A Summoner’s Worst Nightmare

by kickassanakin

Summary

Law summons a demon to help him take down a crime lord.

It all goes downhill from there.

Notes

YO!!! this is my entry for the lawlu big bang! i’ve been working on this for a long time and i’m super excited to start putting out chapters! i’ll be uploading them weekly, so every late monday/early tuesday there should be a new chapter up!

i’d like to point you all to the FANTASTIC art provided by skartlie!! check it out here: https://skartlie.tumblr.com/post/183240587500/
Monkey D. Luffy was going to be the Demon King. For as long as he could remember, that had been his goal – to gather a crew of powerful demons like himself and reach the top of the ladder.

Not for power, of course. Who cares about that? He’s got plenty already. No, Luffy wanted to be free. Free to do as he pleased. Free to explore the human world as much as he wanted, without making deals.

Demons weren’t usually allowed to visit the human world without a human tethering them down. But there were a few who did it anyways. Whitebeard, Big Mom, Kaido, and Shanks – otherwise known as the four demon emperors. They roamed the other world freely, interacting with humans as often as they wanted.

Luffy wanted that. He wanted to explore the human’s world more than anything.

But to do that, he had to make contracts. The contracts themselves weren’t so bad, but it always felt like he had been chained to the human who made the contract with him. Like he was some sort of dog doing its master’s bidding.

Luffy hated that more than anything. He didn’t care about the payment at the end.

So he was a bit unconventional. That wasn’t his fault.

Aside from being commanded around like a dog, making deals was fun. Seeing what people wanted was interesting, and humans never stopped wanting things. Plus, making deals with them was like going on an adventure.

Sometimes he was summoned by people who wanted boring things, like money or power or whatever, and those people he refused to deal with. They usually weren’t smart enough to trap him during the summoning.

But there were times that he got summoned by people who had dreams.

Trafalgar Law had dreams. He had summoned Luffy into maybe one of the shittiest human homes the demon had ever seen, but his gaze was sharp, and his words were fierce. Luffy immediately had found himself drawn to this human, despite being trapped like a bug within the summoning circle.

“I’m going to take down Donquixote Doflamingo,” the human had said, as if he expected Luffy to know who that was.

So maybe Luffy thought it was a little funny when the human had to backtrack and explain who, exactly, that was. Some underground crime lord? Whatever. He was just a human.

Luffy didn’t care too much about the why, just that it had a lot of adventure potential. And he was going to get a good meal out of it, too. Law had promised a full meal once the contract was fulfilled, and also everything in his fridge.

The human had definitely done his research, much to Luffy’s disappointment, but at least he had an interesting dream. Luffy didn’t mind helping him reach it. Even if he was going to be held on a leash the whole time.

There was something about Law that Luffy immediately liked. Maybe it was his weird sad scowl, or
the way it looked like he hadn’t slept in three weeks.

Whatever it was, Luffy was pretty glad he’d made a deal with this human.

“Your fridge sucks,” he said through a mouth full of baloney. “What’s up with that?”

“I spent most of my money on getting the necessary items to summon you,” Law said drily, “Apologies for not stocking my fridge to your needs.”

“Apology accepted.” Luffy cleaned out the rest of the fridge and began to wander the small apartment. “So, you want me to find this Mingo guy and kick his ass?”

“What?” Torao looked genuinely perplexed, “No, I have a plan.”

“What do you need a plan for?” Luffy frowned. “If you know where he is, just tell me. I’ll go beat him up.”

“Beating him up won’t stop him.” Torao said sharply.

“Okay,” Luffy shrugged, “Then I’ll kill him.” He didn’t really see the big deal. “Whatever you want, I’ll do it.”

Law pinched his brow. “No, no – you can’t just kill him. That won’t fix it.” He shook his head. “He’s the most dangerous man in the city, at the least, and he’s got failsafe upon failsafe to make sure no punk kid can take him out. We need a plan.”

“Fine, fine, we’ll do it your way.” Luffy eyed Law’s ratty couch. Oh, he liked the look of that. He stretched himself over to the couch and splayed out across it. Yeah, that couch was lived-in. Definitely a good place for a nap. He closed his eyes and waited for Law to keep talking.

… When Law did not keep talking, Luffy opened up one eye to give him a look.

Law had his mouth hanging open in shock. “What?”

The human quickly shook himself and cleared his throat. “I was… not expecting to see you move like that.”

“Oh, like this?” Luffy intertwined his fingers and stretched, making a criss-crossed net. “I’m a rubber demon. I stretch.” He unlaced his fingers and rested back on the couch.

Torao pursed his lips. “What else can you do?”

Luffy shrugged. “I can fight.”

“And?”

“What else is there?” Really, this Law guy thought too much. “If you need to beat someone up, that’s what I do.”

That wasn’t what he wanted to hear. The human let out a sharp bark of a laugh. “Great. So you’re not much help, then.”

Ouch. “I have friends who do the other stuff. We work together.” After all, he couldn’t be the demon king without his own entourage.

“But I only have you.” Law shot him a withering look. “Or are you going to call up your friends,
“Duh.” Luffy rolled his eyes. “I can’t leave them out of a job like this.”

“What about your brothers?” The human perked up. “You mentioned them when I first summoned you. What can they do?”

Luffy laughed. “Ace and Sabo are super strong, and super smart! But they make their own contracts.” They’d be jealous that he got such a fun deal, though. Ace worked for Whitebeard, one of the demon emperors, and Sabo… well, Luffy didn’t really know what Sabo did. But he definitely made deals once in a while. “I should probably call my friends now. It’s almost time for lunch.”

“You just ate everything in my fridge.” Law sounded as if that was some sort of ridiculous concept.

“You had like three packs of sandwich meat and a bottle of ranch. Sanji’s gonna bring lunch boxes.” Luffy’s mouth watered at the concept. “He’ll probably freak out when he sees your kitchen.”

“What kind of friends are these people, anyways?”

Luffy smiled. “They’re the best! You’ll like them.” He pulled out his den-den mushi and dialed Zoro’s number.

Law looked on in fascination. Had he never seen a den-den mushi before? Well, Luffy had no time to wonder. Zoro’s voice crackled on the other end – reception wasn’t so great up in the human world. “How’d it go?” He asked gruffly.

“Great! He wants to plan something though.” Luffy scratched his head under his hat, right at the base of his small horns. “So I guess he wants to meet you guys now.”

“Sounds smart.” Zoro didn’t say it in a way that sounded like a compliment. “Smart humans are dangerous.”

Luffy snorted. “If he tries anything, I’ll just eat him. Now come on, I’m hungry!”

“Tell Sanji that, idiot!” Zoro snapped. “We’ll be right there.” He hung up with a sharp click.

Luffy smiled back at Law. “That was Zoro. You’ll like him.”

Law was already regretting this contract and it hadn’t even been in effect for longer than an hour. Luffy was a whirlwind of dumb questions and even dumber comments, and when he had decided to drink the bottle of ranch instead of – oh, any kind of actual liquid – he didn’t even bother setting a coaster on the coffee table before setting it down and propping his legs up on it.

Oh, yeah, and he put his feet on Law’s coffee table. Disgusting.

Luffy looked at him curiously. “Don’t worry, Torao,” he smiled the too-wide smile again, “Zoro and everyone else should be here soon.”

“My name is Trafalgar Law,” Law corrected stiffly, “not Torao.”

Luffy shrugged. “I’m calling you Torao.”

“Please don’t.”

The demon chuckled. “Shoulda said so when we made the contract!”
Was that a migraine on the horizon? It certainly felt like one.

Before Law could say anything else, there was a knock at the door.

Before Law could go answer it, it was kicked open by a mean-looking demon with funky eyebrows. Well, a funky eyebrow. He could really only see the one – the other was covered by his bangs. What really took Law by surprise were the sharp black horns that sprouted just a little higher than that. They curled up over his head and pointed up at the ends. Other than that, his skin was a strange golden color – and for a moment, as he stepped over the threshold, it looked like he was covered in scales. Behind him entered a man who was relatively plain-looking… aside from the red eyes. And… was his skin actually a dark green color? The more Law looked at the second entrant, the less he was sure of his initial description.

“Sanji! Usopp!” Luffy exclaimed as he leapt off the couch. “Did’ya bring food?”

“Shut up!” The demon with weird eyebrows – Sanji, presumably – snapped. When he did, a puff of smoke slipped out alongside his words. “Did you thank your host for letting you eat his entire fridge?”

Luffy paused, then looked back at Law.

“Torao, I—“

Law waved a tired hand. “Yeah. Don’t worry about it.”

Luffy looked back to Sanji with stars in his eyes. “Done.”

Sanji handed him a large box of… something… that looked filled to bursting. “Don’t make a mess.”

“You know better than to tell me that!” Luffy laughed as he opened the box and sloppily yanked out a giant hunk of meat. He had barely taken a single bite before Law felt the itch to rub everything in his home down with wet wipes.

Only after that disgusting display did Sanji bother to look at Law. “Hey,” he said, “I’m Sanji. Nice to meet you.” He stuck out a hand in greeting.

Law inspected the hand casually as he reached his own out to shake. This new demon’s hands were more… normal, he guessed? At least, they didn’t have the same rubbery feeling that Luffy’s did. He did have slick black claws though, which Law was careful to avoid. Sanji grinned, showing off razor-sharp teeth.

“I’m Usopp!” The dark green man behind Sanji stepped between them and stuck out his hand. “I guess you could call me the brains of this operation.”

Law grabbed his hand firmly, but quickly had to steel his expression into something neutral, because Usopp’s hand had a bizarre texture. On the spot, it made him think of some kind of leaf-like texture. Usopp saw his expression and grinned sheepishly. Despite being a slightly lighter shade of green than his skin, his teeth were just as sharp as Sanji’s. “I’m smarter than your average potted plant, that’s for sure.”

“It’s… nice to meet you.” Law said stiffly. “So, you’re Luffy’s friends?”

Sanji shrugged. “Two of them.”

Law felt his heart sink. There were more?
“Zoro, that’s the wrong door!” A woman’s voice shouted out from down the hall. “Come here, you idiot!”

Upon meeting Sanji, Law had thought the demon was the opposite of Luffy – cool, calm, suave. He quickly learned that wasn’t the case, though.

“Nami, dear!” Sanji went heart-eyed (not literally, thank god) and darted out of the room. “Is that moss-head bothering you?”

“Her directions are too confusing.” Law recognized that voice from the snail-phone conversation – Zoro?

“I’m literally just pointing down the hallway!” The woman’s voice rose shrilly. “It’s not my fault you can’t walk in a straight line!”

Law didn’t have time to find that exchange funny, because another person appeared in the doorway, and there was no doubt that this one was a demon. It seemed to be made entirely of… rocks? But had a slight dusting of moss at the top, where its head was. The face looked like it had been chiseled by some sort of expert, because it held an annoyed expression perfectly – but there was a gash through half of its face, leaving it with only one rocky eye. The moss on top of its head seemed to dry out and turn brown when it saw Sanji.

“How did you get here first?” It growled – ah, so this was Zoro.

“Easily.” Sanji said simply. “We don’t get lost like you do.” He elbowed Usopp. “Moss-head’s looking a little dry, don’t you think?”

Usopp sighed and waved his hand towards the rock monster’s head. Within seconds, the dying foliage started to regrow.

Zoro shot a glare at Usopp, and the green demon put his hand down. “You know I hate when you do that.”

Usopp shrugged, but when he spoke his voice was shrill. “Just thought I’d do you a little favor! I hate seeing them die, you know that!”

“If you grow flowers on my head again, I will cut you in half.”

The plant demon nodded very quickly. “Got it!”

“I don’t know, I think he looks cute with daisies for hair.” Another demon spoke as she entered the room. Law realized he was going to need a bigger apartment if Luffy had invited any more friends to the party.

This demon looked… the most like a human. She had bright orange hair and a smile with two small fangs, but other than that, she looked pretty normal.

Well, she seemed to flicker a bit as she entered the room. So maybe not. Law really needed to stop making snap judgements on these guys. She walked up to Sanji and glared at him. The air around her seemed to pick up just a little bit, despite there being no windows open or any breeze to speak of. “You left me with Zoro duty.”

“I know, and I am so sorry.” Sanji sounded genuinely apologetic, which kind of surprised Law. “Luffy was hungry, and I couldn’t risk him making a scene. You know how he gets.”
Uh, no, Law didn’t know how it got. And now he was worried. If other demons didn’t want to risk Luffy “making a scene” when he got hungry…

Sanji turned to Law and smiled disarmingly. “Oh, you don’t have to be worried. I’m here now.”

That did absolutely nothing to stop Law from feeling worried. In fact, it somehow made him feel much worse.

She turned to Usopp. “What do you have to say?”

He shook his head with a nervous smile. “I am not getting involved in this!”

She glared at him, but not as hotly as Zoro had. She sighed and smiled just a little. “Because I like you so much, you only have to pay half as much as Sanji.”

Usopp laughed, the nervousness suddenly gone. “Yeah, sounds good to me.”

The girl demon stopped her conversation with Usopp and eyed Law over. “Hm. Not much to write home about.” She flipped her hair and walked over to him. As she got closer, he got a better look at her, and realized that it almost looked like she was… some sort of image projected onto a cloud. Or something. It looked like the next gust of air might blow her away – except that somehow, she seemed to be in control of the air itself. She stuck her hand out to shake. “I’m Nami. The only sane one in this group.” She flipped her hair back over her shoulder again. “I take it you’re the Law I’ve heard so much about?”

Law reached out to shake her hand, not sure if he would go right through her. To his surprise, he touched a solid hand – but upon touching said hand, he felt a shock of electricity zap through his body. He quickly let go of her hand, and she grinned. “Nice to meet you.”

“Uh.” Was all he could say in response. “Is this all of you?”

Sanji laughed. “Oh, no, there’s a few more of us. But we figured you could only handle so many demons at once.”

Zoro raised a rocky brow. “I bet he could handle it.”

Nami swatted him on the top of the head. “You’re a freak of nature. He needs to adjust.”

“So, Torao here wants to take down some crime lord or something.” Luffy started talking. “What’s his name again? Mingo?”

It took Law a moment to find his words. “Yes. Donquixote Doflamingo.”

“Yeah, that guy.”


The other demons snickered at this. Law couldn’t really tell if Usopp was joking or not. “Well… I don’t need an army. I just need someone competent to help me take this guy down.”

Sanji nodded thoughtfully. “Doflamingo… I haven’t heard much about him. Why do you want to take him out?”

Law found he could only stare blankly at Sanji for a moment. “Because… he’s… a crime lord.”
The demon just shrugged, apparently not satisfied with that answer. “Eh, I guess it’s not my job to question these things. What’s your plan?”

“I said I’d kill him, but Torao doesn’t want me to.” Luffy crossed his arms over his chest. “Apparently we have to do this the human way.”

“So then why did you summon a demon to do a human’s work?” Zoro rolled his eye. “And I thought you were smart.”

“I need all the help I can get.” Law said stiffly.

“So then why not call up your friends?” Nami suggested. “Surely you have those?”

Law glared at her. “I don’t want to involve my friends in something as dangerous as this.” Plus… sure, he had friends: people he’d met in college, coworkers, stuff like that. But He’d lived his whole life trying to keep from making any strong attachments to other people. He’d go out for drinks with some friendly students after school, but he wouldn’t invite them over to his shitty apartment and share his tragic backstory.

So… maybe he didn’t have friends. At least, not ones that would help him take down a crime lord. Certainly not ones that would summon demons with him. If he’d mentioned that to Shachi or Penguin, they’d probably just take him to the hospital for a broken brain.

“Okay, okay, can you just tell us the plan now?” Luffy cut right through Law’s internal tangent. “I’m kinda bored with all this meet and greet stuff.”

Law resisted the urge to run his hand down his face. Maybe this had been more trouble than it was worth.

“Doflamingo runs a crime syndicate based on trafficking various items. He sells weapons, drugs, even people. He supplies some of the worst criminals known to man.” Law plants his fist in his palm. “I want to cut off his trafficking supplies. His employers will castrate him and we won’t take any of the blame.”

“Seems like it would be easier for me to just kick his ass.” Luffy huffed.

Law grit his teeth. “The goal here is to stay as far away from Doflamingo as possible. He’s insanely powerful.”

Zoro snorted. “Sure. But he’s only human.”

“I wouldn’t underestimate him. He’s been the undefeated king of the underworld for as long as anyone can remember. He practically owns the city.” Law faced Zoro with a steely gaze. “He’s dangerous.”

Nami cleared her throat. “What supply are you planning on cutting off?”

“Preferably the humans. That’s his biggest business, and his employer is even more dangerous than him. We’d be taking out two birds with one stone.” Law felt himself slipping into planning mode – meeting all these people who were very much not human had definitely taken a toll on his mental facilities, and retreating into a cold, calculating mindset would help him relax. “As long as we can take out his human trafficking route, we’ll be set.”

Usopp snorted. “Do you have any idea how to do that?”
Law nodded. “I know where Doflamingo finds his stock. He’s a scientist named Caesar Clown. Caesar keeps to himself a lot, but has a huge compound far away from the city. I know he and Doflamingo are working together, and I recently learned that that’s where Doflamingo gets his human supply from.”

“So we kill Caesar?” Luffy asked hopefully.

“… No. We kidnap him.” Law narrowed his eyes. “What is with you and killing?”

“We’re demons. It’s in our nature.” Zoro answered for him.

“Not true! I have no interest in killing people!” Nami reprimanded the stone man. “I’ve got more important things to do.”

“Yeah, stealing from them,” Zoro raised a brow as he turned back to Law. “Point is, we like the simplest solution.” He grinned. “And usually the solution with the most danger.”

“Well, the simplest solution here will get me killed.” Law responded irritably. “I have a plan. Just follow it.”

“I like the least dangerous solutions.” Usopp pointed out unhelpfully. “You got one of those?”

“I already made the deal with him, so let’s just do what he says.” Luffy shrugged, interrupting the argument. “Means we get to spend more time up here anyways!”

Zoro nodded silently, conceding to Luffy’s opinion.

For just a moment, Law wondered why that was. Zoro was such a larger demon, and probably much more powerful. If all Luffy could do was stretch, it didn’t seem like he could beat this rock monster in a fight. But Zoro listened to his word as if it were gospel.

“How do you plan on getting close enough to this Clown guy to kidnap him?” Sanji asked, packing up the empty lunchbox Luffy left on the coffee table. “Seems he’s pretty hard to get to.”

“Not for me.” Law smiled smugly. Finally, something was going the right way. “I managed to squeeze my way into his workplace as a medical assistant. For all intents and purposes, he’s a great doctor. But he doesn’t have time to do every procedure with his own hands.”

“Meaning…” Luffy tilted his head, a little confused-looking. Law avoided thinking about how it almost made him look like some kind of puppy.

“Meaning that five nights of the week, I have access to Caesar’s labs, where I’m supposed to be operating on people.”

Law didn’t actually have a medical license. If anyone found out about their arrangement, Caesar would be arrested, and Law would be blacklisted. While it was one way of solving the problem… it would be too easy for Doflamingo to access Caesar even in prison, while Law would never be able to become a doctor.

But he was a brilliant surgeon, and Caesar knew that.

He had sought Caesar out himself and demonstrated his skill. Within the week, he was helping the scientist with his research by sitting in on procedures and learning what Caesar wanted him to do. He was soon promoted to the status of “lead researcher”, which basically meant that he was allowed to do the procedures while Caesar watched and took his own notes. What he was researching, Law
wasn’t entirely sure. He didn’t think it had anything to do with Doflamingo though, so he didn’t mind the unethical consequences of these procedures too much. They weren’t very invasive, usually just a peek into the chest cavity, but Law never noticed anything wrong or out of the ordinary. Caesar was the one who knew what he was looking for.

But he was sometimes asked to do other things. Give test subjects certain drugs and watch how they react. Study different blood samples. Check genealogy reports. Some of these duties he was tasked with seemed relatively normal for a human trafficking business, but some parts of it were… odd.

Unfortunately, Law didn’t have much room to question. He needed to be able to access the facility. If he stained his soul black while doing it, well. Maybe it’d be a nice garnish for the demon that was going to eat it.

*If* Luffy was going to eat his soul, anyways. The demon had just said “You owe me a meal,” but did he mean some sort of dinner date or did he mean Law’s soul served up on a platter?

“So are the rest of us just allowed to waltz right on in, or…” Nami waved her hand in front of Law’s face, breaking his spell. “You have a way in. The rest of us might get noticed.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll be able to sneak you in.” Law said, trying to sound as confident as possible. He hadn’t thought out that part of it, but he’d come up with something.

Luffy nodded excitedly. “Okay, when are we doing this?”

Law bit his lip. This was really happening. “Tomorrow night. I need to get everything ready.”

He was really going to do this. Finally, after so many years, he was going to get his revenge. And his chances of success rested entirely on the shoulders of this cute, cheeky rubber demon.

