Gone Fishing
by KlonoaDreams

Summary

Life in the world of One Piece…isn't so great as one would think. Of course, I'm in no position to talk, considering how lucky I've been. Though, if there's one thing I've learned the hard way since my first life, it's that luck eventually runs out. SI OC

Notes

So guess who just caught up to One Piece instead of Naruto, never mind that One Piece is still on-going and has like eighty-eight chapters more than Naruto (as of 5-28-15)? That's right, everyone—me! So in order to commemorate that milestone (I have no life), have this self-insert OC fic done in a manner similar to Butterfly Child! Have fun~!

Disclaimer for the entire story: I don't own One Piece or anything related to the One Piece franchise! I am in no ways Eiichiro Oda, nor will I ever be!

Do you have any idea what I would do if I was Oda? I would certainly not be in college, struggling to get passing grades and save money! Though, I would have to go through the life of a mangaka, which, honestly, doesn't sound so fun because like…they only get an average of four hours of sleep a NIGHT. Anyways, more information will be given in the ending A/N, so read on, my fellow readers!
Hook

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

I honestly have no idea what to even think of my current situation. For all intents and purposes, I should be dead. And trust me, I should know because I was the one who slipped on a wet surface and cracked my head on the hard restroom counter. I'm pretty sure the location of said restroom is going to get sued for my death...although, my memory's kinda hazy as to where exactly I was when I went to the restroom.

Well, at least I didn't die in a run-down hotel room with a prostitute in Las Vegas. I mean, what happens in Vegas—oh, whom am I kidding? I'm too broke to afford any of that shit. The life of a college student is so not good on funds. And, to be honest, I wouldn't even have any uses for a prostitute, considering I'm not into any of the services that are being offered...like, at all.

At least there's some dignity to dying on the cold, tiled restroom floor—no, there is not. I died in a fucking restroom. At least the Vegas scenario meant I went out with a bang...

In any case, as I mentioned before, I should be dead...but I'm still here. I can move, however...not much, but movement is movement. All I can really see was darkness that I should honestly be freaked out about, but...it's honestly comforting. I felt safe and I think that was the main reason I wasn't freaking out completely.

I can't talk, but I think I can breathe...? Something is wrong, but I can't what. And that is pretty much how I've been for god knows how long as of this moment. I have no sense of time and I don't even want to start. I spent most of the time just sleeping and, sometimes, kicking at something that's just there. Usually, that got me a muffled, verbal response. By the way, I'm hearing voices.

_Hooray!

Seriously, though, these voices are the only thing keeping me sane, even if they did get uncomfortable at times, because it is freaking boring just staying here within the darkness. Pfft, darkness...now all I can really think is Kingdom Hearts—aww, son of a bitch. I'm totally gonna miss Kingdom Hearts 3 now that I've died...fuck it, I didn't even have a PS4 or anything and I couldn't afford one, so what was the point? Still...I wanted that game!

Sigh...so many regrets, but at least college ain't one of them—it so is. Well, it could be worse again. I could have died right as I was getting my diploma on graduation day! That's assuming I would have actually graduated...okay, now I'm being a little too pessimistic. In any case, this was how my situation has been for an unknown amount of time and before I knew it, I was being squeezed out of this orifice (oh god, don't tell me what I think is happening), screaming at the top of my lungs.

As I was being cradled within what felt like a pair of gigantic arms, it took me a little more than ten seconds to fully grasp just what ordeal I had just finished going through after a period of darkness.

I was just born.

Someone just gave birth to me.

And that meant I just went through someone's va—eeeeewwww! Screw maturity, there are things people should not be conscious and aware of when going through things like this! I should be dead—why am I here?! And why did I have to have the luck of finding out this way that reincarnation is
Okay, I am totally giving up on childbirth after this! If I want to have kids, I'm adopting, as I had intended to before I met my untimely end in that restroom. Besides, like the whole prostitute thing, I doubt I would even have enough interest to do the do. I'd rather just hug—I'm that type of person.

Just when I thought things couldn't get any worse, I felt something prod at my mouth and when my first instinct was to latch onto it, I screamed internally. If there's one thing I learned quite well during a ten-week course of college psychology, is that there is this reflex babies are born with called a rooting reflex, which helps them breastfeed. I'm being breastfed right now and—oh god, someone wake me up right now!

If it weren't for the fact that instincts I couldn't exactly control were taking over, I wouldn't have allowed this to happen. Alas, I am only a newborn, not even ten minutes old—at the complete mercy of the person who had just finished giving birth to me. So I guess this must be my mama…huh…

Well, she seems gentle so far and, from the sound of other voices, she's not alone. I couldn't really see anything right now, because my eyes refused to open, so the most I can do is assume. And even if I could open my eyes, my eyesight would be complete shit because that's how the eyesight of an infant is.

Also, Mama seems have it going on, with her seemingly massive breasts—I'm assuming they're big. Of course, seeing as I was just born, just about everything seems massive, so that could just be me…unless it isn't, which in that case, I seriously hope I don't inherit that part of Mama. Please don't screw this up for me genetics—at least give me time to prepare!

The future suuuure looks promising!

Sarcasm aside, I felt safe again, if mortified (you try being breastfed). Fortunately, for me, sleep soon over took me. Sweet, sweet darkness—take me away from this reality! I have never been so glad to fall asleep than the times I usually pulled all-nighters during a school night. Ugh, worst situation ever—especially when all you have to energize yourself is a 5-hour Energy drink that you've bought from your campus store. Haa, at least that is something I left behind in the past…

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I have no idea how long I was asleep after that, but when I woke up, something was different. For one thing, the arms I was now being cradled in were rather firm and not soft, like Mama's were. And based on the nonexistent chest I was being held against, this person was definitely not Mama…and most likely, male.

Having noticed that, I finally opened my eyes and after slowly adjusting to the lighting, I decided that I wanted this person to be the first thing I saw—holy crap, that hair is red and nice hat.

Are you…are you my daddy? Am I gonna have red hair? Because that would be totally bitchin' if I had that red hair—hello, what's this? A finger? In my hand? Wow, my hand is tiny—whoa, whoa, whoa…whoa.

The hell is up with my hand?! What's with this blue color?! Is that white?! What am I?! I would be enjoying the rather pretty metallic blue coloring my hand had if this wasn't on me. The white certainly complimented it well—oh my god, focus!

Nice to see I still retained my ADHD—or is that just my baby mentality talking? Whatever it is, my
attention span is short, which is nothing out of the ordinary when it comes to me in general. Still, what is wrong with me?! I don't think it's normal to be blue…and white—am I sick? I don't feel sick—although, I do feel hungry…

Growl.

Uuurgh, hunger does not feel good! Why does it feel so much worse as a baby? Hey, bucko—I'm not letting go of the finger until you give me some food!

*Feed me, Seymour! Feed me!*

C'mon, man—don't make me cry! I don't want to be that type of baby, never mind that it's in their instinct to cry out for food and various other things! Also, what is up with these voices? This language—I do not comprehend! Looks like I have a language barrier to overcome and a language to learn.

It's French all over again! Awesome…except, unlike French, I *need* to learn this language if I want to understand the people around me…so I guess Spanish would be a better example, considering my Spanish-speaking parents that I have left behind in my past life…

I miss them so much…and while I don't want to cry about being hungry (even though I *so* want to), I felt like crying over the fact that people I knew were most likely going to mourn for my death.

I do not envy the person who found my body in that restroom… God, I am so morbid. This is what I get for playing *Cards Against Humanity*.

*I'm a horrible person.*

Growl.

And I am hungry and sad and—why did you take the finger away, Dad?! Everything is going wrong—huh? I blinked as the soft tip of a bottle prodded at my mouth before I latched onto it. After suckling it for a few seconds, I realized that Dad must have noticed I was about ready to cry and decided to stop that by giving me food. Well, it's not breastfeeding, but I'm not sure how to feel about the contents of this bottle.

Why do I have to be aware of how formula tastes?! Ugh, when am I going to wake up from this surreal dream? I might have already come to terms that I am dead, but that doesn't mean I can't at least live in a state of denial! I mean…I could be in a coma right now! Yeah…or I am really dead and this is my new life after a rather surprising reincarnation.

Well, at least Dad seems to care about me, based on that smile of his—why does it look so familiar? And whoa, where did you get those scars on your eye? That must have *hurt*, from the looks of it.

*Hey...where's Mama?*

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Month one of being a baby—any sense of time is completely unreliable, so all I can do is make assumptions for now. All I have done was eat, sleep, and poop…gross. I do not enjoy the diaper life—nope, I sure don't! I cannot wait for the day I start toilet training and actually get moving instead of lying about in this bassinet whenever I'm not being fed, changed, or handled.
The only thing that was interesting about this bassinet is that it was a rocking type! Though, at times, the rocking did get rather uncomfortable, in the sense that I wanted it to stop. Ugh, and don't get me started on the fact that I have to sleep on my back. It's uncomfortable, but I don't think I'm supposed to sleep on my stomach until I'm older, so…yeah.

The only good thing, so far, is that I have not suffered from sleep paralysis. It is the main reason I had given up on sleeping on my back in my past life. I can deal with nightmares—sleep paralysis, however, can go fuck itself. I don't think my brain is developed enough just yet to wake up while the body is still asleep, so I guess that could be one reason I haven't suffered from any episodes. Not that I'm complaining—I doubt I could handle consecutive episodes of being unable to move, while feeling as though someone is in the room when there isn't…ugh, just the thought of it gives me chills.

I'm also quite sad to say that it took me this long to figure out that the language being spoken around me was Japanese…but I am totally not at fault for that! Apparently, Dad and his many friends weren't exactly so vocal around me. It was as if they were worried their words could make me cry—which, to be honest, I probably would have. I dunno, I've cried over a lot of things out of boredom because nothing fucking happens.

*I need entertainment, dammit!*

By the by, Dad likes to shirk of his fatherly duties and get his friends to take over for him. Let me tell you how embarrassing it is to find out the person changing your diaper isn't your father, but some guy with curly black hair. It sure scared the hell out of me…

And it was that same guy who would later walk up to my father and practically shove me into his arms. He most likely annoyed that Dad was being a lazy bum. Maybe this is why Mama isn't here anymore…

In any case, it was thanks to this event that I finally had my first brush with the outside world and it was…quite interesting. For one thing, my ears picked up the sound of crashing waves and the smell—it didn't really take me long to figure out that we were on a ship, which certainly explained the rocking of my bassinet, which wasn't the rocking type, now that I think about it…

So yes, a ship…I was on one—why am I on one? Should I even care? I mean, Dad seems to like me enough not to ignore me, even if he does make his friends do most of the work caring for me…but at least I'm not being dropped off at an orphanage! Though, they could have considered it and just how long have we been traveling? Long enough, I would probably guess…

Well, I'm still alive…but also blue and white. I've gotten quite used to the fact that I'm not exactly normal in terms of appearance, but I guess it's not all bad. I'm not sick…and really, Dad and his friends don't seem to mind my appearance. But that could be the language barrier preventing me from understanding any conversations and the fact that I'm usually confined to my bassinet a majority of the time.

*Being a baby sucks eggs.*

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Month two of being a baby—sense of time is still unreliable, but…my hearing has improved! And so has my sight and my, how things seem so much more defined! It still isn't as good as I wanted it to be, I mean my line of sight continues to be limited, but hey, sight is sight!
I still don't know why Dad's smile seems so familiar, but guess who's got a spiffy new pacifier? That's right—me! Man, I should not feel this elated to have something as mundane like a pacifier, but I am. I'm... just gonna peg that down as a baby thing. It's new, interesting, and it sure as hell is better than sucking on my fist. By the way, I can do that—yes, I am proud of that.

You'd be proud of making any sort of progress once you've spent two months living as a baby. It is seriously boring as hell and the only thing that seems to have change is the fact that Dad and his friends are making it a habit of taking me out of my bassinet to explore the outside world... well, explore as much as I can through sight and sound—which is still limited.

At least Dad and his friends are talking more around me, but I can't exactly understand what they're saying—like, these are words completely out of my vocabulary of Japanese words I should recognize. Then again, it's been a while since I've last watched any anime or dramas, so there is that.

And my listening skills aren't exactly the best—not now, at least. Even so, the most I have been able to pick up is the word "Papa" and it seems to be used to refer to Dad, who always sounds annoyed whenever that happens. I guess his friends are teasing him...

I might not understand the language, but I can pick up on tone and emotion, so that at least gives me a sense of context when it comes to the conversation. Usually, the environment I'm in is a rather lighthearted one. Something always seemed to be happening, and I usually missed out on it because it was out of my line of sight or the language barrier got in the way. It was either one or the other—sometimes both.

The only thing I have managed to figure out is why Dad always sounded so annoyed whenever the booze was brought out (I can smell) and that was because he's not allowed to drink... probably because he was stuck with me. I'm guessing he's the designated caretaker, as everyone else was having the time of their life, getting drunk off their asses. It was pretty interesting, because a lot of things always happened when everyone got drunk.

You get everyone stumbling around, just bumping into each other, guys fighting over meat (I've seen it happen once and it was awesome!), and my most favorite... drunk singing!

...When you're stuck in the body of a two-month old baby with the mentality of a twenty-year-old person with ADHD, you learn to take whatever form of entertainment you can get. And as I said before, drunk singing—can't get any better than this. I still can't figure out why the song my father's drunk friends are singing sounds so familiar, though... but I like it!

Meanwhile, Dad is muttering something under his breath—probably something involving the fact that he can't drink. From what I have noticed, the guy's been keeping a chalkboard tally that might have to do with the days he has been sober... or rather, hours—I dunno, we're never around the chalkboard long enough for me to actually count. So I can't exactly confirm how many marks there are on the chalkboard, but all I can say there is a lot.

Dad's not taking the sobriety very well.

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being a baby. I have learned to grab stuff and put it into my mouth. I have become the reason why so many precautions are to be taken when it comes to keeping things within my reach. Yet another developmental stage overcome, but crawling is still so far away… Also, Dad and his friends have learned not to put anything within my reach, because chances are, I'm gonna either put it in my mouth or knock it onto the ground.

*R.I.P Mug of Booze.*

I laughed when that happened, much to everyone's surprise because guess what? I laughed for the very *first* time! I also rolled over for the very first time—that's a thing, but I'm more excited over the fact I can laugh *again!* It feels *so* good to laugh! Ahahaha, I'm such a little shit because of that!

Still, being a little shit is my only source of entertainment because the pacifier lost its appeal. My weird skin-color has lost its appeal, as pretty as I still *do* find it. Faces, however, have suddenly become much *more* interesting as my hearing and vision continues to improve. When I'm not being a little shit, then I'm just staring at people while they talk. I've…weirded out a couple of Dad's friends doing that. It's honestly hilarious.

Right now, I'm currently spending some quality time with Dad and by quality time, I mean he's fast asleep in a hammock, while I laid on his chest. I was messing with this nifty little headband I snatched off of Dad's curly-haired friend. There were letters on this headband that I could finally make out now that my eyesight has improved. I wanted to read them…*I really* wanted to read them.

And when I did, I was so happy I could make out the letters:

**Y-A-S-O-P-P**

I was so giddy because I could *read!* Ahh…Yasopp…why does that sound so familiar? Hmm…fuck it, I'm just gonna go to sleep. I'm tired and Dad's tired as well—he's hiding from everyone right now since he's supposed to be up and about, but guess who decided to have a party of one and get drunk off their ass while everyone else was asleep? It certainly wasn't me.

There goes three weeks' worth of tallies on the chalkboard. It's time to start over again and I wonder who's won this round's betting pool…

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About an hour or so later, I woke up, feeling rather sluggish at first. I yawned, making a face a second afterwards when I heard my stomach growl. I guess it's time to wake Dad up from his nap. Though, as I lifted my head up to look at Dad, my eyes immediately focused on his red hair, which always caught my attention. It was just so *red*…and I still have no idea if I got his red hair or not.

What I would give for a mirror…it would certainly clear things up to how far my weird skin-coloration reached, like—is it on my face? What color are my eyes? What color is my hair?

*Growl.*

That definitely ended my current train of thought…I get too easily distracted. Welp, that's just how I am, I guess. Grasping the headband in my hand, I intended to whack my father over the face with it, only to *just* realize that father had his straw hat covering his face. So much for *that* wake-up call…ruin my fun, why dontcha?

Hmm…since he's asleep, maybe I can try it on…let's do it! I felt myself smile as I reached out with my free hand to grab the straw hat covering my father's face. It was seconds after I had managed to pull off the straw hat covering Dad's face that things suddenly began to connect.
The ship.

Yasopp.

Straw hat.

Red hair.

Red...my eyes widened once the connection was made, and let me tell you—it was horrifying to find out that your father is motherfucking Red-Haired Shanks! How the fuck did it take me this long to realize that my reincarnation brought me into a world that I once thought was fictional?!

I was in the world of One Piece...fiction was now reality. And I just so happened to be part of it!

OH GOD WHY?!

Chapter End Notes

Just to give everyone a heads up about this OC, she's human...though not fully and while she thinks Shanks is her father, he isn't really (biologically, at least). I won't say any more than that since I will go into it, come the next chapter. Though, I will give you a hint—the title of this fic has meaning in regards to this SI OC. Again, she's not fully human, so make what you will of that.

So anyways, I know I have a crap-ton of fanfics to update, but I seriously wanted to do this because I caught up to One Piece. As of the date this story has been published, there are over 788 chapters of One Piece. Do you guys have any idea where exactly I was last week in the series? I was at chapter 237...I got a lot of reading done.

And I honestly can't get over the fact that I caught up to One Piece, instead of Naruto, a series that has already finished (not including Naruto Gaiden). In any case, this story came to be about before I actually caught up to One Piece. Like, I had this idea for an SI OC, similar to my Naruto SI OC, Akimichi Chōko in Butterfly Child...but I decided not to go into it until I caught up to One Piece, which I felt I would not do until like...years later.

Yet, look what happen within a week! I'm just...I can't even, but I am quite happy to see my One Piece SI OC see the light of day. To be honest, she came to be when I noticed a lacking amount of deconstructive SI OC fics where a person is reborn into the world of One Piece. I've seen a lot of "OC falls into the world of One Piece" however, but a majority of them (from what I have seen) end up focusing more on the romance instead of the seriousness of the situation. Like, there is so much world building to work with and just...it has a lot of potential, much like Naruto, except instead of ninjas, you get pirates. But just like Naruto, the world of One Piece isn't sunshine and rainbows—oh, no.

There's a reason this little one was horrified at the thought of being in One Piece and it doesn't have to do with the fact that she could potentially die. It's more than that and I'll sum it up in one word: Corruption. It exists in the world of One Piece and it sure as hell ain't pretty. It sure makes living in the world a rather nightmarish one once you are aware of what is going on in the shadows.
For now, I hope you enjoyed the concept I have put up and just know, I'm not focusing on any romance at all. In the true spirit of One Piece, there shall be no romance! Or rather, if there is any (and there probably will be), it sure as hell won't be the main focus of the story and it won't be happening until waaay later into the story. I'm like that.

So until next time, everyone!
Chapter Notes

Okay, I should have mentioned this last chapter, but this fic is gonna have multiple POVs, in order to give more perspectives. So have a POV shift! Oh, and a huge shout out to ChibiFoxAI for helping me out with this chapter. Get used to seeing her name from here on out, by the way, so read on, everyone!

Red-Haired Shanks had hoped that the four-month-old in his care wouldn't have caused him any trouble, as he was still in the midst of sleeping away a massive hangover. Unfortunately, the baby decided now was a good time as any to cry and woke him up rather abruptly, to the point where he nearly sat up. Fortunately, he remembered that he had a baby laying on top of his chest, so he managed to stop himself before he sat up.

With his heart pounding within his chest, Shanks looked at the crying white-haired baby girl. He had no idea why she was crying. It was so sudden—and she sounded so terrified…this wasn't like her!

"What's wrong with Mako?!” Shanks wasn't that surprised to see Yasopp barge into the room not long after Mako had started crying. After all, Yasopp was a father—he had the most experience out of everyone in Shanks's crew with infants. He was also the one everyone depended on the most whenever Mako started crying. And, had it not been for Yasopp, Mako would have continued being nameless.

After all, no one had been prepared to find a pregnant stowaway on the ship, four months ago. They were especially not prepared when said stowaway suddenly went into labor, which was induced from the stress of being caught. Shanks and the others were only lucky that they were not that far off from land when they had found her. Otherwise, caring for the newborn baby would have been much more difficult than it already was—and that was with the access they had for the baby products she needed, as her mother had died shortly after giving birth.

Really, of all the luck they had…and now, Mako would never have a chance to know the woman who had risked everything to escape from the life she had left behind. Mako's mother was one incredible woman, living the last several months of her life on the run, while pregnant with Mako. It wasn't every day that Shanks came across a person who was capable of stowing away on Marine ships without getting caught. It really says a lot about the Marines when pirates are more capable than they are at discovering stowaways on their ship…

Shanks was not looking forward to the day Mako asked him about her mother. Of course, that was assuming she stuck around long enough with the Red Hair Pirates to ask—which, honestly, could happen. After all, Shanks was a man of his word and when he promised that woman he would keep her daughter safe, then he was going to do just that.

The problem with that, however, was that Shanks wasn't expecting Mako to be half-human, because, as it turned out, her father was a mako shark fishman. Now it wasn't that Shanks had anything against fishmen (the same went for his crew), it was more that he was concerned over how Mako was going to be treated around others.
For now, Shanks's main concern was getting Mako to stop crying. Her cries were *not* making his headache get any better…

"Maybe if you didn't drink so much..." Yasopp muttered as he tried his best to calm Mako.

