sanji gets shrunk to three inches because the writer has a sense of humor

by MalkyTop

Summary

there are things other than devil fruits that can do some weird stuff and the grand line is full of them. that's the only explanation for why sanji's currently wearing a napkin.
“I think they're pomegranates.”

“Don't be silly, pomegranates don't grow in winter!”

“...Uh, yeah. They do.”

Usopp opened his mouth, considered who exactly he was having discussions about fruit with, and closed it again.

Chopper circled around the potentially-pomegranate tree. “They look like Christmas ornaments!”

“They look like pustules of blood growing out of a bare tree,” Robin added, seemingly oblivious to the way that both Chopper and Usopp paused to shiver from something other than the cold. One of her hands reached up and plucked a fruit carefully off a low-hanging branch. “Do you think they're edible?”

Nobody was remotely surprised when the pomegranate disappeared from Robin's grasp in a rubbery blur. “Let's find out!”

It took quick reflexes, backed up by years of training, for Sanji to manage to swipe food away from Luffy's ever-gaping maw. His captain's teeth clamped on nothing but his own hand. “Hey, dumbass, this is wild fruit. Don't just eat whatever the shit you find hanging on a tree, alright? I gotta test to see if it's poisonous or not.”

“You know, Sanji, I don't think any of us are interested in eating some blood fruit anyways so we could just leave – “

With a practiced flourish, Sanji broke the pomegranate open with his bare hands.

“– or you could do that.”

“Um, how do you test if something's poisonous anyways?” Chopper asked, venturing closer now that it was clear that there absolutely wasn't blood inside of the fruit. “I mean, if you can't find it in a book or anything...”

“Well you see,” Sanji said, already picking at the fleshy seeds inside, “society has been built off of the bulk of knowledge handed down by previous generations. The trial and error that our ancestors went through, foraging unknown plants, gave way to a record of certain patterns that a trained cook can use to figure out what's good to eat.”

“Wow...so what're you gonna do?”

“I'm gonna eat it.”

Sanji's proud smirk was met by a bored look (Luffy), a disappointed face (Chopper), and an unimpressed stare (Usopp). “...Isn't that just trial and error.”

“Shut up, Longnose! It's an educated trial and error! I'm tasting this while thinking like a plant!”

“In other words, you're not thinking at all. Chopper, you should probably sedate him. The snow's gotten to his brain.”
“Actually, what Sanji is remarking upon is the evolutionary purposes of various aspects of plants. If something does not want to be eaten, it will generally evolve a certain type of attribute that would discourage consumption. And so, keeping that in mind, you could test if something has certain attributes in order to gauge the likelihood of whether it is edible or not. Thus, 'thinking like a plant.'”

“Oh Robin-chan,” Sanji crooned, clutching the pomegranate over his heart, “you know me so well~”

Chopper stood by him in his reindeer form, uncomfortably close. “So I shouldn’t...?” Out of the corner of his eye, Sanji could see Chopper subtly wave his horns towards his head.

“Well, he's still sick in the head. But that's normal for him.”

“Like I was saying, there's plenty rules of thumb when it comes to this sorta shit. White berries usually mean poison. If something tastes like almonds, it's better to avoid. Anything that burns the skin or the inside of your mouth, anything that tastes bad or bitter or whatever, avoid.”

“Most of that...just sounds like common sense.”

“Shut up and let me test this out already.”

Sanji had been holding one of the seeds for so long that it had started to stain his fingers purple. Giving Usopp a last glance in case he decided to interrupt with something stupid again, Sanji tossed the seed into his mouth and felt it out.

His friends managed to keep quiet for only a few seconds, but frankly, Sanji had a habit of getting way too engrossed in compartmentalizing the exact taste of new foods and it would take him forever if nobody spoke up. Robin, as the only person present immune from any sort of negative reaction from Sanji, took the job. “How does it taste?”

Sanji swallowed and sighed. “Bitter. No good.”

There were a few more seconds of silence for an entirely different reason.

“...Shouldn't you have spat it out, then?”

Sanji considered this, his face blank.

“Oh.”

This one word inspired a flurry of activity and Sanji suddenly found himself surrounded, with Usopp shaking him by the shoulder and Chopper clinging to his arm.

“You just got done telling us about what's not good to eat! Why did you swallow that?!”

“Are you gonna die?! Please don't die! You need to vomit right away! Sanji, please throw up!”

“Look, I dunno, I just ate it without thinking, okay?! Get your shitty hands away from my mouth!”

After a brief struggle, Sanji managed to shove both his overly-concerned friends off and sped behind the pomegranate tree, shuffling around the trunk whenever Usopp and Chopper tried to make their way to him. “I'm not gonna freaking throw up!”

“If you don't want Robin to see, then you can do it behind some bushes or something!” Chopper had grown to his Heavy Point and tried to make a flying tackle as Usopp circled the other way. Sanji jumped over him and ran to the other side of the tree.
“But that’s such a waste!”

“A waste of what?!” Usopp shouted back, filling in for Chopper since he was currently dealing with a mouthful of snow. “Are you saying it's a waste of food?! Don’t be an idiot! You're poisoned!”

Sanji moved to flee again, but found his legs tangled in some sprouting arms. He was unable to do anything except fall on his face. A few seconds later, he felt someone thump on top of his back, then someone else thump on top of that person’s back. There were hands grabbing at his face, and he wrenched his head away, buried it in the snow until he remembered that he needed to breathe or something.

“It's not necessarily poison! It could just make me a little sick or something! Get off! I really don't like barfing!”

There was another thump added to the dogpile, and Sanji sank that much deeper in the snow. He was starting to think that if the pomegranate didn't make him sick, these idiots would.

“Hey, why're we all sitting on top of Sanji?”

“He ate a pomegranate seed that might be poisonous and now he refuses to barf.”

“Wow, that's dumb. Everybody knows you don't eat seeds.”

Sanji could hear the sounds of teeth crunching on fruit.

“...Luffy,” Chopper said, his face pressed into Usopp's back, “what are you eating?”