… Let’s face it. He was going to die.
Chapter 2

Caesar Clown’s research facility was… gigantic, to say the least. Imposing, maybe. Threatening, definitely. But it was where Law worked most nights, whether he liked it or not.

“Are we in yet?” Luffy hissed from behind.

“Shut up.” Law hissed back as he shoved the demon down in the back seat. They were packed into his car – a minivan, emphasis on the “mini”. Sanji had complained the whole ride over that Zoro’s various body parts were up in his business.

Law pulled into the front gate at Caesar’s facility and rolled down his window. He nodded at the guard.

The guard, a burly fellow with a thick red beard, eyed him over suspiciously. “Where’s the usual ride?”

“In the shop,” Law said gruffly, “Don’t ask.”

The guard narrowed his eyes for a moment, then shrugged. “Shit happens. Go on in.” He opened the gate and let Law through.

“That was anticlimactic.” Sanji said.

“That was the easiest part of this whole mission.” Law clenched the steering wheel tighter. “Once I leave, you will have to find out where he is and grab him on your own. I’ve given you a map of the place, so don’t get lost.”

“Have we got the leash for Zoro?” Sanji snickered.

“Shut it, curly-brow.” Zoro snapped. “It wasn’t funny a thousand years ago, and it isn’t funny now.”

“It is a little funny.” Luffy said helpfully.

Zoro growled, but nobody took him seriously.

Law pulled into the building with no more drama. Caesar was a terrible man conducting all kinds of experiments on human beings, but he was considerate enough to have a small parking structure under his lab for his many employees. Law found a parking spot near the entrance, which was going to be useful for their quick escape. He figured this was probably going to be his last night on the job.

As he pulled into the parking spot, Nami spoke up. “You can take my den-den mushi while we’re separated. That way we can keep in touch.”

Law frowned. "Your... what?"
Nami rolled her eyes. "Den-den mushi. Transponder snail. Very useful communication device." She pulled a small snail out of her pocket. It looked almost exactly the same as the thing Luffy had used to call his friends over, but it looked more like Nami? What the hell were these things?

He ran a tired hand through his hair. "Why don’t you guys just have cell phones?"

"Why don’t you just have den-den mushis?" Nami smirked. "I’ll give it to you, but if it’s in any way damaged by the time we meet up again, you owe me." She placed the little snail in his hand and smiled sweetly. "Take good care of him, won’t you?"

Law swallowed. "Yeah. Fine." He stuck the little snail thing in his messenger bag and slung it (carefully) over his shoulder. "Let me know when he’s in your possession."

Luffy nodded and pumped a fist in the air. "Okay, gang! Let’s go kidnap the Clown man!"

"Could you be any louder?" Sanji snapped.

"Yeah, a lot." Usopp grinned. "You’ve heard him before, right?"

Zoro chuckled as Sanji ran a clawed hand down his face. A wisp of smoke trailed from the corner of his lips. "Let’s just go."

Law wondered just how competent these demons really were. So far, he didn’t have a lot to work with.

"Don’t worry," Zoro fixed him with a knowing look, "We’ve got this."

As he stared at the gaggle of demons before him, he knew he had no choice but to trust them. "Fine. Just..." He paused. It felt like he should say something to them before he left. "If you get caught, don’t incriminate me."

Zoro actually laughed at that. "No promises. Luffy can’t lie to save his life."

The minute they were all out of the car, Luffy disappeared.

Well, to everyone else he just disappeared. Luffy could see himself just fine. But he had a lab to explore, some friends to back him up, and a clown to catch.

Now, there was something weird about this lab. Luffy couldn’t place it exactly, but something was definitely off. The very air around him felt wrong almost, like if he had fur, and someone was petting it the wrong way.

Usopp might have been able to pick up on it, but Luffy had already separated from the group. He knew they’d catch up some way or another. Either Zoro would get lost and stumble right over him, or Sanji would find him.

He had just crawled up into the air ducts that snaked through the entire building when his den-den mushi rang.

"Luffy!" His den-den mushi crackled to life. It was Sanji. "Would you consider not running off like this every time?"

"Nope!" Luffy laughed. "I’m gonna try and find this Clown guy, but I’ve gotta be stealthy."

Usopp’s voice came faintly through the den-den. "Luffy? Stealthy? This whole place is going fall
“I’ll bet you five minutes.” Nami said drily.

“Deal.”

“Come on guys! I’m not that bad. I’m in the air ducts, nobody will know I’m here!” Luffy said loudly.

“Hey, is someone in the air ducts?” There were voices down below, and they clearly heard him.

“Did anyone bet on five seconds?” Zoro said, but Luffy knew he was smiling.

“Looks like I’ve gotta run. I’ll let you know when I’ve found him!” Luffy started off again.

“Not if we find him first!” Zoro challenged. The den-den mushi clicked off and Luffy grinned.

If it was a contest, he was going to win.

Before anyone down below could catch him in the air ducts, he shot off like a rocket. He was pretty small for a demon of his stature, and his powers made it easy for him to slip through tight spaces like it was nothing. He flew through the ducts and into the deepest part of the building. He peeked through the grates from time to time to see what was going on in the various rooms he passed, but there wasn’t anything too interesting. A lot of humans were strapped down in chairs and there were various tubes connected to them, all with strange colored liquids, but it wasn’t clear what was going on. Some sort of experiment, but nothing that piqued Luffy’s interest too much. He kept exploring, though he didn’t notice what a racket he was making. He made a lot of noise in maneuvering through the sharp angles and turns of the ducts, and the guards were never too far behind him.

Around the center of those experiment rooms was when Luffy finally got cornered. Guards were all pointing their guns at the ducts and demanding he come out.

A guard slammed open another hatch in the air duct and climbed in with him. "Stop where you are!" The guard pointed his gun right at Luffy's face. More guards squeezed inside, and it was getting crowded. Luffy could see more guards down below, waiting for him to run for it. He tried to turn around, but could hear the clanking of more guards coming down the other direction, too. He looked right and left, desperate for any kind of opening, when he noticed something strange.

Above him was a small hole, smaller than the rest of the ducts, but still big enough that he could fit through it. It was some other kind of duct that led somewhere else.

With nothing left to lose, Luffy grinned at his would-be captors and slipped away.

He squeezed up into the smaller duct and found himself in a might tighter space, but there was even more to explore now that he was free from his pursuers. He could hear them behind him, all clamoring at the spot he had gotten away, but humans couldn't follow where he had gone.

Unfortunately, the duct didn't open out into a larger space, so he had to awkwardly inch forward to make any headway. His face got stuck on the side of the duct and he had no choice but to scrape it along the metal, since there wasn't any room to adjust his position.

There was a bend in the duct, which was hell on earth to get around, and at that point Luffy decided he was done sneaking around in the vents. Anyways, it would be best to escape the air ducts for a little bit while the guards were still crawling through the more spacious areas like ants. He’d take his chances in open spaces where he could actually attack something if he had to. Without any more thought, he shoved his way over to the closest grate and popped it off before hopping down and
dusting himself off.

“That was a tight fit!” He laughed to himself as he stretched out his limbs.

“... Excuse me?”

Luffy froze. Uh-oh.

He turned his head all the way around to see a very large man sitting at a regular sized desk. He had a sick, thin-lipped smile slashed across his face, and wore a weird jacket with the word “GAS” on both sides.

Luffy pursed his lips. “Are you Caesar Clown?”

The man chuckled. “Yes, of course. And you are?”

Luffy grinned and cracked his knuckles. “I’m Monkey D. Luffy, the man who’s going to be the demon king!”

It took about five minutes for Law to get ready before he went to work. He figured it would take the demons some time to find Caesar in this huge building, so he had to pretend to go about his job as per usual until something changed.

So imagine his surprise when he walked out of the bathroom, clothed in his pastel yellow scrubs, to see the entire place on fire.

Well. Not literally on fire, though it may as well have been. Armed guards were running past him, frantically calling for reinforcements. As he stood there in shock, an alarm started blaring.

What. Had they. Done.

The snail thing (relocated to his pocket) started to ring. Law decided he hated that noise, so he grabbed it and answered it as quickly as possible. He didn’t really know how to answer it though, so he spent a good few seconds figuring out where to poke it to get it to stop making that godawful sound. As soon as it stopped, Law held it up close to his face to hear. “Hello?”

“So, good news and bad news!” Nami greeted. “I borrowed Zoro’s den-den, he wasn’t going to use it. Okay, which one first?”

“I don’t care!” Law hissed. “What the fuck is going on?”

“Okay, good news first. Luffy found Caesar.” Law could hear sounds of gratuitous violence from the other end of the line.

“Let me guess,” Law said drily, “Bad news is that he got caught?”

There was a man’s harsh grunt on the other end of the line, and then a scream. “Bingo,” Nami replied, “Anyways, Luffy’s having a little trouble gathering... all of him.”

That stumped Law for a moment. “All of him? Was I supposed to clarify I didn’t want him to maim the target?” He felt his blood start to boil.

Nami sighed. Law could hear another man scream on the other end of the line. “Well, yes, you should have. But it’s a bit more complicated than that.”
“How?” Law tried not to yell into the little snail. He took a deep breath to calm himself. It didn’t really work. To keep from any more outbursts, he spoke through tightly clenched teeth. “How can it be more complicated than that.”

“We’ll be able to talk more in the van. Just go! We’ll meet you there, be ready to drive.” Law wasn’t able to get another word in before she hung up. And since he had no idea how to actually call anyone on one of these things, he (carefully) shoved it back into his pocket and dashed back to the parking lot.

Pastel yellow scrubs and all.

Law had just started the car when he heard a loud thunk! from the back. He barely had time to turn his head before Nami, Zoro, Sanji, and Usopp piled inside. Nami sighed heavily and wiped her brow. “Thank god that’s over with.”

“Where’s Luffy?” Law asked angrily. “Still gathering up pieces of Caesar?”

“That’s—”

“Start the car, start the car, I see him!” Usopp yelled, interrupting Nami and waving his hands in Law’s face. “He’s got Caesar, let’s go!”

Law peeked around Usopp to see something in the distance of the parking lot that looked a lot like Luffy, if Luffy had shiny pitch-black skin and red eyes. And he was running straight at the car. And he had some kind of giant burlap sack wrapped up in his carapace-like arms.

Law stepped on the gas and shot out of his parking spot. Luffy took a flying leap into the back of the van, the doors held open by Zoro and Sanji. They shut the door the second Luffy tumbled into the van, burlap sack first.

“Phew!” Luffy exhaled in relief. “Great job, team!”

Law spared only a second to turn around to yell at the smaller demon. “What the fuck did you do to him?!”

Luffy looked different from a second ago. His whole body had been covered in that shiny pitch-black substance, but his eyes weren’t red anymore and he was back to normal. Well. As normal as he could be with his arms wrapped around the burlap sack about five times. Luffy just smiled at Law, sharp teeth glinting in the dim lights of the parking lot, and Law felt a weird pit open up in his stomach before he remembered to turn around and watch the road.

“He’s right here!” Luffy said excitedly. “He was a bit hard to wrangle, so I had to tie him up and put him in here.” Law assumed he meant the burlap sack.

“You didn’t… cut off anything?” Law narrowed his eyes as he drove out of the parking lot and rushed towards the front gate. Fortunately, they had managed to drive out when the gate was in the middle of closing after letting another employee through.

Unfortunately, they weren’t completely clear. Law had a second to brace himself for impact before the side of his van hit the edge of the gate, knocking off his side mirror.

But then they were free. Law pressed down hard on the gas and shot away from Caesar’s facility.

A few seconds after clearing the gate, he heard a loud boom. He turned around to see a dark cloud of
smoke form from where the entire building used to be.

“What the fuck happened in five minutes?” Law could tell his voice was going to go hoarse from all this yelling.

“Oops,” Sanji smirked, smoke emitting from his mouth, “Did I do that?”

Okay, so Law had severely underestimated these demons. Maybe he did have a shot at taking down Doflamingo.

Maybe he did have a shot at vengeance for Cora.

“By the way,” Luffy said, “You never told us this Clown guy was a demon!”

What?

Law parked the van in a small alleyway far from his shitty apartment and from Caesar’s ruined facility. He couldn't take any chances on being followed. Best not to let the enemy know where he lives.

As soon as he parked, he turned around in his seat to glare at the burlap sack that had kicked and wiggled and screamed the whole ride. “Caesar Clown.”

The sack stilled. Luffy kicked it. The sack grunted in pain. “How can you touch me?” The muffled voice of Law’s boss confirmed it – the being in the sack was indeed one Caesar Clown.

Law nodded to Luffy. “Let me see him.”

“Are you sure about that?” Nami spoke up. “He's not using his human disguise. He looks…” She looked around the van, then shrugged. “Well, nevermind. You've spent enough time around us.” Luffy opened up the sack and Caesar’s head popped out.

The true form of Caesar Clown was only slightly less appealing than the human one. Behind his usual unkempt black hair were strange horns, his eyes were red, and his teeth were sharp. And based on the size of the bag, he was a few extra feet taller than he used to be. Those were the only differences between the old Caesar and the new.

Law grimaced. “What the hell is going on?”

Caesar all but hissed at him. “Do you know what will happen to you if I tell anyone you're working for me?” He curled his lip into a snarl. “If you release me, I’ll still go easy on you. You still have a shot at being a surgeon.”

“Shut it, old man.” Zoro said lazily, from the corner of the van. It looked to Law like he had just been napping. “If Luffy beat you one-on-one, you have no chance against all of us.” He closed his eyes again after his threat.

This time, Caesar did hiss. “Do you know who I am?”

“I thought I did.” Law said, mustering up every ounce of strength he had to sound like he was calm. “I thought you were a disgusting excuse for a man who experimented on innocent people. Now, you’re still all of that – you’re just not a man. Care to explain?”

The demon pouted. Law had never liked Caesar anyway, but this childishness made him hate the man – err, demon – even more.
“What were you going to do with him after you kidnapped him?” Usopp ventured from his spot next to Zoro. They were pretty damn cramped in that van. Law was starting to regret his initial plan of van interrogation.

“I had just planned on bringing him back to my place and locking him up until the next part of the plan. But it looks like things are going to have to change.” Law said as he looked grimly at Caesar. “This just got a whole lot bigger.”

“I’m not telling you anything!” Caesar hissed.

Luffy rolled his eyes. “You’re not a very good captive, you know.”

Caesar sneered. “Good!”

There was a small commotion from behind Caesar. “Hey, you kicked me!” Sanji snapped at Zoro. Law saw a hint of flame in the golden demon’s mouth.

“Sorry,” Zoro said, not sounding sorry at all, “I was asleep.”

“Oh god. Law was going to get a headache. “All right, everybody out.” A pause. “Not you, Caesar. Or you, Luffy.” Even just those two was bound to keep the headache coming, but at least it wouldn’t be a migraine. “Everyone else out.”

There was a moment of confused silence before the rest of the crew clumsily shuffled out of the van. Nami winked as she closed the door behind her. Law didn’t think too hard about that wink. Didn’t want to.

He started his interrogation as calmly as he could. “Caesar. If you’re a demon, what are you doing here?”

The scientist scoffed. “That didn’t work five minutes ago, and it won’t work now.”

Law looked at Luffy. “Can you make him talk?”

The demon, who looked a little bummed that he hadn’t been asked to go outside with his friends, brightened. “You want me to beat him up?”

Law smiled. “Just enough to get him talking.”

Luffy grinned at that. “Mr. Clown guy is kind of special – he’s like Nami, he doesn’t really have a body. But I’m special, too.” He closed his eyes for one moment, and then something strange happened. That pitch-black substance Law had seen earlier… seemed to spread out from his fingertips until it entirely covered his arms. He opened his eyes, and for a second they were all red.

“What is that?” Law asked, almost irreverent. To say it was the strangest thing he’d ever seen would just not be true, but for some reason it was the most mystifying.

Luffy stretched one arm out towards Law. “It’s just something I learned to do over the years. I dunno how to explain it, but it lets me grab Mr. Clown here, so I think it’s pretty cool.”

Law held Luffy’s outstretched hand carefully and ran his fingers over the demon’s skin. It reminded him of obsidian. It was hard to the touch, yet Luffy seemed to have no problem moving his limbs
“This is amazing.” Law said quietly.

Caesar cleared his throat, taking Law out of his… scientific curiosity.

Right. Interrogation. Well, Law would get to see how Luffy used his power with his own eyes. He sat back and crossed his legs. “Do you know who Doflamingo sells to?”

Caesar laughed. “Why would I tell you?”

Luffy cracked his knuckles. Before Law even had a chance to blink, Caesar cried out in pain. Blood started to gush from his nose. Luffy pulled his arm back and smiled.

“You can keep avoiding the answers, but that’ll just give him an excuse to beat you up.” Law nodded towards Luffy. “That seems to be one of his favorite things.”

Caesar debated with himself for a moment. The blood seeped from his nose to his lip. “I’ll tell you that a big deal is going down next Monday, but that’s all.”

Law felt himself smile. “You don’t seem to realize that you don’t get to decide how much you tell us.” He looked at Luffy, who readied his arm for another blinding-fast punch.

Caesar backed away, the blood dripping further down his face. “Wait! That’s just because I don’t know any more!”

“Sure. Luffy?”

Law didn’t have time to process the speed at which Luffy hit Caesar. He just knew one second the scientist was sitting upright, and the next, he was doubled over in pain. “I mean it, that’s all I know!”

That wasn’t really what Law wanted to hear. “This deal, where is it going down?”

“… Dressrosa.” The answer itself was obvious – Dressrosa was the name of Doflamingo’s nightclub-slash-crime-headquarters – but Law just wanted to needle this guy a little more.

A loud knock at the door interrupted him. Usopp poked his head through, looking panicked. “Uh, I hope you got what you needed. There’s trouble coming!” And as he spoke, the van itself shook with the weight of some thing landing on top of it.

Luffy didn’t waste any time vaulting out of the van to join the fray. Unfortunately, Law didn’t have to wonder what was going on outside for too long, because sharp talons pierced the ceiling of his van and peeled it back. What stared down at him with a sharp, hungry smile was some sort of woman with wings. Had she not looked totally evil, Law might have guessed she was some sort of angel.

There were too many different types of demon, and Law was really going to lose track of them all.

She tucked her wings in and landed in the van. “Trafalgar Law. It’s been a while, hasn’t it?” The twisted smile never left her face.

"Been a while?” She certainly didn't look familiar. As Law wracked his brain to try and remember her, he felt a slight twist in the back of his mind as some part of him almost recognized her, as if this was some kind of deja-vu. But whatever that niggling feeling was, it felt more like the kind of memory one might have from a dream -- ephemeral and impossible to grasp.

“M-Monet!” Caesar cried in relief. “You came to rescue me!”
“Shut up,” Monet whipped her head to glare at him, “I’ll deal with you in a moment.” She turned her attention back to Law. “You’re much too young to be playing this game, Law.”

Law clenched his fists. “You won’t get away with this.” The name ‘Monet’ had sent another spark of recognition through him, but it still wasn’t enough.

“You think you’re the only one who’s made friends with demons? Welcome to the big leagues, kid.” She laughed, grabbed Caesar with one set of talons, and unfurled her wings once more – but something stopped her.

A fist covered in that pitch-black substance stretched out from nowhere and hit her right in the face. She hissed in surprise and let go of Caesar, who was starting to look a lot worse for wear.

“You’re not taking our hostage!” Luffy yelled as he climbed back into the van. “I captured him fair and square!”

Monet quickly got her bearings back and flapped her wings, getting her airborne and just barely clear of the van. “Sorry, kid. You’re centuries too young to take us on.” She laughed, and with her free talon, she grabbed the side of the van and pushed.

Law went tumbling inside the not-so-cramped space, but Luffy grabbed him and yanked him out of the car before he suffered any major damage. He was dumped unceremoniously on the hard cement, but at least he didn’t have any broken bones. Probably. He just got a little up close and personal with the weeds growing in the cracks of the cement, nothing too bad.

… Except the weeds started to move. And grow. Very fast. Within seconds, a giant hand made out of interlocking weeds reached out into the sky and all but plucked Monet right out of it.

Law looked around frantically, trying to figure out just what the fuck was going on, and noticed Usopp with his eyes closed and a concentrated expression on his face.

Was he doing this?

It seemed so. The giant hand slowly pulled Monet back down to the ground, where Sanji, Zoro, and Luffy looked ready to fight. Zoro’s arms were covered in the same shiny substance that covered Luffy’s, but he held a sword in each hand, and one in his mouth. Sanji snorted a little, smoke shooting from his nostrils. He kicked the ground and one of his legs erupted into flames. Nami was a little ways back, closer to Usopp, where she held a dark and puffy cloud between her hands.

Wow, Law had really underestimated these guys. Maybe they were kind of competent after all.