"Just make her stop crying..." Shanks wasn't in the mood to deal with Yasopp's hypocrisy—he and the others were in no position to talk. Unlike them, at least Shanks had no regrets doing what he did last night—massive headache be damned.

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When Mako didn't stop crying three days later, Shanks was starting to grow concerned (and irritated because Mako now slept in his room). The only time Mako stopped crying was when she was being bottle-fed or passed out from exhaustion. It was really nerve-wracking and Shanks wondered if this was what fatherhood felt like it, because Yasopp seemed to be the only one on the ship that didn't feel like punching anyone who tried talking to them.

Mako used to be so well behaved...just what happened, is what Shanks couldn't figure out. Shanks honestly missed seeing her act like a little shit, laughing whenever something amusing happened. And yet, when Shanks didn't wake up to Mako's cries the next morning, he almost had a panic attack until he realized that Mako was back to her usual, laughing self. She certainly seemed amused to see the bags under his eyes...

"You're a little shit, you know that?" Shanks said as he held Mako up in front of himself. She just looked at him for a moment and laughed. Shanks doubted that she was even able to understand him, but nonetheless, he was glad she stopped crying...and for the first time in three days, Shanks smiled.

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When Yasopp found out that Mako was half-fishman, he was almost concerned that whatever knowledge he had on babies wouldn't apply to her. Fortunately, for everyone, Mako's development wasn't anything out of the ordinary. Aside from the tiny dorsal fin on her back and her skin coloration, Mako was like any other human baby. Though, that could change as she got older, but for now, Yasopp was just glad to have something that reminded him quite fondly of the child he left behind in Syrup Village.

"Usopp's only two years older than Mako." Yasopp could only wonder how Banchina and Usopp were getting along, without him, as he watched Shanks finally live up to the nickname that was given to him by the crew.

That nickname just so happened to be "Papa" and it was a nickname Shanks denounced. However, as Mako started to show more favoritism towards him, Shanks was having more and more difficulty denouncing the nickname when Yasopp was there to comment on his caretaking skills.

"You'd definitely make a great father!" Yasopp grinned as he patted Shanks on the back.

Shanks's silence was enough for Yasopp to know that the redhead was not amused with his comment.
At five months old, Shanks wonders if something is wrong with Mako when the first thing he wakes up to is her repetitive babbling. Yasopp is quick to reassure Shanks that it was perfectly normal for Mako to do that. And yet, as the days went by, Shanks felt as though Mako was deliberately annoying him when he caught her watching his reactions to her constant babbling.

"I'm onto you, Mako," Shanks told Mako as she stared at him through the bars of the crib they had recently bought her. Thanks to her constant use of her newfound mobility, Mako had tipped over her bassinet when she was rolling around and almost fell onto the floor. Thankfully, Shanks had been around to catch Mako, though it became apparent that an upgrade from the bassinet was much needed.

Shanks couldn't help but snort at the thought of his crewmembers going shopping for a crib. He wondered what people thought whenever they saw the others buying baby products for Mako…

"Aha!" And there goes Mako, rolling around in her crib again…

"At least you won't be able to tip this over, huh, Mako?" Shanks grinned at Mako, who suddenly stopped rolling and started staring at him with those big pink eyes of hers. It was almost unnerving, but Shanks wasn't bothered. He just wanted to know what brought the sudden staring from her.

"Mako?"

Mako blinked, almost as if she was responding to her name. This caused Shanks to blink back in response and soon, the two were just staring at each other. A few seconds passed and Mako suddenly blew a bubble, which prompted Shanks to laugh.

"Dahahahaha!" As much as Mako got on his nerves, Shanks couldn't help but find her amusing.

"Ahahaha!" And it seems as though Mako was attempting to mimic his laughter.

"You're adorable, you know that?" Shanks said as he picked up Mako.

Mako just laughed.

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"Whatever you say…Papa…" Even Beckman seemed to be in a somewhat humorous mood as he handed baby Mako over to Shanks.

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By the time Mako had turned seven months old, Shanks had grown used to being called, "Papa." He had also grown used to being pelted with pureed food that Mako didn't like, which always turned out to be vegetables (she at least liked fruit, so she was eating something). She was more interested in the food on his plate, but Shanks knew better than to let her try eating some of his food.

"At least wait until you have some teeth!" Shanks said before getting a handful of pureed carrot thrown in his face.

Splat!

"Ahahaha!" Mako certainly seemed to be enjoying herself…

At least she avoided aiming at his straw hat…she always did, now that Shanks thought about it. Not that he was complaining—Shanks really appreciated that Mako never threw any of her food at his hat. He also appreciated that Mako's food throwing was a phase, as she eventually grew bored of it after a few more days of repeating the same action. That still didn't mean she liked the food she was eating, based on the face she was making, but Shanks was just happy she was eating.

He was also happy his crew gave him privacy whenever he fed Mako…

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Shanks never once considered the fact Mako could crawl was something he should worry about…until the day she nearly crawled off the ship when they were at a port. Shanks was only glad that everyone else was currently drinking to their hearts' content at a nearby tavern, otherwise, Yasopp would have teared him a new one.

Mako seemed about ready to cry, somewhat shaken up by the fall she almost had…but then she noticed how Shanks was reacting and started laughing. All that Shanks could even do was just sigh and smile. Surely, Mako wouldn't get any worse than this by the time she turned nine-months-old…

…

He was wrong.

So very, very wrong…

If Shanks thought Mako was troublesome enough at eight months, her crawling having improved immensely since she was six months old, then he certainly had no idea what to think of a nine-month-old Mako, who had taken her crawling skills to the next level. She was moving at a pace faster than Shanks was comfortable with—especially since he had a tendency to lose her. Not that he was going to admit that, of course, as he didn't need Yasopp getting on his case for it.

Keeping Mako away from the ale became a part of Shanks's caretaking routine. And things only got worse when Mako turned ten-months-old, because she started teething. The crying—it didn't want to stop. And Mako—she just kept biting on everything.
Once when Shanks wasn't paying attention, Mako ended up biting his leg with the surprisingly sharp teeth that were erupting rather painfully from her gums. She was probably still mad at him for pulling her away from the leg of a table she had been chewing on. Teeth marks were showing up everywhere on the ship at a startling rate, with indents becoming deeper and deeper with each passing day.

It didn't take a genius to figure out that Mako's fishman origins were to blame for this. Anything that Yasopp knew about babies was obsolete, as he, like the others, was not prepared for this development in Mako. They were only lucky the crying lasted for only a week...but the biting continued. And anyone who managed to piss off Mako got bitten, as Shanks had learned quite quickly.

... 

... 

It was close to Mako's first birthday that the Red Hair Pirates received a surprise visitor in the form of Dracule Mihawk. Now Shanks wasn't that surprised to see the serious-faced swordsman. In fact, he was actually wondering why it took Mihawk this long to arrive—they were overdue for a duel, anyways. Though, at the moment, Shanks wasn't exactly in any current state for a duel at the moment, as he had an eleven-month-old baby to find—of course, no one needed to know that.

Especially not Yasopp—oh, most definitely not, Shanks was a good father!

... 

Shanks needed a moment to think when he realized he had referred to himself as a father. It seemed as though the words of his crew and Mako were finally having an effect on him. With that in mind and an approaching Mihawk whose footsteps were drawing nearer and nearer with each steps, Shanks decided to play innocent in hopes that no one else notices that he had no idea where the hell Mako was.

"Hawk-Eyes—what brings you to the West Blue?" Stalling for time with a casual conversation—a classic!

Mihawk stared at Shanks, who just smiled. "You know very well why I am here."

"Right!" Shanks laughed nervously. "Before that, how about we take the time to catch up? I mean, it's been ages, Hawk-Eyes!"

Technically, it's been more than a year, but Shanks wasn't going into specifics. He just wanted Mihawk to take the bait and sit down with him for a drink. The more time that passed, the higher the chances were that Mako would pop up—she usually did whenever she wanted something from Shanks. Knowing how much closer it was to her usual lunchtime, she was bound to show up soon.

All Shanks had to do was kill some time until then. Hopefully, Mihawk was in a mood to socialize.

... 

Fortunately, Mihawk was. Having set his sword down against the wall, Mihawk sat down in the chair on the other side opposite to where Shanks now sat. One drink turned into three, and soon, the others were joining in as lunch was served, but Mako had yet to pop out.

"Where are you, you little shit?" Shanks kept a close eye for any signs for the teething little terror while everyone else was eating.
"Is something the matter?" Mihawk was observant as always.

Shanks forced a smile as he tried to avoid catching Yasopp's attention. "Not really—hey, so how was your trip to the West Blue?"

"Uneventful." A man of a few words, that Mihawk was—not exactly what Shanks was hoping for, but at least he was talking.

Shanks was ready to try and pry some information from Mihawk when he noticed a very familiar baby girl crawling towards Mihawk's sword. Now Shanks knew how Mihawk felt about his sword and to see an eleven-month-old baby crawling towards it, with no hesitation whatsoever…it wasn't that shocking for Shanks to suddenly yell, "STOP!"

Soon, all eyes were on him and Shanks found himself being stared at Mihawk, who had this look on his face that said, "What is wrong with you?"

Laughing nervously, Shanks forced a smile and quickly added, "You gotta tell us more than just that!"

Mihawk just continued to stare and Mako seemed to have ignored Shanks as she placed a chubby little hand on the swordsman's sword. Alarms were blaring within Shanks's head by now.

"You can't just STOP by without telling us how you got here." Shanks hoped that Mako got the message—she didn't and Mihawk was most definitely questioning him right now. "GO...on—c'mon!"

Mihawk stared at Shanks for a few more seconds before shifting his yellow eyes onto the mug of ale he was drinking, almost as if he was wondering if something was in the ale they were drinking.

The rest of the Red Hair Pirates wondered that too...and then they noticed Mako had toppled over Mihawk's sword. By now, everyone was staring wide-eyed and agape at Mako, who didn't seem to have a care in the world as she looked over Mihawk's sword. Mihawk almost turned around, but everyone was quick to yell, "DON'T!"

Mihawk blinked at this. "Pardon?"

"How about another drink?" Lucky Roo was quick to suggest.

When it became apparent that Mihawk's mug was still somewhat full, Shanks grabbed it and threw the contents out, inwardly mourning the loss of good ale (he would have drunken it, but he still wasn't allowed to drink) before pouring Mihawk another drink. At this point in time, Mihawk knew there was something up with the Red Hair Pirates and their captain. And when a look of horror suddenly crossed their faces, Mihawk finally turned around and saw what appeared to be a white-haired baby girl, with a rather strange skin coloration, chewing on the hilt of his sword.

"Mako!" Shanks finally got out of his seat and ran up to go fetch Mako, who continued to chew on Mihawk's sword.

By the time Mihawk was given back his sword, there were teeth marks on the hilt. Shanks was almost worried that Mihawk was pissed off—the fact that the swordsman rarely ever showed his emotions was what scared Shanks the most. Because no one could ever tell what was on Mihawk's mind.

Mihawk continued to stare at Shanks, who was currently getting his hand bitten by Mako (did her teeth get sharper, or was it just him?). Seconds passed, which soon turned to minutes, and Mihawk...
stayed silent, his stare still fixated on Shanks and Mako. After a total of five minutes, Mihawk finally spoke.

"You…procreated?" The words that came out of Mihawk's mouth completely mortified Shanks.

Mako did not help at all when she suddenly exclaimed, "Papa!"

"You stop that—right now!" Shanks pointed a finger at Mako, only to have it bitten by her. She seemed to be in a better mood, because she was mostly nibbling on it. It was uncomfortable, but not painful as it could have been.

Things only got worse when Mihawk started to laugh—yes, he laughed. "Wahahahahaha!"

Shanks almost thought it was the end of the world, because Mihawk rarely ever laughed. Even Mako seemed to understand that, based on her terrified expression—she must have finally realized the consequences of her actions when it came to chewing on Mihawk's sword.

"I can explain, Hawk-Eyes!" was all Shanks could even say.

And upon hearing that, Mihawk stopped laughing. "I assumed you would."

"Hawk!" Mako suddenly exclaimed as she pointed at Mihawk.

Shanks blinked a few times before snorting and bursting into a fit of laughter. "Dahahahaha!"

"Ahahaha!" Mako laughed.

Mihawk just stared at the two while the rest of the Red Hair Pirates decided to take their leave.

"A stowaway?" Mihawk repeated.

"Yeah." Shanks let out a puff of air as he recalled the memories he wished he didn't have. Meanwhile with Mako, she was currently stealing the food off his plate, taking a particular interest in his fish.

"How long ago was this?" Mihawk asked.

"Well, Mako's turning one soon…so it's been year," Shanks explained. "To think that her mother was able to stowaway on Marine ships without getting caught—that woman sure had guts."

"Mako—don't eat the bones!" Shanks stared agape at Mako as she suddenly swallowed the food in her mouth, almost in defiance. "You little—ugh…It must be nice doing whatever you want to do, huh?"

"Buh…" Mako just said before pushing Shanks's empty plate towards him, almost as if she was asking for more food.

Mihawk arched a brow at this. "Quite the handful, isn't she?"

"You should have seen her last month…” Those days without sleep because she wouldn't stop
crying…Shanks was glad they were over. "This is nothing—Mako, that's his food."

"She can have it," Mihawk said as he pushed his plate towards Mako, who immediately snatched it up and started eating. "So tell me about her mother—you seem to be leaving some things out."

Shanks had been hoping Mihawk wouldn't noticed—he should have known better. "Some things are better left unsaid, but…I might as well tell you."

It seemed only fair for Mihawk to know about the ordeals Mako's mother experienced prior to ending up on the Red Hair Pirates' ship.

…

By the time Shanks was done talking, Mihawk looked disgusted…and Mako was fast asleep on the table, blissfully unaware of what had been said. Shanks honestly wouldn't have it any other way. Mako was better off not knowing what happened…at least, that's how Shanks felt.

"They're treated like livestock—she said they were planning on selling Mako when she was born!" Shanks still couldn't believe that. Considering how Mako has been acting as of lately—she wouldn't have survived the lifestyle her mother had.

Mihawk stared at Shanks for a full minute before saying, "You really do care for her."

Shanks blinked a few times before focusing his attention on Mako as she continued to sleep peacefully. "Yeah, I guess I do…"

As much of a little shit she has been, Mako really grew on Shanks…not that he was going to outright admit it. He had enough teasing from his crewmates. Then again, from the way he had been acting around Mako as of lately, nothing had to be said.

"I'm just digging myself a deeper grave…" Shanks sighed as he picked up Mako off the table. "Can you give me a minute, Hawk-Eyes?"

Mihawk nodded his head. "Proceed."

It was shortly after Shanks had put Mako back into her crib that he and Mihawk finally had their duel. Of course, that was a story for another day that Shanks most likely would tell Mako as soon as she could actually understand him.

…

…

Come Mako's first birthday, everyone, other than Shanks, made the birthday girl a cake. It wasn't the best-looking cake they had ever made, but Mako seemed to be enjoying it. Of course, when Shanks got too close to Mako, he ended up getting cake stuffed into his mouth.

"Ahahaha!" And there went Mako, laughing as usual, as she clapped her hands ecstatically.

Shanks stared at Mako for a good minute while the rest of his crew started laughing as well. After swallowing the cake in his mouth, he grabbed a handful of cake and stuffed it into Mako's mouth—payback, of sorts. Though, he instantly regretted it once he remembered that Mako had sharp teeth that were most likely going to sink into the palm of his hand. And yet, when the pain didn't come, Shanks was confused. Mako was a vindictive little shit when she wanted to be…and she was letting him off the hook.
"Mako?" Shanks looked questioningly at Mako.

Mako chewed a few times before swallowing hard. She then smiled, showing off incomplete rows of sharp, triangular-shaped teeth that fitted together perfectly like puzzle pieces. Without any warning, she suddenly said, "Love you!"

Shanks blinked a few times, feeling his face heat up as all eyes focused on him. He never expected this and yet...he wasn't bothered by it. Honestly, he was touched.

"Are you crying?"

"Not a word of this leaves this room, otherwise I'm marooning you on an island, Beckman."

Chapter End Notes

And that was year one of growing up Mako—and yes, her name is Mako! Oh, and just a heads up, that part where Mako has a moment with Shanks where she just stares at him before blowing a bubble—that was the first time she realized that that was her name.

If anyone's wondering about Mako's skin coloration, just look up a shortfin mako shark, take its coloration and apply it to Mako—basically, a metallic blue back with a white front, with the colors connecting in the face area (upper half of face is blue while the bottom is white).

And for the anonymous reviewer worried that Arlong was Mako's father—he isn't, rest-assured. They're in the West Blue, anyways, so I doubt Arlong would be anywhere in that region. So yeah, Mako is half-fishman and you have Dellinger to blame for this, otherwise, Mako would have never come to be. You win this round, Donquixote Pirates! DX

So yeah...you see the summary of this fic? Mako wasn't kidding when she said she's been lucky so far. And really, she has been lucky, compared to the life she would have had, had it not been for her mother. I won't go delve into it just yet, but I will leave snippets in for you guys to figure it out. I like it when readers speculate. :3

I hope you enjoyed this chapter, because I sure did! So until next time, everyone!
Bounty

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Learning how to walk was honestly a pain in the ass. More often than not, I landed flat on my ass, earning Dad's laughter as a result. I'm pretty sure Dad's having the time of his life doing the laughing instead of me. It's my fault for being a little shit a majority of the time, but when you barely have anything to do, being a little shit is as good as entertainment as I can get. On the bright side, I'm finally catching on to what is being said!

Now does that mean I have a good grasp on the language? Hell no, the language barrier is still there —slowly being overcome. One day, you shall be my bitch—one day. Oh, and my name is Mako—do not expect me to be eccentric and pull off hallelujah moments. I'm not that Mako—though, I wouldn't mind a uniform paying homage to Stardust Crusaders…

I am waaay too obsessed with Jojo…

Anyways, it's strange having Shanks as a father—it's even stranger realizing you are now living in the world of One Piece. Fortunately, I managed to at least catch up with the manga before I died. Unfortunately, I left myself on a cliffhanger, without even getting to see Luffy defeat Doflamingo for good. Even worse, there is at least nine years left of One Piece before it even ends. At most, it's like fifty percent done—meaning I have to be pretty careful what the hell I'm doing in this world. As far as I can tell, Shanks still has his left arm, so he hasn't met up with Luffy just yet or set up his base in Foosha Village, which is cool—actually, now that I think about it… Fuck.

I'm gonna end up meeting Luffy, aren't I? Not that that's bad or anything, but I'd rather avoid the main character of One Piece as if my life depends on it—I just don't want to be involved, okay?! I'm most likely going to get my ass killed through affiliation and become the dead person in a flashback…

Back on the subject that Shanks still has his left arm—I have no idea how far back I am from the start of the series. It could be years—maybe even months. How the hell am I supposed to know?

…

Well, Gol D. Roger is at least dead, considering that Shanks has his own pirate crew, so…that gives me some idea of where I am on the timeline. I could ask Yasopp about Usopp, which should give me a huge hint since he's the same age as Luffy, but I can't talk for shit just yet. I'm gonna have to wait and when that happens, I have to be careful about it. However, chances are, Yasopp's gonna go on about his son whenever he gets drunk.

On the bright side, I finally figured out what song it was that the Red Hair Pirates usually sing whenever they're drunk! It's Bink's Sake! You can bet that I've been trying my best to sing along whenever that happens. Shanks is honestly a sweetie when it comes to that, because he's usually there to help me pronounce some of the words.

…

I still can't get over the fact that Shanks is my father. Though, I have come to accept the fact that I am part fishman—which, by the way, is totally a thing. That really explains the weird skin coloration and the shark teeth, which are totally bitchin'. What was not bitchin', was teething—you try having
extremely sharp teeth erupting from your gums, like fucking *ow*. What's even worse, I left teeth marks on Dracule Mihawk's sword—let me repeat that.

I left teeth marks on *Mihawk's sword*. How the fuck am I still alive? Honestly, that is a very good question...I should not think too hard about this. I *should* be more careful about what I do—and by that, I mean I need to start behaving. I'm gonna be outstaying my welcome the longer I act like a little shit...

*Thud!*

"Dahahaha!" There goes Dad again...laughing at me for landing flat on my ass, as usual...curse these wobbly legs!

You know what? Fuck it—I'm done. If my legs and sense of balance don't want to cooperate, then I'm just going to stay here on the floor, sitting. I puffed up my cheeks and crossed my arms, silently fuming at my futile attempts at walking. Yes, I am throwing a silent hissy fit. No, I do not give a fuck that I'm throwing a silent hissy fit.

There are a lot of things I can't do as a one-year-old. I can't talk well. I don't even know what the crap people are talking about most of the time, thanks to the existing language barrier. I'm not even gonna mention the frustrations that come with being unable to go to the bathroom whenever you want (and *need*) to go, instead of having to rely on someone else to help you because the diaper life entails constant dependence on others.

Now I'll admit I wasn't the most independent person in my past life, but at least I was *capable* of doing things on my own. Right now, the fact that every shred of independence I have taken for granted is gone is just...*uuuurgh*!

I could already feel my eyes beginning to burn. The urge to cry was really strong, but I didn't want to cry. I may be physically one, but that doesn't mean I have to act like it when things don't go my way! I am *not* reverting back to that negative aspect of myself that I had in my past life. I just can't go back to that lifestyle—nope, nope, *nope*!

Shit, my nose is starting to run. I sniffed, taking the moment to rub my eyes. I'm hoping Dad won't notice, since he's like that some times.