“Huh? That blood fruit or whatever.”

“Luffy,” Usopp breathed out, trying to bend his arms backwards in a futile attempt to grab at his captain, “we just got done having an argument about the reasonable edibility of that fruit. I literally said the word 'poisonous' a few seconds ago.”

“What? Nah. 'S good.” Luffy spat out several seeds, all of them arcing beautifully over the bodies of his flailing friends. Sanji caught a few of them with his head. His attempts to pull himself out from underneath the weight of everybody increased in intensity.

“Actually, our captain is on the mark.” Belatedly, Sanji realized that his ankles had ceased being held captive long ago. A forest of arms sprouted, picking all four guys up and organizing them helpfully in some form of upright fashion. Robin smiled at them and took another bite from another pomegranate. “The seeds may be bitter, but the flesh tastes rather palatable. That would be a point in favor of its edibility.”

With that, all of the vigor in the 'Saving Sanji's Life For Him Because He's An Idiot' plan dissipated. For his part, Sanji tried not to think about how disappointed Usopp and Chopper looked that he wasn't maybe going to die of poison and instead stomped in front of them.

“There's snow everywhere, you assholes!” Sanji gestured towards himself, his face set in an expression indicating that he didn't fully appreciate snow filling every gap in his apparel, nor the feeling of wet clothing in the middle of winter. “Dammit, I'm going back to the ship. Gotta freaking change. Those baskets better be full of quality shit when I get back!”

Sanji took a few awkward steps towards the Sunny, looking like he would rather walk straight out of his socks, before Chopper grabbed hold of his pants. He whipped his head down, glaring at the top of Chopper's hat. “What.”
There was no immediate response besides a tighter clutch on his pants. Sanji tried not to roll his eyes, did so anyways, and said, “If you’re still worried, you can follow me around for eight hours. If nothing happens, then I’m fine, and that means you stop bugging me.”

“R-right! Make sure to tell me if you feel anything different!”

“Yeah, yeah...” Though frankly, he was sure Chopper was in for a boring ride. All he planned to do was take a quick shower, change into some dry clothes, and then gargle water for as long as it took to get rid of the damn bitter taste in his mouth.

Eight hours passed without incident. Usopp and Robin managed to come back with a good haul of fruits and vegetables, while Luffy came back totting an entire bear and commanding him to cook it up immediately. Sanji passed around snacks right before they set sail.

And then, four hours after their departure, he succumbed to a 107 degree fever.

Consciousness.

Or, at the very least, awareness.

It was dark. But also soft. He felt the wisp of something all around him, as though he were engulfed in an oppressive cloud.

The last thing he remembered was a shortness of breath, his heart pounding so fast he almost thought it would stop out of exhaustion, thought he would die. Trying to walk over to a chair and ending up leaning against a wall instead. Telling someone, “I thought, the kitchen is always hot, I didn't realize,” before promptly passing out.

So, a couple of possibilities. He could be dreaming (a really boring dream, if so). Or dead. Couldn’t rule that out.

Sanji patted down his pockets for his ever-present lighter and found that, surprisingly, it was not present. Nor were his pockets. Or his pants. He wasn't sure whether this was in favor of the dream or of death, but either way, it was extremely unwelcome. The only thing left to do, he suppose, was to find someone and complain. And with the thought of getting to shout at someone pushing him forward, Sanji started in a random direction.

The terrain wasn't exactly easy to traverse. On the one hand, the floor was soft and easy on his feet. On the other hand, the floor was soft, leaving him to wade through at a speed he wouldn't consider his fastest. It didn't help that his head was constantly brushing up against something and so he felt the need to crouch and, at the risk of sounding like an old man, it wasn't that good for his back. There was no sign that he was even approaching anything resembling an exit out of this cave or whatever the shit he was supposed to be in. And so it was an utter surprise to him when he suddenly stumbled out into a bright light, fresh air, and a rather disquieting sight.

It wasn't that Sanji had anything against beds. They were nice. Warm. Even just thin bedding was a step up from sleeping on bare rock. It's just that when beds stretched out into landscapes, he couldn't help but find cause for concern. Furthermore, when there was a large, brown mound perched on the edge of the bed-cliff, with a smudge of blue on its front and large, curved structures shooting out of its sides, he couldn't help but feel like screaming.

So he did.
“Three inches.”

As the ruler beside him pulled away, Sanji numbly let his feet fall away beneath him, plopping straight onto the wood desk below. He didn't really know what else to do. Mostly, he just looked straight ahead at the curtain of cloth and flesh in front of him. If he kept doing that, he couldn't see that any of it was, in fact, connected to faces that he knew.

Before, when he had screamed, it had woken Chopper up, who took one look and also started to scream. Then Sanji remembered that he was naked and screamed louder, trying to pull up the floor-comforter up to cover himself up and the two of them continued that pattern for a while until someone managed to take control of the situation and now he was here, in front of his friends, wearing only a napkin. His brain was trying to keep up with the current events but it kept getting distracted by how the napkin was too big for him.

“What the heck happened?” And that was Nami's voice, and how did he even recognize it? It was so different, it sounded so booming, and if she wasn’t careful, he was sure it could blow his eardrums out. None of that he associated with Nami, but it was Nami's voice all the same.

“It's gotta be the pomegranate seeds. They were poison, I'm pretty sure. I knew he should've barfed them up!”

“There's a limit to what poison does!”

“It is the Grand Line,” Franky rumbled. He was in the back, and loomed far above the others already. It was more like distant thunder than a voice. “Weird is normal here.”

“There's a limit to how weird things can get!”

“Guys...what're we gonna do?” That was Chopper, the only one that he could even see face-to-face. Or, he supposed it was more like face-to-body. Even though Chopper was resting his head flat on the desk, even if Sanji stood as tall as he could, he was pretty sure he would barely stand as tall as his eyes. Eyes that were currently welling up with globules of tears, so it was a good idea not to stand next to them anyways.

“We could call him San-inchi.”

