

For His Sweetheart

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For His Sweetheart

by [sabershadowkat](#)

Summary

Ever since their first foray to a restaurant together, way back when, Zoro had made it a point to take Sanji to one on any of the islands they'd visited, if they had the time and were both upright.

Notes

Sequel to the 2006 story [Rules of Love](#)

prompt: fall in love, the choice is yours

Dressed in a wrinkled black suit coat that only had one hole and small bloodstain, and one of Sanji's ties loose around his neck, both of which he'd unearthed from the bottom of his ship's locker, Zoro entered the galley on the Thousand Sunny in search of the tie's owner.

"Oi, Cook," Zoro called when he didn't spot Sanji at the stove or sink. "You in here?"

"Storeroom," came the muffled reply.

A tall, broad-shouldered swordsman, with green hair, three earrings in his left ear, and several scars, Zoro crossed through the galley to the storeroom beyond. His left wrist rested on the trio of hilts of the katana at his side. He spotted Sanji's backside bent over an open salt barrel. "You want to go to that fancy restaurant in town?" Zoro asked, unabashedly admiring the view.

"When?" Sanji straightened and turned, with a preserved fish in his hand. He was the same height as Zoro, deceptively thin, with asymmetrically curled eyebrows and blond hair that fell over one eye. He wore a full suit, as usual, this one black pin-striped with a sky blue shirt and fully knotted black tie. He blinked at Zoro's outfit, and a flash of attraction and fondness crossed his face before it wrinkled into a scowl. "Is that my tie?"

"Yeah." Zoro grinned rottenly. "It was in my locker from that time--"

The fish came flying toward Zoro's face. "Don't talk about things like that out loud!"

Zoro chuckled, catching the fish and throwing it back at Sanji. "We going or what? The choice is yours."

"Fine." Sanji dropped the fish back into the barrel, his cheeks stained red. He pulled a cigarette from the pack in his breast pocket and lit up, trying to hide his discomfiture. He put the lid back onto the salt barrel. "But you need to wear that tie correctly."

"Like this?" Zoro did something rather perverse as he tightened the tie. He dodged out of the storeroom with a loud laugh as a kick came soaring at him.

Moonstone was the center of a bracelet of islands linked together by a narrow chain of bridges. The Thousand Sunny's crew had docked for supplies earlier in the week, defeated a corrupt government, and now that they'd healed, were setting sail in the morning. That greedy sea witch, Nami, had reluctantly divided the reward loot between the crew.

The setting sun tinted the adobe buildings a soft orange. Patrons in colorful shirts and billowing trousers hustled home with their purchases as shops closed for the night. A few of the islanders stopped to smile and thank them. A hum of relief after oppression danced on the salty air.

The restaurant was nestled between a tailor and a fruit seller. At the door, the Matey-Dee, or whatever he was called, eyed Zoro's outfit with disdain, but Zoro knew from experience that as long as he wore a stupid suit coat and tie, they wouldn't turn him away. They were led inside, through the arched adobe doorway, to a table in the back by the kitchen. Something

else Zoro knew from experience would happen. Zoro didn't mind the slight, and Sanji liked peeking into the kitchen whenever the swinging door opened, anyway.

White linens covered the tables, arranged in intimate settings of two or four. Hurricane lanterns with red glass cast a rose glow in the centers of the tables. More silverware than necessary graced each place setting. Cloth napkins folded into swans nested in the middle of each menu. Polished glasses awaited expensive wines.

Zoro loosened his tie slightly as he straddled the seat across from Sanji. The diners around them gave them smiles instead of the usual sneers. It always helped to save a town before going out to eat.

Sanji flicked the napkin open and draped it across his lap before picking up the menu. Zoro shoved the napkin, menu, and most of the silverware to one side of the table. He only needed a fork and knife to eat, or chopsticks, depending on what Sanji ordered for him. They had an unspoken agreement that Sanji would find something on the unrecognizable menu for Zoro to eat and drink, and Zoro would do his best not to act like "an ill-manned oaf with the palate of a sea slug", as Sanji had put it.

"Hasselback Tomato Caprese with a lovely arugula... Endive Salmon Boats, smoked with tender care and a fruity wood... delectable Portabella and Brie Cups... Rich and woodsy Porcini Risotto..." Zoro watched Sanji fall in love with the menu, visible eye alit with joy. Ever since their first foray to a restaurant together, way back when, Zoro had made it a point to take Sanji to one on any of the islands they'd visited, if they had the time and were both upright. The fancy places served things Sanji liked but couldn't feed to the rest of the crew.

Zoro fought the urge to lean back on two legs of the chair and put his booted feet on the table.

The wine guy and the waiter - Zoro still hadn't figured out why one guy couldn't do both jobs - both came and went and came again with their food and drinks. Zoro recognized a tiny portion of fish surrounded by artfully decorated weeds on the plate in front of him. He sighed. "Why can't these places ever give us enough to eat?"

"Most people are not pigs," Sanji said, examining the meal placed in front of himself with a chef's eye. "Shut up and eat it."