"Mako?" Unfortunately, Dad *saw*!

And since I cannot talk as my vocabulary is limited (curse you language barrier!), all I can really say is something like, "Hmm!" and look away.

...As an aunt to two nieces and four nephews (one of whom was recently born before I met my untimely end in my past life) who I have known since their births (excluding the youngest), it kinda pains me to notice that their behavior has sort of rubbed off on me. In this case, it was my youngest niece who has had the biggest impact on my current behavior, as only *she* was capable of acting this way towards people she felt she didn't want to talk to at that current moment (she was pretty moody).

What bugs me about it is that she did a better job at it than I did because when I finally noticed that Dad didn't exactly get the message, he was already crouched down to my level, his gaze focused on me.

"Mako?" he said again.
I sniffed again, no longer able to hide the fact that I was crying. I wasn't sobbing, but the tears of frustration were still there. I was annoyed when Dad started to talk again and I couldn't exactly understand him.

I don't like this language barrier…

There is nothing more frustrating than being unable to understand your own parent…even more so, if you couldn't communicate. I know I am only one in this body, but…it's still frustrating. I was at least familiar with three languages, of which were completely useless in this situation. I was more like a parrot in this current form, relying on my listening skills and ability to use context based on the situation. Nice to see those English classes didn't go to waste…

I snapped out of my thoughts when Dad suddenly ruffled my hair. He then hooked his hands under my arms and lifted me off the floor. What happened next boggled my mind a bit as Dad turned me around so I wasn't facing him before propping me down on the floor in a standing position. It was there that I understood what he was trying to do.

Dad was helping me stay on me feet. He was giving me the support I needed to walk. Oh my god, I'm actually doing it! I had never felt so elated! Of course, I'm not actually walking, but this is good enough. It's helping in some way and that's giving me some practice!

And, to be honest, it's also getting past the instability that comes with being on a ship since, let's be honest, the rocking never completely stops. It was part of the reason I was having so much damn trouble staying on my feet at times. Apart from that, everything else was just me.

I have no idea how long Dad was helping me walk, but it was long enough for everyone else to return to the ship, because you see, we were currently docked at a port. And, like always, Dad and I were left behind to watch the ship. Now I think that is complete bullshit and to be honest, I was getting sick of seeing the same damn scenery that was the ship. I wanted to go with everyone else, but apparently, I was either too young or everyone wanted to keep the fact that I even existed aboard the Red Hair Pirates ship a secret…maybe both. I have no idea how that would work, considering that they have to buy me stuff like diapers, food, and the like—but I digress.

Anyways, as I was saying, the others returned and stayed quiet long enough to witness the sight of Red-Haired Shanks acting like a father as he helped me walk. Neither of us noticed them until we heard snickering. Now if there was one thing Dad hated the most, it was being teased for being a father. It was never meant in a bad way, it was just something his crew liked to tease him in a playful manner.

With his own crew teasing him, Dad looked at them and bluntly said, "Bite me."

I blinked a few times and had a rather mischievous thought pop up in mind. I grinned widely and then tried my best to actually do what Dad had said…I tried to bite him. Of course, Dad seemed to have this sort of sixth sense when it came to this as he quickly noticed my attempt and lightly flicked me on the nose for it.

"No, Mako." Being the little shit I was, I heard this phrase a lot—like, really.

I blinked a few times and pouted, narrowing my eyes when I heard Dad's crew burst into a fit of laughter. Whether they were laughing at the fact that I almost bit Dad in response to what he had said or that I was scolded, I had no idea. It could have been both, and I still wouldn't have known.

Because this is what it's like to be out of the loop. At this point in my current life, I have grown used to it. It's annoying as hell, and the only good that came out of this is that I wasn't expected to stay in
the loop—at least, not yet. I hoping this won't get me killed…

*It's probably going to get me killed…*

…

A little later after that, I found myself being presented some clothes by Yasopp. Now the thing about this situation is that, up until now, I haven't exactly been wearing anything other than a diaper. Being only a baby, I wasn't exactly bothered by the fact that I was technically half-naked. I mean, things were already worse in the case that I get my diaper changed every day and I'm not even gonna go into detail about bath time with Dad.

>Nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope*

*Moving on* (oh god, **go away**, mental images!), Yasopp was checking if any of the clothes fitted me. Out of all of the clothes that Yasopp had brought, only a freaking white dress fitted me. I have no idea how the frick this happened, but considering that, apart from the dress, every other article of clothing was not only meant for toddlers older than I was, but also meant for boys. I'm seriously going to peg this down as everyone, but Yasopp, being ignorant on how to shop for a one-year-old little girl.

Dad seemed rather amused with the situation while I just had this look of annoyance on my face as I looked at the dress I was now wearing. It honestly wasn't as bad as I was making it out to be. In fact, I rather liked this dress. It was cute and rather simple—I like simple things. I especially like simple things that are pretty or cute.

I have mixed feelings on dresses in general, but mostly for the fact that I don't like not wearing any pants or shorts. It makes me feel exposed…but, right now, I don't mind this. The material was soft and after going without clothes for so long, it just felt rather nice to have this loose material covering my legs. Heh, I remembered back in my past life, I had this obsession with dresses…

Then a wasp somehow got stuck under the skirt of a Tinker Bell dress I was wearing, and stung me on the leg many times. Freaking wasp killed any positive thoughts I had on dresses after that. Seriously, fuck wasps—they deserve to **die**.

"Thank you!" I found myself soon saying to Yasopp, earning a couple of pats to my head afterwards from the guy. I still have some slight mixed feelings about the dress, but by the next day, I was totally up for wearing the shit out of this outfit.

Although, to be honest, wearing such an outfit with delicate material on a ship consistently isn't exactly the best sort of thing a toddler like me should do—especially since I like to crawl a lot, as I still haven't gotten the hang of walking just yet (soon, though…**soon**). It was something that everyone soon discovered right after I had managed to tear my dress's skirt somehow (don't ask—even I don't know how the hell I did it) after about three days of wearing the same outfit.

On this ship, everyone wears the same set of clothes for more than a couple of days at a time, changing only when it's necessary—it depends on preference. Laundry day usually occurs every two to three weeks or so, depending on the weather. Yes, I am aware of how unhygienic this is, but we are living the life of a pirate on a freaking ship that is mostly out at sea. We kinda need to conserve water at times as a precaution—especially since these guys **love** to get drunk. If I recall anything, one of the symptoms for a hangover is dehydration.

…
I looked up a lot of crap because I was like planning on getting drunk legally once I turned twenty-one in my past life just so I knew how it felt to get drunk. I only had one more year left to go—then I died in that restroom. So I have to wait even longer before I can get drunk and yes, I am rather bitter about it. Am I as bitter about it as Dad, since he hasn't been allowed to drink since I came to be on this ship?

Probably not—I mean, Dad knows what it's like to drink and get drunk. I, on the other hand, do not... though, I do have somewhat useless knowledge on the chemistry of beer and wine—hell, I even have an idea on how to make it. You'd be surprised what kinds of classes were available at my university...

Anyways, since all I had was like one outfit that actually fit me, I was wearing this dress for days at a time before getting it washed and put back on me. By the end of the month, everyone had picked up minor sewing skills in order to fix up the damage I put this dress through with my surprisingly destructive ways of transportation (which was crawling). The white fabric was no longer pristine as it originally was the day I received the dress.

So when the ship docked at a port, I made sure to tell Yasopp as best as I could to get me more clothes, since he was the only person who actually knew how to shop for a toddler. Unfortunately, he mistook the little display I was making as a request for more dresses, which is honestly understandable, given that I was trying to indicate that I wanted more clothes by pointing at the worn-out dress I was wearing. It wasn't exactly the best way to communicate without using any words, but it was the best that I could do on a short notice. In any case, I now had more dresses to wear, so it wasn't all that bad. And, to be frank, I was in a bit of a mood to wear dresses anyways.

I mean, there was no one to tell me what I can or cannot do while wearing a dress. There was no one to tell me to keep my legs closed, or that this dress's design was so not cute, when I felt it was, in my opinion. It was just good to be free of any opposing opinions towards how I felt about something like dresses.

The dresses were cute, simple, and I liked watching the guys try their best to fix the damage I dealt to the dresses I wore—especially if it was Dad. It was certainly entertaining to see Shanks trying to comprehend how this situation came to be. While I toned down my behavior a notch, I was still a little shit in my own, unique way.

"Just keep on smiling, you little shit," Shanks said as he managed to successfully patch up a tear in the amethyst-colored dress he was fixing.

I was sitting down in front of Dad while he was doing this, wearing only a diaper since he was currently fixing my dress. While I have only managed to pick up a few of the words he was saying, I've heard it enough times to understand the message. So I did what I usually did whenever I was acting like a little shit. I laughed and then I smiled.

 Eventually, I started to get the hang of walking, and when Dad saw me taking my first few steps without any support, he pretty much made a huge deal out of it—especially since I managed to stay on my feet instead of landing flat on my ass. And there was much rejoicing that night. The booze was brought out, everyone but Dad and I got drunk, and Bink's Sake was sung (I'm getting better at it!).

All in all, a good night, though I'm pretty sure the reason everyone was in such a good mood (Dad especially, even though he couldn't drink) was because, now that I was starting to get the hang of walking, that meant I would be crawling less, and crawling less meant less damage to the dresses I
was wearing. And with less damage to the dresses I wore, that meant less fixing that was needed. It was a pretty logical conclusion (I can only assume), except for one thing…

Walking gave me more range. More range meant more opportunities and soon, Dad woke up to be climbing out of my own crib. Whatever joy there was in me learning how to walk soon turned to horror once everyone saw how I was able to climb onto the table.

Be afraid. Be very afraid…for I can now walk! Though, to be honest, one of the very first things I tried out now that I was able to walk, was the bathroom. I was extremely careful when I entered the place to do my business (I don't want to die again in such a place). I, however, was not as careful to go undetected as Dad seemed to have followed me and when I came out of that bathroom, he just stared at me for a good minute before picking me up and swinging me around like the proud father he was.

And before you ask, yes, there was a celebration. It was embarrassing as hell (I was mortified) and I'm pretty sure this was payback from Dad, for how much of a little shit I've been. You win this round, Dad!

So ends the diaper life for me, and that was one huge developmental stage out of the way…I am extremely content. And then I managed to find a mirror while I was climbing about onto a dresser in Dad's room and spent like an hour just staring at my own reflection.

It was so weird. I mean, I was completely white from the front in places, and metallic blue everywhere else. My face was probably what I considered to be my most interesting feature, as everything about it just caught my attention. My white hair, my pink eyes, the fact that the upper half of my face was metallic blue while the lower half was just white, and then there was my teeth…

I really did like my teeth and just—they were interesting to look at. The way the rows of teeth just connected to each other like puzzle pieces. How the heck is this working? It's a mystery…

By now, I was aware of the dorsal fin on my back. It was rather sensitive, as I have found out the hard way whenever I hit my back on something. I'm wondering if this is going to be a permanent feature I have to look out for or something that will eventually become retractable…I'm hoping it's the latter, as it really makes putting on my dresses a hassle. Yasopp had to put a slit in the back in order to accommodate my dorsal fin just sticking out.

"Having fun, Mako?" I nearly shrieked when I saw Dad's reflection in the mirror. I have no idea how long he had been standing behind me, but apparently, it was long enough to see me playing with my reflection. How embarrassing… "That's you…and that's me."

I can see that, Dad…as much as I've acted like it, I'm not that stupid— "Pfft, ahahahaha!"

Freaking Dad and his funny faces—oh god, I can't breathe! Air, I need air!

**Thud!**

I collapsed onto my side, holding my stomach as I continued to laugh. I laughed harder once Dad started to tickle me, for whatever reasons he had. Oh god, you're gonna get it later—once I get out of this position!

"S-Stop—ahahaha!" Oh god, I'm getting flashbacks to when my oldest brother in my past life would trap me in a corner and tickle the crap out of me! Unlike my oldest brother, however, when I said stop, Dad stopped. My stomach was hurting after all of that, while Dad had this smug look on his face.
You win again, Dad! Ahh…I'm just gonna lie down for a while, ha…

"C'mon, Mako—it's lunchtime." I see…I'll be there in a bit…you know what, fuck it.

"Carry me." I might have pride, but it isn't enough to keep me from making such demands. I am still only a one-year-old little (little, more like tiny—everyone and everything is huge) half-human girl.

About five minutes later, I could be seen stuck under Dad's arm as he made his way to the dining room (as I have called it, since that's where we all ate). There were better ways to carry someone like me, but Dad decided that a little troublemaker deserved to be carried this way. I wasn't in a position to complain, so I just let it happen. We had fish for lunch, anyways, so I got back at Dad by eating everything—bones included.

I don't know about you, but fish bones seem tastier to me than they ever did in my past life. I also like the crunching noises I make whenever I just chew on them. My teeth are hella strong, and I think that's just awesome.

"Mako—don't eat the bones!" Dad had this strange look on this face when I swallowed audibly. It was enough to make me snicker like the little shit I was. "Now you're just doing that on purpose."

No shit, Dad—what gave you that idea? Pfft, ahaha, I love messing with him…

Everyone had expected to worry less about fixing my dresses now that I was able to walk. However, as the days went by, it soon came to their attention that walking was just as bad as crawling, because I liked getting into everything and since I wasn't exactly careful with how I maneuvered my way around things, my dress kept getting caught on things and tearing in places. The look of resignation on Dad's face was priceless.

Days soon turned into months, and eventually, it was my second birthday. I was two years old, now—whee! I was pretty hyped up throughout the whole day, since the guys were making me a cake like last year. As much trouble as I have caused everyone, they still appreciated the fact that I was here. To be honest, just knowing these guys were acknowledging the day I was born was enough for me to not care for the fact that I didn't get any birthday presents.

I'm not petty enough to throw a fit over the lack of presents—I've had enough life-experience from my past life to have gotten used to the fact that I won't always get presents, unlike my older siblings' spawn. Ha, so many tantrums I've witnessed from them as their aunt…I will never lower myself to their standards.

That was to say, I wouldn't throw a tantrum…nope. I was much more mature than that! As surprising as it sounds…yeah, not exactly the most mature person in the world for someone my age, but hey, I'm only physically two—I now have an excuse. Woohoo!

The day was going good so far. I was giving Dad a break, thus allowing him rest from my shenanigans. Then everything changed when the Marines attacked—yes, of all the days, it happened to be today that Marines decided to drop by and raise hell.

These motherfuckers have no idea who the hell they are messing with…well, they probably do. I mean Red-Haired Shanks and the Red Hair Pirates—they had to have some idea. Meanwhile with me, I was just sitting around, watching as everyone beat the crap out of these guys. Not exactly the smartest thing I ever did, but I was baffled that I was caught in between such conflict, like—holy
shit, I could die! Why am I not concerned?!

Needless to say, when a lone Marine managed to find me and mistook me as a child hostage, picking me up by the back of my dress while trying to talk to me in a calm manner, I started to worry…then the asshole had the gall to drop me when he noticed I wasn't exactly human—fully, at least.

I had no idea what the crap this guy was saying after that, but I felt offended and I wasn't exactly in a good mood after that. So I did the only thing I knew how to do so far, and that was bite this guy in the leg…hard. My sharp teeth sunk into his skin and the guy just starting screaming, running about as he yelled out for help. He shook his leg, but I kept my hold by wrapping my arms and legs around his leg.

I'll teach this guy for deciding to ruin my birthday! I'll teach everyone—even if it means putting up with this gag-inducing blood in my mouth! Bleegh…this is so gross, but I am so mad!

"Mako!" I heard my name called out quite a number of times as the Marine I was chomping down on started to run around the deck like a chicken without its head.

I probably gave Dad a heart attack for what I did, but again, I'm mad and when I'm mad, I don't think straight. There are reasons why I took anger management classes in my past life when I was younger and since my brain isn't as developed as it was when I was an adult—I'm more susceptible to impulse.

When I felt the Marine stop running, I tightened my hold on his leg as he tried, once again, to shake me off. He then tried prying me off with his hands, but quickly learned that was a bad idea based on how hard I was holding onto his leg. I honestly underestimated my strength…because my grip was strong.

All I can say, this is definitely a result of my fishman heritage. No normal two-year-old girl should be this strong. It was upon noticing this that I decided to test something out and punched the guy in the kneecap…

Crack!

That…was not a good sound…and neither were the screams that were coming out of this guy's mouth. Feeling rather horrified with what I have done, I released my hold on this guy, spat out whatever blood was in my mouth, and ran like hell, as fast as a could on these little legs of mine. My first thought was to look for safety. Safety, in my head, was Dad and Dad was nowhere to be found within my sight. I felt like panicking—and I did when I noticed I was surrounded by some Marines.

The looks on their faces that they gave me made me feel like I was some sort of monster, which honestly…wasn't that farfetched. I had blood staining my dress and I'm pretty sure there was still some blood dribbling out of my mouth, which came from that guy I bit in the leg and punched in the kneecap. I felt sick to my stomach the more I thought about this.

The feeling only grew stronger when I finally understood what they were saying…they were calling me a monster. Ahaha, to think that this would be yet another word I would come to understand on my own like this…it's funny. Doesn't it just make you laugh?

I wanted to laugh…but I didn't have time to do that as, all of a sudden, one of these guys tried to grab me. My first instinct was to bite down on his hand—and I did. The Marine's reaction to this was instantaneous. He screamed loudly as he tried to shake me off his hand, but I refused to let go. This ended up scaring the crap out of the other Marines as they refused to touch me, even though the Marine whose hand I was biting was asking for help.
Then I felt something come down on the back of my head hard. What happened next ended up making me sick to my stomach…I bit down so hard in reaction to the blow I was given to the back of my head that I soon felt myself falling down.

*Thud!*

I landed hard onto the floor, but that wasn’t what bothered me the most. What *did* bother me was the fact that I had a large chunk of the Marine’s hand in my *mouth*. I spit it out almost immediately, backing away from the bloody piece of flesh. Oh god, I think there’s *bone* in there!

I felt like throwing up—and I did. The Marine whose hand I had bitten a chunk out of was freaking out so badly, the others that were next to him were doing just the same. Meanwhile with me, I was just disturbed.

Then I noticed another Marine had a pistol aimed at me.

*I’m going to die again.*

*Right on the day of my second birthday, I’m going to die.*

That’s all I could really think before I closed my eyes and the trigger was pulled.

*Bang!*

…

I was confused when I felt nothing—no pain or anything, aside from the throbbing in the back of my head from the hit I had received earlier from someone. Then I opened my eyes and saw that the Marine that tried to shoot me was now face down on the floor…dead, with a bleeding hole in his head. I didn’t have much time to react as Dad soon came rushing in to pick me off the ground and punched a nearby Marine that was in his way.

Dad ran into the ship, carrying me in his arms as he tried his best to keep me calm. I was so close to freaking out…then Dad put me inside a barrel and told me to stay quiet until he came back for me. I did as I was told and stayed where I was placed. Dad left after that and didn’t come back until what felt like an hour.

By then, the Marines were chased off, as the Red Hair Pirates were victorious. I was relieved when I heard that and started crying when Dad took me out of the barrel. So much happened today, that it wasn’t even funny. This is the worst birthday I have ever had. Oh *god*, I ripped out a chunk of someone’s hand, cracked someone’s kneecap, and saw a dead body—I need *help*!

*I almost died again…*

It was during this that I found out that Yasopp was the one who shot the Marine that tried to kill me. As thankful as I was, I was still freaking out over the fact that I saw a *dead body*. I should have expected this—hell, people died during the first chapter of *One Piece*. Just what was I expecting? Sunshine and rainbows?

*People die in this series…*

It took me about a week to get over the shock of what happened during my second birthday. By then, the guys decided to try again when it came to throwing me a birthday party. This time around, we weren’t interrupted. The party went well, the food was good, as was the cake, and as disturbed as I was for what had happened on that day, I felt as though I could get over it. After all, no one
important died.

*I'm still alive…*

Of course, such positive thoughts weren’t that effective in preventing the nightmares. More often than not, I woke up in the middle of the night and crawled out of my own crib to join Dad in bed. It took an entire month before the nightmares finally ceased. By then, I returned back to my troublemaking demeanor.

Although, one thing did change…and that was the dress I wore that day was burned so that nothing remained. It gave me a sense of closure just watching the tainted material burn into ash. I felt as though a heavy burden was lifted from my shoulders.

Things were going to get better…that's how it felt. And really, it did get better…

...  

...  

Fast-forward to a few weeks later, Mihawk decided to show up one day and give us some rather surprising news. He was completely wary of me this time around, considering the teeth marks I left on the hilt of his sword. All I did was grin at him when he looked at me…then he pulled out a rolled up piece of paper from his pocket and opened it up for everyone to see.

At first, I had no idea why the others, including Dad, reacted the way they did, their jaws dropping from shock… I didn't really have to ask, though. I ended up finding out myself about fifteen minutes later, when the entire Red Hair Pirates crew, plus Mihawk, who wasn't allowed to leave, sat down around the table as the booze was brought out for a celebration.

Dad picked me up off the floor and seated me down on the table, allowing me to see the piece of paper Mihawk had brought on him…it was a bounty. But it wasn't just any bounty—oh, no.

It was my bounty.

At only two years old, I was now known as Mako "The Jaws" and had a bounty of five-thousand Beri. That's one *hell* of a way to get people to acknowledge your existence in this world. I'm honestly more shocked over the fact that they managed to get a non-bloody picture of me in that dress.