But then a strange whistle pierced the air and Usopp screamed out in pain. Law heard a loud crashing noise – the giant plant arm had been sliced right in half, freeing Monet and Caesar.

Law whipped his head around, desperate to see what had happened… but saw nothing.

Nothing, until something stopped right in front of him. Some one, really.

Something about the man before him also seemed vaguely familiar, like an itch Law couldn’t quite scratch. He was tall, and imposing, and held a bamboo stick that was covered in the same black substance that Luffy and Zoro were covered in, but he was very clearly not on Law’s side.

He had a hamburger patty stuck to his face, but that wasn’t what Law was currently worried about.

“You got the prize, Monet?” He said blithely. “You know he’ll have our heads if we don’t bring it
back."

“I’ve got him. He was about to start squealing, too.” The harpy woman laughed.

The man looked at Law curiously. “Oh, boy.” He grinned, but it was not a nice one. Law couldn’t shake the feeling that he had seen it somewhere before. “Joker’ll love to hear about you.”

Law startled. “Joker?” Doflamingo’s moniker. “He knows about demons?”

The strange man just laughed. “Forget about this, kid. You’re way over your head.” He stepped forward, a threat in his eyes. Luffy moved to protect Law, but before he could reach, the strange man disappeared again.

Law felt searing pain explode up his side.

As pain seared through him, everything around him moved in slow motion.

Law saw the crew’s eyes all widen with horror.

He saw Luffy dart towards him, arms outstretched, a cry echoing from his mouth that Law couldn’t hear.

He saw Monet flap her wings and escape, taking Caesar Clown with her.

And then he didn’t see anything.

Chapter End Notes

let me know what you think! thanks for reading!
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

hello everyone! hope you're excited for chapter 3!

with this chapter is some AMAZING art by scarlettic! PLEASE check it out!!
https://skartlie.tumblr.com/post/183566353160/

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He floated in and out of consciousness for a little while after that. At one point, he knew he must have been on death’s door – after all, there was a skeletal man looming over him. But he faded out again after seeing the skeleton, and didn’t wake back up for a long time.

But when he did wake up for real, feeling a sense of clarity and presence that he hadn’t felt since the ill-fated interrogation, the skeleton was still looming over him.

He screamed and scooted back against the bed he was lying down in.

The skeleton jumped back and screamed as well. Had Law really died? If so, why did he still feel so shitty?

“Oh! I’m so sorry, did I scare you?” The skeleton seemed to regain his bearings and placed a hand over where its heart might be. “You startled me right out of my skin! If I had skin, that is.” It (he?) let out a strange laugh at his little joke.

Law didn’t respond.

The skeleton froze for a moment, his eternally toothy grin perfectly still as he waited for any kind of response.

After a moment, he sighed. “I’ll go get the doctor.” He stood up, and – wow. This man was (had been?) huge when he was alive. He was easily taller than Sanji or Zoro. He exited the room and finally Law was able to slow down and think for a moment.

Dry Bones there had to have been a demon. One of Luffy’s friends, maybe? That seemed about right – Luffy had a lot of weird friends, and nobody had said that Sanji, Zoro, Usopp, and Nami were all of them. But that didn’t explain where he was – he had been placed in some sort of medical bay, one that he had never seen before.

It felt weirdly out of time. There was equipment meant for surgery and other more modern, more invasive medical procedures, but off to the side there was also tools that looked more like they belonged in an apothecary, such as a mortar and pestle. Where the hell had he ended up?

Moments later, the door opened, and Law was back in panic mode. The creature that walked in was clearly the least human out of all of the demons Law had met so far. It looked like… to be honest, like a deer and bigfoot had a baby. It was a little shorter than Law, but that didn’t mean much in the grand scheme of things – he was a pretty tall guy. It stood on two legs, had arms, was covered in thick, soft-looking fur, and had the cutest blue nose – but the most interesting thing about this monster were its large and deadly-looking horns. It had entered cautiously, and seemed a little…
nervous? The shy monster waved carefully at him, but said nothing.

Law cleared his throat. “Hi.”

“… Hi.” It walked carefully towards him. “You’re not going to… scream, are you?”

Law sighed. “Not again, no.”

That seemed to relax the smaller demon. “Okay, good.” It walked over to him on delicate hooves and stretched out one arm with – you guessed it, a hoof. “My name is Chopper. I’m a doctor.”

Law tried not to snort as he took the hoof in his hand and shook it gingerly. His left side still felt ablaze with pain, but he could move his right side with relative ease. “Can demons even be doctors?”

Chopper sniffed. “Of course. You think humans are the only ones who do stupid things that get themselves hurt?”

As if on cue, Luffy burst into the room. “Torao,” he cried, “You’re awake!” And then Law had an armful of weird rubbery demon.

Law looked frantically at Chopper, who just shrugged. “Luffy is very physical with the people he likes.”

For some reason, that sent a blush up Law’s cheeks. He didn’t understand why, entirely – after all, he had barely known the demon for a full day. Not exactly enough time to develop any feeling stronger than “exhaustion”, at least… for Law. But he had to admit, there was some strange pull Luffy had. And even if their interrogation hadn’t gone as planned, it had gone a hell of a lot better than Law thought it would.

“When that guy hurt you, I thought you were going to die.” Luffy didn’t look distressed when he said, this, though. “I’m glad you didn’t.”

“Yeah, me too.” Law gently pushed the demon out of his lap. “Please don’t hug me too hard.”

That spurred Chopper into action. “Luffy, leave him alone for a minute. I need to check his wounds.”

Luffy shrugged and slithered off the bed, but hovered over Chopper as he went carefully over Law’s injuries and told his side of the story.

Apparently the strange man with the bamboo was someone nobody had seen before. That much didn’t surprise Law, he had figured that out already. But what was interesting was what he did after Law passed out in a pool of his own blood.

“Yes, he turned to me and said something like, ‘Joker won’t be happy if I kill him,’ and then left with the bird lady.” Luffy frowned. “Is Joker the name of that Mingo guy? That’s a lot easier to remember than whatever stupid name he already has.”

Law swallowed heavily. “Luffy…”

The demon quirked his head curiously. “Yeah?”

“If Doflamingo is onto us, then we’re in a lot of danger.” He took a deep breath. “Nowhere is safe, probably not even my apartment.” Until this was over, he wouldn’t be able to go home. If he was ever even able to go home, it would be a long time from now.
Luffy raised a brow at Law, as if that was the most obvious thing in the world. “Duh. That’s why we took you to a safe place.”

Law shook his head. “No, you don’t get it. There are no safe places –”

“Better not let Franky catch you saying that.” Luffy chuckled. “He’d get pissed.”

“Franky is a mechanic and engineer,” Chopper helpfully supplied. “He built this place a while ago.”

For these guys, “a while ago” generally meant “a hundred years before you were born,” so Law didn’t even bother to ask about when.

Instead, he asked “Why?”

“Mostly because he could. Partially because he felt like we might need it… eventually.” Luffy shrugged. “Either way, it’s always good to have a secret hideout.”

Chopper poked at his ribs and he let out a hiss of pain. “Sorry!” The monster doctor dabbed a cotton ball in some kind of ointment and dabbed it carefully onto the offending area. “This should help.” He was right – the searing pain dissipated within a few seconds.

Law groaned. “What did he even do to me?”

Chopper stiffened. “Well, he… it looks like…”

“He punched you real hard and almost sliced your arm off!” Luffy exclaimed. “With just that bamboo stick, too.”

“Yeah, really impressive,” Law deadpanned, “I might have appreciated it more had it not been my body that he so viciously attacked.”

Luffy nodded sagely. “Of course.”

“Chopper, right?” Law asked. The deer demon nodded. "Do you think I could borrow some painkillers?”

Chopper frowned. “You’re still in a lot of pain?” He started to look worried. “I know it was a terrible injury, but you should be feeling better…”

Law shook his head. “No, I just feel a headache coming on.”

The demon doctor let out a soft giggle at that. “Sorry, I can’t offer a prescription for Luffy headaches. You just have to get used to those.”

Of course.

He just took another deep breath and massaged his temples instead. “So… where are we, exactly?”

“It’s a pocket dimension,” Luffy said simply, as if that weren’t a big deal, “We named it Sunny.”

For one second, Law thought this was the last straw. A vein was going to pop in his head, or he was going to have a heart attack, or something, and he would just fucking die right there.

Luckily, Chopper saw this coming, so he quickly grabbed Luffy and ushered him out of the room. “He needs rest,” he huffed, “And you are a menace.” He shut the door on a pouting Luffy and turned back to Law. “Sorry about that.”
Law laid back down in bed. “I can’t believe I’ve got a contract with him.”

Chopper chuckled. “Most humans don’t enter into contracts for a long game.” He sat in a rolling chair but made no move to further poke and prod at Law’s body. “He just gets excited about the human world – he doesn’t get to spend a lot of time up here.”

Law frowned. “Why not?”

Chopper shrugged. “Some kind of rule. It’s to keep us all safe. Demons can cause a lot of mischief if they’re allowed to run free.” He smiled at that. “But Luffy manages to find a way to cause as much chaos as possible when he gets up here.”

Law closed his eyes. “Doesn’t surprise me.”

“Did you hear about Alabasta?” Chopper said, and though Law had his eyes closed, he could tell the deer demon was smiling.

“Who hasn’t?” He shot back, though his words had no bite. “Alabasta isn’t too far from here.”

It had happened a few years ago. Alabasta was a country just across the sea, but it had good relations with Law’s country. At the time though, the whole of Alabasta had been suffering an extreme drought, and there were whispers of revolution against the king. It had bubbled under the surface of the country for years, slowly reaching a boiling point as the land and its people wasted away.

But the day of the revolution, something happened. Nobody ever got the full story, but there were rumors. Rumors of an evil lurking within the rebellion, rumors of a usurper hiding behind a noble cause.

All that was revealed was that the royal family had been framed for their crimes. Perhaps more information was available within the country itself, but Law was just a medical student, and he didn’t have time to travel to other countries just to get the truth on a story that didn’t really matter to him.

However, it had piqued his curiosity.

Chopper smiled. “We were there.”

And that piqued his curiosity even more. “What were you doing there?”

“What else? Luffy was in a contract.” He laughed. “That one got us in hot water – there were some demon hunters on our trail that year. But the Princess was nice enough to help us get out after her contract was up.”

Law felt a little lightheaded. He had started a contract with a demon who was capable of destroying – or perhaps saving – entire countries. He had been in a contract with the princess of Alabasta.

He really had underestimated Luffy.

Maybe they really did have a shot at taking down Doflamingo. Luffy didn’t seem like the type to quit. Or the type to lose.

As it turns out, demonic doctors were better than human doctors. Within a few hours, Law gradually felt better, until finally he could actually move both arms without suffering excruciating pain. He still felt a little stiff, but that was better than the alternative, which was losing his damn arm.

“I’d like to learn how you did that,” Law told Chopper while massaging his shoulder. “It could be
really useful.”

Chopper seemed to blush at that, despite the fur covering his face. “I wouldn’t share trade secrets with a human like you!” He said, but his voice was high-pitched and flattered-sounding, so Law figured he just had some sort of complex.

“Well, thank you for helping me.” Law tried hard not to think that the shaggy-furred demon with great horns longer than his arm was cute, but after a display like that, it was impossible not to. “I would like to see how Luffy and the others are doing now, though.”

Chopper stopped wiggling around and nodded, suddenly stern.

Damn it, he was adorable.

“I’ll take you to them.” Chopper helped Law out of bed, then paused. “But please… don’t scream when you see Brook again.”

Law smiled weakly, remembering the friendly skeleton and being struck with terror. “I promise I won’t.”

Chopper led him out of the medbay and into what looked like a small park. Luffy was stretched out on the grass, and it would have looked like a perfect sunny afternoon had Sanji, Zoro, Nami, and Usopp weren’t right next to him, in what looked to be a serious discussion.

Chopper cleared his throat loudly, and everyone turned to look at Law at once. He waved awkwardly and moved to sit next to Luffy.

“Law! You’re okay!” Nami smiled, but there was still worry in her eyes.

Usopp was the same. “I knew you’d make it. I wasn’t afraid at all,” he said, clearly afraid.

“Glad you’re alive.” Zoro didn’t say much else. Law had kind of expected that.

Sanji nodded coolly at him. “Now we can get back to work.”

“You’ve been working this whole time!” Luffy whined. “We’ve gotten nowhere!”

Zoro rolled his eyes. “Cook. Just call her.”

“But it’s work related!” Sanji said, suddenly flushed. “I don’t want to get her involved.”

“She’ll know more than we do…” Nami said, turning the option over in her mind. She nodded then, resolute. “Sanji, call her.”

Clearly, Sanji couldn’t refuse Nami’s demand. He pulled out his den-den mushi and dialed. As he did, Usopp wandered off back towards where Law and Chopper had exited, but he went through a different door.

“Who is he calling?” Law asked Luffy.

The demon snorted. “His wife.”

The phone rang for less than a second before it was picked up. A woman’s voice answered. “Jiji, is that you?”

“Hi, Pudding!” Sanji swooned. “How are you doing, princess?”
Law snorted. “Pudding? That’s a weird nickname.”

That made Luffy laugh. “That’s just her name.”

Oh, shit. Well. At least Sanji was too busy melting to overhear him. The woman on the other end of the line said, “I just pulled a batch of gingerbread out of the oven. I wish you could have some!”

If Sanji got heart eyes when he looked at Nami, then Law had no idea what the hell kind of expression he was making when he talked to Pudding. “How long have they been married?” Law whispered. It seemed like it couldn’t have been more than a week.

“I think like three hundred years? The wedding was fun. Sanji’s family almost got killed by Pudding’s mom.”

… Law decided he would never attend a demon wedding.

“I hate calling you about work,” Sanji whined to the snail, “But it’s really important. Do you know anything about a human named Donquixote Doflamingo?”

There was a short period of silence on the other end of the line. Then she responded. “The name sounds familiar… I’ll have to ask Mama about it. How soon do you need the information?”

Sanji looked to Luffy, who looked to Law, who mouthed “As soon as possible!” to Sanji.

“Whenever you can, darling!” Sanji cooed. “I love you!”

Pudding sighed happily on the other end. “I love you too, Jiji! Oh! I gotta go. It’s time to decorate!”

The snail hung up with a click.

“What happened to ‘as soon as possible’?” Law asked irritably.

Sanji snorted, a puff of smoke rising from his mouth. “As if I would hurry a woman along for your needs. It’s not my contract.”

Luffy groaned. “We get it, you love Pudding. What do we do until then?”

Despite his annoyance, something clicked in Law’s brain. “How long was I out? What day is it?”

“A few days… today’s Monday.” Chopper said nervously. “Why?”

Excellent. “Doflamingo is supposed to be working on something big in his club soon. If we’re lucky, we can sneak in and find out what he’s doing.”

“But I need to wait for Pudding to call!” Sanji said desperately. “I can’t go traipsing off with you to some club, what if she has to leave a message?”

Law held back a grimace. “You can wait here for her to call. It’s probably for the best that we bring a small team to infiltrate the place.”

Nami brightened considerably at that. “Infiltrating is one of my best qualities.” She grinned. “Who should we take with us?”

“Well,” Luffy said, “Obviously I have to go. He’s my human.”

“Then I’m putting you on a child leash and keeping you in sight at all times,” Law grumbled, “I’m
not having a repeat of Caesar’s lab.”

Luffy just nodded. “Fair.”

Nami sat down next to them, a thoughtful expression on her face. “We might also want to bring Robin. She’s really good at reconnaissance.”

That had Luffy nodding enthusiastically. “Torao hasn’t met Robin yet!” He turned to Law with a bright smile. “You’ll really like her, I promise.”

Law tried hard to give him a smile back. “You’ve said that about all your friends.”

“Yeah, well, my friends are all awesome.”

Law had to admit, Luffy was right. While they all had their… bizarre quirks, they seemed to be a powerful group. And they clearly all cared about each other.

He was still curious about the skeleton, though.

Luffy grinned. “I want Usopp to come, too!”

Chopper cleared his throat. “I don’t know if Law is ready to go on a mission like that.” He gestured towards the still-bandaged arm. “Humans don’t recover from injuries the way you do, Luffy.”

Law shook his head. “I’ll be fine.”

“ Aren’t you supposed to be a doctor?” Chopper said, exasperated. “You should know better than to keep going after an injury that bad!”

“I made a contract with Luffy to help me take down a crime lord. I didn’t make a contract with you to nag me about a couple of scratches.” Law glared at the fluffy doctor, but could only keep the glare up for a second. He softened. “This is something I need to do.” He rolled his arm around in its socket – it felt stiff and pretty fucking sore, but it wasn’t going to kill him. “Besides, I’m feeling great.” He offered Chopper a small smile. “Without your help, I’d be in much worse shape.”

This was the right thing to say. Chopper covered his face with his hooves and shook his head. “Oh, don’t flatter me like that, idiot!” He squeaked.

Luffy laughed, so Law just assumed this was normal.

“All right... now that’s settled. I’ll go get everyone, then we can head out.” Nami stood up and ruffled Luffy’s hair, then walked off.

Law watched Nami walk away. She headed towards the place where he and Chopper had walked out of – it looked almost like a ship’s cabin.

He suddenly had a terrible sinking feeling in his gut. The large grassy area around him had been enclosed by a fence – but upon closer inspection, it seemed to be a railing. Before the cabin was a big pole with a bench around it. Law had stupidly assumed it was just there for decoration or something, but… the ground shifted ever-so-slightly under his feet, as if they were cruising on –

He ran to the edge of the fences (railing, he reminded himself) and looked over.

How had it taken him so long to realize where they were?

Water gently lapped against the wood, far below him. He whipped around to shoot Luffy a terrible
“Why the fuck are we on a ship?”

“Because I wanted it to be a ship, that’s why!” A voice, louder than Luffy’s, boomed from nearby. Law searched for the voice and found it – he was climbing down from the mast.

And, *holy shit*, this was the biggest man Law had ever seen. In sheer height, he towered over everyone. In width, well, let’s just say the man was jacked. Unnaturally so. “You don’t have a problem with my ship, do you?” Next to him, Luffy was vibrating with some kind of excitement, but he didn’t speak. It seemed to be taking him a lot of effort to keep his mouth shut.

Law, in a moment of self-preservation, shook his head and said nothing.

“*Super!*” The giant extended one giant hand. Upon closer observation, his hand – his entire arm, really – seemed to be made of metal. “The name’s Franky.”

Law reached one hand out to shake. He resigned himself to holding onto one of Franky’s giant, metal sausage-like fingers, because there was no way he’d be able to grab the entire hand, but was surprised when a small panel in Franky’s giant hand opened up and a smaller one (this one hand-shaking sized) emerged.

“Holy shit.” Okay, Law couldn’t keep that one in.

Franky *beamed*. “Right? They’re super useful for detail work.”

Luckily, Franky hadn’t taken Law’s cursing as a negative. The human just nodded weakly. “Convenient.”

Franky looked like someone had just slapped a ton of mechanical parts onto (and… inside of?) a human being. Somehow, he was the most terrifying out of all of Luffy’s friends. “I’m an engineer. I built pretty much everything here.” He gestured around him with his other huge arm, then grinned down at Law.

Law nodded uncomfortably. “Yeah, it’s… impressive.” He quietly thought to himself that Penguin and Shachi might be more interested in this than he was. They always seemed to get fairly excited over engineering and cars and whatnot, they’d probably get along just fine with Franky. Except, you know, for the fact that Franky was a giant half-mechanical demon.

Still, he found himself thinking, building a giant ship within some sort of pocket dimension? That was cool as fuck.

“Hell yeah, it’s impressive. This baby can go anywhere without being noticed. In your world, this little dimension here is packed into a cola-flavor chapstick tube.” He grinned even wider. “As long as someone’s outside to carry it around, we can go *anywhere*.”

“So we can go straight to Dressrosa?” Law frowned thoughtfully.

Franky laughed and clapped the human on the back. Ignoring Law’s strained grunt of pain, he boomed, “Luffy, you caught a smart one! Or maybe it was the other way around?” He shrugged and laughed again. Luffy laughed with him.

“Don’t tease the human too much, dear.” A soft voice called out from the upper deck. Law looked up to see a tall black-haired woman who smiled at Franky like he was the most amusing insect in the room. A weird combination there, but Franky seemed to like it.
“Robin!” Franky rushed over to her and picked her up in his massive arms, kissed her nose, then set her back down onto the grassy deck. He held one of her hands in his slightly-smaller robot hand and both walked back to where Law and the others sat. “I guess Nami’s outside?”

Robin nodded. “She told me to come inside and meet the latest…” Her eyes scanned the clearing for a moment before settling on Law. When they made eye contact, she smiled again. Law noticed her fangs. “I see what Nami was saying.”

“What was Nami saying?” Luffy finally spoke up, his curiosity reaching its peak. “She says a lot of things.”

“He’s cute.” Robin smiled softly, offering no other explanation.