"Better be getting another tie out of this," Zoro grumbled, picking up his fork. He felt a kick to his shin under the table, and looked up sharply. "Oi!"

Sanji smirked, but there was a soft look in his eye. "Depends on if I get my flower or not."

Memories crashed over Zoro, and his heart tripped in his chest. A broad smile crossed his lips. "Why? You planning on falling for me again, 'sweetheart'?"

Sanji flustered as Zoro turned the tables on him. He pulled out his cigarettes, caught himself, and put them away again, the rose on his cheeks having nothing to do with the colored glass on the lantern. "Shut up. Stupid marimo."

Zoro laughed, and when he was kicked in the shin again, he laughed louder. Eyes turned toward them, and Sanji appeared to want to beat him senseless. Zoro knew they'd fight all the

way back to the ship, then fight in a different way behind the locked storeroom door. He looked forward to every second of it. "Eat your food, Ero-Cook."

In the morning, he'd try to find that flower.

"Where the hell is that swordsman?!"

Sanji emerged from the galley at Nami's bellow from the main deck of the Thousand Sunny. Morning sunlight glittered on the adobe buildings in Moonstone. Locals in colorful clothing rushed about port, assisting sailors in preparing to set sea. Dressed in a yellow shirt and black trousers, sans tie, Sanji wiped his damp hands on the towel draped over his shoulder, a cigarette dangling from his lips. "What's going on?"

Nami pivoted on her heel and glared up at Sanji, hands on her hips. "Zoro said he'd be right back, and he's not."

Sanji's lip curled in amusement. "You let him leave the ship on his own?"

"It's not funny! I told everyone we were leaving this morning, and it's time to go!"

"Zoro sighting at two o'clock!" Usopp's voice called over the speaker from the crow's nest. "He appears to be walking in a circle around the Moonstone fountain."

"Oooh, that brain-dead moron," Nami fumed. Suddenly, she became all smiles and batting eyelashes. "Sanji-kun, will you please fetch Zoro for me so that I can kill him?"

Sanji exhaled a puff of smoke with a chuckle. "Yeah, I'll go and get him."

After depositing the towel in the galley, Sanji made his way ashore. He received smiles and morning greetings from the townsfolk as he strode through the streets. Moonstone was laid out in radial fashion, with the fountain at the center. A single road led from the docks to the fountain. When Sanji turned around, the Sunny was clearly visible from where he stood.

The giant, white adobe fountain had five bowl-shaped tiers, with each tier spilling water into the one below it, growing progressively bigger from bowl to bowl. A pinnacle spire with a moonstone gem rose from the topmost bowl. People gathered around the fountain, exchanging greetings and gossip. Sanji stamped out his cigarette, flicking the butt in a nearby trash can, and leaned back against the waist-high rim of the fountain to wait.

Sanji wasn't concerned that Zoro would suddenly veer off. He was certain Zoro could glimpse the ship from the far side of the fountain, but instead of keeping focus on the Sunny, he'd keep his head turned the same direction. After all, according to Zoro-logic, if the Sunny

was on his left when he was on one side of the fountain, it should still be on the left when he reached the other side. Except Zoro's body had turned when he rounded the fountain, so left was now in the opposite way.

Zoro eventually stomped into view, looking like he'd been fighting in the mud. He had a cut on his forehead and a gash in his thigh. Dried blood and mud streaked his face and clothing. Clutched in his hand was a fistful of daisies, most without their petals or completely headless. Zoro stopped short when he saw Sanji, then stomped over to him and shoved the daisies at his chest. "Stupid, damned love cook."

Butterflies fluttered in Sanji's chest, and he snagged the daisies before they fell to the ground.

"I'm not the one who ran off to pick flowers." He pretended the fact that Zoro had followed through with getting him a flower - or flowers in this case - affected him. He looked Zoro over. "What did you do, wrestle with some pigs?"

"Do you want a go?" Zoro threatened, hand already drawing one of his katana. His expression was full of thunderclouds.

"Anytime - except now." Bouquet in hand, Sanji started in the direction of the ship. "Nami-san is waiting to leave."

Zoro re-sheathed his katana and fell quickly into step beside Sanji. He muttered about irritating dartboard brows and moving streets and idiotic gestures and holes dug in the middle of nowhere.

Sanji plucked the least ragged looking daisy from the bouquet and tucked it behind Zoro's ear as they walked. "Here. Because you 'can't grow none'."

Zoro sputtered, and Sanji shot him a sideways smirk. The storm clouds melted, and Sanji squawked when he was abruptly grabbed, and Zoro planted a searing kiss on him.

Zoro broke away and bumped their foreheads lightly together. His black eyes were alive with happiness. "Race you to the ship."

Zoro took off before Sanji could gather his senses. Heat flushed Sanji's cheeks, and several more flower petals had fallen to the ground around him. Light titters and whispers and a few knowing grins came from the people nearby. Sanji tried to straighten a tie that wasn't there, gave those around him a self-conscious smile, and hurried after Zoro, yelling with fond frustration, "Oi, moron! You're going the wrong way!"

End

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