_Ahaha, well, fuck._

I would be laughing if I weren't so disturbed over the fact that a two-year-old girl like me could even *get* a bounty like this. Then I recalled Nico Robin, but she was like eight-years-old or something—apparently, there aren't any age limits in the world of *One Piece* when it comes to getting bounties. This is fucking disturbing as hell!

I mean—I'm wanted dead *or* alive! I'm barely two years old, and people are already after my ass. This is honestly the worst—but, still…ahahaha, I can't believe I have a bounty.

*I'm so boned!*

"Ah!" I let out an annoyed whine as Dad brought his hand down on my head to ruffle my hair.

"It's okay, Mako!" Oh god, Dad's drinking again… "Papa will keep you safe!"
I should have not felt so happy to hear Dad say something like that…but I did and I had this big, stupid grin on my face because of it. Even though things weren't exactly great by my past life's standards, things weren't as bad as they could be. And just knowing that seemed to be enough to keep me smiling.

Chapter End Notes

In case people weren't aware, I made some reference pictures of Mako. Check 'em out when you can if you want an idea how Mako looks like! You can find the pictures here: http://s777.photobucket.com/user/KlonoaDreams/library/OCs

That aside, before anyone asks, the legal drinking age in America is twenty-one—just putting that out there since I am aware that I have readers from different parts around the world reading my stories. By the way, thank you guys so much for taking the time to do so! I truly appreciate it! ^^

In any case, Mako had a bit of a wake-up call this chapter. Like, it's one thing seeing people die from a reader's standpoint, but actually being there to see the body—is another thing. This is exactly one of the reasons why living in the world of One Piece isn't as great as it seems. Sure, it depends on where you could be born, but for Mako, she was born on a pirate ship in the West Blue.

On a more humorous note (of the black comedy kind), Mako's got her own bounty. Yeah…only two years old and she's already made her place in the world. Being half-fishman makes her stronger than the average human and since there aren't many half-fishman around, I've been using Dellinger as an example. At two years old, he was capable of lifting cannonballs…so Mako has the shared ability to do so, but for the most part, all she's been doing is getting into everything, like the little troublemaker she is.

This is what happens when you put her in an environment where she has to find ways to entertain herself. This is where Mako and Akimichi Chōko differ, as Chōko had Chōji growing up. One little change can really make a difference. By the by, just to let you guys know, Mako is, by far, the most accurate representation to how I was as a child. Just let that sink in…heheh, sink.

Anyways, there isn't really much for Mako to do just yet. She can't change the future, because she doesn't even where she is on the timeline—though do keep in mind that Usopp is two years older than her, meaning that Luffy is that much older than her as well. While she doesn't know this, you guys do…meaning it'll be two to three more years before the Red Hair Pirates dock at Foosha Village.

So this chapter started off rather humorous before getting serious near the end. This is pretty much how my entire experience with One Piece has been, to be honest, ahaha… Just giving everyone a heads up, do keep your guard up from here on out—you never know when shit will hit the fan.

Updates are going to be a little unpredictable from here on out, but I will try my best to update as soon as possible. I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! So until next time, everyone!
Having a bounty isn't so bad, though one of the things that changed a bit was that Yasopp got me this neat little dark blue cloak to wear whenever we were docked at a port. Even if it hadn't been that long since Mihawk had dropped by to pass on the message that I had bounty, no one wanted to take any chances with me—not after I had nearly died on my second birthday. And considering how distinctive I am in appearance, right after Dad and his red-hair…it's best to be safe than sorry.

Though, it was around this time that I was starting to get tired of staying behind with Dad as everyone else went into town to restock. Every time we docked at a port, we stayed around for a couple of days at a time—sometimes longer than that, it really depends on the weather and such.

For this occasion, we were here to stay for like three days, two of which have already been spent restocking and getting drunk at taverns, while Dad and I stayed behind to watch the ship. I've tried my best to go along with Yasopp or Beckman, but I always got told to stay behind with Shanks. I always pouted and crossed my arms like the disgruntled two-year-old I was.

It was during the morning on the last day we were going to stay docked at this port that I decided that I was going to make my father take me into town. Unfortunately, the bastard decided to have one of his occasional parties of one last night, where he got drunk off his ass and was hungover quite badly in the morning when I tried nudging him awake.

"Not now, Mako…Papa's trying to sleep…” Good god, Dad, you reek of booze and slight desperation.

I puffed up my cheeks and decided to see if I could go along with the others—assuming they were still on board the ship. I made sure to wear the cloak Yasopp got me before I went outside…only to find out that everyone had already left. The look of disappointment on my face was quite strong.

At this point, I had two choices. One, I could go into town on my own, completely unattended and extremely vulnerable, thus risking my life…or two, I could somehow convince Dad to get his lazy, hungover ass out of bed and take me into town.

…

I'm liking the sound of option two—I'm totally not in the mood to press my luck, even though that's pretty much what I'm doing by taking a hungover Shanks into town. It's not as big of a risk as it is going on my own—that's all I need to know to make the decision. Having made my decision, I started making my way towards Dad's room.

Now there's the lazy bastard, sleeping away a hangover, as usual… It was so tempting to mess with him—but I am going to be much more mature about this! And by mature, I'm going to push my Dad off the bed.

Thud!

That…was much easier than I had expected it to be…I keep forgetting how much stronger I really am. Anyways, Dad seems to be sleeping like a log since the most he did was just groan a bit before going back to sleep…on the floor that he had just finished landing on after I had pushed him out of his bed. Jesus fuck, Dad, how much of a heavy sleeper are you?!
Do I have to cry? Because I will—never mind, I'm not resorting to such tactics just yet...I'm using that as a last resort. I'm also not gonna bite you, because, frankly, after seeing the damage my teeth are capable of...I'd rather refrain from using them on you. So I guess I'll just go get a bucket of water...hope you like water, ahahaha!

... 

... 

*SPLASH*

I had the biggest grin on my face as I watched my father scramble to get a hold of his surroundings right after I finished dumping a bucket of water on him as he slept. He sure seemed confused as hell, though confusion quickly turned into annoyance when he saw I was holding a now-empty bucket in my hands.

"What do you want, Mako?" Shanks asked before snatching the bucket out of my hands.

"Go town!" My grammar isn't exactly the best at the moment, but I'm trying my best, okay?!"Town?" Shanks furrowed his brow, somewhat confused with what I was trying to say. It took him a minute to realize what it was that I had meant. "Oh, you wanna go into town?"

I nodded my head. "Yes!"

Shanks blinked a few times. "Do you have any idea how dangerous that is?"

"Yes!" I am aware.

"And you still want to go?" Shanks arched his brow at me.

"Yes!" I can do this all day, man—just take me into town.

Shanks ran his fingers through his red hair as he exhaled. "And what are you going to do if I don't?"

I grinned mischievously at this, showing off my rather sharp teeth. "Bite you!"

... 

"Let me change first, Mako." Aww, yeah, managed to convince Dad to actually *do* something! Oh man, I wonder what I'm going to see in town—aaaah, I'm so happy! I'm just so EXCITED!

I was quick to run out of the room, but not before grabbing Dad's straw hat off a nearby chair. I made sure to close the door behind me. I sat down on the floor, just clutching onto Dad's hat before taking a moment to realize I was holding onto Shanks's *straw hat*. Blinking a few times, I stared at the hat before decided to place it on my head. It...fit rather big, so it went over my eyes. Sighing in annoyance, I took the hat off and decided to try again with wearing it, years from now when the hat didn't fit me as big as it did now.

For now, I'll just wait for Dad to finish changing. About ten minutes had passed before Dad decided to come out of his room, looking rather panicky, asking, "Where's my hat—Mako..."

I laughed as I stood up and held out the straw hat for Dad to grab. He stared at me for a good minute before grabbing the hat and placing it on his head.

"Okay, let's go—stay by my side." Note to self: Make sure Dad isn't hungover the next time we're
docked and I want to go into town. Hungover Dad isn't exactly in the best mood—like ever, unless otherwise.

I probably didn't help it by throwing that bucket of water—but it woke him up. That's all I really care about and oh my gosh, I'm actually getting off this freaking ship for once—whee!

...  

Dad was honestly supposed to be the one leading me around town—instead, it was I, who was leading him around town. Dad didn't even seemed bothered by it, just mostly exhausted from the fact that he was hungover. Though, he did seem rather annoyed to put up with my shit, but I made it my goal to not be a little shit as usual—I mean, I already threw a bucket of water on the guy after pushing him off the bed, and then threatened to bite him with my teeth.

Anyways, the town seemed so much bigger than usual, but that could be because of how small I was. I was so giddy the entire time. It was as though I was a little kid in Disneyland again…except instead of an amusement park that was full of my childhood memories and familiar faces, it was just a strange, new environment filled with people—so many people.

...

Okay, I'm starting to realize how uncomfortable I am with this. I don't know anyone but Shanks and his crew. I'm a two-year-old little half-human girl with a bounty. I have a distinct skin coloration and physical features that denote my fishman origins, and this is the first time I'm off the ship, wearing only a cloak to keep people from recognizing me (or just staring at me in general). Unfortunately, a little girl wearing a cloak still garners attention, as I have come to find out the hard way.

"Mako—you okay?" Dad must have noticed that I tightened my hold on his hand. "You wanna go back to the ship?"

"No." I'm not going back on that ship just yet. If there's anything I have learned in my past life, it's that you have to suck it up sometimes. Otherwise, you'll miss opportunities, like friendship and becoming Miss Congeniality! "Stay!"

"Okay, whatever you say, Mako..." Dad was such a pushover when he's hungover...not that I'm complaining or anything.

I mean, this is probably going to be my only chance in god knows how long, since we're out at sea for months at a time. The Red Hair Pirates like to take their sweet, sweet time getting to places. One day of discomfort will have to do if I want to see new things—wow, the women in this world have huge breasts.

...

I am not proud of my short attention span, sometimes—please leave me be and...wait a second, is that who I think it is? I blinked a few times as my attention focused on a raven-haired girl who had just finished walking past Shanks and I. I watched her for nearly a minute before tugging on Shanks's hand, signaling him that I wanted to start walking again, except this time, I was keen on following after that girl. I...wanted to make sure I wasn't just seeing things. And who knows—maybe as I'm following that girl, I'll find something interesting about this town.

Going into a new place without any ideas on what to look for is honestly the worst you can ever do. It really doesn't help that Dad is hungover right now, so I'm technically the one dragging his ass
around town instead of the other way around, which would have been rather helpful as he probably had better ideas on where to take me. Right now, I'm drawing blanks on what I want to look for, and it is only until now that I finally know what I want to do…and that's find out where that girl is heading towards.

I can't really see her face from my perspective, but the way she's holding herself as she walks—he's confident about her destination. She knows what she's looking for and I'm curious to know what that is. I hope she doesn't notice us…

At first, I was rather iffy over the fact that I was technically stalking a teenaged girl, while dragging along a hungover, grown-ass man by the hand. Say what you will, but that sounds shady to me, man. Fast-forward to fifteen minutes later, I've come to a conclusion that this was the best idea I have ever had since like—ever. And the reason why I have come to this conclusion was because the huge building we had just entered while following after that girl turned out to be a freaking library. Books…books everywhere—it had been so long since I had last seen a book that I stood there, staring in awe at the many shelves full of books for a good minute before Dad suddenly spoke.

"A library—this is what you wanted to see?" Dad sounded rather confused, and I wouldn't blame him. I mean, I've been leading him around town without telling him anything. "Well, I guess we can stay around here for a bit—hey!"

I didn't let Dad finish his sentence and just started dragging him toward a random direction. I had no idea what I was looking for, but all I knew was that I wanted to read a book. I wanted to read. It didn't cross my mind that I had lost sight of the girl until I had returned with an armload of books to the table where Dad had been waiting for me.

I resisted the urge to slap myself in the forehead for forgetting about her. And instead of beating myself up for losing sight of that girl, I decided to just sit down and read…because Dad had passed out on the table, meaning he's not going to be reading to me. Besides, I'm sure that girl deserved a break—we probably freaked her out because I'm quite sure she was aware that we were following her. She just chose to ignore us.

As I sat down under the table, with a neat stack of books at my side, it came to my attention that I had no idea how to read in Japanese, meaning…I wouldn't be able to read this book, even if I tried. With that thought in mind, I still decided to open up the book and at least familiarize myself with the contents of this book. If I'm lucky, maybe whatever I had grabbed off the shelf had pictures—

"Huh?!” There were many things I was ready to see within this book…what I was not expecting to see, was the English language—this book was in English. I had no idea how to handle this and did the first thing that cross my mind—I shut the book.

Okay, okay, okay…

Maybe I was just seeing things, is what I was trying to tell myself as I tried to calm my pounding heart. Swallowing hard, I opened up the book again…

I was not seeing things…

The words were all in English, and the sentences had the structure to match it, so it wasn't broken
English or anything. I could very well read this book if I wanted to. I could read it...and that was what disturbed me, because—I'm only two years old. I shouldn't be able to know how to read, when this is the first time, in this life, that I am actually holding a book.

This is so unreal...

But...I could read. I still don't know why, but I could read, so I decided to read out a few sentences and—immediately closed the book upon realizing this was a romance novel I had grabbed off the shelf. Yeah, I'm not in the mood for that. Though, would that make the other books I got romance novels as well? I mean, I got them off the same shelf...

Well, only one way to find out...

Please don't let it be smut—please don't let it be smut! Okay, I'm not taking any chances, so I'm just going to skim it and—there are no pictures in this book. I'm going to be a complete child about this and leave these books be. It would probably be smarter that way, instead of trying to read something so complex and out of my age level. Of course, I've lived my whole life, reading books outside my grade-level since the fourth grade.

Still, I am but a two-year-old little girl—I should be looking for picture books or something similar to that, since I have no idea where the children's books section is. Sighing in dismay, I decided to do some exploring...because like hell I'm going to talk to the librarian. I don't do well around strangers...

I'm quite glad this library is mostly empty, though any aisle that was populated by at least one person was an aisle I skipped. Apart from my aversion to strangers, I really don't want anyone to recognize me. Again, I am a two-year-old girl with a bounty and distinctive features that cannot be overlooked. It's pretty much the reason I'm wearing this cloak. I've also been very careful to stay hooded at all times and keep my mouth closed...it's very nerve-wracking. And the fact that I left Dad on his own, as he was still passed out on that table, isn't really helping since I'm on my own.

However, any issues I had immediately went out the window when I saw an empty aisle with a ladder. I should have been wary, but I took my chances and climbed up the ladder in order to get access to the books that were completely out of my reach. Being as short as I was, I had limited range in general, so I had to find ways to increase it. And with this ladder, I could get any book I wanted on this shelf.

I have the power!

Even if it meant finding books that were probably not what I was looking for, I was still going to get them. I don't know what this book is about, but I got it from the top shelf and just knowing that made me feel like I was on top of the world!

On the other hand, being only a two-year-old girl meant everything about me was small...that included my hands. So when I pulled out that book off the shelf, I had to use both of my hands. I didn't really consider any of the possible consequences that could come from this action, due to my current happy-go-lucky stupor. And it was only until I started to feel myself topple back a bit that I realized I was standing on top of a ladder, with no hands holding onto the rails of the ladder.

I'm a fucking idiot.

The book I was holding had enough weight to disrupt my balance and before I could even react, I was falling backwards. I was falling...and because I was so high up on the ladder, I was going to get
hurt. I could even die from this sort of fall…

*Shit, shit, shit, shit!*

I should have never left Shanks's side! Why am I such a risk-taker?! I immediately shut my eyes and braced myself for a rather painful landing…except it never came. Someone had managed to catch me as I was falling.

Relief instantly washed over me as I opened my eyes…only to quickly realize that something was completely off with this situation. While I am very grateful that I did not hit the floor, I still had a right to question the arms that were *sprouting out* of the rails of the ladder I had just fallen off from—what the fuck, man?! Arms don't just randomly grow—wait a second…

*Wait a fucking second!*

It was at that moment I heard a rather feminine chuckle. Footsteps soon followed after and within the span of five minutes, I had been lifted out of the pair of arms that had caught me and gently set onto the floor in a standing position by a teenaged girl with brown eyes and long, black hair tied into a ponytail. My eyes could not be any wider as I stared at the girl before me as she knelt down to my eye-level.

"You should probably start with something smaller instead," she said as she offered me a rather colorful book, using the extra hand that came with the arm that was sprouting out of her shoulder.

*Holy shit…I found Nico Robin.*

Chapter End Notes

BAM, cliffhanger!

Thought this was a good place as any to stop this chapter and I know I updated this story the other day, but hey, surprise update. To be honest, I should be working on an eight to nine page paper, an Atavist presentation, and a 13-page take home French final, all of which are due tomorrow, instead of this—but you guys seriously know me! Yeah…I already got the 5-hour Energy, so no sleep for me tonight—it's gonna be one of those days. Do I regret it? Pfft, maybe—ahahaha, I already got everything prepared, so it isn't that bad…

In any case, you have Mako finding out peculiar things about living in the world of One Piece, and one of those things is the fact that English is a language that does in fact exist. It's not just Japanese, and unlike my Naruto SI OC fic, English isn't a secret language. I'll go more into depth about it in later chapters, since this is part of my world building touch, because you can definitely expect some world building from me. You guys know how much I love world building, right? Well, now you do.

So let's get put the focus back on Mako…she likes reading and books. She especially likes reading books and what better place to do just that, but a library? You know how I kept making a huge deal out of the fact that the Red Hair Pirates are currently in the West Blue, where Shanks's hometown is located (in case anyone was wondering why they're in the West Blue)? Part of the reason I brought that up is because, up until she was twenty-three, Nico Robin has been in the West Blue her entire life. So it was only a
matter of time that someone like Mako would bump into Robin.

And just to clear things up, Robin was the girl Mako was following. Mako wanted to make sure she wasn't seeing things, because she thought she spotted Nico Robin. And by the by, fun fact about me, I was once a Miss Congeniality in a pageant—just thought I'd put that out there in case anyone was confused about Mako mentioning that.

Moving on, I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter and do expect a POV shift come the next chapter. When that will be, I have no clue, but I will try to update as soon as I can! So until next time, everyone!
Nico Robin

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Having been on the run since she was eight years old, Nico Robin had quickly learned to read her surroundings whenever things started to go awry. From reading people's emotions to noticing a sudden change in her environment, finding out that she was being followed was just one of the many things she had grown accustomed to. In fact, Robin was more surprised that it took this long for something like this to occur, as she had been in this town far longer than she had intended. Though, Robin had been expecting a Marine—not a hungover red-haired man.

Despite this, Robin wasn't that surprised. After all, this wouldn't be the first time a random man started to follow her. Being a physically attractive fifteen-year-old did warrant unwanted attention at times, much to her discomfort…

Though, Robin would be lying if she said she wasn't surprised when she saw that the man wasn't alone when he had followed her into the library. The little girl holding the man's hand had just been so tiny, Robin hadn't been able to see her at first. Robin almost wondered if the World Government had decided to change their tactics…then she saw how ecstatic the girl had gotten upon seeing the various books in the library.

It was rather adorable…it almost reminded Robin of herself when she was younger and so eager to learn—not to say that Robin lost any of that eagerness, as it had never once left her. Not even when her world went into shambles…Still, to see that eagerness within someone else so young was heartening.

Robin had found herself unable to take her eyes off this child. She was rather glad she didn't, save for a moment where she took the time to go fetch a children's book for the little girl. Otherwise, Robin wouldn't have been able to save the little girl as she was falling.

And here she was now, just kneeling down before the little girl who had caught her attention, offering a children's book she had gotten with the intent of handing it over to the little girl. Robin was almost concerned that she had scared the little girl with her Devil Fruit powers, but she couldn't really tell what expression was on the little girl's face. After all, the little girl was mostly covered up by the dark blue cloak she was wearing—which was rather peculiar, in Robin's opinion.

A minute passed and the little girl continued to stare. Robin was almost concerned that something was wrong. It could have been a delayed reaction the little girl was experiencing. After all, most children would be shaken up by such a fall. Still, Robin had no idea what to expect from this peculiar little girl, but one thing was certain…

Robin didn't want to see this little girl cry…so she did the very first thing that popped up into her mind.

"Dereshishishishi!" Robin laughed. She laughed a very unique laugh—one that she hadn't heard from its original source in years. She had hoped it would be enough to make the little girl laugh…as she had, when she heard Jaguar D. Saul laugh.

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"Dereshi?" The way the girl reacted reminded Robin so much of herself. It was almost as if the past
was repeating itself…

Suddenly, the little girl just dropped the book she had been carrying in her arms and lunged forward, wrapping her arms around Robin. Robin blinked a few times, somewhat stunned with the girl's actions…then she noticed that the girl's hood had fallen off.

And that's when Robin realized that the little girl was much more different from what she had expected. Skin with such a distinct coloration, a slight bulge coming from her back—there was no doubt that this girl wasn't human…fully, at least. Almost at once, Robin wondered how it must have been for the little girl to react this way.

"Maybe we're more alike than I thought…" Robin found herself thinking as she patted the girl on the head.

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This little girl was only two years old…she was only two years old… That's all Robin could really think as she read to the little girl, using the children's book she had gotten for said little girl. One thing about the little girl that had really stood out the most to Robin was how much attention she gave towards the text.

"Words different…" she suddenly said as Robin turned the page. "Why?"

Robin blinked. She hadn't expected to hear that question—not from a two-year-old girl, at least. Then again, Robin could already tell that this girl wasn't like other girls (or children in general) her age. Smiling, Robin decided to answer the little girl's question.