Law extended a hand out to shake. He was wasn’t actually sure if that was demon etiquette, but it was the only thing he could think of doing to keep this whole situation even a little bit normal.

Robin waved her arm, nonchalant.

Law had the extremely unpleasant sensation of something growing out of him. He watched in fascinated horror as a hand manifested itself from his shoulder and brushed some of his hair out of his eyes. He dropped the hand he had offered to shake and sat down heavily on the ground.

“That Vergo did a number on you.” Robin said, with a curious… motherly? lilt in her voice. “He won’t get away with it.” She looked towards Luffy, who nodded.

“He’s not human, so I’m just going to kill him when we see him next.” The demon was already cracking his knuckles in preparation for the encounter.

Law decided that was enough. “Okay, okay, we’ll get there when we get there. What comes first, though, is Dressrosa.” He looked sternly at Luffy. “We are not going to beat anyone up tonight.”

Luffy nodded. “Gotcha.” Clearly the information had gone in one ear and out the other, because he was still cracking his knuckles.


Robin nodded. “We can relay the information to her when we get there. She’s a professional.”

Suddenly, there was a loud CRASH-BANG-SCREECH from the upper deck. Law startled, but quickly settled back down when he heard Usopp yelp out some sort of curse. “Come on!”

A few seconds later, Usopp peeked over the upper railing to look at the group assembled on the lower deck. “Sorry!” He gestured backwards, to an area Law couldn’t see. He must have gone back up there while Law hadn’t noticed. What Law did notice, though, was that Usopp’s hands appeared to be covered in blood.

… Considering Usopp looked like he was made out of plants, it probably wasn’t his blood.

“I’m just trying to feed everyone before we go!” He waved, exasperated. “But some of them are just so stubborn!” A giant green plant bud raised up above Usopp and, before Law’s very eyes, blossomed -- except this blossom was a mouth full of razor-sharp teeth all aimed for Usopp’s head.

Before anyone could even warn him, Usopp whipped around and fixed the plant with a point and a harsh glare. “Stop it! I’ll feed you in a second!”
Luffy laughed, but Law saw a bit of drool hanging off his lips. “Got any extra up there?”

Usopp lifted a metal bucket. The contents of said bucket made an uncomfortable sloshing noise. “This is all they’ll get until I get back! Also, it’s probably not anything you wanna eat. It’s all raw.”

Luffy, who had still been sitting down, rocked backwards until his back was on the grassy deck. He crossed his arms over his chest and pouted. “I’d eat raw meat… if Sanji would let me.” He shot a glare with no heat in it at the golden-scaled demon who was still sitting at the snail phone with stars in his eyes. Sanji, not looking away from the snail, flipped him off.

Robin sat down on the ground next to Luffy and Law. “Usopp can join in when he’s done. You know how hard it is to tear him away from his plants.” There was an amused glint in her eye as she spoke.

She turned to Law. He felt strangely small under her gaze. “So, what’s the plan, oh brave little human?”

… Despite the way she talked to him, Law didn’t feel as if she was looking down on him. Which was weird, because her language seemed to scream the opposite. She just looked vaguely amused with the whole situation, which, in all honesty, was pretty fair.

“I figure Nami has some way to slip us into the club without anyone noticing.” Law began.

Robin nodded.

Luffy stuck his finger up his nose.

Law grimaced.

Robin chuckled.

“Uh… after that, I was planning on getting into the lower levels, where Doflamingo does his actual deals.” Law ran a hand through the grass on the deck. It was strangely soft. “Once I know who and what he’s dealing with, I can find another angle to stop him.”

Robin smiled. “Taking things a little slowly now, are we?”

“What choice do I have?” Law grimaced. “My only other lead was whisked away by… demons.”

Wait a fucking second.

“He’s got to have some kind of deal with a demon.” Law felt a dark pit open up in his stomach. “I don’t know how or why, but he must be. Why would so many of them work for him?”

This time, Robin smiled. “Very smart. This Doflamingo sounds dangerous… we’ll have to be careful, lest our precious human fall into the wrong hands.”

Law nodded uncomfortably. “Yeah… that’s the plan.”

Luffy was bored to death of waiting around in the Thousand Sunny. He knew he just had to be patient, because there were lots of preparations being made and stuff, but it didn’t stop the minutes from stretching on longer than he could stretch himself.

Law and Robin chatted for a while, and Luffy just laid down on the grass of the deck and quietly listened. After what felt like forever (according to Law and Robin, two minutes), Sanji got up and
asked if anyone wanted anything to eat. Without getting a response, he whisked away and returned with a small bowl of fruit. He placed it between Robin and Law and went on his way, probably to cook something more substantial for Luffy.

Law pulled an apple out of the bowl and looked it over for a second. Then he reached around in his pocket and pulled out a black pocket knife, with little white crosses etched into the handle. When he clicked it open, Luffy was delighted to see the blade itself was black too. Law started peeling the apple with it.

“That’s a cool knife.” The demon crawled closer to get a better look.

Law gave him a quick, awkward smile. “Thanks. My… my dad gave it to me.” He peeled a little more off and held the skin in between his thumb and pointer finger, clearly not sure what to do with it. Luffy grabbed the apple skin and ate it.

“Does it have a name?” Luffy asked through a mouth full of apple. “Every cool blade should have a name.”

The human snorted. “It’s just a pocket knife.” He peeled a little more skin off and handed it to Luffy. “But yeah, it has a name. Apparently it’s called Kikoku.”

“Very cool.” Luffy rolled over and stared at the knife a little longer. It really was pretty. “Did your dad name it?”

“I don’t know. He just told me that’s what it was called.” Law wiped off the knife and put it away, then bit into the apple. Luffy got the feeling that Law didn’t want to talk about his dad anymore.

Robin didn’t say much about Kikoku, but she had eyed it with a lot of interest. Maybe it was some sort of cursed blade. She’d probably know all about those.

A little while after Law finished his apple, Luffy noticed that the human’s lap looked more comfortable than the grass. So he did what any sane person would do and got on his hands and knees, crawled over to the human, then plopped his head down on Law’s thigh.

Yeah, much better. The grass wasn’t tickling his face anymore.

Law was warm. Not hot, not like Sanji, but a nice warmth. If Luffy listened carefully, he could hear Law’s heartbeat, too.

… Which was going a million miles per minute. Luffy cracked open an eye to look up at Law. “What’s wrong?”

Law was staring at him with some strange openmouthed expression on his face. “What… are you doing?”

Luffy raised a brow. “Trying to take a nap. You?”

“Uh.” Law swallowed heavily. He looked to Robin desperately.

Robin smiled her patent smile. “Yes, it’s normal.” She reached over and ruffled Luffy’s hair. Luffy grinned and closed his eyes again. “He’s like this with everyone he likes. I guess you’ve not seen him drag everyone on the ship into a nap pile before.”

Luffy felt Law shake his head. “Yeah… no. Never seen that.”
“You will,” Robin hummed, amused.

There was another moment of silence, but this time Luffy didn’t care as much. Law was warm, and his heart rate was slowing down, and they had a good amount of time before Nami would get to where they needed to be. He could stand to catch a quick nap…

“Luffy,” Law said quietly, “Do you mind if I…”

Luffy felt a tentative hand brush against his hair. He smiled. “Go for it. I’m already napping.”

He knew Law was fascinated with his rubber body. Most of the humans he’d worked with were totally blown away by it, even if they didn’t think much of it at first. That never bothered him. He never made it a point to prove them wrong. He just did his job the best he could. It wouldn’t be much of an adventure if he half-assed it, right?

Law carefully brushed through Luffy’s hair. He didn’t poke or prod or any of those other things that other humans usually did. He just… ran his hands through Luffy’s hair. It felt nice. Different from how it felt when his friends did it.

He ran his hands along Luffy’s scalp, then paused. “I didn’t know you had horns.”

“Oh, yeah. They kinda blend in with my hair sometimes, ‘cuz they’re so small.” Luffy grinned. “I can pretend to be a human pretty well, as long as nobody touches my head.”

Law snorted. “I guess that’s why you wear that hat all the time.”

“Oh,” Luffy shrugged, “I wear the hat because I like it. It was given to me a long time ago.” Law hummed in acknowledgement and resumed running his hands through Luffy’s hair, this time careful of the small red horns on top of his head.

“I was just curious. It looks soft.” A pause as he took a few strands of Luffy’s hair between two fingers. “It is soft.” There was another pause, then, “Funny. I didn’t take you for one who’d regularly bathe.”

That got a laugh out of Robin. “You should see him when he’s off-contract. We have to chain him up and hose him down.”

Luffy pouted, his eyes still closed. “I’m not that bad.”

“Yes, you are!” Sanji said distantly. He was in the kitchen, the door kicked open to let the hot air out. “Moss head is just as bad. You try sleeping with him when he hasn’t showered in a week.” In his mind, Luffy could see the face Sanji made at that moment – pure disgust.

Sanji loved Pudding.

He also loved Zoro.

Zoro and Pudding loved each other too, but… in a different way.

The three of them seemed really happy with the arrangement, though, so it wasn’t like it was a bad thing. Their relationship altogether was weird. Interesting, kind of, if Luffy cared any about that whole “romance” thing.

Love, in general, wasn’t really a concept Luffy understood. At least, the romantic kind of love. He loved his friends deeply. Some of them just loved each other a little differently, but for Luffy, he
loved them all the same. It was a blinding bright feeling that welled up in his chest at the most random of moments. His love for his friends kept him going, even when he felt like there was nothing left to live for.

He sometimes thought about what it might be like to feel a romantic love. What would it feel like? Who would he feel it for? Was it even possible for him? He’d think these thoughts, vaguely, then forget about them. He didn’t really dwell on those kinds of things, anyways.

Law’s movements were almost rhythmic at that point. It was comforting. Luffy was in real danger of falling asleep – though, that had been his goal, so maybe that wasn’t a bad thing.

Humans were generally predictable. They reached their goal, completed their contract, gave Luffy his payment, then pretended that the demon had never existed in the first place.

Sure, there were a few exceptions (he and the crew were always invited to see Vivi on special occasions), but for the most part? After the contract was fulfilled, humans didn’t care about him or his friends.

That didn’t usually bother Luffy. As long as no one disrespected or hurt them, he didn’t really care.

But… it was nice that Law was getting along with everyone. Or, trying to. Luffy could just tell that Franky and Law were on completely different wavelengths, but at least the human was nice about it.

“Luffy?” Law’s hands stuttered in Luffy’s hair.

Luffy cracked one eye open and stared up at Law. He was pretty – that ‘hasn’t slept in four days’ look really worked for him.

“Thank you for saving me.” His cheeks turned a shade darker. “I know it’s a part of the contract, but still. Thank you.” He swallowed heavily. “I knew this was going to take a lot of work. I never expected it to be so… so…” He shook his head and sighed. “Out of this world. Sorry.”

Luffy just smiled. “That makes it more fun.”

“We might have to re-negotiate the price, though.” Robin said quietly. “Other demons weren’t accounted for in the initial deal.”

Law nodded, solemn. “No problem.” He shrugged. “Thank you for sticking around, though.”

Robin smiled at that. “If Luffy hadn’t saved you, I’m sure Nami would have beat him for messing up the contract.” She stood up, brushed herself off, then started to walk off. “Let’s have some fun tonight.” Then she was gone.

They were silent for a while after that. Luffy dozed off peacefully while Law just sat there, lost in thought.

After some time, Luffy adjusted his position in Law’s lap and wrapped his arms around the human’s torso. “What kind of adventure would this be if I gave up right at the beginning?” He blinked his eyes shut, keeping it open just a peek to see Law’s reaction.

Law smiled. Luffy hadn’t really see Law smile before, he realized.

The human’s smile was tired. His eyes crinkled a bit at the edges. In all honesty, the guy looked like he hadn’t smiled in a few years.
But Luffy liked it. If he had any say, he’d get Law to smile like this more often.

He hoped that maybe Law wouldn’t put them in the back of his mind once this job was done. He had never really felt that before about his other contracts… but he couldn’t help but hope.

There was something about Law that Luffy really liked. And, as it went with all his friends, he didn’t like to let go of things he liked without a fight.

Chapter End Notes

see you next week!!
There was nothing to it. Luffy just had soft hair.

Law’s curiosity was scientific. It honestly didn’t mean anything other than that.

So he felt… indebted to Luffy. Yes, they were in a contract. Yes, it was technically Luffy’s job to keep him alive.

But Law still remembered Luffy’s face as he reached out to save him. Call him sentimental, but that wasn’t the kind of face you made when you were saving some dumb human. For a moment, Law could maybe fool himself into thinking that Luffy might actually care about him.

But that was… probably foolish.

He didn’t even know why he wanted Luffy to like him. According to everyone on the crew, he did. But Law couldn’t take that at face value. Maybe Luffy treated all his contracts like this. Law didn’t know how demon contracts were supposed to work. There wasn’t exactly a class in college teaching him the ins and outs of working with beings from the underworld.

In his world, the idea of “demon summoning” was just a joke. Something only crazy people and crackpot cults decided to try. The only reason he even considered it a genuine possibility was because of Cora.

At that thought, he flinched. Even years later, it still hurt to think about.

Luckily, he didn’t have to explain himself to Luffy, who was still in his lap. The flinching could be easily explained by Brook, the friendly skeleton, walking up in that very same moment. He was dressed outrageously, and carried a cane that he definitely didn't need. He tipped his head to Law and Luffy in greeting.

"Hello," he said, a little nervously, "I'm Brook."

Law nodded slowly. "We've met." Kind of.

Brook smiled. Law had never thought that skeletons could smile before, considering the lack of facial features... but somehow this guy pulled it off. To his surprise, it didn't look all that scary.

With a pang, Law realized Brook had been one of the first people to see him awake in the infirmary. And he had just screamed at him. That was kind of a shitty thing to do.

"Hey, I'm sorry about earlier." He didn't know exactly how to put into words 'Sorry for freaking out back there, but you're literally a skeleton,' so this was the simplest way to get to where he wanted to go.
"Yo ho ho!" Was that a laugh? No human being laughed like that. Well, okay, Brook obviously wasn't human. "It's quite all right. I gave you quite a scare! Are you feeling any better?"

Law stretched out his arm and moved his fingers around. Luffy grumbled in his lap, so he quickly resumed petting the demon's head. "Feels fine to me."

"I'm glad to hear that." Brook smiled again, somehow wider this time. "I see he's taken a liking to you."

Law blushed. "You sure he doesn't act like this with every contract?"

The skeleton shook his head. "No, not usually. This is how he acts with his crew."

Law didn't have time to feel embarrassed by that. "Don't talk about me like I'm not right here." He looked down to see Luffy had one eye cracked open. He was watching them talk.

"Sorry, Luffy." Just kidding. He was even more embarrassed now. Good thing he had a great poker face.

Luffy shrugged and closed his eyes again.

When Law looked back up, he caught Brook watching them with a strange expression on his face. Okay, all expressions were strange on a skeleton's face. But... it was contemplative.

"I know I'm not a part of the team going off to Dressrosa," Brook said, clearly pretending that he hadn't just been staring at the two of them with that pondering expression, "But I wanted to wish you good luck."

"Thanks." Ah, Law felt bad. Brook was just a nice guy, if a bit weird.

The skeleton nodded politely again, then wandered off. Shortly after that, he heard the sound of a violin playing.

"He's cool, right?" Luffy grinned up at him. "He's a really good musician."

Uhh. "Wait. Brook is... a musician?"

"Yeah! Every good crew's gotta have a musician." Luffy said this easily, as if all of it made perfect sense. Law did not have time to unpack all of that, though, because in the next moment, Luffy got off of him and stood up.

He turned to look at Law with a manic grin. Coupled with his strewn-about hair, he looked a little more scary than usual.

"We’re here."

"How – how?" Law felt a little off-kilter from Luffy’s quick movements.

"I have good observation skills." Luffy said with a small shrug. "Come on, we’ve got a party to crash."

An arm grew out of the grassy ground and reached out to help Law stand up. Law looked around, confused, only to see Robin once again walking towards them.

He took it, stood up, and brushed off his pants. "Uh. Thanks."
She simply smiled.

Luffy grabbed Law’s arm and dragged him towards the door leading into the ship. “Let’s go!” Law had no choice but to stumble along after him.

Robin followed at a slower pace. Usopp, who had finished feeding his plants and had been joking around with Franky for the rest of the trip, quickly dashed after Robin.

Luffy led them through the door, then down some stairs to the lower levels of the ship. Law took in the surroundings with fascination – it was like no pirate ship he’d ever seen. To be fair, in the modern era there weren’t many pirate ships to look at, but he highly doubted that back in the day pirate ships had aquariums.

They went further and further down, and their surroundings got darker and darker, but eventually ended up at a trap door in the bottom of the ship. Law felt a ball of ice form in his stomach. Luffy yanked it open and smiled brightly at him. “Alright, jump on out!”

That ball of ice instantly turned into a rock and sank. “Are you serious?”

Luffy nodded. “It’s not so bad.” Law somehow doubted that. Despite being at the bottom of the ship, there was no water beneath this trap door. It was just an inky black void, and it did not look particularly inviting.

Luffy snorted at Law’s hesitance. “Don’t worry. I’ll go first!” He grinned wider and hopped right down.

He was gone. No sound, no nothing. It was as if he jumped right out of existence.

Law turned back to Robin and Usopp. “Uh.”

Robin chuckled. “Nervous? Don’t worry. Just take a deep breath and count to three.”

Law nodded weakly and turned to stand in front of the door again. He paused, inhaled deeply, then closed his eyes.

“One, tw—” He didn’t even have time to scream as an arm bloomed up behind him and pushed him into the darkness.

He tumbled out onto the ground with less grace than he’d have hoped for. He didn’t get to stay on the ground for long – Luffy grabbed him and hauled him upright like he weighed no more than a couple of grapes. “See? It wasn’t so bad!”

“He did great.” Robin said calmly from behind him. He whipped around to glare at her, but she just smiled.

They were in an alleyway. He could hear the pounding of music from a nearby building, Dressrosa.

“Law, I got you some clothes to wear so you don’t look like you just crawled out of a ditch,” Nami said brusquely as she handed him some jeans and a new t-shirt. All black, except for a few tasteful yellow spots on edges the shirt. “Now you owe me.”

“Was this not a part of the contract?” He frowned as he removed his old shirt. “Also, please turn around.”

Robin put her hand up to her mouth as if to stifle a giggle. She turned around. Nami rolled her eyes,
but also complied. “You made a contract with Luffy. You owe me a hundred bucks for that outfit.”

“A hundred dollars? Are you kidding me?” Law was struggling into the jeans. They fit… they were just a little tight.

“What, you wanted to walk into a nice club wearing something from Target? Not on my watch.” Nami sighed and shook her head. “You can pay me back later, but there’s gonna be interest.”

“Luffy. Can she do this?” Law looked to the demon, who hadn’t turned around like he’d asked.

The demon just laughed. “I guess!”

“I wouldn’t fight her on this, if I were you,” Usopp added helpfully, facing the wall, “She adds an argument fee each time you whine about it.”

Law swallowed the rest of his complaints. “Fine. Thank you for the clothes, Nami.”

Nami hummed, sounding surprisingly pleased. “For thanking me, you no longer have to pay interest. Just a hundred-fifty total.”

Law bit down hard on his lip to keep from screaming.

The demons seemed to think that was enough time for Law to finish changing, so they all turned around to appraise him. Nami smiled and nodded. “You look good.”

“Like a hundred and fifty dollars?” Law asked.

Nami narrowed her eyes. “Wanna make it two hundred?”

Luffy jumped into the middle of the almost-fight with a gleeful look on his face. “Torao, you look great! How come you didn’t get me any clothes, Nami?”

“Because you ruin everything I buy for you.” Nami replied harshly. “Besides, you weren’t the one wearing a shirt stained with your own blood.” She started, as if she just remembered something. “Oh, right! I also got these for you.” She pulled out a pair of glasses. “I figure you should have some kind of disguise. So… put these on and take off that hat.”

“But I like my hat.”

“Yeah, well, Luffy likes his contractors to still be alive at the end of these things. So take it off.” Nami reached out as if to swat it off his head, but he quickly took it off before she could reach him. “Fine.” He swiped the glasses from her and put them on. They were non-prescription, so aside from feeling like a dick, nothing had changed.

Law had to admit, he was thankful for the new clothes. Even if they made him feel like some sort of hipster. For everyone else, Nami waved her hand around for a second – where there was once a group of demonic-looking entities, a couple of regular humans stood. Usopp was no longer dark green, Robin’s eyes had some white to them, and Luffy… well, Luffy had already looked mostly human from the start but Law guessed that if you were to knock off Luffy’s hat, the little horns on top of his head would be gone.