“Damnit, Marimo, this isn't the time for dumbass jokes!” Sanji instinctively shouted, feeling more like he was simply yelling out at mountains and waiting for echoes to come back. It was hard to exactly discern the expressions on everybody's faces, high up as they were, but he could at least tell that all of their eyes were on him now. And it was hard to miss Usopp's hand going to his mouth.

“Are you laughing?!” he accused, his face red with either anger or embarrassment but let's just say it was anger.

“B-but,” Usopp spluttered, and he totally was laughing, “I-I'm sorry, it's, it's just – he sounds like Chopper.”

Okay, it was definitely embarrassment.

“No! Shut up, you bastard!”

“Alright, alright, alright, sorry...by the way, Chopper, you're the doctor. You can fix this, right?”
“Aww, shut up, ya bastard~!”

Usopp gestured towards the two currently smallest members of the crew and quirked an eyebrow. Much to Sanji's consternation, a quiet, understanding 'ohhhhhh' breezed through the air above him.

“In any case,” Sanji gritted out, trying his best to ignore the way Usopp turned around and walked away, hands over his mouth, “we have to turn this ship around! Go back to that goddamn island and get one of those shitty pomegranates so we can figure out what the hell it did!”

“Um...Sanji-kun...you were out of it for a while...” And never had anything that came out of Nami's mouth made his stomach sink so low. “We've...already reached the next island. And the log pose is set for the one after.”

So. That was it. His life was over.

He probably looked pathetic, dropping to his knees and burying his face in his hands, but there was no other way to react to such a sudden upheaval in his very existence that rendered his entire being utterly useless to anybody he cared about. What was he going to do? How could he even perform basic tasks like walking to another room? He had already grasped the vastness of the world long ago, and now it had only become bigger.

“Wait!” Luffy slammed his hands on the table, causing Sanji to bounce and fall over, and then perched his chin on top. “You need those blood fruits, right?”

“Well, if I'm gonna figure out how to reverse...this, then that would help a lot,” Chopper said.

“The thing is, I took a bunch of them to eat!”

Sanji sat up, staring straight at Luffy's earnest face, and for once in his life he found himself praising his captain's goddamn never-ending stomach.

“But I ate them all!”

“Luffy!” Never mind.

“But I mean, if you need the seeds, then I didn't eat those! I spat them out everywhere!”

“Where, exactly?” Sanji asked, trying not to put that much stock into Luffy's competence.

“Mostly over the railing.”

This time, Sanji kicked Luffy right in the nose. This did nothing but bounce him backwards flat on his head. Luffy, not even acknowledging the (frankly, embarrassing attempt of an) attack, shot back to his feet and zoomed out the door, shouting back, “I'm gonna see if I can find some!”

There were some conveniences of being small, Sanji reflected. For instance, being small meant a plethora of available hiding places, where he would never be found.

Currently, three inches tall, wearing only a napkin, and showing off just how completely powerless he was in front of the entire crew, he decided that he would like that very much.
The plan, said Nami (who had taken charge of the situation as usual because Luffy kept being
distracted with poking at Sanji's unnaturally small form), was to ask around the island they were
currently on for any information about that weird pomegranate. This was, as always, a brilliant plan
and Sanji was completely ready and willing to go through with it (and also away from Luffy's
goddamn prodding fingers).

“Absolutely not. You're staying on the ship.”

“But – “

“We'll be going outside. With people. I don't even want to think about what disaster could happen
with you like this.”

“I've already thought of twenty,” Usopp muttered from his seat.

“For instance, you are just the right size for a bird of prey to swallow you whole.”

Everybody fell silent in the aftermath of Robin's words. Usopp groaned into his hands. “Twenty-
one.”

Sanji very gamely pushed his new nightmare for the next few days from his head, as well as Luffy's
finger from his face. “I still need to get groceries, though!”

“Then just write down – er, well, just tell us what to write down and we'll buy it for you. Luffy,
seriously, stop bothering him.”

Luffy's cheeks puffed up with a pout as he finally withdrew his finger. Sanji found himself
sympathizing with him, in that he found himself wearing the same expression. But it was easier to
see on Luffy than it was on him, so he tried to express himself louder by crossing his arms and
plopping down. But it wasn't like he could bear to just...ignore what Nami told him to do.

“Peaches,” he muttered.

“What was that?” Nami stared helplessly down and then turned to everybody else. “Fishes?”

Usopp crossed his arms. “No, you say 'fish,' not 'fishes.'”

“Tell him that, not me.”

“Nah, nah...ain't there that saying? 'Somethin' fishes in the sea?'”

“That's 'Plenty of fish in the sea.' Fish.”

“I said peaches! PEA-CHES!”

“Oh, peaches. Okay.”

“But we could use some pike.”

“Um...right...just to make sure, does anybody here know what pikes look like?”

“Oh, I do. I'm a master of fish, you know. When I was a stalwart three years old – “
“Okay. So Usopp's on grocery duty.”

“We also need chayotes.”

Nami’s pen jerked to a stop. “Ch...chay...otes...does anybody know what...those are?”

Uncomfortable silence.

“Hang on, I can try drawing it,” Sanji said, only managing to grab Nami's quill because she grudgingly let him. He shouldered it, tried not to sneeze with all the feathers (or, rather, feather since there was only one, as much as he kept thinking there wasn't), and started to jog an oval-ish path.

The result was...well...some curves jagged because the pen nib caught on the paper, tripping him up, and then there were all the times he accidentally stepped in the still-wet ink, trailing behind footprints alongside the drawing, not to mention that in the end, he misjudged the distance to the beginning of the oval and ended up overshooting it, making the chayote look more like a really messed up 'U' than anything edible.

Nami squinted at the drawing.

“...Yeah. Okay. You'll have to go grocery shopping.”

One, he had to stay hidden.