"This is the language we all speak, in written form…" Robin began. "It's the first language we learn to read and write in before moving onto the other language you probably saw in those other books."

"Oh…" was all that the little girl said. "Just two?"

"No…there are more languages—it's just that these two are favored by the world." While the intent was to bring everyone together on the same grounds when it came to communication, Robin had come to notice that literacy is what proved to be a barrier in people without access to the proper education that was needed.

It took Robin a moment to realize that she was still talking to a two-year-old girl…who had most likely gotten confused with Robin's explanation. At least, that's what Robin had assumed, until…

"You know lots!" the little girl smiled, showing off a rather interesting set of sharp, triangular-shaped teeth.

"Lots?" Robin repeated questioningly.

"Yeah!" The little girl seemed so happy with that. "It great! You great!"

Robin couldn't help but chuckle. The little girl was just too endearing for her own good… "Thank you—um…"

"Mako!" the girl suddenly said. "I'm Mako! You?"

Robin stared at the little girl named Mako and smiled as she said, "Nico Robin…you can just call
me, Robin."

"Robin!" Mako repeated happily. "Nice meetcha!"

Robin blinked and then smiled. "Nice to meet you, too, Mako…"

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Robin was usually wary of who she followed…Mako was no exception. So as the two-year-old dragged Robin along by the hand, Robin made sure to keep her guard up. And when Mako ended up bringing Robin toward a table where that hungover redhead was passed out at, Robin couldn't help but arch her brow.

"Papa!" Mako suddenly exclaimed.

Robin would have never thought that this man was Mako's father. Though, that would explain why a two-year-old girl would be with such a man…

"Papa!" Mako called out again to her father.

This time, the redhead reacted. He lifted his head off the table and opened his eyes slightly, staring blearily at Mako. "Wha…Mako? What happened to yer hood…?"

Mako just grinned widely as she lightly tugged on Robin's hand and confidently said, "Mine!"

Robin blinked, not knowing how to react. Mako's father, on the other hand, turned his attention away from Mako to look at Robin. He stared at Robin for a good minute before his eyes widened and his jaw dropped. It seems as though the man had finally registered who it was he was looking at. That, paired up with what his daughter had just said was enough to give him the shock of his life.

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Some children bring home a dog or a cat…Shanks had actually been preparing for the day Mako would do the same. However, instead of a cute animal, Mako decided that she wanted to bring home a person. Shanks had no idea how to react to this…

"Mine!" Mako repeated again while wearing a huge grin on her face. She then looked at the teenaged girl whose hand she was holding onto. "Come with?"

"Huh?" It seemed the girl was just as confused as Shanks.

"Come with! Come with!" Mako seemed rather adamant to bring along this girl she had most likely just met.

For someone who was still hungover, this was something Shanks felt he should have to deal with while he was sober. Unfortunately, he just had to have his party of one last night…he still had no regrets.

"C-Can we go somewhere else?" Shanks decided to ask the girl. "I don't think this is the best place to talk about something like this…"
The girl stared at him for a moment before nodding her head. "Sure...where do you suppose we should go?"

"Ship!" Mako suddenly exclaimed.

The girl blinked a few times while Shanks just face palmed. One of these days, Shanks was going to have to sit down with Mako and explain that people can't be owned. Until then, he had to clear something up with this young lady. He could only hope that she understood...and didn't think badly of him for going along with what Mako had said.

But before that, Shanks got out of his seat and walked over to Mako. He then knelt down to her level and pulled her cloak's hood over her head. Feeling content with what he did, Shanks stood up and turned his attention to the girl.

"The name's Shanks," Shanks introduced himself. "I'm quite sure you've already acquainted yourself with Mako, right?"

"I have." The girl smiled. "And hello, Shanks...I'm Nico Robin."

It took Shanks a moment to realize what the girl had just said. And when that happened, Shanks almost wanted to scream...because the girl Mako had brought along had a bounty of seventy-nine million beri. Mako had found Demon Child Nico Robin...how?!

This was not good... The three of them, altogether, in one place—this seriously wasn't good.

"I think we should go...now." If there's one thing Shanks wanted to avoid, it was attention. He already had to put up with Mako's distinctive appearance making it easier for people to recognize her and the fact that he had a bounty of his own. Adding Nico Robin to the mix was only going to make it worse for all of them.

Fortunately, for Shanks, Robin seemed to understand that as well. "Shall we?"

Shanks nodded his head and picked up Mako off the floor. "Time to get going, you little shit."

"Ahahaha!" And there goes Mako, laughing as usual...

"Does she even understand what she's done?" Shanks honestly wondered what went on in Mako's head sometimes...for a two-year-old girl, she has caused him a lot of trouble. Sometimes, Shanks couldn't help but marvel how innocent a child could be.

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About half an hour later, Robin was acquainting herself quite nicely with Red-Haired Shanks on his ship. She was rather surprised to find out that Red-Haired Shanks was Mako's father. She was even more surprised to find out the two-year-old had a bounty, which is why Shanks had been so concerned for all of them after finding out who she was. It was quite strange, but not unwelcomed to hear that someone was actually worried about her well-being.

It had been so long since Robin had someone actually showing concern towards her, without showing any interest in her bounty for personal gain. The fact that Mako seemed to be so happy with her presence was just something that made Robin smile. Meanwhile with Shanks, he seemed exasperated with what to say to Mako, who seemed so adamant on getting Robin to stay with them.
Eventually, Shanks just sighed and turned his attention to Robin. "If you want, you can come along with us…"

"Oh…" was all Robin was able to say as her eyes went wide with astonishment. She had not been expecting this at all. And yet… "I guess I'll stay, then."

She didn't mind.

"Yay!" Mako was ecstatic. "Robin stay!"

"I apologize in advance for Mako's behavior…" Shanks sighed. "She might be sweet to you right now, but before you know it, she'll be causing you trouble."

Robin could tell that Shanks was talking from experience. Of course, Shanks was also assuming that Robin was going to stay with the Red Hair Pirates long enough to see that side of Mako. While Robin wouldn't mind a place on the crew, she still wouldn't want to risk causing Shanks or his daughter any of the trouble that always seem to come her way because of her past. So Robin made a mental note to leave the moment she had the opportunity to do so. For now, Robin was content to just feel wanted for once in a manner that did not involve her bounty.

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Robin had only intended to stay for a while… She had never expected the Red Hair Pirates to take their sweet time getting from one place to another. Still, the fact that Shanks's crew accepted her with open arms was enough to make the voyage bearable. That being said, by the time they had reached their next location, Robin found herself unable to follow through with her intent to leave—not with Mako staying so close to her side. And wherever Mako was, Shanks wasn't too far behind.

So Robin stayed a little longer than she had intended. One month soon became two months and two months soon became three. By the fourth month, Robin had found herself rather attached to the Red Hair Pirates. They had listened to her, instead of the lies that were being spread around by the World Government.

They had even accepted her, for who she was, even after she had shown her Devil Fruit powers. While Mako had always been accepting, Robin had no idea what to think of the Red Hair Pirates and kept her powers a secret…only to reveal them in order to prevent Mako from getting seriously hurt when she fell off the crow's nest—what was she even doing up there?

"Bird!" Mako loudly exclaimed as she held up a newspaper.

Robin arched her brow at this before realizing the bird that Mako had been talking about was a News Coo.

"Read?" Mako seemed to be asking, almost as if she hadn't just fallen off the crow's nest.

All Robin could see in the background, was Shanks, mouthing, "Told you she would be trouble."

The lack of direct attention to her Devil Fruit powers was enough for Robin to ignore Shanks as she took the newspaper Mako was holding out to her. The first thing that caught her attention was the headlines, which read:

**MARIEJOIS BURNS**
Apparently, a fishman by the name of Fisher Tiger had climbed up the Red Line and not only attacked the World Government capital, Mariejois, but also set it on fire (thus explaining the headlines). The newspaper went into details on how atrocious of an act it was and how many, if not all, indentured servants had suddenly gone missing during the chaos of the attack. It was around here that Robin stopped reading, as she wasn't a fool. Having been a victim of libel and slander, Robin knew when the truth was being covered up—this was no different.

Though the term, "indentured servants" was used, Robin knew for a fact that it was just a euphemism for slaves. And Fisher Tiger had been the reason that said slaves had gone missing—or rather, had been freed. Reading along the lines was honestly one of Robin's favorite past times when it came to seeing the information spread around through the newspapers.

"Anything worth reading?" Shanks asked Robin as he picked Mako off the floor.

"Depends on who you are asking," Robin replied as she showed Shanks the newspaper.

"Let's see what the damage is—" Shanks trailed off, looking rather pale as he read the newspaper entry. "Oh this isn't good…"

Robin arched her brow at this. "What's wrong?"

Shanks said nothing as he set Mako onto the floor. "H-Hey Mako—how about you go bother Beckman? I think he's smoking again and you know what that means?"

Mako grinned widely before running off, gleefully exclaiming, "Hide the packet!"

Robin continued to stare at Shanks, waiting to hear a response to the question she had asked him. It was only until Mako had disappeared from their line of sight and was, presumably, out of earshot that Shanks finally spoke.

"I think now is a good time as any to tell you the truth about Mako," Shanks said as he adjusted his straw hat. "As much as it pains me to admit it, Mako isn't really my daughter…"

"Is that so?" That certainly raised a lot more questions Robin had in regards to Mako.

"Yasopp's the only one in this crew who has actually fathered a child," Shanks explained. "I was just entrusted to protect a dying mother's child. I never had any intents on becoming a father. Of course, Mako never got the message—not that I mind."

If there was one thing Robin knew for certain, it was that Shanks truly did care for Mako. Though, that still didn't explain why Shanks looked so grim when he read the newspaper. While Robin had gained some insight in regards to Mako's mother, Mako's father, on the other hand…

"If you're not her father, then who is he?" Robin found herself asking.

Shanks paused for a moment before grinning, his eyes completely hidden by his straw hat. "Didn't you read the news? Apparently, he and many others have gone missing since the fire that burned Mariejois…"

Robin was never one to show much physical affection…but after learning the truth from Shanks, Robin felt as though she should do something. So when Mako returned to show off the packet of
cigarettes she had just finished stealing from Beckman, Robin knelt down to embrace the little girl. And because Robin felt that one pair of arms wasn't enough, multiple arms soon wrapped themselves around Mako. It was a hug that only someone who had consumed the Hana Hana no Mi could provide.

...

After all that had happened in Mariejois, Robin had every reason to leave the instant she had learned about Mako. With so many slaves having escaped, the Marines were no doubt going to try and reclaim them—even if that meant searching every ship sailing the seas. And while Mako wasn't branded like her parents, the child of a Tenryuubito slave was still considered a slave.

If any light were to ever be shed on Mako's parentage, it would put an end to the freedom she currently had. And Robin would be damned if she caused a child the misfortune she had brought onto others. She would not allow it to happen...

For now, Robin would try her best to stay unnoticed while she was with the Red Hair Pirates. Eventually, she would leave them, rather than put them at risk with the World Government—not after they had given her a place to stay where she actually felt safe…and wanted. Of course, this had only been possible because Mako had wanted her to stay...

Why did she want me to stay?

Robin had yet to figure it out. Even during these four months she had spent with Mako, Robin still had no idea why the little girl had ever wanted a stranger like her to stay. And, initially, Robin had no idea why Shanks had allowed it to happen.

About a few weeks later, when Robin had decided to ask Shanks, the answer she had received caught her off-guard.

"Mako seemed pretty happy with you around and..." Shanks trailed off.

Robin arched her brow at this. "And...?"

"You looked pretty happy, too..." Shanks smiled. "You should smile more. It's a nice look."

And just like that, Jaguar D. Saul popped up in mind. The similarities were there, except instead of laughter, it was smiling...and just like before, Robin felt her face heat up as she blushed. A rush of positive emotions washed over her as a smile tugged at her lips.

"Like that!" Shanks suddenly said as he grinned. "C'mon—don't hold back."

And just like that, Robin smiled. She honestly felt happy with the answer Shanks had given her question. It was enough to almost make her forget about her current predicament...almost.

Maybe I'll stay...just a little longer...

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When Mako started prancing around in the new clothes she had been given, Robin realized that she had been with the Red Hair Pirates for more than half a year now. Mako was getting older, and it showed from how she finally fit into the clothes that had been bought for her when she was only a year old. According to Yasopp, the crewmates who had picked out the clothes had no idea how to shop for a one-year-old little girl...and it definitely showed by the fact that Mako was dressed in clothes meant for a boy her age.
Of course, Mako didn't seem to have a care in the world that she was wearing. In fact, she seemed rather content with wearing something other than the dresses she had previously worn, of which had all been thrown out due to having been worn consistently to their limits. Delicate material plus a ship life did not mix together whatsoever and with the way Mako liked to get into everything, much to her father's and everyone else's discomfort, it was a wonder how her dresses had managed to last as long as they had.

That still didn't stop Robin from buying Mako a dress she thought would look cute on the two-year-old during their last stop at a port. Mako seemed to like it well, but still preferred her other clothes. Though, from what Robin could see, Mako was at least trying to keep this dress in one piece.

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"Happy birthday!"

Robin felt her eyes go wide when the many members of the Red Hair Pirates, Shanks included, suddenly shouted at her the instant she entered the dining room. It puzzled her how they knew when her birthday was...then she noticed Mako prancing around in the white dress she gave given the little girl. Robin recalled a random question Mako had asked her involving her birthday...

Today was the day she turned sixteen—a day she was going to keep to herself, as she felt no need for others to know such a trivial fact about herself. And here were the Red Hair Pirates, offering her a cake with sixteen candles. The only reason this was even possible was because Mako didn't keep the information she had learned about Robin to herself. Mako had shared it and for that, the Red Hair Pirates made sure that Robin knew that her birthday wasn't going to be ignored.

As Mako walked over to Robin, carrying a plate with a slice of cake, all Robin could do was smile. And about four months later, Robin had returned the favor by giving Mako a huge storybook for her third birthday. Mako liked to read...and when she received the storybook from Robin, the first thing Mako did was read to Robin. Just seeing the little girl who she had taught how to read, just trying to read back to her made Robin smile and ignore the fact that it had almost been a year since she had started traveling with the Red Hair Pirates.

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A month passed and Robin soon found herself returning to a place she could only ever revisit through her memories: Ohara.

The crew's navigator had been rather surprised to find an island on the map he had been using. It had been completely by chance that the Red Hair Pirates had come across the island of Ohara—or rather, what had been left of it. But for Robin to have been aboard with them...that was something Robin was still trying to wrap her mind around. It was just too lucky...but Robin had noticed her fortune had been on a rise since she had joined the Red Hair Pirates.

"This is your home, huh?" Shanks had asked Robin after she had told him and the others that this island was Ohara.

"What's left of it," Robin couldn't help but add.

It was so empty and yet, so very green at the same time. What should have been nothing but burnt remains and ash, was full of vegetation. It seemed that life continued to grow, even after everyone else was gone. It was almost as if the island itself was acting against what the Buster Call had
intended on doing, which was destroying everything on Ohara.

"Do you wanna get off?" Shanks's question had caught Robin completely off-guard. She almost had no idea what to say… but after a moment of silence, she had her answer.

"Why not?" It's not as if Robin had anything to lose if she took a tour around the remains of her homeland.

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It was strange—setting foot on a devastated island. The only life that seemed to exist was mostly plant life. The plant life at least seemed to be flourishing, Robin couldn't help but think as she knelt down to look at a tree sprout that was growing near the where the Tree of Knowledge once stood. The Tree of Knowledge, now black and brittle from being burnt from the fires that had set Ohara ablaze, had fallen to the side, destroying everything had been near it. Over five-thousand years it had been growing, containing so many books, only to fall to a Buster Call that had wiped Ohara off the map…

With the little tree sprout that was growing in place of the magnificent tree that once stood, Robin could at least say that the Tree of Knowledge now lived on in that little sprout. The thought made her smile…it was a shame that the books were completely gone.

"At least something else will live on…" Robin smiled wistfully.

Then, without any warning, Mako suddenly shouted, "Book!"

Almost at once, everyone's attention focused on the three-year-old as she pointed ecstatically at the lake nearby the Tree of Knowledge. It was a lake that everyone had ignored for the most part, having paid more attention to the scenery surrounding it. It was not every day that the Red Hair Pirates had a chance to see what kind of power a Buster Call had in regards to what it could do without being caught in the crossfire, after all. Even Robin hadn't batted an eye at the lake, the fallen Tree of Knowledge having caught her full attention.

So when she and the Red Hair Pirates walked up to find out what Mako had seen in the lake, Robin was completely speechless, her eyes wide with astonishment. The lake had been completely frozen solid, but that wasn't what had caught Robin's attention. What had caught her attention were the numerous books that had filled up the entire lake.

"Book!" Mako shouted again as she jumped up and down, clapping her hands repeatedly. It was a normal reaction from her to seeing so many books.

Robin almost felt like doing the same—almost. Instead, she was more content to see that something else had survived the Buster Call. So many scholars had stayed behind in order to ensure that several thousand years' worth of ancient text somehow managed to avoid being burned and to see it here, somehow preserved…it gave Robin some comfort knowing that the scholars of Ohara did not die in vain. Though, the fact that the lake was frozen was an issue that Robin couldn't help but feel uncomfortable about due to reasons she had with her last experience involving ice in an environment that had no reason for it. That is to say, the lake wasn't naturally frozen—someone else had and who that person could possibly be made Robin rather nervous.

After all, Kuzan had promised Robin that he would be the first enemy to catch her if she had done anything. And considering how infamous she had become these past eight years, Kuzan had every reason to come after her at this point.
"You must be pretty happy, huh, Robin?" Shanks's question snapped Robin out of her thoughts.

Robin blinked a few times and forced a smile. "I guess you can say that…my mother and the other scholars had stayed behind in order to save as many books as possible."

Silence…

Everyone always seemed to get quiet whenever Robin brought up her past. It was a usual reaction whenever a serious subject was mentioned. Then Mako decided to run off without saying anything, turning all attention on her.

"Hey, what're you doing, Mako?!" Yasopp exclaimed.

"Ship!" Mako responded as she presumably made her way toward the ship. Not wanting to let the three-year-old go on her own, everyone else followed after her.

Sometime later, the Red Hair Pirates, Robin, and Mako returned to the Tree of knowledge. What had changed this time around was the fact that Mako was carrying a bunch of origami flowers she had made in her spare time. If there was one thing Robin knew about Mako, it was that, apart from reading, she liked origami. More often than not, Robin came across Mako, concentrating deeply as she tried to fold a piece of paper to match what was on the page of the book on origami she was reading. In fact, it was Mako who had made Shanks buy her a book on origami after docking at a port a couple of months back. That day, everyone, Robin included, had been making various works of origami. Robin certainly had an interesting time using her Devil Fruit powers to make various paper cranes.

Sometimes, Robin wished Mako was just as focused with learning how to write as she was with origami… But right now, Mako seemed to be focused on doing something with the many origami flowers she had folded. It took only until Mako had started setting down the origami flowers around the growing tree sprout for Robin to realize Mako was leaving flowers at what could be considered a gravesite.

Robin found herself needing a moment to recuperate after making such a realization. Sometimes, it was easy to forget that Mako was only three years old…

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"Are you sure you don't want us to help you get to the books?" Shanks asked Robin as they and the others boarded the ship.

"We can help break the ice!" Lucky Roo suggested.

"I think a better idea would be to melt the ice with warm water…” Beckman mused. "Breaking the ice could damage the books."

Robin was honestly touched that these three were so intent on helping her get access to the many books that her mother and the scholars of Ohara had risked their life to protect. Still, for them to stay on this island any longer worried her.

"We should leave…” Robin said firmly. "That ice…it's the work of a Devil Fruit user…”

Shanks blinked a few times before his eyes suddenly went wide. He probably remembered Kuzan, the man who had frozen Jaguar D. Saul when Robin had told him what really happened on Ohara. "GOTCHA…let's leave."
"Bye-bye, Ohara!" Mako waved at the island before turning to Robin. "Come back soon for books?"

"We do have the island marked on our maps..." Yasopp said as he looked over the Red Hair Pirates' navigator's shoulder.

"Tell you what, Robin—how about we come back later when we have the chance?" Shanks smiled widely at Robin. "What do you say? C'mon, I know you really want to get those books..."

Robin couldn't help but smile at this. "Oh, alright."

Robin didn't have the heart to tell Shanks or anyone that she had plans to leave them eventually...

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About a week after the visit to Ohara, Robin had quite the shock of her life when Shichibukai, Dracule "Hawk-Eyes" Mihawk paid the Red Hair Pirates a surprised visit. Though, that shock quickly diminished as Mako ran up to Mihawk and latched herself onto his leg.

"Hawk-Eyes!" is all she said as Mihawk just stared at her rather warily.

Then Mihawk noticed Robin and arched his brow at her. "Nico Robin?"

"Uh...yes?" A small bead of sweat rolled down the side of Robin's face as she looked at Mihawk, his hawk-like eyes completely focused on her.

A minute passed before Mihawk reached into his pocket and dropped a small wrapped package that Mako was quick to catch. Smiling widely, Mako unlatched herself from Mihawk's leg and unwrapped the package. Inside, she found candy that she was quick to start eating—starting off with a lollipop. All of this was done without Mihawk's gaze ever leaving Robin.

It was rather nerve-wracking to the point where Robin nearly wanted to embrace Shanks when he showed up at that moment. He seemed rather pleased to see Mihawk, who still seemed rather perplexed with Robin's presence.

Mihawk shifted his attention to Shanks and asked, "Another stray?"