“If we had any extra time, I’d ask you to shave that nasty goatee, but we don’t always get what we want.” You know what? Law couldn’t even argue against that one. Nami huddled them all together and gave Luffy a meaningful glance that Law interpreted as “For the love of god, pay attention.”
“Dressrosa is a popular nightclub on the best of nights,” Law spoke up, “How are we all going to get in?”

Nami smiled. “I’m a master with illusions. We’ll get in just fine. What we really need to worry about is where we’re going to find Doflamingo. He’s not going to be on the floor tonight, not if some big deal is going down.”

“There are back rooms for private meetings.” Law said. “I mean, that’s highly likely, considering the kind of club he runs.”

“Let’s hope we can sneak in to those rooms without being caught. I wonder what they’d do to us.” Robin mused. “Nothing good.”

“Can you not talk like that?” Usopp begged. “I’m feeling a case of the ‘Can’t-Sneak-Into-The-Club-Itis’ coming on.”

Luffy laughed. “Come on, let’s get going! Nami, get us in there!”

She nodded and saluted. “All right, captain.” She turned towards the mouth of the alley and walked out. She stopped, looked behind her at her group, then beckoned.

Luffy didn’t need to be told twice. He grabbed Law’s hand (they were really going to have to talk about that) and shot off towards her.

Even the line into Dressrosa was packed. It stretched around the block and just kept going – Law couldn’t see the end of it.

But Nami just walked right up to the front. The music inside was so loud that Law could feel the pulse of the beat from where he was standing. Nami motioned for everyone else to get close to her, then she tapped the bouncer on the shoulder and smiled brightly.

He looked down at her and glared. Law had the sudden thought that the bouncer was big enough to punch a concussion right into him, if he so desired. “Name?”

But the imposing man didn’t phase Nami at all. “Oh, we were already inside. We just came back out for some fresh air.” She showed him what looked like a stamp on her hand. “Could you please let us back in?”

The bouncer narrowed his eyes at her. “I’ll need to see everyone’s stamps.”

The demon nodded and jerked her head at her group. “Go on, show him your stamps.”

Law looked down at his hand and was surprised to see a stamp on his hand. He flashed it at the guard, who just narrowed his eyes again and nodded. Everyone else did the same.

“… All right. Go on in.” He stepped aside.

But as Law and Luffy walked past him, he cleared his throat. “You two are brave. Proud of you.”

Oh, god. Luffy was still holding his hand. “Wait, it’s not—”

“Come on, lover boys! Before this song is over!” Nami winked at him, and then they were in.

Now, Law was a medical student. He’d gone to college. He’d been to his fair share of parties.
Dressrosa put them all to shame, and he hated every second of it.

The music was too loud. The lights flashed too much. The people moved too close. And worst of all, it was *too hot*. He felt like he was suffocating with every breath he took.

Luffy seemed to enjoy the whole scene, which kind of made Law hate it even more.

“I like this music! Do you think we could get Brook to sing stuff like this?” Luffy bounced along happily to the pulsing beat of a song that was more electronic hum than song.

“I’m sure you could ask.” Robin patted him on the top of his head. “We need to keep an eye out for the back rooms. Try not to get lost, Luffy.”

The rubber demon nodded and grinned. “Sure! Let’s go, Torao.” He tightened his grip on Law’s arm and dragged the human deep into the crowd.

Immediately he was overwhelmed with sights and sounds and touches that he hadn’t been prepared for. Luffy had taken him right through the dance floor, apparently thinking a straight shot through to the back would be the fastest way to go. Law caught a glimpse of Robin mingling through the edges of the crowd, but he had completely lost sight of Nami and Usopp.

Someone stepped on his foot. A hand pressed against his ass. A whole person rammed into him, causing Law to trip forward and nearly crash into Luffy.

Luffy, however, didn’t get caught up in the crossfire. It was like he was made of water, the way he smoothly dodged and ducked out of the way of every living thing in the immediate vicinity. Even Law couldn’t touch him – just as he keened forward, Luffy turned around and steadied the human. “Be careful,” he said with a smile, “It’s pretty rough in here.”

Law didn’t question how he could hear Luffy’s speaking voice in the middle of all this noise. Maybe it was some demon nonsense.

“How are you not getting hit at all?” Law yelled at the demon. He didn’t have the same kind of power, so he just had to speak as loud as possible and hope for the best.

Luffy didn’t laugh like Law thought he would. He just smiled and tugged at the brim of his straw hat. “You don’t have to worry about me.” He squeezed Law’s hand. “You ready to go?”

He felt like, for that short moment, he and Luffy had been in their own small world. The club pulsed and moved around them like a living being, but when he listened to Luffy, it was like a wall came up and over them, protecting them – no, protecting *him* – from the crazed atmosphere. When he nodded that yes, he was ready to go, the bubble popped, and the sounds and sights and crowds filled in the space that had so recently felt empty.

Luffy’s full-blown grin came back, and he led Law through the crowd. He brazenly ran through other partiers, but did so with a weird grace that Law couldn’t help but feel jealous of.

After a few more incidents ending in “Sorry, excuse me,” or “Coming through, don’t punch me,” they ended up in the far end of the room, where a simple, nondescript door barred the rest of the way. The only thing interesting about it was a small pink flamingo in the center of the door.

Nami, Usopp, and Robin were already there. Nami was holding a fruity-looking drink that she must have gotten from the bar – on the complete other side of the room. She put it down and placed her hands on her hips. “What took you so long?” Nami berated. “Do you know how conspicuous it is to have so many people standing over here?”
“Nope!” Luffy said cheerily. “Come on, let’s do this.” He looked at the door. “Do I punch it down? I can do that.”

Usopp stood in his way quickly, shaking his head. “No! No, no, we can do this. No punching yet.”

Luffy puffed out his cheeks in disappointment, but he stood down. Usopp sighed in relief and turned back to Nami and Robin. “All right, who should do it?”

Robin raised her hand. “I should be able to open the door from the other side.” She crossed her arms over her chest and closed her eyes. Nothing happened for a moment – at least, nothing that Law could see.

Then the door unlocked and swung outward.

Another Robin stood in the doorway. She smiled at Law, then bowed to the original Robin, then… melted… away…

If he still had his sanity intact by the end of this night, Law would count that a total win. As it was, he felt it slipping away faster with every second.

The group walked away from the crashing pulse of human life and further into a long hallway. It was more darkly lit than the club, which was to be expected. This was for more private audiences, Law knew. A multitude of doors lined the hallway, all the same design as the one that they had first gone through. As they passed each door, they were occasionally treated to noises in the rooms behind the doors, but not every room was occupied. Still, it was enough to make Law feel a little woozy. The occupants probably counted on the loud music to cover up their grunts and groans, but anyone walking past those doors could hear it.

“How do we know Mingo’s not in any of these rooms?” Luffy asked, not as quietly as he should have.

Law grimaced. “He wouldn’t use these rooms for important meetings. Too dirty.”

Luffy opened his mouth as if to ask another question, but before he could, they passed a door with a particularly rambunctious couple inside. “Nevermind.”

At the end of the hall was another door, but this one was different from the rest. Instead of a flamingo in the middle of the door, it was a crown surrounded by a diamond, a club, a spade, and a heart.

Law felt a cold chill arc down his spine. “I’m going to guess this is the door we need.”

“Allow me.” Usopp nudged Law out of the way and stood in front of the door. He pulled a small seed out of his bag and knelt by the handle on the door. He carefully pushed the seed into the lock, whispered a few words of encouragement, then stepped back and smiled. “Everyone else got to show off already.”

Inside the door came a few clunking noises. Then the handle turned and the door swung out. Sticking out of the lock was a small green plant. Usopp gently pulled it out of the lock, placed the plant in his bag, then shot Law a big grin. “Cool right?”

“I had no idea plants could do that.” Law was honestly surprised.

Usopp shrugged, attempting to look casual. “Most plants couldn’t. But they all listen to me. I just have to ask them to do something, then they do it.”
Not for the first time, Law was quietly thankful that these monsters were on his side.

The door opened up to a stairwell that led down. Usopp gulped audibly and moved back, to be behind Robin.

Law rolled his eyes and walked into the stairwell.

The air in there was cool and stale, as if not many people went back that way. He turned to the group and fixed them all – especially Luffy – with a serious look. “We will need to be quiet from here on out. I don’t know what we’re going to see.”

Luffy clapped his hands over his mouth and nodded.

The group resumed their silent wanderings, keeping an eye (and an ear) out for anything that sounded out of the ordinary. The further they went down the stairs, the colder it got, to the point where Law wondered just how deep underneath Dressrosa they had gone.

It was near the bottom of these long stairs that Luffy stopped suddenly. “Don’t go any further,” he warned, “They’ll know we’re here.”

Law furrowed his brow and tried to strain his ears, to hear anything that might have given Luffy that idea. But he heard nothing.

Usopp seemed to agree with him, though. “We can’t get any closer than this.”

“How do you know?” Law asked, irritable.

Luffy simply pointed straight ahead. Law followed where the demon was pointing, and through the darkness he could barely make out a door at the far end of a hallway.

In front of the door stood a man that was, once again, vaguely familiar to Law. He couldn’t place where he’d seen this man before, which surprised him considering the massive spikes jutting out of his shoulder guards. Even from their distance, those were easy to spot.

“He can’t see us right now,” Nami whispered, “I’ve been disguising us so far. But any closer than this and he’ll probably notice.”

“So what do we do now?” Law couldn’t help but feel an angry spike of irritation. They had gotten so far, and for what? To be stopped a couple feet away from their goal?

“I could always beat him up.” Luffy suggested, pulling his arms back in a threatening stretch.

Robin shook her head. “No, you’re too loud.” She said this with a smile, but even if she hadn’t Luffy wouldn’t have taken it as a bad thing. He even shrugged, as if agreeing with her. “Nami, can you distract him away from the door?”

The illusory demon sighed and waved her hand about airily. “Yeah, I guess. I can give you guys about fifteen minutes, tops.” She whirled around to give both Luffy and Law a pointed glare. “And when he passes by, don’t even breathe.”

Satisfied with Law’s silent nod, she closed her eyes and wiggled her fingers. A strange thumping noise came from above, from up the stairs, and it was clear that it got the door guard’s attention, too.

Without hesitation, the monster of a man rushed past the group. Everyone had pressed themselves closely against the walls to escape accidentally brushing up to the guy, and it seemed to have
worked. Nami nodded at the rest of the group to go forward.

“I can lead him further down the hall, but when I say to get back here, you get back here. He’ll notice if you move.”

“Thanks, Nami!” Luffy said cheerily, then bounced down the hall to the door. Law, Robin, and Usopp followed.

Usopp managed to press his ear up against the door. He listened for a few moments, then gave everyone a thumbs up to confirm the meeting was going on. Law followed suit in listening from the door.

Robin pulled a small snail – much like the one Sanji had used to call his wife – out of her pocket. She placed it next to the door and pressed something on its shell. Its eyes and mouth opened, but no sound came out. If you had to ask Law, he’d have guessed it was some sort of… snail-based recording device.

Smart.

Law could hear voices on the other side of the door. He shut up his own internal monologue and listened.

“He wants a shipment of a hundred out by the end of the week.” An unfamiliar voice. Male.

“We’ve had a minor setback in production this week, but rest assured, he’ll get his product.” That voice was all too familiar – Doflamingo.

“He’d better. You know what will happen to you otherwise.” Another unfamiliar voice, this one female.

Doflamingo laughed. “How long have we been partners? I’ve never let Kaido down. He’ll get everything right on time, just like he always has.”

Usopp let out a strangled choke. Law glared at him, but it seemed to be quiet enough that nobody inside the room heard him.

“Do you know how difficult it is to find the right kind of human that Kaido wants?” Doflamingo let out another chuckle, but he didn’t sound particularly amused. “If he wants a demon army, he should hire demons.”

“Why hire demons when you can make them yourself?” The female voice snapped. “Not to mention that this is your contract. You’d be out of a job if he took the easier route.”

“True,” Doflamingo said, and Law could easily picture the smile he had on his face, “It’s just worth noting.”

At once, both unfamiliar voices made noises of surprise. Doflamingo made no such noise. “Pica,” he said coolly, “Is something wrong?”

There was a short period of silence. “Hmm. I see.”

“Guys!” Nami called from the end of the hall, frantic. “Get out of there! Run! The guard, he just disappeared—”

The door began to open. Usopp let out a strangled scream as they all leapt back.
Law felt his stomach turn to ice when he saw who had just opened the door.

Before them stood Donquixote Doflamingo in the flesh. And he looked positively—excuse the term—demonic.

“Oh, my,” he said softly, “What have we here?”

“Torao, run!” Luffy yelled. He pushed Law back and confronted Doflamingo head on.

The behemoth of a man hardly noticed the small demon in front of him. His eyes were locked onto someone else. “Law,” he said with a grin, “It’s been some time. What are you doing here?”

“We’re here to beat you up!” Luffy aimed a punch right for Doflamingo’s face.

Doflamingo held out one hand, his fingers outstretched.

Luffy couldn’t move his arms. He could try, sure, but those arms weren’t going anywhere.

“I don’t have time for small fry like you.” He grinned, then swatted Luffy aside like he was nothing. The demon slammed against the wall with a sickening thud.

Law stood frozen to the spot. He couldn’t explain it, but seeing Doflamingo frightened some primal part of himself that he had completely forgotten about.

“Torao!” Luffy sounded desperate. “You have to get out of here!”

Doflamingo laughed. “I don’t think he’ll be going anywhere.”

“Treinta fluer!” Hands bloomed out of the ground and pushed Law backwards, startling the human out of his frozen fear and forcing him to turn and run. “Luffy, go with him! We’ll hold him off.”

“But—”

“Go!” Usopp yelled, surprising Law. “We’ll handle this.”

Law felt a rubber arm curl around his torso and had milliseconds to prepare himself as he was effectively slingshotted down the hall. Nami grabbed a hold of Law and pulled the chapstick tube out. “Get in.”

“Wh- how?” Law stared at the tube incredulously. How had he even gotten in there in the first place?

“We don’t have time for this!” Nami yelped, then flicked off the cap.

Law felt like he was being pulled in all directions at once, then he felt very, very dizzy.

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading!! see you next week!
They were back on the Thousand Sunny. The ship rocked comfortably to and fro, and the sky was bright blue. The grass underneath him was soft.

He sat up a little too quickly and made himself dizzy again.

“Slow down,” Brook said quietly from his side, “You’ll make yourself sick.”

“Robin, Usopp,” Law said, a little hoarse, “Nami, Luffy – are they okay? Where are they?”

After a moment of thought, Brook spoke. “Luffy’s here. Before he got away, he got heavily injured. Chopper is with him now.” His empty eye sockets were somehow filled with emotion. “The others… stayed behind.”

“What?” Law asked. “What do you mean?”

“He means Doflamingo has them.” Zoro spoke up. Law turned around to see the rock demon resting against the mast. “They stayed behind so you and Luffy could escape.”

The ice in his stomach turned to stone and sank to his gut. “I’m so sorry.”

“Don’t be,” Zoro shrugged, “Means I get a chance to fight the guy. They’ll be fine.”

“Wait,” Law shook his head, an attempt at clearing his mind. “Can I go see him?”

Brook and Zoro looked at each other.

The skeleton shrugged. “I don’t know if Chopper’s done yet.”

“I can help. I’m a doctor.”

Zoro snorted. “Yeah, for humans. You have no idea know what Luffy’s made out of.”

“How will I learn if I can’t even help?” To be honest… he did have a morbid kind of curiosity. What was Luffy’s body made out of? It appeared human, were his organs similar? Were they made of the same stretchy, rubbery substance as the rest of him?

But voicing those thoughts out loud probably wasn’t like, the best idea.

“Chopper might appreciate a willing audience.” Brook suggested. “The injuries are grave. Company would be good for him.”

Zoro shrugged and closed his eye. “Fine.”

Brook stood up and nodded to Law. “I’ll lead you there.”
The walk to the infirmary was short and quiet, save for a soft tune that Brook hummed as he walked.

Law suddenly felt very, very guilty for screaming at this tall skeleton when they first met.

He turned around to look at his surroundings (wow, it really was a pirate ship) and was immediately startled by Zoro, who was right behind him.

“What are you doing?” Law asked, biting back a surprised yelp. “I thought -”

“I figured I’d check on my captain. Got a problem with that?”

Law shook his head, silent.

Once they reached the infirmary, Brook knocked on the door. “Chopper?”

The door opened and Law came face-to-face (more like face-to-horn) with the smaller demon. He eyed Law up and down, then looked back into the room. Blood was smeared up his arms.

Chopper frowned. “I guess. Just, don’t touch anything or like, do, anything. Okay?”

“Uh. Yeah. Okay.” He could just watch. That was fine.

Chopper stepped back and allowed the human inside.

“I’ll leave you to it, then.” Brook bowed his head and headed off.

Luffy was laid out in bed, looking much the same way Law had not too long ago. He was covered in bandages and looked… cold.

“What happened?” Law stood over his bedside and hovered worriedly.

“Doflamingo happened.” Zoro narrowed his eye and stared at Law. “Luffy got out of Dressrosa, but he took a lot of damage.” The demon stood on the other side of Luffy’s bed. “Did you know about his power?”

“Doflamingo’s… power?” Law frowned. “He’s a crime lord. Of course he’s got power.”

Zoro snorted. “I’m not talking about that. I’m talking about his strings.”

Uh, nope. “You’ve lost me.”

Chopper stepped in. He checked Luffy’s bandages and applied fresh bandages to other wounds, but talked through the actions. “When Luffy got here, he mentioned something about strings. And his wounds look like he was whipped with some sort of knife.” The doctor pulled back some of the bandages and showed Law what looked like a line slashed right into Luffy’s arm. The skin around it was red and puffy. “He’s woken up a few times, and he says that it was Doflamingo’s strings that got him. What does that mean?”

Law felt a migraine coming on. Doflamingo having fucking *string powers* wasn’t what he had expected to learn. “I don’t know. I’m sorry.”

A somber silence filled the room, only occasionally broken by Luffy’s quiet breathing.


He wanted to argue. He wanted to stay here with Luffy, to try and help, but he knew he had no choice.
This was his fault.

The human left the infirmary and stood outside the door for a few seconds before Zoro joined him. The demon jerked his head as he continued down the hall, silently telling Law to follow him.

They walked outside and up onto the upper deck, where Sanji and Brook were sat around a table. A plate full of food sat on the table. Zoro sat down next to Sanji and gestured for Law to sit at the place with the plate. “You need to eat.”

Law felt awkward. He had made a contract with their friend that ended up not only getting their other friends kidnapped, but also left Luffy in a near-coma. Law didn’t feel like he had the right to sit there and eat with them. In fact, Law just felt like shit.

Sanji glared at him. “Sit down and eat.” Smoke puffed out of his nostrils. “I don’t let people starve.”

Law felt weirdly threatened by that, so he sat down.

“You need to tell us about your history with Doflamingo.” Zoro said. “Don’t leave anything out.”

“Luffy never needed to know.” Law knew that it was a shitty thing to say, but… talking about it was hard. Talking about Cora was still too painful.

Zoro crossed his arms over his chest and fixed the human with a hard stare. “Luffy never asks about stuff like that. But we’re all fighting this guy for you, not just him.”

Law sighed. “You’re right.”

“Talk and eat.” Sanji said sternly.

Law looked at the food that was on the plate. He couldn’t recognize it, but it looked like some sort of meat. Since Luffy’s friends seemed okay, he didn’t think they’d feed him human meat or anything, but he was still a little nervous.

“Doflamingo had a younger brother,” Law began, “His name was Rosinante, but everyone called him Corazon. He was my foster dad.” He closed his eyes and took a bite of the unidentifiable meat on the plate.

To his surprise, it was delicious.

“Corazon was one of Doflamingo’s top men. He tried to keep me out of the underground affairs, but Doflamingo insisted on keeping me around.”

He remembered their home – Doflamingo had insisted that he and his brother (and, consequently, Law) live together. It was a beautiful mansion, but Law had loved it for the massive library. Doflamingo had been happy to provide him with all sorts of books, and had even hired private tutors to help teach him whatever he needed. He was essentially home-schooled until…

As he looked back, he knew that Doflamingo had been grooming him to take Cora’s place one day. Maybe he always knew who his brother really was. Maybe he was just evil.

“But Cora worked for the government, and he was trying to put a stop to Doflamingo’s empire.”

He remembered the tears Cora had shed for him. “Cora had managed to get me out… somehow. But he couldn’t save himself.” The details of his childhood were fuzzy, but what remained crystal-clear after all these years was the sound of the gunshots that had robbed Cora of his life. “It’s been my
goal ever since to take down Doflamingo.” Law pulled Kikoku out of his pocket and fiddled with it. He ran a hand over the white crosses etched into the handle and sighed.

Sanji, Zoro, and Brook took the story in for a moment. Law took that opportunity to put his knife away and go back to eating – he hadn’t realized just how hungry he really was.

“Sanji,” Brook said, “I do believe she should visit.”