This took a lot of debate, as Sanji absolutely refused to be tucked away in some goddamn pocket like a piece of lint, and he needed to be able to see the produce anyways to properly judge the quality. But Usopp absolutely denied him his shoulder (“You'll fall off oh my god don't do this to me”) and it turned out, in an embarrassing turn of fate, that Sanji was easily tangled in Usopp's hair. So it was decided that he would hide in Brook's head. Brook's eye sockets were slightly too small for him to curl up in, but his brain cavity was just about the right size for him to recline and still be able to peer out by opening his skull a crack.

This was, on all accounts, really creepy. “I suppose I shall have another voice in my head,” Brook commented, his laugh sounding somewhat unhinged, and Sanji bounced around in his skull and shouted at him to shut up already. But it worked out. And besides, given the only clothes he had on right now, a scrap of fabric with a hole cut in the middle to pit his head through and another scrap he had to tie around his waist like a precarious skirt, he was very sure that hiding away from sight was a very good thing.

Two, no eating weird things he didn't recognize ever again.

Sanji technically didn't agree to this, but said, “You don't have to rub it in or anything,” which was close enough.

Three, don't do that thing where he gets pissed off and throws himself into unreasonable situations, or at least if he gets pissed off, just stay put and do not explode into flames.

That one he responded to with a noncommittal grunt.

And with that, he was off, or rather, Brook and Usopp were off while he tagged along. The ride was a comfortable one; surprisingly so, considering just where he was. Brook had an uncanny ability to glide along the ground on legs that were suited for a giraffe's gait, ponderously slow but making a great amount of distance with each stride anyways. At every stall, he would bend his spine in angles so acute that Sanji could have fallen right out of his skull if he wasn't careful, and hover his spidery
hands over every produce until Sanji said, “That one, that one,” so he could pluck the designated specimen between his fingers. To the side, Usopp would ask the stall owner for any information about a weird pomegranate and produced a drawing of his own, one that was as close to blood red as crayons could manage. Every stall owner replied with pretty much the same answer.

“From the last island? Y’mean the one that nobody lives on?”

“Not like we get shipments from over yonder. Folks sailin’ in tend t’ buy, not sell.”

“What kinda idiot would just go and eat a wild fruit like that?”

“Never heard of it. Never seen it. Dunno what ‘weird effect’ you’re even talking about.”

It would be discouraging if Sanji hadn’t found the most perfect chayotes he had ever seen, and so instead of dwelling about his shitty size, he got distracted by banging against Brook’s skull and demanding him to haggle lower, no, lower, this isn’t the time to be a goddamn gentleman, stupid skeleton, everybody here are a bunch of crooks out to get your money (except also they have families and their own fees to pay, taxes and stuff) but also: they’re all out to get your money.

So even as he could vaguely hear Usopp mumbling at his pomegranate drawing, he couldn’t help but feel quite pleased with the haul they were getting for the low price that he had haggled. It turned out that negotiating the price from within a skull made for easy pickings. Probably because nobody wanted to deal with an intermittently yelping eight-foot-tall skeleton for longer than they had to.

“Jeez...I'm starting to think that, that...we really can't find this thing here. What're we gonna do?”

“If we cannot do anything, then that is all. But for now, let us not give up the ghost. Once was enough for me! Yohohohoho!”

In the middle of the skullquake, Sanji slammed a hand against the side of the cranium. “Oi! Brook! I told you don't laugh with me in here!”

“Ah, that's right.”

“And tell Usopp to stop fretting about this shit – pomegranate or not, like hell I'm staying like this.”

“Did Sanji say something?”

“Ah, yes. He says that next time, he will be a giant.”

“Don't put words in my mouth!”

“Yohohohoho,” Brook laughed, as though Sanji’s kicks were tickling his (non-existent) brain, and his skull rattled and shook once more, throwing Sanji about until he landed on the one other occupant in Brook’s head.

Piano music blasted in his ears and bounced off the walls of Brook’s cavernous skull, leaving him dazed and somewhat deaf. For a moment, he thought that Brook was laughing again, that bastard, but no, it was a more deliberate laugh, one that was set to a melody, and it had that tinny quality that all recorded sounds had.

The goddamn Tone Dial, Sanji realized, and then there was sudden light and a lot of confused fumbling and the feeling of being grabbed and then Brook jabbed a thumb on his head about three times before Usopp pointed out, no, wait, that's Sanji, stop and in his surprise, Brook dropped him, actually dropped him and during his fall all Sanji could think about was that at least he got enough
good fresh food for everybody to last another month or so before he bounced off the cobblestone twice and skidded to a stop for a few more inches.

There was a lot of screaming, a lot of crying, a lot of “WE KILLED SANJI OH MY GOD AAAAA” and the whole time goddamn Bink's Sake was playing because Brook had completely forgotten about the Tone Dial and he had to climb up Usopp's entire flailing body to get to his ear and shout, I'm fine you goddamn idiot, which just made Usopp scream and flail more but Sanji was prepared for that and held on for dear life but the thing he had held onto was Usopp's hair and the damn black cloud engulfed his arms and chewed them up into its curls and he was absolutely stuck again and he decided, you know what, this was enough groceries.

“Back already?”

“Yeah,” Usopp heaved out as he wheeled the cart full of various produce carefully around Chopper's blanket of drying herbs. “Brook dropped Sanji.”

“What?!”

“Usopp-san! Please, could we not describe it like that?!”

“How else am I supposed to say it?”

“Is Sanji okay? Is there bleeding? Broken bones? Concussion?! Oh my god, I dunno if I have a cast small enough for him, where is he, oh my god, Brook, what happened?!”

“Oh, well,” Brook said, raising a hand apologetically, “I dropped Sanji-san.”

“Oi.”

“How long ago?! Oh my god, oh my god, I don't have to amputate, do I? Oh no oh no oh no”

“Relax, I'm fine,” Sanji drawled out, pushing open Brook's skull and waving down at Chopper, who was looking more and more like he was just chasing his own tail.

“How can you be fine?! You fell like eight feet!” Chopper paused in his frantic circling to consider the previous sentence. “That sounded less serious out loud than in my mind.”

Taking advantage of the lull in the doctor's panic, Sanji continued, “Yeah, I kinda just bounced a few times. Not even bruised. Rather not do that again, though.”