Robin almost felt offended to be referred to as a stray by Dracule Mihawk, but said nothing of it. It would be foolish to get on Mihawk's bad side, according to what she had heard of the Shichibukai through various rumors.

"You have Mako to thank for her." Shanks grinned widely.

"Yes!" Mako exclaimed as she dashed over to Shanks's side.

"So I assume you're here for another duel...?" Shanks looked questioningly at Mihawk.

"Your assumption is correct." Mihawk tipped his hat.

Robin honestly couldn't believe what she was seeing, though she was inwardly relieved that Mihawk didn't seem to hold an interest to who she was. He just acknowledged she was there and seemed to be more wary of Mako, for reasons Robin couldn't exactly tell. She decided to make a mental note to ask Shanks later about it. For now, Mako seemed to be asking for her attention.

"Let's make origami!" Mako suggested after taking the lollipop out of her mouth.
Robin blinked and nodded. "What do you want to do this time?"

"Flowers!" Flowers seemed to have been a favorite of Mako's, with the rose usually being the type she picked out the most, despite having some of the most complicated folds.

"Okay, let's go make some, then." Robin smiled at Mako as the three-year-old walked up to her side.

…

About fifteen minutes later, Robin found herself stifling a giggle when Shanks placed an origami rose that Mako had just finished making on Mihawk's hat, where the plume was located. Mihawk didn't even react to it. He just continued to act as if Shanks hadn't just given his hat an addition. Judging by the expression on Mihawk's face (or lack thereof), Robin just assumed that Mihawk was completely used to Shanks's antics. He seemed especially used to whatever antics Mako was involved with as well, in particular…

Within a matter of seconds, Mako and Shanks managed to change whatever impression Robin initially had of the Shichibukai. And just seeing how Shanks interacted with Mihawk—it took a huge load off of her shoulders in regards to how she should act around the man. She was still aware of who he was, more that Robin was a bit more relaxed than tense.

A couple of hours later, Mihawk finally took his leave, reminding Robin that she, herself, needed to eventually leave this ship as well. The problem, however, that Robin realized she kept making excuses so she could stay even longer with the Red Hair Pirates, even knowing that doing so would be risky. She was putting everyone at risk with the World Government—why was she still here?

Why am I still here?

Robin didn't seem to have an answer…but then she saw Mako offering her an origami rose and Shanks calling the two of them over for dinner. And while Robin was at the dinner table with them and the rest of the Red Hair Pirates, she found herself getting extra helpings from Lucky Roo. Beckman made a comment that she should eat up, while Yasopp mentioned she was still growing. It was at that moment that a random crewmate remarked how tall Robin had gotten, which earned her much attention as she realized she had in fact gotten taller in the past year. Robin was almost at a loss with how accustomed she had grown with this typical type of behavior with the Red Hair Pirates.

This was just yet another day with them…and Robin couldn't help but be so content.

Maybe…another month wouldn't hurt…

…

Robin knew her luck would run out eventually…she just wished it hadn't happened after staying two more months with the Red Hair Pirates. When it came to everyone's attention that a Marine ship was on their tracks, Robin was quick to panic. The last time she had attracted a Marine ship to the pirate ship she had once been on ended up rather ugly, with the captain being quick to give her up…Despite the way everyone had treated her, Robin had been expecting the Red Hair Pirates to do the same.

What she didn't expect was genuine concern.

"We're not gonna let them get you!" Shanks had been quick to proclaim. "Now take Mako and go inside the ship!"
Robin stared wide-eyed at Shanks for a good minute, not knowing how to react to his outburst. She only snapped out of it when Mako had tugged on the skirt of her dress and told her they needed to go.

"The Marines aren't nice—they'll just call you a monster, like me..." Mako frowned.

Seeing that frown on Mako's face, hearing her words—it made Robin's chest hurt. Mako had already lost so much—not that she would know, as she was blissfully unaware of how serious her life could have been, had she not been so lucky. To hear that the little girl that had managed to find her a place on a ship with people who cared about her wellbeing called a monster—that just wasn't fair.

*It's just not fair.*

Without even saying a word, Robin picked Mako off the floor and ran into the ship, carrying the three-year-old in her arms. Robin made sure that she found a good place to hide, in order to ensure that no one found them. She had hope it would stay like that...

About half an hour later, a lone Marine managed to barge into their hiding spot, somehow managing to make it past the others. He was definitely looking for Robin, based on how quick he was to threaten them with a gun. That meant that the Marines were definitely here for her.

It didn't even surprise Robin that someone like this Marine would point a gun at a child. After all, Robin was only eight years old when the World Government decided to give her such a bounty for people to hunt her down... And the fact that Mako was only half-human was probably what made it easier for the Marine to not hesitate.

Within a matter of seconds, three arms sprouted out of the Marine and Robin suddenly yelled, "**Tres Fleur Clutch!**"

*Snap!*

Robin had grown so used to hearing that familiar snap...but she knew that it wouldn't be enough to completely take out the Marine. The fact that she hadn't even blinked an eye when she had two hands wrap around the Marine's neck honestly frightened Robin, but she just couldn't get over the fact that the Marine had pointed a gun at a child. That could have been her eight years ago—that had been her once.

It was almost as if Robin was releasing pent up rage she held against the Marines as she continued to strangle the Marine with her hands. And it was only until she was completely sure that the Marine was dead that Robin realized what she did—and in front of Mako.

"R-Robin?" Mako suddenly said.

*What have I done?*

"C-Cover your eyes!" Robin was quick to tell Mako. "Just do it—please!"

As soon as Mako did as she was told, Robin stood up and ran over to the dead body lying in the middle of the doorway. With the help of her Devil Fruit Powers, Robin had been able to hide the cadaver in a nearby broom closet. How this particular Marine ever managed to make it this far into the ship without being caught, Robin will never know...but she knew that she and Mako had to find a different place to hide.

...
Five minutes later, Robin and Mako were now hiding in a barrel. Mako had suggested it, mentioning that Shanks had once hid her in a barrel. Robin honestly had a lot of questions to ask, but for now, she just hoped no one noticed either of them. She also hoped that she didn't cry...

This is my fault...

Because she had been so selfish, Robin had gotten the Red Hair Pirates involved with the Marines—Marines that were after her, not them.

Why aren't they giving me up?!

It would only make things easier for Robin to find her reason to leave, instead of a reason to stay.

Why?!

Robin could already feel the tears pricking her eyes. She had done enough crying in the past until she had reached a point where she finally decided to stop crying altogether. She wasn't going to revert back to that now—not after all that she had been through. Robin bit her lip and tried to ignore the tears that had already started to stream down her cheeks.

Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry, don't cry!

…

…

"Dereshi!" Robin felt her eyes go wide when she heard that familiar laugh she usually laughed herself when she felt down. Seeing Mako doing it instead was something that caught her completely by surprise. "Dereshishishi! Dereshishishi!"

Robin wasn't so used to hearing someone else, other than her, do something like this. It took her a full minute, of which Mako continued to laugh that unique laugh that Robin realized…Mako was trying to cheer her up. Mako was doing what Robin had done about a year ago when the two had first met each other.

Knowing this, Robin wrapped her arms around Mako as she brought the three-year-old in a tight embrace. She sniffed, her thoughts now shifting over to how everyone else was doing on deck with the Marines. She hoped no one had gotten to hurt or worse—killed.

…

A total of four hours had passed before Shanks had managed to find the two of them, hidden inside the barrel. It had taken them that long to get rid of the Marines. Robin was incredibly relieved to see everyone was well, if slightly injured. They were all alive—that's what counted.

"Some Marines managed to make it inside, but it doesn't seem that any of them had managed to get to the two of ya…" Shanks remarked.

Robin felt her cheeks heat up as she recalled the Marine she had strangled. At the moment, she was rather embarrassed to even bring that up and decided to do so later when things calmed down. For now, she had to bring up a point that she was sure everyone else had noticed.

"They know I'm with you…" Robin stated. "They know I'm with you…"

While the Red Hair Pirates were already susceptible to Marine ambushes before, the fact that they
now knew Robin was with them would only bring in an increase. That alone just added quite a
tedious burden to the Red Hair Pirates that Robin felt they didn't deserve.

"Right…there's that…" Shanks didn't seem too unfazed. "I guess that'll just be something we'll have
to watch out from here on out. Well, anyways—how are you two doing?"

Robin hadn't been expecting this. She had been expecting everyone to talk about how much more
difficult she had made their lives. She wasn't expecting Shanks, of all people, to ask if she was fine.

"Why are you treating me like this?" Robin asked. "It's my fault they're going to be after you because
of me. You were better off just giving me up!"

Maybe then…she wouldn't have put them all in danger…

"Robin…why would you think that?" The look of concern on Shanks's face as he asked that
question caught Robin off-guard. "You're one of us! We can't just let anyone take you away!"

And from there, everyone else seemed to have repeating similar phrases to Robin. They weren't
going to let the Marines take a member of their crew away without a fight. She was one of them.
That meant if she went down, so did everyone else. They would rather die than give her up for
selfish reasons involving safety. They would rather be selfish in keeping her around and risking their
lives for her.

Before Robin even knew it, she was crying. The tears were streaming down her cheeks again and
her chest felt as though someone was squeezing her heart. Just hearing how so many people wanted
her, never once shifting the blame to her that it was her fault, when she had.

Robin had finally realized why she had stayed…it was because she wanted to stay.

_I can't leave them._

_I just...can't..._

And for the first time in years, Robin allowed herself to cry. She collapsed onto her knees and started
criying into her hands while everyone else just watched, letting her cry as much as she wanted.

_Thank you…_

_Thank you for giving me a place to stay._

Chapter End Notes

Bet you guys weren't expecting this! Hell yeah! Oh, and a huge shout out to
UnstableFable for making this story's bitchin' cover!

Link to the cover here: http://ladybblooddraws.tumblr.com/post/121382313417/gone-fishing-by-klonoadreams-life-in-the#permalink-notes

Look at it! Look at how glorious it is and it's all thanks to UnstableFable, yaaaaah! I'm
sorry, I'm just so hyped up that Gone Fishing has a cover! Moving on from that, I'm
pretty sure a lot of you weren't expecting Robin to come along...well let me just say that
it happened. And here's the thing about how I work with my SI OCs so far. I start things
out slowly, working my way up so that it sets things up for later future events. Anyone who has read my Naruto SI OC Butterfly Child should know how slow it started at first, before suddenly going into long-term events that can't be changed because of how they have been set up. It's gonna be the same way here.

What it means is that while things change, something else balances it out, but whether or not these events happen the same way they have in canon is not always guaranteed. It's basically a reminder that the SI OC is not always in control of the events around them, if ever. The fact that Mako was able to get Robin to come along was one thing, but for Robin to have actually stayed—that was a completely different story, as you can see from this chapter.

So yeah, in any case, a bit more of Mako was revealed this time around. While her mother is dead, her biological father is still alive and even more so on her parents, they're both Tenryuubito slaves. Some of the world building I have implemented here involve the fact that various languages exists. Japanese is the main language everyone speaks in, but...English is the one they read and write in (which explains why you have people speaking it at times and Franky's "Suuuupeerrrrr!") and that alone causes some problems for people who don't have the access for the education—it was done intentionally. Remember that corruption factor I mentioned at the beginning of this story.

Then there's another factor of the child of a Tenryuubito slave is still considered a slave —credit goes to ChibiFoxAI for that. That aside, Mako is in a position where if her past ever gets brought up around the wrong people, everything she has had so far could easily be taken away from her—like freedom. Now I want everyone to refer to this story's summary again...yeah, makes sense, huh?

Thin ice, man—that's what Mako's standing on and she doesn't even know it yet. On a more light-hearted note, ChibiFoxAI has mentioned that Mihawk seems to slowly be getting domesticated and that it is hilarious, which it is. Ahahaha, and Mako's picked up a hobby on origami, so expect her to be folding that paper when she gets bored. As short of an attention span that she has (as she does have combined hyperactive-impulsive and inattentive ADHD like moi), Mako can very much concentrate easily on a task that catches her interest.

It might have taken me some time, but I can at least say that I am finally out of college for the summer! Expect some more updates, depending on what happens! I seriously hope I am at least productive this time around...so yeah, I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! I'll try to get the next one up as soon as I can, so until next time, everyone!
Surprise

You know, I'm oddly disturbed with the fact that I didn't seem too unfazed with the fact that Robin just strangled a man to death within our vicinity. By the way, I still can't get over the fact that Nico Robin has stayed this long with us—not that I'm complaining or anything. This woman deserves a safe place where people care for her. It's gotten to the point where she just broke down because everyone was telling her that they wouldn't let the Marines take her away without a fight and so on.

While I might seem like my usual, happy-go-lucky self, on the inside, my feels were all over the place. My heart felt like it was being torn to pieces, and I honestly felt scared with the fact that I now lived in a world where anyone's life, such as Robin's, could easily get fucked over by the World Government. This is seriously some dystopian bullshit they're pulling. Though, the question is… which dystopian novel can I apply the most to this situation?

Well, books almost got burned (I'm getting huge Library of Alexandria vibes from the Tree of Knowledge), so I'm guessing Fahrenheit 451 is definitely a good place to start, but I'm not too familiar with it as I am with Nineteen Eighty-Four (Big Brother is watching you…) and Brave New World (where do I even begin with this one—soma?)… Speaking of Nineteen Eighty-Four, I already know, based on how things went with Robin and what really happened on Ohara, that censorship is definitely a thing. I mean, I saw through the lies they were trying to pass off in that newspaper article of Fisher Tiger.

Indentured servants my ass—they are totally depriving people of information.

By the way, English seems to be the official written language of this world, while Japanese is the spoken language. It's rather strange, but I'm not complaining since I'll be doing well in one area that would benefit me in the long run. Meanwhile with the Japanese language, I can barely read and write…I just recently got a hang of actually talking in sentences—and that was only because Robin was here. Robin is the best teacher to ever exist. I'm so grateful to her and she's just a gem over all that I'm going to bite anyone that makes her cry…in sorrow. Right now, those are tears of joy she's crying.

And I will protect that joy she is experiencing…as soon as I am capable of defending myself without the need of someone else to protect me (because I am not fit to defend myself just yet in my current form). That's going to take a while—especially with how small I am. I have no idea how tall I actually am in inches or centimeters (whatever the frick this world's system of measurement is), but everyone and I mean everyone is taller than me. Sure, I'm only three, but the height gap is freaking jarring and then there's Robin who seems to be getting taller with each passing day.

Hell, everyone in the world of One Piece seems to be hella tall—I guess there's a chance for me to actually be tall for once (which means I won't be mistaken for a twelve-year-old for once, huzzah!). At the same time, there's also a chance I'm gonna be extremely busty and I'm not comfortable with that thought.

Nope, nope, nope, nope!

Weirdly enough, the proportions of women in this world aren't exactly as weird as they appeared on paper (and by weird, I mean exaggerated hourglass figures). It seems almost natural—probably because their waists aren't as small as they appeared in the series, which is still strange because I'm not used to seeing well-proportioned women from this once-fictional world.
I'm still not too proud of my short attention span (but I'd be lying if I said I didn't like what I was seeing—like damn).

...

...

One thing that changed after Robin's breakdown is that she started smiling a bit more often. Another thing that also changed was, for the time being, Dad wasn't allowing Robin and I to leave the inside of the ship for reasons that I couldn't even begin to ask. Something about coursing through dangerous territory—I don't know. Everyone was being rather vague in an attempt to keep Robin calm (she's done enough worrying).

Whatever was going on, it was how Dad and the others had lost the Marines after chasing them off the ship. We weren't told anything until like almost a week later, when we were finally let outside and holy crap, the sun is a bright, glowing orb that makes me want to hate it! Geez, I forgot how bright it can actually get after staying inside for so long!

"Welcome to the North Blue!" is what Dad first tells us upon coming out and—wait, what? Are you…are you messing with me? We were in the West Blue about a week ago, how the fuck did we get to the North Blue and—oh…oh shit… Holy shit, how did we make it through the Calm Belt without dying?! Well, at least that explains how we shook off those Marines, ahaha…

Well, this is more surprising than finding the Marine that Robin strangled to death two days after the incident. All I can say, is that it was probably the most surprising thing ever to find a corpse falling out of the broom closet, when all you wanted to get is a broom to clean up the mess you made by dropping a plate. It is also quite possibly the most hilarious thing ever because it was like something out of a black comedy skit.

...

Yes, I am disturbed that I took in that shock in stride, but not too much, because I mean, c'mon, it's the dead body of a Marine that tried to shoot Robin and me. Plus, when Dad found out about the scenario (which he did quickly because everyone heard me scream), he went on and on about how Buggy did the same damn thing when he first killed someone. I have never been so interested to hear about a man's first kill—especially since it was Buggy's first kill.

It certainly got Robin feeling better, since she was still hung up about killing a person in front of me and the fact that it was I who had found the body she had forgotten about. Of course, this isn't the first time I've seen a dead body, so the shock wasn't as huge and considering the new piece of information I've gained about Buggy…it's not so bad.

So yeah, the North Blue…this is our new location on the map, and I have no idea how to feel about it. Hell, I had no idea how to feel about being in the West Blue for the past three years, but hey, I got to meet Nico Robin and managed to find her a place with the Red Hair Pirates, so it isn't that bad.

I mean, I'm actually learning shit with her around and that is just…it's a great feeling, being able to do something you weren't able to previously, because of lacking knowledge. Though, I do have a growing concern in regards to how this is going to affect the future. I try not to think too much about it, because otherwise I'm going to fret about whether or not I'm going to be the reason that the Red Hair Pirates will never get to the East Blue and reach Dawn Island, docking at Foosha Village, where Luffy lives.
I did the math, which took a while since Yasopp never does seem to talk about Usopp around me, and that's probably because I am a girl and not a boy like Luffy—or because Yasopp thinks I'll feel jealous, which isn't far from the truth since I do seem to get worked up about the most random of things. Like books…and origami—have you seen these complicated folds?! I will slap a bitch who thinks my work is subpar!

Anyways, I did the math, using Robin's current age as a basis and found out that Luffy is five-years-old right now. While he was seven-years-old at the start of the manga, the Red Hair Pirates docked at Foosha a year before, making Luffy six at the time. Luffy (and Usopp, to that extent) is like two years older than I am, so in order for the meet up to match up, there is like less than a year for the Red Hair Pirates to get to the East Blue in order for that life-changing meet-up to occur.

I think too much and I really wished I didn't know so much to be this concerned… So I'm just going to not think about this for a good amount of time because I'd rather not stress over such things at my current, physical age. Like, nope—did enough of that during college.

…

So I'm going through my head for any information I know of in regards to the North Blue, and the first thing that pops up in mind is Montblanc Noland, which, through that extension, brings up Sanji, Bellamy, and other characters who were born in the North Blue. I made a face when I recalled Flevance and the tragedy that befell it. Seriously, this just reminds me even more of how much the World Government is shit—wait, a second.

My brain just thought of something…we're in the North Blue. Aren't like…Donquixote Doflamingo and his pirate crew currently terrorizing the North Blue?

…

…

Shit.

Well, this is freaking lovely! My heart's starting to pound so hard within my chest and I'm already feeling feelings that a three-year-old probably shouldn't—that being anxiety and immense fear. Just knowing what the Donquixote Pirates are capable of made me turn to Robin, who was smiling. She seemed so happy, just looking out at our current surroundings. After all, this was the first time in sixteen years that she has ever been outside of the West Blue.

I'm scared…because what if the Donquixote Pirates come after Robin for her bounty? What if they come after Shanks's bounty as well?! They're going to ruin our lives if they ever catch us!

Considering what happened about a week ago, there is a huge chance that our bounties went up because of our affiliation with Nico Robin, and, through that extension, because the Red Hair Pirates attacked the Marines in defiance when demands were made to give up Robin. Hell, I have a sinking feeling we've become rather infamous because of that.

Oh man, this kinda sucks.

Swallowing hard, I did the first thing that popped up in my head and latched onto Robin's leg. My body was trembling at this point and I could feel the tears pricking my eyes. I didn't want to cry, but…

I'm scared…
"What's wrong, Mako?" Robin asks as she picks me up, holding me close to her chest.

"Scared…" This isn't fair…this isn't fucking fair!

Out of the frying pan and into the fire…that's what happened.

"I wouldn't blame you." Robin smiled wistfully as she started to stroke my hair. "I was scared too…"

No, you don't understand…

It's more than that. I don't think I'll ever be able to tell anyone. And that's just so frustrating, but I don't know what to do. I don't even know if I can do anything. And just knowing that…made me cry.

I'm scared for all of us.

…

…

After my little breakdown, everyone seemed to be a bit more careful around me, as so not to set me off. I try to ignore my current concern by immersing myself in origami. It seemed to be working, so far…but I'm still worried. I don't want to lose everything that I have right now, but I doubt I'll even be able to do anything about it…

Then Dad walked up to me as I was working on what was the fortieth origami rose I had folded (when I am on a roll, I am on a roll) and knelt down to my level. I looked up from my work as Dad smiled at me.

"You okay, Mako?" he asked me.

I stared at the redhead for a good minute before going back to my work. "I guess…"

"What's wrong?" Dammit, Dad wants an actual answer.

I puffed up my cheeks as I finished folding the origami rose I was working on. I took a minute to think very carefully about what I was going to say next before actually saying it. "I'm scared Robin will get taken away.

…

"Is that it?" Dad sounded relieved before he placed his hand on top of my head. "Look, Papa will make sure that they don't take Robin away…okay?"

