"Don't apologize. You have nothing to apologize for."

Sanji shook his head against Zoro's chest, embarrassed by his own emotions.

"I know it's overwhelming, but you're safe."

"I don't know how to do this. I don't know how to let myself have this, how to believe I deserve it."

"Then let me believe it for both of us until you can believe it yourself."

Sanji's fingers clutched at Zoro's skin, desperate for something to anchor him. Zoro's hand came up to cup his face, thumb brushing away tears.

"Look at me."

Sanji forced his eyes open, meeting Zoro's gaze through the blur of tears.

“You’re not going to lose me. I’ve waited two years for this. I’m not going anywhere.”

“But what if—”

“No what ifs. I’m here. You’re here. That’s what matters,” Zoro interrupted gently.

A fresh wave of tears hit Sanji at the words. Zoro held him through it, his hand stroking through Sanji’s hair, his lips pressing gentle kisses to his forehead, his temple, the top of his head. He murmured soft reassurances, words Sanji couldn’t quite make out but that soothed him anyway.

“I just feel— it’s like I’m drowning. Everything is just— it’s so much,” Sanji confessed, his voice hoarse and raw.

“You don’t have to figure it all out right now.”

Zoro’s hand continued to stroke through Sanji’s hair. They lay there together, wrapped in blankets, holding each other. Sanji’s body ached pleasantly, his mind was still spinning, but the panic had subsided into something he could breathe through.

“I like this,” Sanji said quietly.

“Hmm?”

“You holding me, taking care of me. I liked the sex, but I like this too,” he admitted, his voice barely audible.

“Good. I like taking care of you, holding you. I hope it makes you feel safe.”

“You do.”

“Safe enough that you won’t run anymore.”

“I won’t, I promise. I won’t run anymore. But I— I don’t think that I can— I don’t think I can handle anyone knowing about this yet. Robin knows but I’m not ready for a big announcement or...”

“We’ll tell the crew when you’re ready.”

“Really?”

“For now, this is just between us. No pressure. No rush.”

Sanji nodded, relief flooding through him.

“Thank you.”

“For what?”

“For being patient. For not giving up on me even when I was pushing you away.”

“I told you, I’m not going anywhere. I’ve wanted you for too long to let you go now.”

Zoro’s arms tightened around him as he kissed the top of his head. Sanji felt something in his chest settle. Not completely, but enough. They stayed like that, wrapped in each other, until Sanji’s breathing had completely evened out and his tears had dried on his cheeks. He felt raw, exposed and vulnerable, but he also felt accepted, safe and wanted.

Maybe even loved.

“I should probably get back to the bunkroom and you’ve got watch,” Sanji said quietly, though he didn’t move.

“Not yet. Let me hold you a little longer.”

Sanji nodded, burrowing closer into Zoro’s warmth.

“Okay. A little longer.”

They stayed like that, wrapped in each other. The Crow’s Nest felt like another world entirely. The starlight outside the window, the vast sea spreading out below in the darkness and the rocking motion of the ship all conspired to make Sanji feel like they were floating in space, that nothing outside this moment mattered or could touch them. For the first time since that night in the hotel room, Sanji let himself believe that maybe, just maybe, this could work.

He couldn’t deny it anymore, couldn’t pretend it was a mistake or a moment of weakness. This was real and he wanted it. He wanted Zoro in every way possible.

Maybe that was okay. Maybe he was allowed to want all of it. Maybe he was allowed to have all of it. With Zoro.

Maybe it’s worth the risk.

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