Zoro rolled his eye, but nodded. “He’s right.”

Smoke poured out of Sanji’s nostrils, and if he looked any closer, Law might have been able to see that the smoke clouds were in the shape of little hearts. “Well, good, because she’s on her way!” He turned to Law and smiled, showing off all his sharp teeth. “My wife is coming. She might be able to help.”

“Help with what?” Law was confused. “I told you my tragic backstory. That’s in the past.”

“Yes, but it seems a little fuzzy. Pudding is great with memory, she can help you remember better.”

Law frowned. “I’m not sure I want to remember any better.”

Sanji shrugged. “Well, I want to see her, so she’s going to be here anyways.”

Great.

Pudding arrived not much later. Apparently it was easy for her to travel between the demon world and the human one – her mother was an emperor, whatever that meant.

She looked… exactly like what Law would have pictured. A pretty girl like that seemed to be exactly Sanji’s type.

It had been a few hours since their talk on the upper deck, and Law had been pacing in the grass of the bottom deck since Chopper wouldn’t allow him back into the infirmary. Luffy was starting to wake up, he had said, and he didn’t want any extra excitement in the room.

Sanji had just made a sound that was even more inhuman than he looked, then shot straight towards the door that led to the exit/entrance of the pocket dimension.

“Pudding, darling! I’ve missed you so much!”

The door opened and what looked like a young woman ran right into Sanji’s arms. He picked her up and twirled her around in the air before setting her down. “Jiji!” She hopped up onto her toes and kissed him on the cheek.

It was a whirlwind of movement after that, and before Law knew it, Pudding, Sanji, Zoro, and Brook were all sitting with him on the grass.

“Ohh.” She moved her bangs away from her forehead to reveal a third eye. Something about that third eye made him feel weird. “I remember you!” She giggled. “You wouldn’t remember me, though.”

Law frowned. “Excuse me?”

The demon girl smiled. “I edited your memories fairly recently. Well,” she frowned, thoughtful and amused, “It was recent for me. You were just a little kid!”
His memories? “Why?” It didn’t seem like she had anything to do with him. His head was really starting to hurt.

“Momma asked me to. She said it was a favor for a friend.” Pudding shrugged.

“What friend?” Zoro asked. He narrowed his eye at Law.

Pudding laughed. “Kaido, of course!” She turned to Law with that soft, amused smile. “I didn’t take everything from you. Just the important bits.”

… Kaido?

“Gee, thanks,” Law said drily, ignoring the spike of fear that name inspired. “Is there any way to get those bits back?”

Pudding snorted. “Of course. What, do I look like an amateur?”

Sanji shook his head and held Pudding’s hands in his own. “Of course not! You’re just divine, darling.”

Pudding blushed so hard that her whole face turned red. “Jiji!” She playfully slapped his hands away. “Stop! You’re too sweet!”

“Just sweet enough for you, my dear!”

Oh god. Law’s headache was on the fast track to killing him if he didn’t get those two to shut up.

He cleared his throat and got their attention back to himself. “Pudding, can you please give me my memory back?” He knew it was a long shot, but he had to try. Knowing that there was something missing from his brain made him too uncomfortable not to ask. Especially if it was something taken because Kaido had asked for it.

She pursed her lips thoughtfully for a moment, then nodded. “I don’t see why not. I only promised to take your memories, not to never give them back.”

Demons were so fucking weird.

Pudding crawled over the grass (and over Sanji’s lap) to be face to face with the human. She hadn’t covered up her third eye, so Law got to experience the odd sensation of being stared at by someone with three eyes.

According to her, this was not the first time this had happened to him.

She placed a hand on each cheek and closed her eyes -- all three of them. Then, her third eye opened, and Law felt a strange tugging sensation from the middle of his forehead.

Something fluttered in front of his eyes, but he knew it wasn’t his hair. It continued to flutter in front of him until it came further into view, where Law could more accurately describe it as… camera film?

“Don’t touch that, sweetie,” Pudding chided gently, “It’ll break you if we mess this up.”

Well, okay then. Law sat perfectly still as he watched this weird camera film come out of his face. On it he could see vague outlines of pictures: of Luffy, smiling and laughing and punching. Then it was Shachi and Penguin, from a conversation just before Law had gone home to summon Luffy. Then further back, to college, to high school, to his childhood.
When he saw the faint image of Cora smiling down at him, it felt like his heart had broken all over again.

Pudding carefully took hold of these older memories and studied them closely. Then, she snapped her fingers and started fiddling with the film.

New images were added. Law saw Doflamingo in a fair amount of them. He saw Vergo, too. In fact, he saw a lot of people he had thought he’d never seen before.

Pudding played memory surgeon for quite a while. Law spent that time focusing on not moving, because he had no idea what she meant by “breaking” him, and he sure as hell didn’t want to find out.

Finally, she smiled. “There we go. I think I got it all back.” She patted Law on the top of his head (and ruffled his hair, which was weird but okay, he guessed), and that seemed to do the trick. All the ghostly memory film slipped right back into his head.

And then he remembered everything.

“You’ll get him out?” Cora’s voice wavered with hope. “He’ll live?”

“No!” Law shouted, but he didn’t listen.

“Yeah.” The demon, great and terrible and unfathomable, reached down with one massive, clawed hand. “He’ll be fine. But I’ll get your soul when you die.”

“Cora, please!” Law’s throat was raw from screaming, but Cora only looked back at him and smiled.

“Don’t worry, Law. I love you!”

He extended his own hand and placed it on the demon’s palm.

Everything went white.

Luffy dreamed.

He dreamed about Law.

Adventures were always exciting. And this adventure seemed to be even better than any of the others that came before it! But this contract wasn’t like anything else he had done before, and he knew it was because of his human.

Law was brave, and kind of mean, and definitely driven. He seemed willing to do whatever it took to achieve his goal.

And he was beautiful, too. Luffy wasn’t one to care much about looks, but he had to admit the human was nice to look at.

In his dream, his head was in Law’s lap again, feeling those fingers card gently through his hair. How they carefully pressed against his horns.

His dream self purred as Law picked him up and sat him more properly on his lap. Luffy looked into Law’s gray eyes and suddenly felt a strange thump in his chest.
Law’s hand rested against Luffy’s cheek. He said nothing, just softly swiped his thumb over Luffy’s old scar and smiled.

The demon’s heart began to beat faster.

Then, the scene changed. He saw Law being attacked by that Vergo guy, and suddenly he was filled with the same protective rage that had washed over him when it really happened. In his dream, he launched himself at Vergo and tore the other demon apart. He easily came apart in Luffy’s claws. When he was finished, he picked up Law and cradled the human in his arms.

Covered in blood staring at those gray eyes once more, the scene changed again.

Doflamingo towered over them. His laugh echoed through the dream, and he raised one hand. With a flick of his fingers, Law pulled himself out of Luffy’s arms and began to walk towards the behemoth. His movements were jerky, unwilling, and when Law looked back at him, his face was full of barely-hidden fear.

Luffy tried to run towards him, to save him, but his feet were stuck to the spot.

Doflamingo’s smile could cut steel. Luffy, despite his need to break free and save his human, couldn’t move from his spot. He was stuck. Powerless. Useless. Weak.

It was at the depths of his despair that something interesting happened.

Law stopped moving. His whole body went rigid, and then relaxed. He held out his hand, shouted, and then everything went white.

Luffy woke up with a start. He tried to sit up, but his limbs were still too exhausted to hold the rest of his body up.

“Luffy!” Chopper greeted, the relief in his voice almost too obvious. “You’re awake!”

“Mm,” Luffy mumbled, “Torao?”

“Well... “ His doctor frowned. “I think it’s best if you see him for yourself.”

“But he’s okay?” Luffy wouldn’t stop his struggle until he got a yes or no answer.

Chopper could tell. He sighed. “Yes. I’ll go get him.” He pointed one hoof at the bedridden demon. “You stay there.”

Luffy nodded dutifully. He normally wouldn’t listen to Chopper’s advice, but his arms and legs still felt like dead weights. He knew he wasn’t going anywhere soon.

Chopper left and came back not a minute later, with Law in tow. He looked... different. Older, somehow. Once sure that neither of them would cause a huge ruckus that would mess up the infirmary, Chopper quietly slipped out of the room.

“Torao!” Luffy smiled. “You weren’t hurt?”

Law smiled back, but it looked pained. “Not this time, no.”

The human moved closer to Luffy’s bedside. His eyes ran over all of Luffy’s bandages, all the bruises and cuts that would surely fade to scars. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be.” Luffy shrugged, ignoring the spike of pain in his shoulders. “This isn’t our first rodeo.”
“You haven’t been up against someone like Doflamingo,” Law countered, “He’s different.”

Luffy rolled his eyes. “Yeah, he’s working with Kaido. We were going to fight him some day anyways.” Luffy couldn’t help but find some joy in Law’s confused look.

If he wanted to be the demon king, he was going to have to take out the competition one way or another. But he didn’t feel like explaining demon-world politics at the moment, so he just smiled. “Really, it’s fine.”

That made the human’s face go dark. “No, it’s not.” He reached out to hold onto Luffy’s hand. “I wasn’t aware of Doflamingo’s true strength.”

Luffy laughed. “Yeah, none of us were.” But he knew his friends would be okay. They’d gotten out of worse scrapes before.

“I used to be aware.” Law’s grip around Luffy’s hand tightened. “But he made me forget.”

“So… you know now?” There was an element to this conversation that Luffy was missing.

Law gave a tired nod.

Well, context wasn’t necessary if he had it all figured out. “Okay, so you know now. That means we have a better chance this time!”

The look Law gave him was withering. “It means now I know just how stupid I was to rush into this with barely any plan.”

“So we’ll plan!” Luffy tried to sit up. “We have to get my friends back.”

“We’ll try.” Law closed his eyes. In that action alone, it looked like he was holding the entire world’s pain on his shoulders. “We probably won’t make it.”

“Bullshit. We’ll be fine.” Luffy smiled up at him. “It always works out in the end.”

Law closed his eyes, like he didn’t want to face that smile. “Doflamingo and Kaido have a contract.”

“Duh.”

“It’s not like our contract. It’s… stronger.” Law pulled up a chair and collapsed into it shakily. “Because of that, Doflamingo has developed powers of his own.”

Luffy nodded. That much he understood -- no regular human could attack him the way Doflamingo had. He controlled razor-sharp strings that came from the tips of his fingers, and as far as Luffy could remember, he had never met a human with that power before. “So what’s his weakness?”

Law frowned. “I don’t think he has one. I thought cutting off his supply would ruin him… but we fucked that up because I didn’t have all the information.”

“Why not?” Luffy furrowed his brow. “It sure seemed like you knew everything.”

“… Cora made a deal with Kaido, too.” Law looked down at the floor. “He wanted me to forget about demons. I used to know about Kaido, his powers, even about Doflamingo’s contract with him. But I had that taken from me.”

Luffy didn’t know who Cora was. A new person? “That’s stupid.”
Law looked up at him sharply. “He wanted me to forget so I could try to live a normal life.” Then, a small, tired laugh. “I guess he underestimated my need for revenge.”

“So you’ve got ‘em back now. What’s the big deal?” Luffy knew that Law was upset, but he didn’t quite get why. Clearly he cared about this Cora person. Did he die?

“If I had remembered, we could have avoided what happened in Dressrosa. The others would still be here.” Law brushed a hand against Luffy’s bandages. “You wouldn’t be hurt. I’m sorry.”

“Doesn’t sound like it’s your fault.” Luffy struggled to sit up a little higher. He looked Law in the eye. “Cora’s the one who took your memories. That makes it his fault.”

“No!” Law jerked upright. “It is not his fault. Doflamingo is the one who caused all of this.” Luffy shrugged. “Okay, so it’s Mingo’s fault. We were going to go kick his ass anyways.”

“But… you lost your friends.” Law looked down.

Luffy rolled his eyes and reached out to pat Law on the back. “I said they’d be okay.”

“But what if they aren’t?” Luffy was, to be honest, a little surprised that Law seemed to care so much. Most humans he’d made contracts with just saw demons as a means to an end, not really something worth worrying over. Vivi was different, sure, but she was a special case and definitely not the norm. To see another human worry so much over his friends was… nice.

“I promise they will be.” Luffy smiled. “They can handle whatever Mingo throws at them.”

Chapter End Notes

next week we’ll be on time, i promise! thanks for reading! ^u^
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

I'M SO SORRY ABOUT LAST WEEK! it was the first week of my last quarter at school, so i got a bit sidetracked! on that note, oh my god! i'm almost done with college! AH!

okay, enough of that. here's the latest chapter! we're almost done!! just two more to go... :)

Zoro, Chopper, Franky, and Luffy all sat before Law at the table. They had decided to hold this meeting in the kitchen so that Sanji could stay close to the stove. Luffy, newly out of the infirmary, was starving, and he hated to wait.

“So… both Doflamingo and Cora made deals with Kaido?” Sanji asked. He stirred some meat in a pan and the resulting sizzle caused Luffy, who was sat next to Law, to start drooling.

“Yes. Cora made his to save my life.” Law handed Luffy a napkin. “Doflamingo killed him, but because of that deal, he couldn’t kill me. So he just wiped my memories and turned me loose.”

“I guess that old deal won’t protect you now, huh.” Franky frowned.

Law nodded. “I doubt it. It seemed like a one-time thing.”

“What about Doflamingo’s deal? Why is he still around?” Zoro spoke up. He narrowed his eye at Law. “Is there anything important you can tell us?”

Law stifled the urge to roll his eyes. He understood why Zoro was being a little pushy. “I guess there’s more than one way to make a deal. Depending on what you’re paying, there are different benefits to each party involved.”

“So what did Doflamingo offer up?” Sanji tossed the meat onto a plate and placed it in front of Luffy. The demon lit up and ate the whole thing in seconds. Sanji returned to the stove and Law handed Luffy another napkin.

“He must have offered the same thing Cora had. A soul is a pretty powerful bartering tool.”

Luffy nodded. “It’s one of the best deals a demon can get.” He swallowed the food that was in his mouth. “I don’t really like asking for ‘em, though. I wouldn’t know what to do with them.”

“Well, you might have to figure it out.” Law turned to Luffy and fixed the demon with an intense stare. “I want to make another deal with you.”

“Woah, woah,” Franky sat up, “Wait a minute. We haven’t even finished the first contract!”

“That’s fine.” Law smiled. “This new deal will go nicely with the old one.” This time, there was no hesitation. “Let’s take down Kaido.”
Luffy grinned. “You sure?”

“Yeah. And I’ll give you my soul, too.” He figured it had been forfeit when he started this whole adventure anyways, and if he had to lose his soul, it might as well be to a vibrant demon like Luffy. At least it wasn’t going to waste. “I’m sure you’ll find something to do with it.”

That got everyone to stop and stare.

“Are you sure?” Franky asked, with a worried twist in his features. “Souls are serious business.”

Law laughed. “I don’t mind. I trust you guys.”

To be fair, it was a serious decision. He was not taking it lightly because he thought it was a simple matter. But, when throwing around words like “dealing with demons,” and “giving away your soul,” what else could he do but laugh? There were no options left. He had gotten these demons into trouble, and perhaps the only way he could try to make up for it was by giving the one thing he had left to give.

He felt the hair on the back of his neck prickly. Luffy was staring at him with a heavy look in his eyes. “You really want to do that?”

Law felt crushed under the weight of Luffy’s gaze. The demon was goofy, light-hearted and bright, there was no doubt about that. But when he looked at Law like that, suddenly the human was reminded that this was a demon. He had lived thousands upon thousands of years before this, and whether he completed this contract or not, he would probably survive to live another couple thousand years after. He had seen things Law could not imagine.

He was old and powerful, and when he fixed Law with a gaze that was full of all that ancient knowledge, the human felt incredibly small.

“Yes.”

Despite the instinctual fear that thrilled through Law’s blood while being fixed with that gaze… he was okay with giving this being his soul.

To put it simply, Luffy looked like a boy stretched too tight under human skin. But his grin was infectious and warm, and it comforted Law. As weird as that sounded.

In a way, Law wanted to give this demon his soul. He sure as hell wasn’t doing anything else with it.

It was like a flip was switched. One second, Luffy was staring at him with an intensity that Law had never felt before. The next, he was sat back in his seat with a small smile. “Well, okay. If you’re offering, I’ll take it!” Luffy shrugged, then turned to Sanji, who had just finished up another plate of food. “Sanji!”

“I’m coming, I’m coming,” the cook groused as he dropped the plate in front of his friend. Luffy inhaled the food again and grinned brighter than the sun.

“We’ll have to set up some kind of ritual for it.” Luffy spoke through a mouth full of food, “Contracts with souls are more heavy duty than the one we had.”

“We’ll get it all set up.” Zoro spoke up, eyeing Law with something that reeked of vague approval. “You two should probably get ready. It’s an intense process.”

That didn’t sound… great.
The area with the most space was on the deck of the Sunny. Everyone except for Luffy and Law had vacated the immediate premises -- apparently the “process” only worked when it was just the two of them.

Law felt the grass tickle between his toes. He had decided to forego shoes for this, probably because he would have felt awkward wearing shoes while Luffy’s feet were bare.

“So,” Luffy said, a grin wide on his face, “Are we making a deal or what?”

“What do I do?” Law raised a brow. Nothing seemed particularly strange or ritualistic about the deck, he and Luffy were just standing in front of each other like a couple of idiots.

Luffy stuck out his hand. “Just shake my hand, say what you want, and what you’re giving in return.”

Okay. That seemed simple enough. Then why was his hair standing up on end?

Law reached out to grab Luffy’s hand. “I’m giving you my soul to help take down Kaido.”

Why was his heart pounding in his chest?

Luffy nodded. “I’ll take your soul and kick Kaido’s ass.”

Why did it feel like he couldn’t breathe?

Law’s fingers curled around Luffy’s as they shook hands, and then, much like in his memories, the world went white.

He blinked away the tears in his eyes as the brightness faded. When their hands had touched, and the world around him exploded into light, he had felt a powerful shock pass between them.

Then the light was gone, and so was the strange tingle that shot from where their hands met to Luffy’s heart.

“What… just happened?” Law rubbed at his eyes again, vision apparently still blurry. “What was that?”

Luffy shrugged. “I dunno. I’ve never made a deal like this before.”

Law frowned. “Do you… feel any different?”

The demon stepped back and took a moment to assess himself.

Body: still rubber. That was all he needed to know. “I think I’m good.”

“No, I mean, do you feel any more powerful?” Law rolled his eyes. “God, that sounds so stupid.”

“Oh,” Luffy cocked his head to the side, “Not really. Maybe it takes some time.”

Law sat down heavily on the grass of the deck with a tired sigh. “Yeah, okay. Maybe.” He laid down.

“Why, do you feel any different?” Luffy looked closer at his arms and tried stretching them. Everything felt pretty much the same. Maybe he was more energetic?
Law raised one hand and looked at the sky through his splayed fingers. “I’m not sure. I know Doflamingo and Cora got some kind of power from their deals… I just don’t know how they figured it out.”

Luffy perked up. “Maybe you can fly!”

Law laughed. “I don’t really want to test that theory.” He kept staring at the sky through his hand and didn’t say anything else. Luffy was fine with that. Sure, at the moment he didn’t feel any different, but during the deal he made with Law, it was a whole different story. Energy had crackled between them like lightning, sparks shooting out from where their hands were clasped, and Luffy felt like he’d been electrocuted.

Not that he’d know what that felt like. He was made of rubber. But the jolt of power had only gone through him for just a white-hot second, and then it was gone, and Luffy’s vision had cleared, and Law had looked like he’d just stared point-blank at one of those flash cameras.

It was… kind of cute.

But that raised a confusing emotion from inside him, something that he didn’t really care about giving a name to just yet. It was different from how he had felt about every other human before him, for sure. It was… softer. Warmer. Like he wanted to--

fight with him.

All of his contracts before, he’d made sure to protect the humans first and foremost. They were always getting themselves into danger. It was funny, but his job was to make sure they survived the deal. But Law... he wanted Law to be there with him as he took Doflamingo down. He wanted the human to bare his fangs and fight.

Together.

But that was a lot of revelation for one moment. Luffy was tired from the ritual, so he didn’t mind just letting his mind wander and chilling with Law for a few minutes while they both recovered.

But Luffy was Luffy, and contented silence wasn’t something he was very good with for long. He crawled over to Law and took the human’s still-outstretched hand in his own.

It was warm.

Law looked at him and snorted. “You all right?”


Law chuckled. “Okay, go ahead.”

Humans were different from demons. It wasn’t a bad thing, exactly. Just… different. Their motivations were weird, their emotions were funky, and the way they lived their too-short lives entrenched in regret and sorrow and despair… it was just absurd. Maybe that was just how people pressed for time lived. From the moment a human was born, they started dying. Everything in their life had to be done within a few years, lest they waste the rest of their life away. At least, that was what it looked like from the outside.