I sniffed before nodding my head. Almost immediately after that, Dad picked me up in an embrace and I ended up crying again for the second time. I don't know about you, but just hearing Dad like this—it's reassuring. It reminds me just what type of person he is…and that I shouldn't underestimate him.

After all, my father was Red-Haired Shanks.

…

…

It took us three months to reach a destination point—three months, and that was only because we
were playing it safe by making the world think we were dead. I mean, the most recent News Coo brought us a newspaper talking about the incident, putting out a "what if" scenario in the case the Red Hair Pirates did in fact make it through the Calm Belt (they think we're dead, ahahaha). That scenario is basically our bounties going up, so hey, guess who’s now worth ten-thousand beri?

I might as well try to be optimistic about something since I still have to deal with the fact that the Red Hair Pirates are pretty screwed (to an extent) if the Donquixote Pirates ever find us. Like, I doubt we’ll get out of that encounter without some casualties, at the least. I don't want anyone on this ship dying.

I especially don't want to die, either—once was enough! I deserve a long life this time around, with a death that is more dignified than dying in a restroom! I will never let that go…

Anyways, as it's been three months (a bit more than that in total, but who's keeping track?) since we've last docked, the very first thing I did was get off the ship in order to stretch my legs. I had my cloak on, ready to keep myself from getting recognized.

Freedom!

Oh man, I am totally gonna explore the shit out of this town…as soon as I can either convince Dad or Robin to take me. I wonder if they have a library…

…

Well, there was a library and I did get to read some books, but…I'm currently disgusted with this children's picture book called, Liar Noland. Like, this is bullshit. I know what really went on—hell, I even cried when I found out. And seeing this fabrication that was passed off as a children's book… I'm done.

"Is something wrong, Mako?" Robin seemed to have noticed my annoyance with the book I was reading. "Did you not like the ending?"

Riiipp! "I hate it," I said as I started to rip out the pages of this piece of trash.

"M-Mako!" Shanks did not like what I was doing. "That's not your book!"

I know very well that this isn't my book, but I am just so mad right now, that it's taking every fiber of my being to not cry. This book is a freaking punch to the stomach to those who know the truth…

"People lie…" For various reasons, as they are unable to admit the truth. Reasons can stem from selflessness…or selfishness, such as a king who acted to rashly because of greed. "And sometimes, lies can hurt people…like you, Robin."

This caught Robin off-guard, as she realized that I was talking about how the World Government put up so many lies in regards to the people of Ohara and, through that extension, her. It was because of their lies that she could never have a chance at a normal life.

"What if Noland was telling the truth?" I hate knowing information and not knowing a way to tell it without proof. If there was one thing I've learned writing papers for college, it's that I need references to support my claims. I have cited too much shit and stayed up late too many times to ignore all of that. "What if he was like you, Robin?"

I should not be saying stuff like this…like at all. I'm only physically three, and yet, here's all that education, from my past life and now, actually showing that I've learned. I might act like an idiot…
but that doesn't mean I am one.

"I want to find the truth," I said as I ripped another page out of the book. "The actual truth…no more lies."

No more lies…

…

"Well, would you mind if I helped you?" I blinked when Robin suddenly asked me that question. "I'm also interested in finding out the truth."

I stared at Robin for a few seconds before nodding my head and smiling, which is something I shouldn't do when I have to keep my appearance under wraps. "Okay."

Dad looked rather confused with what was going on, but he seemed relieved that I was no longer tearing out pages from the book. The first thing he did was snatch out the book from my hands and quickly placed the pages I had ripped out back as discreetly as possible. He then put the book back on the shelf and told us to, and I quote, "Book it."

My soul hurt from hearing that pun, but I couldn't help but laugh as Robin and I followed Dad out of the library. We are totally not going to come back to this town's library after what I've done, ahaha. I wish I had pen to at least write "LIES" all over each and every page…of course, ripping out the pages was good enough, for now…

…

…

We were only supposed to stay docked at this town for a couple of days, but we ended up staying a week and that was because some of the crew was gathering information on this town. It didn't really occur to me as to why any of the Red Hair Pirates would want to learn about a town we weren't going to return to—especially since we had to make sure we didn't linger too long in a location, what with us being so infamous now, for protecting Nico Robin.

On the day we were supposed to leave town, I found out why they were gathering information on this town when Dad took me to this town's hospital. It was huge and oh gosh, it looked so damn fancy and sophisticated. The architecture was just—and the courtyard was just so…someone did a mighty fine job on this area, because I am absolutely speechless.

"I think it's time we got you check out, don't you think?" Dad asked me as I continued to stare in awe at the size of the building.

It took me a couple of seconds to process what Dad had just finished asking me. And it was at that moment that I realized that I went three years without ever seeing a doctor. How the hell am I still alive?

…

Herd immunity, I guess—holy shit, if that is the case, then I am fucking lucky! Geez, that's honestly scary…
For such a huge hospital, it sure is taking a while for Dad and I to get called up…of course, we are walk-ins who aren't from this town. They have a specific waiting room for that, by the way, which is actually cool since we don't have to put up with that false sense of hope that the person getting called next is you, when it's really the person across the room. It also helps that it is rather early in the morning, so it's going to take a while…

In the meantime, I am totally acting like my physical age, just messing with these building blocks. Though, I usually prefer those wooden bead and wire maze rollercoasters I usually find in the waiting rooms of certain locations. I will immerse myself in them for like a good ten to twenty minutes.

…

They're colorful and pique my interest—that's all I really need to say and yes, I am aware I get easily distracted, but I am bored. That is why I am trying my best to do something with these building blocks that are around. And then I am totally going to demolish what I've worked on for the hell of it!

I am so destructive, ahahaha~!

"Mako, you're smiling." Oops…thanks, Dad!

You know, thinking of it now, I'm probably gonna give the doctor a nasty shock once the cloak comes off…well, let's not think too much about that. Let's just focus on these building blocks (I'm making a pyramid!) and—

BAM!

I jolted when I heard the loud noise that came from the person who had just finished kicking the door open. It was so sudden—my heart was racing. Oh god, I can feel my pulse…and it looks like it isn't just Dad and I anymore. Yay for more people—not. As much as I wanted to look up, I'd rather not, because then I might make eye contact and that's hella awkward.

I am not a social person around strangers.

"I said I don't want to go to the hospital!" Well, it looks like whoever is with the person who just kicked open the door was a kid. Don't know how old—don't care to find out, either.

I'm just going to stay focused on what I'm doing right now. I want this to be the biggest three-dimensional pyramid I have ever built!

"Too late, we're here." And I believe that to be the adult with the child…lovely. Let's hope this doesn't make this once quiet room all loud, because I'm honestly not in the mood for loud noises right now—I need to focus, dang it! "If you're going to keep acting like a child, then why don't you play with this kid?"

Before I could even process what was going on, a child—a boy, to be precise—was literally dropped on top of my pyramid made of wooden blocks. I made a face as I watched every little block I had tried my best to angle right as I made this pyramid tumble down under the weight of the child that had been dropped on top of it. Well, one thing’s for sure, this kid is older than I am—by how much, I don't know, but I'm just annoyed and I wanna touch his hat.

…

It looks so soft and furry—shut up!
"Sorry about that." Well, at least the man apologize for dropping his kid—fuck it, I'm gonna be a little shit.

I pushed a bunch of blocks in the guy's way as he started walking, hoping to see if he can feel them through his shoes when he stepped on them. I hope they feel like Legos!

**THUD!**

I…honestly wasn't expecting him to trip (how can someone be so damn clumsy?!?) and holy shit—that was way too fucking close! The guy landed right next to my side when he tripped—or at least, his legs did and damn, he's *tall*. It was like watching a tree fall. Ahaha, that's a funny image…

"Mako!" Oops, busted by Dad! "Are you okay?!"

I stared blankly at Dad as he helped the rather clumsy man I just finished tripping. I blinked when I saw a dark purple feather suddenly float in front of my face. My mind was screaming at me to catch it, but I did the next best thing and swatted it away, suppressing a smile when I saw it twirl around in the air. I wonder where that feather came from—oh, I see. It came from the feather coat the man was wearing. How weird…it made him look like a fluffy tree…

Ahaha, he's like a Truffula Tree!

"Sorry about that—Mako's a bit of a troublemaker." I'm right here, Dad…I can hear you loud and clear—wait a second…

We're in the North Blue…in a hospital…with a really tall, clumsy guy wearing a feather coat, who brought a kid with him that's wearing a fur hat and has white splotches on his otherwise pale skin.

…

…

*Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!*

I quickly turned to the boy who had been dropped on top of my pyramid and soon found myself staring into a pair of yellow eyes. I blinked once…then twice…and then a third, for a good measure.

"Stop staring at me!" the boy suddenly snapped.

Oh fuck me sideways, how the hell did we come across Donquixote "Corazon" Rosinante and Trafalgar D. Water Law?!

…

Well, at least it ain't Donquixote Doflamingo, ahahaha—oh god, someone, *help* me!
Trafalgar Law was not in a good mood. He hadn't been in a good mood since Corazon kidnapped
him, in an attempt to find him a cure for his illness. Law had already come to terms with his
impending death. So for Corazon to be so adamant about finding a cure really annoyed Law—
especially considering how Corazon just dropped him on top of these blocks.

Now this stupid kid was just staring at him—what was the point to even wearing a cloak indoors? If
there was one thing that this kid had done right, so far, it was tripping Corazon. The jerk deserved it,
for dropping him onto those blocks…

"I said stop staring at me!" Law didn't like being stared at—that kid was probably staring at the
white splotches on his skin. Probably wondering if he was contagious (which he wasn't). Law was
already prepared for that sort of treatment…

What he wasn't prepared for, was a gentle poke to the nose by a tiny finger and an amused, "Boop!"

It was so sudden and so…random. Law's first reaction was to grab onto the kid's wrist…and almost
instantly, he realized that something was up with this kid's skin. A ghostly white-colored palm, a
metallic-blue back—Law had never seen something like this.

"Ahaha…" Nervous laughter came from the kid and, for a brief moment, Law caught a glimpse of
white with a peculiar shape.

Maybe—just maybe—this kid was just as fucked up as he was. That was a somewhat comforting
thought…then curiosity drove him to reach out towards the kid's hood with his free hand and very
quickly, did Law learn that one should be cautious around strange children, when two rows of sharp
teeth clamped down onto his hand.

…

…

Shanks worried for Mako. He worried for her safety, considering how much of a troublemaker she
was. And though it was a well-established fact that Mako was a little shit (just what was he expecting
from someone he raised these past three years?), he still wished she wasn't the type to press her luck.
Even after tripping a man for toppling her pyramid of blocks, she still had it in her to bite his kid,
who probably deserved better treatment after getting dropped on top of the aforementioned pyramid
of blocks.

Shanks prepared for the worst when the tall, yet clumsy, man stared at Mako as she chewed on the
boy's hand. The boy was rather fortunate that Mako wasn't in a bad mood, because otherwise, he
would have been crying by now, from pain. Mako's teeth were rather sharp…so it was up to her on
how much pressure she was applying to her bites. It seems she was mostly in a playful mood.

"Uh…that means she likes him…?" Shanks tried to lighten up the mood, but then Mako's hood fell
off and now Shanks was on the verge of panicking. After all, not everyone took well to Mako's
fishman heritage. Of course, there always seemed to be a first time for everything, because the man
started laughing and the boy just seemed so annoyed that he didn't even bother trying to pry Mako
off his hand—which was a good thing. Mako had an on-and-off aversion to touch. Sometimes, she just hated being touched.

In any case, Shanks was extremely relieved for the lack of negative reactions to an unhooded Mako. Though, he would be lying if he said he wasn't surprised when the man suddenly asked him, "How old?"

"She just turned three." And that was how Shanks became acquainted with a man named Corazon. Quite an interesting fellow, that man was. They were the same age, too, though the same couldn't be said about Law (the name of the boy) and Mako.

Speaking of them, Law seemed to be having issues socializing with Mako. Mako was just fine, even if Law had presumed her to be male, which was an honest mistake, considering Mako's choice in clothing. Corazon got quite a laugh when Mako bonked Law over the head for his mistake.

"You little shit!" Law scowled at Mako.

"Ahahaha!" If there was one thing Shanks knew about Mako, it was that she practically embraced who she was. She knew she was a little shit and she was damn well very proud of it…so long as it didn't endanger her life.

At least, Shanks presumed, otherwise, he was going to have issues with Mako learning from her mistakes. Still, he was glad that she finally had a chance at socializing with someone who wasn't an adult…even if that someone was only nine years older than she was. Not that age was ever a factor Mako ever considered, as she always seemed to treat everyone equally…to a certain extent.

Mako had her favorites. And seeing how much fun she was having bothering Law, he might have just become one of her favorites. It was honestly something Shanks couldn't help but chuckle at—it was refreshing to see someone else be on the receiving end of Mako's mischief. Mischief, at the current moment, was trying to take Law's hat away from him.

"So what brings you here?" Shanks asked Corazon.

Corazon paused for a moment…then replied, "To find a cure for Law."

"I already told you that it doesn't exi—" Law got cut off when Mako suddenly covered his mouth with her hand, saying, "Shhh!"

It was enough to stun Law into total silence as he stared at Mako, who just patted his face in a manner that denoted that he was going to be okay. Law was baffled and Corazon seemed amused.

"She always like this?" Corazon looked questioningly at Shanks.

"She's unpredictable, I'll tell you that…but she means well." Shanks could at least assure that when it came to Mako. "So what is it that Law has?"

"Amber Lead Syndrome," Corazon said so casually, as if he wasn't concerned with the fact that Law had it.

Shanks felt as though he should know what Corazon was talking about—hell, it even sounded familiar. "Where have I heard that before…?"

"Ever heard of Flevance?" Corazon suggested.

"Flevance…" Shanks repeated. "Hmm…"
"Oh!" Shanks's eyes widened when he recalled the newspaper article he read two years ago, though…then he remembered what typically happened in newspapers. "Oh…well, I don't know where to begin."

Because Shanks had no idea what was truth and what was lie.

"Well, I'm here to get Mako checked out," Shanks decided to change the subject. "Little shit's pretty lucky for someone who hasn't seen a doctor since she was born…ain't that right, Mako?"

"Yes!" Shanks almost thought Mako was mocking him from the way she grinned at him with that smile of hers…

"So, considering how comfortable you are around Law, I can assume that Amber Lead Syndrome isn't actually contagious?" Shanks wanted answers and he decided to start it where it probably counted.

"It's not contagious!" Law sounded so angry when he responded.

And that was all Shanks needed to know…even though he had been asking Corazon. "Good luck finding a cure."

"Hope that check-up goes well." It was nice to see that he and Corazon were on good terms.

"Give me back my hat!"

"Ahahaha!"

Of course, Shanks couldn't say the same with Mako and Law…

*Never change, you little shit…*

Everything seemed to be going well so far after the nurse had escorted Shanks and Mako to the doctor, even if it did take almost two hours for them to get called up… Then Mako's cloak came off and things started going bad. It began with a shrill scream coming from the nurse, and it quickly escalated when the doctor straight up told Shanks that the hospital's services weren't accessible to monsters. And though the doctor didn't say it, having used different means of wording it, Shanks could tell that doctor had been thinking it.

Shanks was always aware of the existing prejudices against fishmen. He was aware how strained the current relations between humans and fishmen were, even more so after the incident where Fisher Tiger burned down Mariejois and freed the slaves. Tensions have been high since that day, and yet…Shanks still couldn't help but feel shocked.

Because Mako understood the context of the doctor's words…she understood it clearly. And it hurt to see the little shit stop smiling there and then…because this was not the first time she had ever been called a monster. Knowing that and hearing the doctor trying to tell him to take Mako and leave was enough for Shanks to ram his fist into the doctor's face.
There was a sickening crack that came after the impact, follow by a spurt of blood, before the doctor collapsed in a pained, unconscious heap onto the floor. The nurse was scared out of her wits and started begging to be left alone, even though Shanks didn't have much of a bone to pick with her. He was more concerned with Mako, who just said nothing and stared.

Shanks's attention quickly shifted when the intercom suddenly sprang to life as an emergency broadcast (as it called itself) announced the discovery of a child with Amber Lead Syndrome inside the hospital. That alone was enough to turn the already nervous nurse into a blubbering mess. It didn't take long for Shanks to put two and two together, realizing that he and Mako weren't the only ones having issues with their doctor.

"C'mon, Mako," Shanks said as he lifted Mako off the swivel chair she was sitting on. "We're leaving."

"…kay…" was all Mako said as Shanks carried her out of the room.

Outside, in the hallways, chaos reigned as the recent broadcast induced panic amongst everyone inside the hospital. Shanks didn't bat an eye at what was going on, paying more attention to ensuring that Mako was covered up completely by her cloak. He didn't want anyone else staring at her the way that doctor and the nurse had. He just wanted to leave this place.

And it was on the way out that Shanks and Mako came across a crying Law. The poor kid was trying his hardest to choke back sobs as the people around him scrambled to get away. With what Shanks already had to endure when it came to seeing how others treated Mako, he couldn't exactly leave Law alone—especially with Corazon being out of sight.

This…this was why Law didn't want to go to the hospital. Screams filled the air, all of them coming from people who were afraid of him—who were afraid of contracting Amber Lead Syndrome, even though it wasn't contagious. Not that anyone would ever stop to listen. They never listened…

And even though Law had already come to terms with his imminent death, it still hurt to be treated like a monster. To have people visibly telling him to leave, to hear people yelling at others to get the gloves, gasmasks, and disinfectants—to talk as though Law didn't feel. And try as he may, Law could never stop feeling.

So when that red-haired man from earlier suddenly walked up to him, asking if he was fine, Law was visibly jarred. Amongst the midst of people try so hard to get as far away from him, here was this man, just kneeling down to his level so they were face to face. Law had mixed feelings about how passive the man had been to knowing he had Amber Lead Syndrome. Now…he was just confused.

He was even more confused when he saw that little girl staring right at him. He almost didn't see her, considering how much she was hidden underneath the cloak that was wrapped around her.

"Did they call you a monster, too?" The question was so sudden, but…Law would be lying if it didn't struck a chord within him. Then, without even saying anymore, the little girl suddenly pulled off her cloak and offered it to Law.

It was small and it probably wouldn't fit him, but…Law still took the cloak and tried it on anyways.

"Thank you…Mako."
Mako blinked and then smiled. Because that was the first time he actually said her name.

Shanks was honestly glad that Mako was smiling again, though he still worried about Corazon's whereabouts. He wanted to leave the hospital, but he didn't want to leave Law behind. He especially didn't want to leave Corazon behind, because Law was Corazon's ward.

Fortunately, Corazon had rather great timing when he suddenly forced Shanks into a standing position and turned the redhead around. Shanks was rather stunned, being a good amount of height shorter than Corazon (he was tall), and Mako was slightly tense. Law seemed to at least be doing better, thanks to Mako's random act of kindness.

"Hey, can you do me a favor?" Corazon suddenly asked.

Shanks looked up at Corazon, wondering what it was the man was asking. "What is it?"

"Can you watch Law for a few minutes?" Corazon looked rather angry. "I have to destroy some ignoramuses."

Shanks blinked a few times and just nodded his head. "Sure. We're the fifth ship on the left on the main dock. Can't miss us."

It was only until after Corazon went on his way, and Shanks, Mako, and Law left the hospital, that Shanks realized he just became an accomplice when he and the kids watched the hospital burn.

"Well... if things don't go our way, we can expect an increase on our bounties, Mako," Shanks remarked, his gaze focused on the burning hospital.

"Ahahaha!" Leave it to Mako, to find humor in the situation.

"Bounties?" Oh, right... Law and Corazon probably didn't know that Shanks was a pirate. "You're pirates, too?"

Well, it looks like Shanks wasn't the only one keeping information to himself. "I'd say it's best I don't say anything until we get on the ship."

Today's events were certainly shaping up to be an interesting story to tell to the rest of the Red Hair Pirates.

When Corazon finally arrived to the location of the ship Shanks had directed him to, it had never really crossed Corazon's mind that there was a reason the red hair and name sounded so familiar. It was just his luck to come across Red-Haired Shanks, who was presumed to be dead after an encounter with the Marines forced the Red Hair Pirates to enter the Calm Belt. It was also his luck to come across Nico Robin, who was currently supervising Law and Mako as the two interacted with each other.

"Well, if that isn't freaking conflicting..." Corazon sure had a lot of lies to tell if he wanted Law to
trust him.

It was certainly an interesting sight, just seeing Law talk to someone like Robin, while the little three-year-old girl folded pink-colored paper. Corazon had only meant to pick up Law…but when he walked up to the three, he found himself being offered an origami heart by Mako.

"Corazón!" Mako smiled at him. "Heart!"

Corazon blinked, finding it rather peculiar with how Mako pronounced name. Of course, Corazon was just a codename, but it was still his name. And it was interesting that Mako was offering him an origami heart, because it was almost as if she knew the meaning of his name. It was unusual for a three-year-old to know a language other than the two most used by the world.

Kneeling down, Corazon decided to ask Mako a question after he accepted the origami heart. "How did you know my name meant heart?"

Mako stared at him for a moment, pondering over his question.

"I doubt she knows that language," Robin suddenly spoke. "She is still in the midst of learning this one."

"It shows—ouch!" Law immediately regretted his comment as Mako was quick to slap him on the cheek. "The hell?!!"

Robin started chuckling. "You know, Mako is capable of hitting harder than that."

Law stared at Robin for a few seconds before rubbing his cheek. "It still hurt…"

"I made a heart because you're wearing hearts!" Mako finally decided to speak, pointing at the heart prints on Corazon's shirt. "You play cards?"