Chopper hummed, rocking on his hooves. “I, I guess...well, mice can survive long falls relative to their size...”

“Please don't compare me to a goddamn pest.”

“Let me check you for signs of a concussion anyways, okay?”

“I need to put the groceries away,” Sanji insisted, but ended up wilting under Chopper's medical glare. “Alright, alright...”

The check-up took a blessedly short amount of time. As hard as Chopper tried, he just couldn't find any symptoms of anything, besides the fact that Sanji was three inches tall. So with that out of the way, Sanji was free to go. No wait. Free to be carried. To the kitchen. Where Usopp and Brook were undoubtedly putting everything in the exact wrong place.
“Hey little bros!” Franky greeted them as Chopper escorted Sanji into his too-large workplace. “You're earlier than I expected, but I'm almost done building this thing for you – “

“Don't care. Chopper, fridge.”

“It'd probably be easier if you just told us the – “

Sanji snapped and pointed. “Fridge.”

Chopper complied with a sigh and a little mumbling about the herbs he left outside, and before Sanji even entered the code, he turned and glared at everybody in the room until he was reasonably sure nobody was looking. He braced his feet against Chopper's palm, planted both hands on the first button, and began to wish that he had made the code something more...compact on the keypad. Seven-three-two-six.

With the fridge open, he let Brook and Usopp take care of putting the perishables in, only giving them a briefing of his specific organizational system. After that, he got Chopper to set him by his ashtray on the bar counter and leaned back against it, breathing in the smell of ash and considering one of the errant cigarette butts he hadn't tossed out before the...this happened. It rose out of the tray like a leaning tree. The longer he stared at it, the more he was convinced that he could manage to squeeze it into his mouth.

He didn't look back towards the expanse of his kitchen. Its width was more like a canyon, the far side a hazy blur that all things in the distance became, which was stupid because this was his kitchen. But all the same, the bar dropped like a cliff and the oven stretched like a plain and even as he frowned at the two giant blurs fumbling with the innards of the white monolith known as his fridge, he couldn't be bothered to insist on supervising their actions. If his old cigarette butts were trees, then the refrigerator was a multi-floored cavernous monster and the thought of inspecting its entire insides was too exhausting for him to handle. So he looked at his ashtray instead and considered how badly he wanted a smoke.

“Hey,” Franky breathed behind him, and he jumped into the air and landed straight into his ashtray.

“Sorry,” said Franky, fishing him out of the piles and piles of ash. Sanji coughed and dusted himself off as best as he could. And now he needed to ask someone to draw a bath for him. In what, a mug? Maybe a soap dish? “Just wanted to show off the thing I just finished building for you.”

“What thing?” Sanji asked, and Franky gestured grandly towards something on the dinner table.

Sanji squinted. “Yeah. I can't see that far.”

Franky stuttered, laughed awkwardly, left to grab the thing and came back, holding it up to the edge of the bar. Now that it was right in front of him, he could see that it was a scale model of the Sunny. Cut in half. It was huge, and it had to be pretty huge from a normal perspective too because it was as big as the ship was supposed to be and if he was three inches then that had to make this...um...well, shit, he wasn't good at this sorta stuff. It was huge.

“Everything to make you feel at home,” Franky said, sounding extremely proud of himself, though Sanji couldn't help but think that making a representation of your own ship being bisected was probably some form of bad luck. He paced until he could see the bathroom, stationed a little ways above him.

“You got running water working in this?” he asked, trying not to salivate at the idea. Franky lowered the model a little and he could see the detail in the tiles, the lovingly crafted faucets, the sheen of new
ceramic.

“Nope, not at all!”

Well, he didn't need to try not to salivate anymore. “Franky, pretty much all of this shit is pointless. I just need a bed.”

Franky looked down at him. Down at his ridiculous model. Back at him. “You're welcome for thinking about your comfort,” he grumbled, but tucked the whole thing under one arm so that he could reach into the bedroom area and fumble about the carefully carved room.

“Yeah, yeah. Put it near the fridge for me or something.”

Franky spun on his feet in automatic compliance, until the actual request caught up to his brain and halted him in his tracks. “You're...gonna sleep in the kitchen?”

And in that one question, Sanji couldn't help but hear myriad others: are you going to stay here now, are you too embarrassed to sleep with us, will you be okay all on your own here, don't you know all of us are fine carrying you back and forth, or is that exactly the thing you don't want us to do, can't you tell that we're worried (so worried), are you going to be safe out of our sight? And he couldn't conceivably answer all of them without making a mess of it (pretty much, maybe, no, yes, yes, yes, probably not), so he shrugged.

Franky paused, shrugged back like it was a secret handshake, and moved on until he too was a haze on the far side of the canyon.

“Um...how many drops do you think...?”

“Not sure...”

Luffy grabbed at the eyedropper in Chopper's hooves, making the table shudder with a clattering roar. “Hey! Hey! Lemme try! I wanna try!”

“This isn't a toy, it's for Sanji! You're just gonna spray it everywhere!”

“Oh Luffy~! If you don't pay attention, this biiiig hunk of meat is gonna disappear~!” Nami trilled from the other side of the table, and Luffy predictably abandoned his current pestering for that instead.

Sanji heard him shout, “Geez! You guys just eat everything when I'm not lookinmphhf!” and then Luffy stopped talking because of the entire pig in his mouth. Chopper turned back down towards him, hovering the eyedropper back over his plate. Which was kind of also his table and also kind of his chair at the same time, currently. Water ballooned from the nozzle until its weight sent the globule down in front of him. Then another, which the first swallowed up into its mass.

“That look good?” Chopper asked, squinting as he tried to compare the volume of water to the estimated size of Sanji's stomach.

He couldn't say it was easy for him either, since it was in the form of a blob and not a cup, but looking at it, he was starting to think that one drop would have probably been enough. He looked up and shrugged. “It's smaller than my head.”