But Luffy’s existence had no end, probably. There was no demon like him to judge a life expectancy off of, so he just didn’t worry about it.
He pressed into the skin of Law’s hands that were covered in ink. The word DEATH was spread across his knuckles. Luffy chuckled a little at that.

“What?” Law asked.

“You have weird tattoos.” Luffy gently rubbed against Law’s knuckles again.

Law huffed and snatched his hand back. “They’re important to me.”

“I know,” Luffy smiled, “I like them.”

Law blushed.

… He liked it when the human blushed.

-- A thought popped into his head, sudden and prompted by the black ink against human skin. It was an idea he hadn’t considered before, a change to his body that just… never occurred to him.

He was flexible, in more ways than one. He had all the necessary abilities to pull off the idea that he had, but was it worth it?

Some people thought Luffy was stupid. He wasn’t - he just had better things to think about. He knew how to fight, how to use his powers to the best of their abilities, how to win. But he’d never considered this technique before. It was almost like it had been locked up in the back of his head, and this deal with Law had just put the key in the door.

“Something did change,” Luffy said, as if he hadn’t just gone on a mental journey. “I think I can take him.”

It’d be risky, sure. But if Luffy knew anything, it was how to go against every odd and still come out on top.

Law looked at him for a moment, studying him with those sharp golden eyes. “Really?”

“Yep!” Luffy nodded and smiled, flashing his human a quick thumbs-up. “I got this.”

“Great.” Law cleared his throat. “We should probably get everyone else back and discuss our next plan of action.” Law brushed himself off and stood back up. Luffy was quick to follow.

“Do we even have a plan?” Luffy tilted his head. “I thought it was just to make this deal.”

“Yeah, and you’ll like it,” Law grinned, “It’s the part where you kick Doflamingo’s ass.”

Chapter End Notes

let me know what you think!! thanks for reading!
“So, we don’t really have any way to sneak back into Dressrosa.” Sanji was quick to point that out. “Nami isn’t here to help us in.”

Everyone had gathered back together after Law and Luffy had finished making a new contract. They were all sitting out on the grass in a big circle in order to plan out their next move.

Law shrugged. “True. But I know something about Dressrosa that I didn’t know before.” He looked to Luffy, then to Zoro. “Make sure he doesn’t get too excited when he hears this, okay?”

The stone demon nodded.

“Dressrosa has an underground fighting ring.”

“What!” Luffy would have leapt out of his seat at the kitchen table, but Zoro immediately pushed him back down. “How do you know that?”

“It’s one of the ways he manages to keep people quiet. There’s a lot of gambling involved in the fighting ring and he uses that money to pay off anyone who digs too deep into his business.” Law cleared his throat. “And if the money doesn’t throw them off, he’ll just toss them in the ring.”

Zoro nodded. “That’s fucked up.”

“Definitely. But I know how to get into the ring.” Theoretically, at least -- it had been well over ten years since he had anything to do with the Donquixotes -- but hey, if a system wasn’t broken, why fix it? And at the time it had seemed as efficient as it could be. “Luffy, you’ll be our fighter.”

“Great!” Luffy bounced up in his seat. “Let’s go!”

“You’ll still have to disguise yourself in order to get in.” Sanji raised a brow. “Those of us who didn’t go the first time are fine, but Doflamingo knows you too well.”

“That won’t be a problem.” Law said confidently. “I’ll be posing at Luffy’s trainer.”

Zoro looked him up and down. “You?”

The human scoffed. “Funny. Yes, me. I’ll be unrecognizable.”

Brook made a doubtful noise, but was kind enough to keep his mouth shut.

“We head in tonight. Once we’re inside, you guys will all start looking for our -- your friends. Luffy and I will distract everyone else.” He didn’t have the right to call them his friends, did he?

“Wait wait wait.” Franky frowned. “I thought you didn’t want anyone to know we were coming.”
“We’ve got to take Doflamingo down.” Law said, solemn. “I’m sure he wants us to face him where he has power over us all. But if you can rescue Nami, Usopp, and Robin, we’ll be on more equal terms.”

Franky pursed his lips. “But he almost killed you last time! What’s different now?”

Law smiled grimly. “That’s what we’re going to find out.”

This time, Law led them to the back entrance.

“Back entrance” was maybe glorifying it too much. It looked more like a garage. But it was discreet and easily ignored, since it was on the other side of the building.

Law had managed to get Franky, Brook, Sanji, Zoro, and Chopper in without too much fuss. Without Nami’s illusions, it was a little more difficult to pass off their looks as human, but luckily the demons seemed to have an affinity for owning plenty of weird clothes. Sanji had instructed his team on how to dress to appear as human as possible, and by the time they were ready, the only one that looked out of place was Brook, with his skull of a face.

Sanji made him put on some gloves and a mask.

Once they were all dressed up and ready to go, you could only tell they weren’t human if you paid too much attention -- but they were going to a club. Nobody would be scrutinizing a couple more rowdy party folk.

But Law and Luffy, who were known by the demons at Dressrosa, had to go even further. They too had to wear masks… but since they were going somewhere different, they put a little more effort into their disguises.

Thank god these demons liked to play dress-up.

Law wore a mask that had bright, beady eyes and a smooth, round face. It bore an uncanny resemblance to a spotted seal. He dug around the Sunny for a pair of jeans and splattered some dark splotches of paint on it for an extra effect. He found a gray sweatshirt and covered that in spots, too.

Luffy wore a large mask that would have been endearing if it wasn’t so realistic. It was a monkey’s head, with a small, cute smile on its face and a strange twinkle in its eye. When he showed off his look, with his trademark red vest and blue shorts, Law frowned.

“You have to change your whole outfit, Luffy.” He raised a brow, though it was still behind the mask. “Hiding your face alone isn’t enough.”

“No, this is fine,” Luffy said breezily, “They won’t catch on.”

Law tried to argue, but soon realized it would be pointless -- Luffy was going to wear those clothes no matter what. He had barely managed to convince him to leave the straw hat behind, so Law figured he wouldn’t try to press his luck much further.

Once they were done with the disguises, he made sure the extraction team got into Dressrosa through the front entrance, while he and Luffy headed for the back. They had their own agenda.

Before anything else, he turned to Luffy. “Let me to the talking here, okay?”

“What if--”
“No. I’ve got this.”

He rapped his knuckles against the metal of the garage door and stepped back as it rumbled. There was a loud screech of metal, and then quiet. A large, burly man stared at them from inside the garage.

“You here to fight?” He asked. Law nodded. “You’re not on the list.”

“Then put us on.” Law said coolly. “My partner here is better than anyone else in this joint.”

The man laughed. “You sure about that?” He peered at Luffy, who just stared at him silently through the monkey mask. “Seems a little short.”

“That won’t be a problem. He’s strong.” Law shrugged. “I’d be willing to give you a cut of the winnings if you got us in.”


Luffy didn’t even bother looking at Law to confirm this was okay, he just barged on ahead. Law stifled his sigh and followed along.

Luffy hadn’t known what to expect. Maybe a crappy little room full of sweaty humans? But the place was… surprisingly nice. It was pretty well-lit, and there were seats for people who wanted to watch, and the ring itself was pretty nice, too. It was big, about the size of a wrestling ring that he had seen on TV once or twice (he was a demon, not some idiot who didn’t have cable).

But what was going on in the ring was much more interesting than what the place looked like. There was a person in there that was absolutely whaling on their opponent. It looked like they were getting whipped with a chain?

Law caught up to him and grabbed him by the arm. “Be careful,” he hissed, “We have to follow the plan.”

Luffy didn’t really know what the rest of the plan was. Cause a distraction? He could do that in like, two seconds tops. But Law’s grip on his arm was tight, so he figured he’d be patient for a little while to get the human to calm down.

When the person on the floor of the fighting ring stopped moving, a bell rang out and signaled the end of the match. The winner turned to face the audience. Luffy felt those piercing eyes swoop over him curiously as the winner surveyed the crowd.

A microphone crackled to life. “And the winner is, once again, the hero of the colosseum, Diamante!” The announcer sounded totally stoked to announce this, as if the guy hadn’t just beat someone half to death. The crowd went wild with applause, and Diamante grinned. “That was the last scheduled fight for the night, thank you for coming!”

Law cursed under his breath, just loud enough for Luffy to pick up on it. Had he not planned for that? Well, that wouldn’t be a big problem. Luffy pushed forward to the edge of the ring, leaving Law behind once again. He heard a startled “Hey!” from his human, but that wasn’t stopping him.

“Mr. Diamante!” Luffy yelped. “I want to fight you!”

Diamante paused and looked down at the voice that had called his name. Luffy knew what he
looked like - a kid in a monkey mask. But maybe the thought of another easy win would get this
Diamante guy down for another fight.

The tall (impossibly tall, Luffy thought) man looked down to where the announcer sat. He smiled a
sick, too-wide smile and nodded.

The announcer slammed his palm into the table. “Hey, folks! It’s your lucky day -- someone’s
challenged Diamante to a fight! Let’s bring this challenger into the ring and see some blood!”

The crown cheered again. Luffy turned around to look for Law. He found his human watching him
from the back of the room, and if he didn’t have that dumb seal mask on, Luffy would be able to see
his silly shocked expression that he was totally wearing.

Luffy liked Law’s shocked face. Luffy liked Law’s face in general. He couldn’t wait until they got to
take off the masks.

He climbed into the ring and took a deep breath. This was a big brawl, nothing special. He could
probably take Diamante down pretty quickly, but what would be a bigger distraction -- winning the
fight easily and becoming the new champion? Or taking his time with the fight?

Ugh, he was starting to sound like Law. Planning things.

He loosened himself up and smiled under his mask. He would just do what he does best -- fight.

Diamante sneered at him from across the ring. “Why are you wearing a mask?”

Law had coached Luffy on his answer to this question. He had made sure Luffy remembered what
he was supposed to say if someone asked why he was disguised. But Luffy let the answer slip his
mind as he blurted, “Doesn’t matter. I’m here to kick your ass.”

He heard the distinct sound of Law smacking his head in frustration, and then the bell rang.

Diamante was quick. He lunged forward with the very same chains he had used to beat on the last
opponent with.

But Luffy was quicker. He dodged out of the way and took his opportunity to slam a speedy but
powerful punch to Diamante’s back. The man grunted but turned again to face the little demon.
“You aren’t human, are you?” He hissed, lashing his chain out in another attack. “That makes things
interesting,” he continued, “Neither am I.”

The chains he had whipped out moved in a way that chains shouldn’t move. They wrapped
themselves around Luffy’s legs and slammed him into the ground of the ring.

Huh. Maybe this fight wasn’t going to be so easy after all.

Luffy quickly untangled himself from the chains and got back on his feet. But Diamante bore down
on him and used his free hand to punch Luffy square in the jaw. He heard his jaw make an
uncomfortable crunching noise, and then his mouth filled up with blood. He lifted his mask up just
far enough so that his mouth would peek out, and he spat his blood at Diamante’s feet. He let the
mask fall back down in place and knelt down on the ground.

Luffy’s body wasn’t like other demons’. His origin was blurry, and he never knew any other demon
quite like himself. But he knew himself, after living for thousands of years, so he knew how to utilize
his rubber body in order to be as powerful as possible.
He compressed his legs as tightly against the ground as he could, then released.

Gear Second was always weird at first. His blood pumped faster and faster, which let him move quicker and attack more powerfully, but his brain always lagged behind for the first few seconds. His vision blurred, and then it cleared just in time to see Diamante’s chain wrapping itself around his legs again. But it didn’t move with the blinding speed it had before. It was like a pudgy snake trying to curl up around a bolt of lightning.

Luffy grabbed Diamante’s shoulders and pushed himself out of the way as he slammed the champion fighter into the ground.

Diamante went down, but caught himself before he hit the floor. He looked up to where Luffy had landed -- on the other side of the ring -- and this time his grin was demonic.

“Good, good. I don’t have to play with you.” He whipped the chain towards Luffy again, but this time it was just as fast as him. Luffy barely leapt out of the way of its grip. He zipped up to Diamante’s body and punched him in the gut as hard as he possibly could with those precious spare seconds he had.

Diamante coughed up blood, but he didn’t go down from that. He took the opportunity to grab Luffy’s arm and slam him down on the ground again. He stepped on Luffy’s chest to try and keep him from squirming away again.

“I’m the champion around here,” Diamante gloated, “You may think you’re hot shit, but you’re not.” He twitched his hand that held the chains, and they wrapped around Luffy’s midsection. He took his foot off the demon and raised it behind him, preparing for a big kick.

Luffy took in a deep breath and filled his belly with air. If he could just loosen the chains a bit, he could slip out. But the chains seemed to swell and shrink with him--

Sharp pain ripped through him as Diamante kicked him in the stomach. His hands flew to the wound and to his surprise, they came away bloody.

Diamante tapped his shoe against the ground. Up close, Luffy could see it concealed a knife. “You and me, we’re demons,” he continued, “We’re allowed to fight dirty.”

Luffy struggled against the chains, but they weren’t moving. Diamante kicked him again, without the knife this time, right in the head.

His mask flew off and he saw stars.

But Diamante stopped. He took a long look at Luffy, face now exposed, and started to laugh. “What are you doing here?”

He turned to scan the crowd again. “Your friend, then… is he-- Ow!”

Luffy had wiggled over to Diamante’s legs and started biting him. He wouldn’t give up. He couldn’t give up. He was supposed to help Law, not doom him.

Diamante kicked him again, and this time he coughed up more blood.

“Pica!” Diamante yelled. “Go get--”

“Don’t worry about it.” Doflamingo said casually from the back of the room. “I’m already here.”
Luffy froze when he heard that voice. Yeah, the plan was to get him over here, but it wasn’t supposed to be like this.

Oh well. He pushed down his fear and let the heat of the battle warm him up. He had a contract with Law, and he was going to fucking finish it.

Luffy took a deep breath, pulled his hand up to his mouth, and bit down, hard enough that he tasted blood. He blew air into his body as quickly as he could, expanding his arm to unimaginable proportions. He moved the air from his hand to his chest, where he forced the chains to break and let him free.

Diamante simply smirked as Luffy pulled himself up off the ground. He wiped his bloody mouth with the back of his hand and fixed Doflamingo with a glare.

“You.” Luffy glowered, fury pooling into his words. “I’m here to get rid of you.”

Doflamingo laughed. It was a cold laugh, but Luffy was running too hot with anger to feel its chill. “I feel like we’ve done this dance before. You know how it’s going to end, right?”

The crowd parted around Doflamingo as he walked up to the ring. Everyone seemed to realize that the fun fight was over, and they all rushed to the exits before things got messy. Doflamingo grinned up at the small demon and then nodded to Diamante. “Take care of him. I’ll handle the other one.”

“Are you sure you want me to deal with this one?” Diamante asked, as if Luffy wasn’t even there. For a moment, he even seemed… hesitant?

Doflamingo smirked. “I wouldn’t trust anyone else to do this job. You’re the best I have.”

“You’re right, I am the best!” All hesitation gone, Diamante grabbed Luffy tightly by the shoulder. “Don’t worry, boss. I’ll make this quick.”

Doflamingo had already turned and started walking away, but he waved a hand as he moved. “Don’t do anything yet.”

Diamante kicked out Luffy’s legs from underneath him. All the air got knocked out of him when he hit the floor, and before he could regain his breath, a sharp boot dug into his back and held him down.

“Torao!” Luffy coughed. “Run!”

But it was too late for that, for both of them. Doflamingo had zeroed in on Law already, his fingers twitching as he walked. “You know, I don’t really understand what your goal here is,” he said casually as he got closer, “You try and take away a source of income, sure. But you fuck that up.” He flicks one hand and Law, who had removed his mask, fell unnaturally still. “You come here to get dirt on me. You fuck that up, too.” Law took a step towards him. From Luffy’s vantage point under Diamante’s heel, he looked kind of terrified. “You come back. Why? You must have known this was going to end in failure, too.”

Law strained uselessly against his invisible bonds. He fixed Doflamingo with a look that was equal parts fear and hate. “Third time’s the charm.”

Doflamingo laughed again. “Doesn’t look like it! Tell me, kid. What’s changed?” He gestured back to Luffy, who was still stuck under Diamante’s boot.

Diamante pressed down harder on Luffy’s back. He tried to bite his tongue to keep his mouth shut,
but he couldn’t stop the yelp of pain that forced its way out.

“You must have made some kind of deal with this demon,” Doflamingo smirked, “In order to get this far, you must have given up something pretty important. But did you know? If your demon dies while you’re under contract, you get it all back.” He pulled Law along like the human was a resistant dog on a leash and walked back towards the ring. “So don’t worry. I’ll get your soul back right now.”

Diamante pulled something else out from his sleeves. It had a metallic noise to it. Luffy turned his head around (thanks, rubber neck) to confirm that yes, the demon had indeed pulled out a sword. How the hell had he managed to fit a sword into his clothes like that?

Well, it wasn’t the time to ask that kind of question. From the way things were going, it looked like he was about to lose his head.

“Stop!” Law redoubled his efforts in trying to break free. “Don’t kill him!”

Luffy’s skin crawled when he felt the cold metal of the sword against his neck.

Death was something he didn’t think about too much. Sure, in his line of work, he’d faced it a few times. Like the time when Crocodile impaled him. Or when Hody Jones took a nasty chunk out of him. Or even when he had faced off greater beings like Akainu — and how he’d always carry a reminder of that encounter, branded right into his chest. He always survived, if barely.

To be honest, death never really bothered him. He knew he’d die eventually. He just hoped that he’d live long enough to reach his dreams, to know his friends were safe, to not have any loose ends that would never be tied up.

But this time he wasn’t so sure. His friends were… somewhere. Not there. Hopefully safe. Law screamed and yelled and fought, but Luffy could see where the strings dug into his body. He wasn’t going anywhere. He wasn’t saving anyone.

At the end of it all, Luffy was just sad that he hadn’t kept his side of the contract.

No, not that. The contract was, at this point, just an excuse.

He was upset that he couldn’t keep his promise.

Diamante raised the sword over his head.

Luffy craned his neck up to get a good look at Law. “Sorry, Torao. Give ‘em hell for me, okay?”

Chapter End Notes

i know i wrote this fic but luffy calling people who dont have cable stupid is like. so mean. i don't have cable. a fake demonic version of a fictional character is blasting me for my tv choices i'd like to get off this ride please
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

the title of this chapter is "luffy fucking dies"

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The sword came down.

… But Luffy never felt the steel come crashing down on his head. All he felt was a sudden draft of
wind. He heard a loud crash, and a confused, pained yelp, but it wasn't him, and it wasn't Law...

He scrambled upright, only to discover that something kind of drastic had happened when he had
been busy accepting death.

Diamante was tangled up in Doflamingo’s strings, right where Law used to be. Both of them had
stupid, confused looks on their faces.

Law was… right next to him. Staring at the palm of his hand in total shock.

Luffy wasn’t going to let this chance get away. He grabbed Law by the arm and dragged him
upright. “Let’s go!”

“I did that.” Law said quietly - or, as quietly as he could. “I did something.”

“You sure did!” Luffy smiled brightly. “Thanks.”

With that, they started to run. Doflamingo would gather his wits sooner than later, and they didn’t
plan on sticking around for that.

During their mad dash through the halls of the underground, Luffy’s den-den mushi started to ring.
Without thinking twice, he answered it.

“Luffy, are you okay?” Zoro’s concerned voice crackled out. “We think we know where everyone’s
being held. It’s pretty dangerous over here.”

“Same here,” Luffy panted into the receiver, “We’re distracting Mingo for now. Will you be okay?”

“Of course. Are you worried about us?” The snail rolled its eye.

Luffy just grinned. “We’ll see you guys back on the ship. Head straight there after you’ve picked
everyone up.”

“Are you sure?” Zoro asked. “Things are gonna get real ugly, real fast.”

Law held his hand out to Luffy. Luffy gave him the den-den.

“Don’t worry. We’ll be fine, too.” Law said grimly. “Get everyone else to safety first.”

Zoro didn’t say anything for a second. Then he sighed. “All right. Good luck.” The line cut off with
a click and Luffy tucked the snail back into his pocket.

“Do you think we got this?” Luffy tilted his head.

Law grinned. “Usually I’m the one asking that question.” He remembered the soft blue light in his hands. “But yeah, I think we got this.”

He didn’t exactly know what had happened back there, but when Diamante’s sword started its downward arc, in that moment he wanted nothing more than to keep Luffy safe.

He did have a power. He didn’t understand it, but he had something.

“Where are we going to fight him?” Luffy frowned thoughtfully. “We don’t have a lot of options.”

“I think we should head to the dance floor.” Law looked behind him. Pretty soon, Doflamingo would catch up to them. “I think I’ve got a plan.”

Zoro sighed as he pocketed his den-den mushi. Luffy and Law would be fine, probably. It wasn’t something he had time to worry about.