If Chopper noticed the vague way he answered, he said nothing of it, instead turning back to his own plate before it could be upended in the never-ending struggle between dinner and Luffy's stomach.
Sanji focused on trying not to flinch whenever Luffy's arm stretched overhead, far too close for comfort, and remaining as upright as he could on a table that was as shaky as Usopp's legs whenever he was trying to bluff. His own dinner was generously donated by Chopper, who had attempted to measure out a length of pasta that wasn't too overwhelming and also sacrificed a bean and a few grains of rice. Of course, Sanji hadn't cooked the evening's dishes himself, but he did direct their creation, mostly by shouting a lot in Usopp's ear and strategically kicking him in hairless places.

This wasn't permanent, of course – Usopp was just filling in until he worked things out. (Sanji tried not to think too hard about what he even meant by 'worked things out.' If he did, he might start defining it as 'got used to maneuvering his kitchen at this size.')

The table was really starting to heave, dinner having gotten to the stage where Luffy got creative and everybody had to resort to outright violence to save their food. Sanji started to scarf down his own meal, even though there was pretty much no danger of it getting stolen, and choked on the new texture of rice – or maybe it was the old texture, just magnified in a way that was too alien for him to recognize, like he had just stuffed an entire potato in his mouth but without the flavor. The bean he had to break apart by hand before swallowing the crumbly chunks one by one, and the water he figured out he could scoop in his hands like a particularly viscous bubble (thank god, because otherwise he would have to lap it up like a dog or something) and he pressed it to his lips.

The entire drop seemed to suck itself inside him like an eager parasite and, completely unprepared for water this lively, Sanji breathed instead of swallowed.

It burned. His lungs felt like they were swelling. He opened his mouth but nothing was going in or out and he fell over and writhed, hands clutching at his throat, and goddammit he was going to drown, he was drowning above water shit goddammit please someone notice, he didn't want to die alone, like he almost did when he was ten, and he absolutely didn't want to die a stupid death like this.

Something slammed down on top of him, and then the world gave a dizzying lurch and his vision blurred but he could feel soft skin pressing all around him. “Som'fin's wrong wif Ffanji!”

“Luffy, I told you, you can't just grab – AAAGH! SANJI'S SUFFOCATING!”

The table clattered, much noisier than he had ever heard before. A torrent of sound. He kept exchanging hands, tumbling into grasps that all felt different and if he concentrated maybe he could recognize them.

“Chopper, Chopper stop freaking out and do something!”

“I-I-I, I don't know, h-he's...he's so small, I can't, I don't.”

“CPR! CPR, right?! We can do CPR!”

“Usopp, don't, you'll break his ribs!”

“Hang on, I'm gonna pound his back!”

“Franky oh my god you're gonna break his spine.”

“Well, girlie, maybe you can suggest something?!”

“I suggest that we shouldn't kill him!”

A different grip, in a sweaty hand that held him upside-down. And then something that felt much
faster than falling, and if he wasn’t already choking for breath that might have stolen it away. The table zoomed close, much too close, head-crushingly close, until it stopped zooming and all the organs in his body felt like they were compressing into his head and he opened his mouth and the goddamn drop of water caught in his throat, pushed its way out, and dripped to the wood below.

He breathed. Coughed. Breathed again. All the blood pooling to his brain pounded in his ears, ready to pop out of every orifice in his head. Zoro relaxed his grip, only slightly.

“There. Better.”

After a few seconds, during which everybody else sounded like they were recovering from asphyxiation as well, the dining room was filled with sounds of multiple people beating Zoro up.

He wanted to sleep in the kitchen. Pretty much everybody else argued against him. “Sleeping here means I don't gotta walk the whole damn way to make breakfast,” he shot back, and Zoro said, “Are you an idiot?” before suddenly succumbing to a mysteriously injured shin. Nami pushed the swordsman aside, gave a weary smile, and said, “Of course.”

Everybody lingered a while longer before leaving, like a lingering end to an awkward dinner party, and only then did Sanji fall back onto the bed Franky had made, closed his eyes, and immediately didn't go to sleep.

They would have to leave. The log pose had already set and they couldn't just stay at some island forever just because of him. Even if they wanted to, it was plain dangerous for a pirate ship to stay docked at one place. They had found nothing, in the end, and he wasn't about to delay their whole journey and shit just for an unfounded hope. Which meant he would...that he...it meant...well... He would have to get used to this.

The darkness of the kitchen created unfamiliar shadows out of painfully familiar things. Whatever Franky had used for the bedding, it was made of bristles that bent oddly against his back, and though he could imagine the material feeling soft under different circumstances, he knew he would get up in the morning with a meaningless pattern imprinted on his body.

He would have to get used to this, too. To textures being coarser. To never wearing any proper clothes. To barely making out objects on the other side of a room because they were just so damn far, to being carried distances that would have normally been just a few steps, to being squirreled away, never able to contribute again, relegated to just a passenger, to looking up, looking up, always looking up.

And wasn't it maddening? Wasn't this utterly insane? For the universe to expect him to put up with this and stay on the right side of hinged. But that's just what he was planning on. He was just as crazy as the universe.

The kitchen door slid open. He could see moonlight sneaking in, and he tried to remember who was on watch but his brain skidded to a halt because no, no. He wouldn't, would he? When Sanji was in a situation like this?

But he would, he absolutely would. Luffy would totally try to sneak food out, even with all the shitty things his poor, cosmic punchline of a cook was going through already.

Sanji hopped out of bed and jogged towards the fridge, arriving at the same time as Luffy, who, he had to admit, got points for actual goddamn stealth, actually crawling around and shit. But considering that his method of cracking the fridge was still just gnawing at the handle for a bit and
then staring longingly at the keypad for the rest of the night, Luffy would probably never get any
closer to actually achieving a midnight snack.

Sanji rested a hand against the side of the fridge, leaned out over the edge of the counter as far as he
could, and said, “What the hell d'ya think you're doing, huh?”

Luffy jumped, his head whirling around until he actually caught sight of Sanji, and he set his chin on
top of the counter and stared at him balefully.

“Saaaanjiiiii...I wanna snaaaack...”

“Go back to sleep and wait for breakfast.”

“C'moooooon...just tell me how to unlock it? You don't have t' do anything, I'll just help myself!”

“That's the worse case scenario,” Sanji gritted out, grinding his foot against Luffy's cheek like he
was violently grinding out the persistent embers of a cigarette. Luffy pouted, moaned, sighed, drifted
bonelessly to the floor and moaned again, as if he couldn't just force the code out of Sanji by simply
grabbing hold of him and squeezing. But tantrums didn't work against Sanji either and Luffy
eventually pulled himself to his feet and started dragging his way out of the kitchen.

“Stupid mean Sanji...c'mon, let's go...”

Sanji squinted. “Go where?”

“Sleep, duh,” said Luffy, and without warning, scooped Sanji up in a light fist and headed for the
door. It took a moment, mostly because Luffy was as careful carrying him as he was carrying most
things, and Sanji had a hard time keeping up with everything when everything kept swinging back
and forth, but he eventually pounded against a finger and kicked hard enough to grab Luffy's
attention once again.

“My bed's over there!” he shouted, pointing back at the kitchen counter, and he had to understand
that much, right? But Luffy just rubbed his eyes and snorted and gestured his hand all around (with
Sanji still in it that bastard) and said, “You weren't sleeping anyways. You shouldn't sleep where
you eat, y'know.”

Said the guy who ate where he slept, but Sanji was a little too dizzy to properly say this out loud. He
tried expressing himself by kicking harder. Luffy didn't notice.

“I know you weren't sleeping, 'cause I was real careful sneaking in, you totally wouldn't've caught
me if you were sleeping. Y'know, if you're lonely, you should just say so.”

That was enough of a non sequitur for Sanji to pause in his struggles. Luffy was decent enough to
hold him up face to face with minimal swinging.

“Sometimes you're really stupid, Sanji.”

And with that, Luffy grabbed the side of his bunk, pulled himself up, curled around Sanji like he was
a goddamn teddy bear, and started snoring.

He was completely and utterly pinned. Luffy had him cornered in the crook of his arm and his torso
loomed overhead like a crashing blimp that occasionally pressed against him with each soft inhale.
Whenever Sanji tried to extract himself, Luffy would just pull him closer until he was practically
enveloped on all sides by his captain, like a prisoner in a living prison.
It was warm. It was soft, because despite everything Luffy wasn't made of muscle. A slow, calming beat thrummed into Sanji's back in time with the in and out of Luffy's breaths, both combining in an odd sort of massage, and this was just not fair, being held hostage by a giant with the only escape being an impossibly long fall and dammit Luffy, shitty goddamn asshole with a rubber ball for a brain, and Sanji buried his face in Luffy's skin and made a sound that could only be called a squeak.

Sanji drifted to sleep, the rhythm of his captain's life a comforting lullaby he just could not resist.
“And he’s off!”

Sanji hefted the first egg and ran straight into the pan, and again, until he could feel the cracks spread on the other side and then, hopping onto the pan, balancing on strips of oven mitts, he kneed it open and let it drip out on the sizzling oil.

The background of running commentary continued on: “He runs back for two, no three, four, five, this is amazing folks, he’s going for a whole six eggs at once! Watch those shells fly! Now for the spatula lift...”

The spatula was like a log, but he lifted it up like he was planting a tree and skittered back to the pan. The head of the spatula fell forward and he let it pull him up to the edge of the pan again. The eggs all mingled together like a soup with yellow zits, and he hefted the spatula under his arms and made a quick stab under the mass of eggs and flipped.

“A beautiful landing folks, never seen one like it, he’s lapping the pan, trying for an even sear, and here comes the dismount, right in the middle of the plate! But he’s still got dozens of eggs to go – “

“Usopp,” Sanji called out as he attempted to cradle two eggs at once. “Shut the hell up.”

“It’s going to get real cold tonight, just so everybody knows,” Nami said over breakfast.

“I shall remember to bring a blanket when I take watch, then.”

“...Do skelebros even feel cold...?”

“You are the last person in the world who should ask that,” Sanji groaned out as he lay face down on the table. Usopp was pressing a pinky lightly on his back and rubbing it in tiny circles as he ate. As much as Sanji refused to step down as the cook, every meal had certainly turned into a workout.

Usopp’s pinky managed to squeeze into the space between his shoulder blades and carefully unwound the knot in his spine. “Y’know, I could cook. Instead of just moving stuff around for you.”

Sanji raised a limp arm. “Argue later. Massage now.”

Chopper looked up from his plate. “Won’t you be cold, Sanji? Maybe we should make you a coat.”

“Out of what, a glove?” Sanji snorted, but Franky was getting a thoughtful glint in his eye, which could somehow be seen from behind his sunglasses. Franky was the one who kept making Sanji’s new wardrobe with a surprising dexterity, but there had been certain artistic differences between the two, mostly around the lack of pants. They had compromised with long skirts, which had the bonus of being significantly easier to sow. But they were often made of scraps of Sanji’s old shirts, which though admittedly useless at his size, still had sentimental value and it absolutely hurt to see them in pieces. Sanji tried to save his gloves. “I could just warm up by curling up in someone’s hands.”

He waggled his eyebrows at Nami, but she was reading the newspaper. Usopp noticed this and pinned Sanji down with his whole hand. “Massage over. C’mon and eat already.”
The temperature dropped, as Nami had predicted, and the only reason Sanji knew this was because Usopp started hogging the blankets, leaving him completely uncovered.

That wasn’t the actual reason Sanji woke up; he didn’t really feel that cold in the first place. The real reason was that it felt like his pajamas were strangling him, and as he ripped off his shirt, he couldn’t help but notice that his pants were looking more like shorts.

The walls of the bed were leaning in now, the fabric under his hands contracting, the ceiling approaching, and Sanji kicked off his pants before they could rip and jumped out of Usopp’s bed as soon as he reached the one foot mark. It was hard to walk while the floor felt like it was moving, but he tottered his way to his locker and pulled on loose-fitting clothes that got more snug with every passing second (thank god he kept them intact) and only when he grew back every single inch, he bellowed out, “I'M BACK!” and possibly woke up everybody in a twelve mile radius.