Especially not when Monet and Vergo, the two demons who started them off on this whole mess, were right in front of him. “We’ve been told to guard the prisoners,” Monet said with a smirk, “I don’t know why Joker didn’t just want to kill them outright.”

Zoro looked to Sanji. “Do I even have to ask which one I’m taking on?”

“Oh, shut up.” The cook spat at him. “Brook, Chopper and I will take on Vergo. You and Franky will be fine without me.”

Before Zoro could make another quip back, Vergo spoke. “How do you know my name?” He asked quizzically, head tilted. “Though I’d prefer if you called me Mr. Vergo.”

Sanji sneered back at him. “Law told us.”

“Interesting.” Vergo stepped forward and brandished his bamboo blade. “He may have his memories back, but it seems he forgot to be scared of us.”

“Nah,” Franky grinned, “He just found some super cool friends.”

Doflamingo burst onto the dance floor with all the energy of a man ready to kill. His hands were poised, ready to send strings flying out at a moment’s notice.

Alone on the dance floor sat Luffy. His legs were crossed and he played with his fingers, stretching them and pulling them back further than any non-rubber being could ever go.

“Hey.” Luffy nodded at him. “Let’s fight.”

He dodged out of the way just in time to avoid Doflamingo’s strings. Had he been a second slower, they would have torn him to shreds.

Luffy induced Gear Second and bounded out of range of another one of Doflamingo’s attacks. He shot himself up close to punch him square in the gut, like he had done to Diamante.

This didn’t even stun the monstrous human. He didn’t even bother using his strings, he just reached
down, lightning-fast, and gripped Luffy’s wrist so hard that it hurt.

“Kaido warned me about you.” Doflamingo grinned. “The little demon who thinks he can take on the world.”

Luffy spat at his feet. “I’m not little. Everyone else is just tall.” He craned his neck back and shouted. “Toroa!”

There was a bright flash of blue light, and then Luffy tumbled back to safety, out of Doflamingo’s grip. In his place was Law, fire in his eyes and death on his hands - literally.

But aside from his tattoos, he held his pocket knife in one hand. Kikoku, he had called it - it glowed blue with the same light that had saved Luffy earlier. The demon watched as Law slammed the knife down and sliced off Doflamingo’s hand at the wrist.

The crime lord roared in pain as Law stood on his own two feet. His severed hand fell to the floor.

Luffy ran out of his hiding place and stood next to Law. “We got this.”

But Doflamingo was nowhere near finished. The hand twitched on the floor, and much to Luffy’s surprise, flew back to its owner. Though it was faint, he picked up on the sound of flesh tearing.

Doflamingo had sewn his own hand back on.

That had pretty much been their entire plan. Now the cat was out of the bag… Law tensed up beside him, ready to fight. “What now?”

Blood rushed in his head, the sound of it nearly drowning out everything except for one singular thought.

Doflamingo had to be taken down, at any cost. His strings were dangerous, capable of so many different things. He could control people, he could cut them to ribbons, he could even heal himself - there was nothing he couldn’t do-

Hold up.

Luffy’s power was strong. But was he really using his abilities to the fullest of their abilities? Law probably would have called this moment an epiphany, but Luffy wasn’t really into the whole “using big words to sound smarter” thing like the human was.

Whatever it was, something clicked inside of him that hadn’t before. The idea that had first come to him on the ship, after the ritual with Law, finally seemed like it could really, actually work. Why now? Maybe because he’d never considered it in the thousands of years he’d been alive, or maybe because he’d never been able to do it before, or maybe because he hadn’t ever needed it until this exact moment. Who knew?

Certainly not one Monkey D. Luffy, future Demon King and current fighter in a battle to the death.

He closed his eyes and covered himself in haki.

Monet and Vergo were good fighters. Excellent, even. But they were no match for a crew of demons half-crazed with worry for their friends and excitement over getting to go all-out in a fight.

After all, the best way to relieve stress is to destroy your opponent. Zoro almost yawned as Monet fell to his blade for the last time. “You done yet, shitty cook?” He shot a glance over to where the
others had been fighting.

Vergo looked worn out. He may have had ridiculously strong haki, but even he couldn’t keep a strong defense up against the monsters he was fighting. “Shut the hell up,” Sanji snapped as he kicked Vergo in the face. The man dropped like a sack of bricks. “We’re fine.”

“Good.” Zoro looked to Brook. “Can you see what’s on the other side of this door?”
“Of course!” The skeleton wasted no time in forcing his spirit out of his body. Zoro caught him before his bones hit the ground - not that that would have really hurt him. But he grinned in that weird skeleton way regardless and phased through the door. He was gone for a few moments before he zoomed back into his body and leapt up and out of Zoro’s arms. “Oh, dear! We need to get in there right away.”

“Super,” Franky brushed Brook aside, “Give me one second.” He gestured for the rest of them to back up, then aimed his canon at the door. He fired a burst that absolutely destroyed the entire wall and sent the entire building rumbling. “Well.” He laughed. “That’ll attract some more attention.”

But their missing crew was there - Nami, Robin, and Usopp were all tied up and in various states of beaten, with Usopp looking the worst. Chopper rushed in and immediately started checking them over for any majorly debilitating injuries.

“Wh… Chopper? What are you guys doing here?” Usopp asked, his eyes almost glazed over as he looked at his friends with shock. “You’re all okay?”

“Yes, we’re here to take you home.” Brook said softly as he began to untie Usopp. Sanji immediately ran over to Nami to untie her. Franky knelt down by Robin and peered nervously at her.

“Did they hurt you?”

Robin gave him a small smile. “It was nothing I couldn’t handle.”

He smiled back, and as soon as she was untied, he wrapped her in his arms and swung her around.

As soon as Nami was untied, she scrambled over to Usopp. “Is he okay?” She pushed some of his hair out of his face and stared at him, worry apparent in her eyes.

“He’ll be okay. We just need to get him back to the Sunny.” Chopper frowned. “Why is he hurt so bad?”

Nami sighed. “The one time he decides to be some sort of hero, it’s to keep Robin and I from getting hurt.”

“And it was worth it! Ow,” Usopp snapped up at her, then winced as Chopper wiped a cloth covered in alcohol over a wound on his face. “I’ll be fine. But maybe someone should carry me out of here, just in case.”

Zoro rolled his eye. If he had enough energy to extort more physical labor out of them, he really would be fine.

“Since you did the right thing and protected the ladies with your life, I guess I’ll help you out of here.” Sanji waved his hand at the plant demon and gave him a big grin.

“Oh, you’re not going anywhere.”

A new voice. Zoro turned around to see maybe the tallest man he’d ever met. He was long and
skinny, and if he knew anything about human anatomy, it was that they didn’t look… like that.

“Who are you?” He curled his lip and drew his swords.

“I suppose it doesn’t matter if I tell you or not. I’m Diamante, the star of this show.”

Well, it looked like they’d have to fight their way out.

There was no other way to put it. One second, Luffy was next to him, a feral grin on his face as he stared down Doflamingo’s imposing figure.

The next second, steam filled the room, so much so that Law couldn’t see anything. And, from the way Doflamingo shouted in surprise, he couldn’t see anything either.

“Luffy!” Law called out. “Are you okay?” If Doflamingo hadn’t predicted this, then it probably wasn’t one of his cronies. But it was still almost definitely not a good sign.

“Don’t worry.” Luffy said, from somewhere above Law. The human then realized that the spot where Luffy had been before was no longer Luffy-shaped. “I think we’ve got this.”

Law looked up. Luffy was still right next to him, no doubt about that. But he wasn’t the same Luffy that Law had come to know and tolerate. No, this one was… bigger. To say the least.

As the steam cleared, Law got a better look at this new form.

His horns were larger now, curving out of his head like twin black scythes. His ears were pointed and tipped with the same strange black substance that now seemed to be partially covering him like great flames licking across his body. His mouth was full of fangs, and for once, he was frowning.

And he was humongous. Bigger than Law, even. Had he been anyone else, Law was certain he’d be terrified of this demon. But… this was Luffy. The Luffy who graciously allowed himself to get dragged into this mess. The Luffy who obnoxiously got in his way during menial tasks while pretending his antics weren’t just for attention. The Luffy who sweat and bled and prepared to die for him, over and over again.

The Luffy who he was in love with.

… Huh. That one was unexpected. He’d unpack that later.

“You look like a god.” Law couldn’t stop the words from spilling out of his mouth.

Luffy laughed and gave Law the barest hint of a smile. “That’s rude.”

But when he turned to face Doflamingo for a final fight, Law couldn’t help but continue to agree with his original statement. Luffy looked like a god of vengeance, ready to strike down those that enacted injustice upon the innocent.

It was the most beautiful thing Law had ever seen in his life.

Doflamingo didn’t let Law have any more time to gawk. He gathered his senses quickly and took a step back when he too saw Luffy’s new appearance.

“What… how did you do that?” He hissed, but then he raised his lips into a smile that looked more like a snarl. “It doesn’t matter.”

“You’re right. It doesn’t.” There was no trace of Luffy’s usual light tone. He was furious, plain and
simple. He wasted no more time in conversation.

Before either human (or semi-human) could process it, Doflamingo was flown backwards and crashed into the wall of the dance floor.

“How did you do that?” Law asked, incredulous. Luffy had just punched Doflamingo so hard that he looked like a ragdoll.

Luffy pulled his arm back and frowned in thought. Then he grinned, and his fangs flashed. “This is going to be easy.”

Doflamingo pulled himself back upright and shot a string directly at Law. The human wasted no time in creating that bright blue bubble. It encased the entire room, but as he formed the bubble, his vision went hazy for a moment. He was using too much energy by creating these bubbles so often.

But in a fight like this, if he didn’t give it his all, then what was the fucking point?

He switched places with a bar stool and watched as Doflamingo’s string sent metal bits scattering around the floor. Even the sharpest chunks of metal bounced uselessly off of Luffy’s skin.

Luffy bounded over to Doflamingo, faster than he’d ever been before, and punched him square in the gut. That one clearly hurt. Doflamingo keeled over and coughed up a lot of blood. He stood back up, fingers twitching, but Luffy grabbed a hold of his hand and crunched the man’s fingers. Doflamingo roared in pain… and then waved his other hand.

A giant whip of strings grew out of the floor and ran right through Luffy’s torso.

“Don’t think you’ve won yet, kid.” Doflamingo hissed as the whip retracted and disappeared. The demon coughed once and then fell to his knees.

“Luffy!” Law yelled. He tried to create another room, to get Luffy out of danger, but he could barely create one as big as the palm of his hand.

“I’m not where I am because of nothing.” Doflamingo kicked Luffy aside and started a slow walk towards Law. Luffy slumped over, a hand clutched to the hole in his chest. As Law watched on in horror, he coughed up blood.

“Kaido is looking out for me. God himself is looking out for me. You think I run this business because it’s fun?” Doflamingo smiled. “Well, it is fun. But I run this business because I have to. Because I’m supposed to. Because the world is rotten, and I’m going to burn it down.”

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Law looked for any means of escape, but there were none. He was trapped.

“Corazon protected you. He knew you were special.” Doflamingo twitched the fingers on his working hand. Law found himself immediately tied up again. This time the strings dug into his flesh so hard that he knew he would bleed. “I knew it, too. That’s why I took you in. I trained you to be a part of my family.”

“No.” Law narrowed his eyes. “You were training me to be a sacrifice.”

“Sacrifice... is such a hallowed, holy word.” Doflamingo said airily. “Let’s be honest. I was going to give you to Kaido. He was going to turn you into a demon.”

The strings tightened their grip. Law found himself gasping for breath.
“But my brother wouldn’t allow it. He went ahead and sacrificed himself so you could live.” The lights of the dance floor reflected off of Doflamingo’s glasses, giving him an even more inhuman look. “You got away, sure. But only because I let you get away.” Doflamingo was there, right in front of Law. There was no stopping him. The strings tightened, and suddenly Law couldn’t breathe.

He reached out and touched Law’s cheek. “You’re mine. I own you.”

Law struggled for a big enough breath to allow himself to speak. He glared at Doflamingo. “I will not let Cora’s sacrifice be in vain.”

Doflamingo laughed.

- And then he was gone.

The strings around Law vanished, too. Air rushed into his lungs as he fell to his knees.

Only when he was on the ground did he realize that something was weird. The floor was cracked and crunched in a way it hadn’t been before, and in the epicenter of this disaster was Doflamingo. One of the lenses on his glasses had been cracked, and it was obvious that he had been knocked unconscious.

But that meant…

Law looked up to see Luffy. Blood oozed from his wound, and he looked like shit, but his fists were smoking and he had a triumphant grin on his face. “That should keep him quiet.”

Steam billowed out from him, and before Law could raise any alarm, Luffy was back to normal.

Though “back to normal” Luffy looked even worse. He sank to his knees, too. His breathing was labored and his eyes were dull, but he still looked content. “I think we got him this time.”

Law stood up and brushed himself off. “What do we do with him?”

Luffy shrugged. “I dunno. Aren’t there like, humans who deal with this kind of stuff?”

Well… not exactly. Law looked at the room around them. It had been thoroughly trashed. Doflamingo was a man with string powers who made deals with demons. There was no way regular cops could handle this.

“We need to find a way to restrain him first.” Law looked around, but didn’t really know what he was expecting to find. “We might have to bring him back to the Sunny.”

That perked Luffy right up. “I bet Franky could make something that’d keep him down! Maybe -” Luffy’s voice got cut off with a strangled choke. Law whipped around to see Doflamingo’s strings twined around the demon’s neck.

Things moved in slow motion. A room bubbled up around him effortlessly as he ran back to Doflamingo. He grabbed his pocket knife - Kikoku, the only gift he ever kept from Cora, apart from his life - and charged it with energy.

He wasn’t fully sure of how this ability of his worked. It seemed like whenever he was in this bubble - this room, he was able to do whatever he wanted. The world was his operating table.

And, as he’d learned in all those years of medical school, sometimes people died on that table.

He stabbed Doflamingo in the heart and discharged all the energy he had stored up in his knife. Light
exploded around the two of them, blinding Law. Doflamingo made a hoarse, low, haunting moan as wave after wave of energy pumped through his body.

When the light faded away and Law pulled Kikoku back out, Doflamingo was dead.

“That takes care of that, then.” Law wiped his knife off and put it away. “We should get out of here.”

Luffy cleared his throat and smiled. “Thanks, Law.”

“I thought my name was Torao.”

“That’s what I said!”

Law rolled his eyes and helped Luffy stand back up. Together, they limped out of Dressrosa.

He wished he could say that he left his own nightmares behind with Doflamingo’s body.

Chapter End Notes

yes i know i initially had this fic as 8 chapters BUT there's an epilogue i forgot to put into the equation so :3c

rip doflamingo.... you will be missed...

also, not to be That Guy, but what are your thoughts on the action in this chapter? i'm always looking to improve myself and fight sequences have always been my weak point ^^;
Luffy had needed immediate medical attention after the fight, and Chopper had yelled at both him and Law when they got back to the Thousand Sunny.

“I know I can’t be too mad, but you should have been more careful!” The demon doctor had said as he picked Luffy up. “These are serious injuries.” He briskly carried Luffy into the infirmary, but before he could shut the door in Law’s face, the human spoke up.

“I’m sorry. I tried to keep him safe.” Law looked down. “I… I don’t know how to use these powers, not yet.”

Chopper gave him a soft, if strained, smile. “I know you tried.” He shook his head. “Luffy attracts danger like cotton candy attracts me. Don’t beat yourself up too much, he’ll be okay.”

Law sighed in relief. He could handle leaving Doflamingo for dead back in the club, but if he’d lost Luffy, he wouldn’t be able to deal with everything that just happened.

Chopper retreated into the infirmary.

Weeks passed.

Law didn’t think he could return home for a while. He had asked Nami to take him back to his apartment, but when they got there… it was swarming with police. He’d been gone for so long, and on top of Dressrosa’s destruction, he didn’t really feel like going back in the midst of all that chaos. So while he waited it out, he’d spent his time recovering with his demons, on the Thousand Sunny. Luffy had needed some serious surgery to make sure all his organs were attached to each other correctly, and this time, Chopper let him sit in and watch.

That wasn’t something he could learn in medical school.

But Luffy was up and running about the ship (much to his doctor’s exasperation) within a few days of the big operation. He’d take off his bandages as often as possible and reopen his wounds over the dumbest of actions. Play-fighting with Zoro almost knocked him out when he started bleeding again.

And to be honest, Law liked being on the Thousand Sunny. It was nice and warm and never dull, but if he needed his space he could easily get away. It felt more like home than that barren apartment he’d lived in for the past five years.

But… while on the Sunny for those few weeks, he’d tried his best to avoid Luffy.

Law didn’t think he’d noticed, since they’d see each other at meals or around the ship when Luffy was chasing Usopp around or climbing on the mast or doing whatever the hell else a stir-crazy
demon like him did. But aside from that, Law tried to stay in places that Luffy didn’t normally visit.

In layman’s terms, he spent most of his time in the library.

He avoided Luffy because he didn’t know what to do. What to think. How to even begin to comprehend his feelings.

During the fight, he’d definitely admitted to himself that he loved Luffy. In a romantic way? Had he ever felt anything like that before? He couldn’t remember ever feeling quite like how he felt right then.

But if Luffy found out, it would be chaos. Would he end the contract? Would he make Law go back to that barren old apartment? Would he make Law go back to his lonely, directionless life?

For once, it was the concept of being alone that frightened him the most. These demons -- these people -- had become friends more quickly than anyone else had ever before. And he liked them. He loved Robin’s morbid humor, Franky’s brilliant inventions, Usopp’s ridiculous stories, Zoro’s quiet judgement, Sanji’s delicious food, Nami’s dry wit, Brook’s inspiring music, Chopper’s kind wisdom… and Luffy. Luffy, who was so many beautiful things that Law couldn’t even try to condense it all into a few simple words.

Long story short, he was terrified of losing all the people he’d come to consider his closest friends.

So consider him surprised - and beyond anxious - when the door to the library opened one night to reveal Luffy. With a very serious look on his face.

“Hey, Luffy.” Law said casually as he flipped a page in his book, feeling anything but.

Luffy didn’t respond right away. He let the door close behind him and walked into the room. He stared around at the books blankly for a few seconds before sitting right next to Law.

“You’ve been avoiding me.” Luffy really didn’t waste his time. “What’s wrong?”

Law swallowed thickly. “Nothing’s wrong,” he lied, “I’ve just had a lot to think about lately.”

Luffy shook his head. “No, something’s wrong.” He frowned. “Did I do something wrong?”

“No!” Law startled, knocking his book off his lap. “No, you haven’t done anything wrong.”

“Then why are you avoiding me?” Luffy, damn him, looked hurt.

Ah, fuck it. “I… I don’t want to leave.” Law looked to the ground. “But one day I’m going to have to.”

“Not if you don’t want to.” Luffy shrugged. “Why are you worried about leaving? Sure, we finished a part of the contract, but we’ve still got to take down Kaido.” He grinned. “I bet he’s pretty pissed off by now.”

“What if you decided to end the contract?” Law said quietly.

Luffy laughed. “That’s stupid. I like you too much to do that.”

Law ignored the way his heart thumped in his chest. “I think I’m in love with you.” He was going to let it slip one way or another. Best to drop that bomb as soon as possible.

“Oh.” Luffy said that, then went quiet for a few moments. They were the longest moments in Law’s
life. Then, “Okay.”

“Okay?” Leave it to Luffy to say something like that.

“Yeah, that’s okay.” The demon kicked his legs back and forth in his seat. “I don’t really know what love feels like. But I like you, a lot. More than normal. If that makes sense?”

Law nodded. He didn’t trust himself to speak.

“I mean, I’ve got my friends, and I love them. But I like you in a different way. It doesn’t feel right to put you with them.” Luffy pursed his lips in thought. “Maybe this is love. Or if it isn’t right now, maybe it could be. I haven’t figured that out yet.” He smiled, and then he laughed. “I want you to stick around so I can figure it out.”

“Are you sure?” Law whispered.

Luffy did something weird, then. He reached out and grabbed Law’s hand. He squeezed him tightly.

“Yeah, I’m sure.” Luffy stuck out his tongue and giggled. “Things are a lot more fun with you around.”

“Then I’ll stay,” Law said.

And so he stayed.

Chapter End Notes

thank you to everyone who’s read this fic, and thank you to everyone who’s commented! and a super special shoutout to my amazing artist, skartlie on tumblr! i’d also like to thank the lawlu big bang team for putting this event together. you guys really motivated me to take the fledgling idea i had and turn it into a real story!

for the record, i guess you could consider this... a part one, of sorts? i’ve set up too much to just leave you all hanging! but i’m currently busy with school, so it might be some time before you see more from these demons.

once again, thank you all for reading, and for all of your support! i’m glad i could write something that made people smile. see you ’round!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!