It was shit o’clock in the morning, not even light out, but Sanji ran right to the kitchen and ran his hands over all the normal-sized handles, normal-sized pots, normal-sized utensils. He could hear everybody talking, chattering meaninglessly behind, not sitting at the table but leaning against the bar, as close to the kitchen as they dared.

He was gonna make a cake. He was gonna grill meat. He was gonna make every damn thing in the book. But as the stove warmed up, as he stood over it, he suddenly felt a downward jolt.

“Sanji?” Chopper yelped as he flicked off the stove and ran out the door back into the night air.

Sanji felt himself shoot back up those few inches and he turned to the others; they piled up in the doorway, shivering in the cold.

“It’s not over,” he said.

It was weird, telescoping in and out as Chopper modulated the temperature in the infirmary. Like he was falling slowly, down and up and down and up again.

“And you don’t feel warmer or colder?” Chopper asked. “That’s weird...it’s almost like your body’s way of regulating its own temperature just completely changed.”

Sanji was no doctor, but he could put two and two together. “So it’s like when water freezes, it expands.”

“No. It’s nothing like that.”

“Like the water in my body lowered its freezing temperature?”

“That’s not how bodies work.”

Though really, an explanation wouldn’t change the fact that at room temperature, Sanji was three inches tall.

“I could install a fridge in your stomach,” Franky said. Sanji carefully tried not to look absolutely
horrified.

“If it fails and he shrinks, it wouldn’t shrink with him. He would rupture from the inside.”

Sanji looked horrified.

Luffy leaned into him and wrapped an arm around his shoulders. “Well, whatever! All we gotta do is just go to cold places!”

“Easier said than done, captain,” and Nami sighed, though fondly.

Sanji shoved Luffy off before his body heat could suck away any of his inches. “We can still have a party, though. As long as nobody minds cold dishes.”

“But,” Usopp said, and he pressed his lips together for a moment. “You’re still...”

Sanji smiled, genuinely. “At least now we know how it works. That’s still a reason to celebrate, isn’t it?”

The party was mostly salads and wraps, much to Luffy’s disappointment, but it was still as lively a party as ever, especially when the snow started. As the snow piled on the deck, Sanji found himself running around and pelting the others (mostly Zoro) with snowballs, rolling around even as his dress shirt got damp and hung sadly from his frame.

Chopper was the only other one without winter gear – even Luffy had to go back in and grab a coat after a while – and the two of them became the target of a concerted effort to cover them in snow and possibly make them feel as cold as everybody else. As Sanji dug his way out of a pile, Brook said aloud, “I wonder if Sanji-san could turn into a giant if it is cold enough?”

He pulled a face. “Please don’t say that.”

“But that’d be so cool! You gotta turn into a giant, Sanji!”

“My clothes’ll rip off!”

Usopp made a choking sort of sound and then slammed a hand across his mouth and turned around.

“Are you laughing? Again?” Sanji demanded, but Usopp shook his head, hair bobbing wildly. Sanji marched up to him, taking the time to revel in the full length of his legs, and spun Usopp around.

He really didn’t look like he was holding in laughter, more like he was holding something far more embarrassing in, eyes crinkled up with heat instead of mirth, and when Sanji said, “What?” Usopp said, “I just imagined you naked I’m sorry.”

Sanji flushed hard enough for the both of them, perhaps for the entire crew combined. Except for Chopper, who said, “I’ve seen him naked, it’s not a big deal.”

Sanji opened his mouth to say something but screamed instead and then threw a snowball right at Chopper’s face.
“And he’s off!”

Sanji bolted out of the freezer with all of his inches intact and scrambled for the prepared ingredients, a blur of knives and slicing and pans and stirring and flipping and who even knew what else, and before Usopp could even get a word in, he was done.

Usopp’s face fell. “C’mon, I didn’t even get to commentate anything!”

“How about, ‘now we’ll wait an hour for the soup to finish before adding in salt?’” Sanji held onto his pants, which were already pooling around his bare feet. He hopped up to sit on the counter while he was still able to and dug around in his pockets for his three-inch clothes. Everything shifted around him. Usopp’s voice sounded like it was getting deeper and further away.

Usopp looked away as Sanji retreated into his suit putting a hand up to cover his peripheral. “Maybe I’ll time you.”

“Cooking shouldn’t be rushed.”

Somehow, Usopp managed to give Sanji a Look without actually looking at him.

“Except in very extenuating circumstances. Now pick me up.”

Usopp lowered his hand, palm flat, and Sanji set his feet into the plush skin. It curled underneath him and he plopped down, using the thumb as an armrest. “Don’t forget my clothes,” Sanji added.

“I’m not your slave,” Usopp grumbled, but he gathered up the suit anyways. “You could’ve run to your locker yourself instead of just sitting there.”

“I like being carried.”

“I’ll drop you,” though Usopp chuckled as he said it, bouncing Sanji a little in his hand. He cut off his own laugh and walked quietly for a moment before adding, “I wish we could do something for you.”

Sanji looked down at his long strides and then pointedly nestled further into Usopp’s hand. “You’re doing more than enough.”

“No, I mean,” Usopp waved the hand holding his clothes around, “like, what if we could make the whole ship cold? Like if Nami could make it winter all the time somehow, or Franky could somehow make some sort of machine. Or...”

“I don’t want to make everybody else cold just so I can be tall.”

“But – “

“I’ll adapt,” Sanji said, patting Usopp’s thumb tenderly, then a little harder in case he didn’t feel it. “Besides,” he added with a grin, “there’s plenty of advantages to being small.”

Usopp glanced quizzically at him, then slowly fell into exasperation. “Sanji.”

Sanji’s face fell as well. “I was talking about using up less food!”

“Mm-hm.”

“No, seriously!”
“Alright.”

“Oh fuck you.”

“That might be impossible.”

“Stop.”

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