At this point, Corazon couldn't help but laugh. Mako was certainly the most interesting child Corazon had ever come across that wasn't Baby 5, Buffalo, or Dellinger. Speaking of Dellinger, he certainly came to mind whenever Corazon looked at Mako. It was not every day that people came across half-fishman hybrids, after all.

"So I see you've returned." Shanks seemed to have rather nice timing. "I assume you have questions."

"If they're the same as mine, then you're right," Corazon responded as he stood up to face Shanks. "It seems we both kept information from each other."

"Dahahaha!" Shanks laughed. "You certainly got that right! But before we start talking, may I ask a question first?"

"Shoot." Corazon owed this man big time for watching over Law.

"You need a ride?" Shanks asked. "We have plenty of room and Law informed me that it was just the two of you."

Corazon found his attention shifting to Law, who just tugged down on his hat to cover his eyes. "Are you always that quick to offer free rides to strangers?"

"I just assumed you might need some help getting away, after what happened at the hospital…" Shanks laughed awkwardly. "By the way, we need to leave now since we're 'dead' and we want to
keep it that way as long as we can. It makes it easier on Robin."

Corazon could only assume, considering how much the survivor from Ohara was wanted by the World Government. It was risky, even being around Robin, but...it was just as risky for Law to be alone with Corazon on a boat that was at the complete mercy of the sea. It was something that Corazon had never considered until after he had entrusted Shanks with Law. Being on his own only made Corazon realize just how alone Law could have been, had Shanks and Mako not been there.

If something were to happen to Corazon while he and Law were out at sea...

... "Well, I can't exactly turn down a free ride." And just like that, Corazon made his decision. He just hoped it was one he wouldn't come to regret.

Chapter End Notes

So like...yeah, more stuff happened and if anyone's wondering about the specific way Mako says Corazon's name, remember that the languages Mako knows are English, Spanish, and French (listed in the order of which she is most familiar and fluent in). Of course, the same also extends to me, but that's what you get when you're working with SI OCs. Anyways, Spanish is a language I've grown up speaking and the thing about it is that when it comes to words in Spanish, you're kinda inclined to say them the way they are pronounced in Spanish, meaning accents and rolling Rs.

What happened with Mako is that she had a slight slip of the tongue, reverting back to a language she knew in her past life. And I just wanted to highlight how difficult it can be to be in a world where the same languages still do exist. This is pretty much the reason why I feel an SI OC should never take chances speaking a language they knew in their past life in a world where it seems that language doesn't exist.

I think that's why it kinda irks me when I see SI OCs using a language from their past life as a secret language to teach others—like...do you have any idea how difficult that is? Not to mention, how much attention that attracts and again, why take your chances? You never know when you are in a world where that secret language could very well exist.

I'm probably just nitpicking things, but I digress. Anyways, Mako is still a little shit, but she's also quite sensitive. On an even more serious note, discrimination...it most definitely exists in the world of One Piece, and I sure as hell am not passing that up, because I took up a challenge when I made a half-fishman SI OC. And just recall the summary of this story.

It's one thing being born in the world of One Piece where corruption is an issue, as well as classism (oh man, does IT exist, ahaha!), but those issues just get even worse if you're not born fully human. Like, it's still bad being human, but considering the type of treatment fishmen and merfolk have received... Let's consider it this way. If that type of treatment (pfft, more like mistreatment) created enough hate and resentment that made a child into someone like Hody fucking Jones (Arlong was bad, but holy fucking shit, did he at least have his reasons), then it's pretty fucking bad.
Anyways, since it's like only been a year since the Fisher Tiger incident, you can expect tensions to still be high. I mean, look at what Law has to deal with when it comes to Amber Lead Syndrome, even though it's only been two, almost three years. That type of shit takes TIME to calm down. Shout-out goes to ChibiFoxAI for the contribution of the whole Corazon asking Shanks to watch Law and Shanks telling Corazon where to find the ship.

So now that I've mentioned Law, let's get onto the character everyone has been waiting for! Yeah, twelve-year-old Law...he's dying, Corazon's trying to find him a cure, and this is just the first hospital the two have visited. What does that mean? It's six months before Law finds out about how Corazon felt about getting stabbed...and it's also six months before they get the call from Doflamingo about the Ope Ope no Mi. So like… time is definitely a thing, ahaha, yeah…

Another thing, since those six months haven't passed yet, Law and Corazon aren't as close as they were then. So, at the moment, you can expect Corazon to be the only one showing concern for Law, while Law is still in his grumpy "I've accepted my death" phase. Of course, Law is quite easy to influence when he's around the right people. He's got Robin, who was also screwed over by the World Government, and Mako, who has to deal with racism and the fact that her parents are slaves (not that she knows yet).

So this A/N is getting a little too long for my tastes, so I'm just gonna end it here. I hope everyone enjoyed this chapter! It took me some time, but I finally got the hang of it! That's it for now, so until next time, everyone!
It's been a week since Corazon took up Dad's offer to stick around with the Red Haired Pirates. During that week, I spent a lot of time trying to get to know Law… Key word: Try.

Law isn't exactly the most sociable person around someone he barely knows—as far as I know. If anything, he was getting along much better with Robin than with me. Which kinda fucking sucks, because I was hoping for a new playmate. I don't care if Law is like nine years older than I am. He's still young enough to be considered a child, unlike Robin, who's almost an adult. I just… want to interact with someone who isn't so fucking tall.

Like—yeah, I'm still the shortest person on the ship, as well as the youngest, but right after me, is Law. He's probably smarter than I am—probably. I might want to find out how much—out of curiosity, of course!

Okay, so I want to abuse my status as the youngest person on this ship and annoy the hell out of Law. I just… want to vent a bit, because I had to deal with this sort of shit for fifteen years in my past life—I was freaking five when I became an aunt. Barely a month after my fifth birthday and bam, here comes my niece—spawn of my second oldest brother and his now ex-wife. And a few years right after that, came my nephew, who has been the source of my disdain up until my death (not gonna lie, but I really do hope my death was a huge slap to his face on how much of a dick he's been to me). The little bastard was the reason I had my first ever breakdown because he knew I couldn't touch him, otherwise his mother (my older sister) would get on my ass for it. Want to know something hilarious and by hilarious, I mean cruelly ironic?

My older sister was a Marine.

Of course, she is nothing like the Marines in this world, but still…the irony—it exists. I do try to forget about it, because I don't like irony when it's inflicted on me. I especially don't like it, considering how I have a friggen' bounty on my head, for what I did to those Marines… Thinking of it now, I might have been venting every suppressed fit of anger I held towards my sister—I don't exactly hate her, but she's not someone I'd like to spend an entire day with, for various reasons apart from the fact that she intimidates me. I consider her more intimidating than Mihawk, and that's saying a lot because how I act around the swordsman.

In hindsight, I should probably give the man more respect, but fuck it—he's weary of me and I want that sort of behavior to last because it amuses me.

"Why do you always make roses?” Law's question snapped me out of my thoughts.

I blinked, looking up from my work as Law stood in front of me. I thought about his questions for a moment before simply saying, "Because."

"Because what?” Oh, man, the temptation is too much!

"Because." Yes, I'm gonna be that person who deliberately acts this way to be annoying. Judging by the annoyed look on Law's face, it's working.
"That's not really an answer." I know, Law, I know.

Grinning, I decided to hold out the origami rose I had just finished making. "I make roses because the folds!"

"Folds…?" Law made a face.

"There's so many!" I added before throwing the origami rose at his face. I might have pouted when I saw Law catch the rose, because I had hoped it would have at least hit him in the face. "It's complicated, too."

"I can see that," Law said as he looked over the origami rose. "Hey…teach me how to make one."

Oooh, what's the occasion? "Tell me why and I'll do it!"

I stifled a laugh when Law scowled at me. It really was amusing to test his patience, but not for too long. Because as much as I want to vent for what I had to deal with as an aunt, I don't want to become my nephew—ever.

"I just want to…it looks fun." Ah, I see Law's finally gotten bored with how little there is to do on this ship.

*Welcome to my world!*

"Start with crane!" I said as I offered Law a piece of paper. "It easier."

Law just stared at the paper for a moment before shrugging and taking it. Afterwards, he sat down and I began showing him how to fold an origami crane. By the end of it, Law managed to make a wonky-looking crane, but for a first attempt, it was honestly better than mine had been. And by attempt, I mean rage-quit. I fucked up a couple of folds so badly, that the creases pretty much made it difficult for me to keep going…so I tore up the paper and started over again.

The thought of that memory made me narrow my eyes at the crane as I continued to stare at it. Law initially had this neutral look on his face, which was quickly replaced with a more…wary expression. It was around the same time I started glaring at his crane. It took me a few seconds to make the connection, to which I decided to ask, "What's wrong?"

"Are you mad?" he responded to my question with another question.

I blinked. "Maybe…but not at you—you did good."

"Ah…” Law almost seemed relieved.

…

"What did you talk to Robin about?" It's been a week and you've talked to her more than me.

"You," Law replied bluntly.

I almost felt my face heat up when he said that. Oh god, what did Robin tell him about me? "Really?"

"Yeah…I didn't want you biting or slapping me again, so I asked her what you were like." Law tugged down on his hat in order to avoid looking me in the eye.

I stared at him for a few seconds before a wide grin crossed my face. I don't know about you, but I
honestly feel a little proud of myself to hear such a thing. It's the idea of having some sort of power that really sells it. Especially since I'm not gonna be a dick about it either—I'm mostly for annoying people out of sheer amusement, but I would rather step on Legos than hurt someone's feelings because it amused me. I might have sadistic tendencies, but I'm not that type of sadist.

"Hey…can I—can I look at your teeth?" Law's question caused me to stop smiling and blink.

"Hm…?" You know, I have never had anyone ask me that. And you know what? I don't mind. "Sure, go ahead!"

It's just teeth—what can go wrong?

And not even a minute after the mere thought popped into my head, I came to instantly regret it when an experimental wiggle to my tooth from Law led to a disturbingly easy tooth extract. I didn't even feel anything—it just popped out so smoothly without any resistance.

"Uh…" A small bead of sweat rolled down the side of Law's face as he looked at a triangular-shaped tooth that he now held in between his index finger and thumb. "It'll grow back? Please don't cry…"

"I'm not…gonna cry…" I say as tears begin to weld up in the corners of my eyes. "I'm fine!"

"A-Are you?" Law furrowed his brow.

"Yes!" I insisted, even though it was a lie. "Like you said—it'll grow back."

"Uh…yeah…teeth fall out and then new teeth grow in." Law was trying his best to reassure me with an explanation I already knew because this wasn't the first time I've lost baby teeth.

Still, the fact that I'm barely three years old is distressing, because…I don't think I'm supposed to lose any of my teeth just yet. So why…why did my tooth come out so easily?

…I felt my heart practically sink into the pit of my stomach when the thought that I could be sick popped into my head. I never got vaccinated…Did I—did I catch something? Is that it?

"Aha…ahaha…" I laughed nervously, almost as if to put my attention away from the nauseous feeling that was bubbling within my stomach. I swallowed hard and tried my best to stay calm. Then, I opened my mouth and reached in to wiggle one of my teeth. Within the span of a few seconds, another one of my teeth came out just as easily as the tooth Law had accidentally extracted previously.

It's almost as if my teeth are ready to fall out under the faintest application of force… Oh god—I really am sick. I mean—why else could this be happening? Stuff like this just doesn't happen—it shouldn't!

"D-Don't cry—hey!" Law wasn't reacting too well to seeing me on the verge of tears.

Normally, I don't like crying in front of others and I'll do just about anything to ensure that no one ever sees me cry. Even if it means holding it in, when all it ever does is just delay the eventual breakdown that only gets worse each time its suppressed. I just don't want to make a scene…

But I am seriously freaking out right now. This is the sort of situation that has haunted me in my
nightmares. I'm only lucky that it's just my baby teeth, but…that still doesn't take away from the potential severity of my situation—the idea that I could have contracted an illness due to how vulnerable my immune system currently is.

"Uu…uuuu…" I'm...scared. "Uuuuu…"

*I'm scared.*

"What's going on?" Corazon had a tendency to pop by every so often to check up on Law. Today was no different from any other day, much to Law's annoyance, except Law wasn't annoyed this time.

"Her teeth—they just popped out like it was nothing!" Law…Law was freaking out as he showed Corazon the tooth he had accidentally extracted from my mouth. "That's not normal!"

He was freaking out and it certainly wasn't making me feel any better. Like, what the fuck—I was expecting you to be calm! Shows what I know how you'd react to a situation like this!

_Okay, calm! Calm, calm, calm, I am calm._

_Calm, calm, CALM...I am very calm! _

_Calmcalmcalmcalm calmcalm! _

*I'm...*

_Snap! _

_NOT CALM._

I started crying after that. I was loud, I was bawling, and I felt like throwing up. It was NOT a good time for me. Though, I guess I could say the same thing about Law, because of how disturbed he was to be so close to me while I was crying.

Meanwhile with Corazon, he oddly calm about this. Probably because he had no idea what the fuck was going on and none of us were hurt (visibly and physically, at the very least). He probably also dealt with worse, considering Doflamingo was his brother, but, again, I could say the same thing about Law and oh, god…where do I even begin with the kid?

Of course, Law did seem to have lowered his guard considerably during the entire week he had spent with the Red Hair Pirates. Not to say that Law still didn't keep his guard up, but he certainly softened up after what happened at the hospital and especially after talking with Robin. And it really shows, considering that Law never gave a rat's ass whenever he made Baby 5 cry, and yet, here he is, looking like he's internally screaming for help.

A few minutes passed and somehow, no one showed up…did they not hear me? HOW?! Dad usually scrambles into the scene the instant he realizes I'm crying, with Yasopp not too far behind him.

"D-Did you…?" Law looked questioningly at Corazon.

It took me a moment to recall that Corazon ate the Nagi Nagi no Mi, which made it possible for him to create a soundproof field. I almost forgot this guy was a Devil Fruit user…

"Yeah—didn't want to cause a scene...now open up." And just like that, Corazon just pried my jaw
open as if it was nothing—what the fuck?!

It was so sudden that I stopped crying almost instantly. "Huwaaahh?!"

"Let's see the damage…" Corazon said as he looked into my mouth. "Hmmm…yeah, it's as I thought."

"Th-Thought what?" Law asked Corazon.

"If you look into her mouth where the gaps in her teeth are, you can just barely see white poking through the gums." I nearly choked on my own spit when Corazon decided to indicate where Law should look via touch. His hands better be clean, or I'll freaking bite him after this! "Her teeth are already growing back."

"Haaah?" I blinked upon hearing this news. It was rather confusing to hear this because I wasn't expecting my teeth to have already start growing back so fast, like…that's not how it works? At least, I think that's not how it's supposed to work.

"Th-They are!" It seems that Law was just as surprised as I was. "Why is that?"

"Remember that your little friend is half-fishman—a mako shark fishman, at that," Corazon reminded Law and, by extension, me. "So at the very least, we can assume this is normal for someone like Mako."

You know, I almost forgot that I was half-fishman for a moment in my panic. While this sort of situation could be seen as unsettling for a typical human child, the same probably can't be said for fishman children—half or not. Seeing as my fishman origins are much more dominant than my human origins (as shown by the fact that I have shark teeth, dual-colored skin, and a dorsal fin), this probably shouldn't have been so unsettling if I had just taken that into consideration.

Well, oops.

"I see…" Law sounded rather relieved. "So it's nothing bad…"

"Nope," Corazon said as he finally released his hold on my mouth, taking a moment to ruffle my hair after that. "So don't cry—you'll worry your father and everyone else."

I sniffed as I wiped away the tears in my eyes. That was just so distressing…but I'm glad that nothing was wrong with me. I almost feel so stupid for actually getting scared over nothing, ahaha…

Snap!

"So is there anything you want to do with those teeth?" Corazon looked questioningly at me. "You want them back?"

Hmm…what use do I have for teeth like that? I doubt the tooth fairy is a thing and honestly, I have no use for any money right now. So what can I do with those teeth?

…

…

Got it!

"Heeeeey, can I make 'em into a necklace?!" I looked excitedly at Corazon, my eyes practically lighting up with enthusiasm. I remembered coming across shark teeth necklaces from time to time in
my past life, most of them usually being sold in shops near beaches. I always thought they were rather cool and seeing as my teeth are shark teeth—why not?! "Can I?"

Corazon and Law seemed rather off-put by my sudden change in demeanor. After all, I was just crying not so long ago after a rather distressing freak-out. And now, I'm just asking if I can make a necklace out of my own teeth as if nothing wrong had ever happened.

"Y-You're weird…" Law was not pulling any punches, much to Corazon's annoyance as he bonked the preteen on the head. "Ow!"

"Be nice to your friend," Corazon lightly scolded Law. "As for you…knock yourself out—it's your teeth."

"Yaaay!" I grinned widely, not really caring about the gaps in my teeth anymore. After all, my teeth were growing back. And I was still as healthy as ever! "Law! Fold another crane?!"

"I guess." Law didn't sound so certain, but he seemed afraid to decline.

"Hey, you mind if I join?" Corazon asked as he seated himself onto the floor. Even when he was sitting down, the man was still taller than Law and I.

I can't wait to get taller… "You can!"

I was honestly expecting clumsy Corazon to have a hard time folding a crane anyways, so I was expecting some entertainment out of this. Instead, I got a neatly folded paper crane that was even better than Law's was. How the fu—that's not fair!

"Is something wrong?" Corazon seemed perplexed.

"She's just annoyed." Shut up, Law, I don't need you pointing stuff out while I'm salty.

"I'm gonna go to Robin now." That's enough origami for me today. Besides, I want to see if she can help me make these two teeth into necklaces!

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By the time dinner came around, I managed to surprise Law and Corazon with a couple of necklaces I made using the teeth I had lost today. Dad seemed rather disturbed that I was using my own teeth to make necklaces out of them, but at the very least, he was relieved to know that I wasn't hurt or anything. I wonder if he was secretly jealous that he didn't get a necklace…hmm…

Well, these teeth are gonna come out eventually, so I guess I can try doing something with them. And by the next day, Robin made me promise to stop extracting my own teeth for the sake of making necklaces. It's not as if I was taking out all of my teeth, but I did have more gaps in my teeth, much to everyone's slight discomfort. They were just so used to seeing the complete set of sharp teeth that made up my smile.

And despite being disturbed at the fact that I gave him one of the necklaces I made, Dad was quick to wear it. He still didn't like what I had done, what with Robin being so quick to tell him what had happened. He even flicked me on the nose as he told me not do it again. But damn if he wasn't proud.

Yasopp was at least nice about it, saying that I didn't know any better (when I actually did, but no
one needs to know that, ahaha…). Beckman, on the other hand, was onto me (that bastard was more observant than he let on). All in all, everyone was just concerned about me. It honestly felt nice to see how much everyone cared for me…

Because as soon as we arrived at our next destination, whatever sense of happiness I had felt during the past two weeks came to an end. Because for a second time, I was refused as a patient at the hospital Shanks took me to, because I was half-fishman. For a second time, Law was forced to relive his trauma regarding his Amber Lead Syndrome. For a second time, Corazon had to set another hospital ablaze because of the mistreatment Law received.

As much as I tried to hide it—tried to convince myself that it didn't hurt to be called a monster—the doctor's words still hurt. Because the idea that two children could receive such mistreatment was just so sad. But hey, that's how this world worked…doesn't mean that I like it.

I didn't cry, though. Law did, but he had every reason to cry. Unlike him, I didn't lose my home, family, and everything that I loved. So for the sake of everyone, including Law, I didn't cry. I smiled and pretended everything was okay, when it wasn't.

And really, it wasn't.

…

Law took a little longer to recover this time around from the harsh treatment he received. Corazon felt rather bad for what had happened, but dammit if he still wasn't going to try. He wanted to find a cure for Law—he wanted Law to live. He wanted Law to stop accepting the fact that he was going to die so easily.

Life in this world isn't fair, and Robin understood that from an early age. I understood that as well because I had a basic understanding of this world because of my past life's status as an observer. It was only going to get worse from here on out, but I did try my best to pretend that there was always a bright side worth looking forward to—if only to keep on smiling.

That still didn't make it hurt any less when we arrived at the next destination to check out a third hospital. Barely even a week had passed, due to how close it was and how fast we were traveling, because Shanks felt so anxious about my health and Law's.

So for a third time, I witnessed my father punch a doctor that said the hospital didn't treat my kind. Unlike the last two doctors, this one didn't even try to be subtle about it. The lack of satisfaction from the sight of watching that doctor getting thrashed didn't make me feel any better—because the damage had already been done.

Sighing, I just walked out of the room, not caring that I left Dad behind. Instead, I just kept going, ignoring the screams around me as everyone scrambled to get away from the child that was suffering from Amber Lead Syndrome—to avoid catching a disease that wasn't even contagious in the first place. Eventually, I came across Law, all on his own as he tried to hold in his tears and choke back the sobs that wanted to escape his mouth.

"Law…" was all I said as I grabbed onto the boy's extremely pale hand.

Law sniffed as he tried to hide the fact that he had been crying, even though the tears streaming down his cheeks already said more than enough. "What?"

"Let's go." I tugged on his hand, motioning for him to walk with me. I sounded so jaded, when I probably shouldn't have…
But I guess when you are a former victim of bullying, you just learn to stop caring—even though the bullying was never like this. Even though bullying leaves scars that will never fully heal, despite how much time has passed. Because no matter how many times you're told to move on and stop making such a big deal out of an incident that happened in the past, it isn't always easy.

And it'll never be, because it hurts. It hurts because for a moment in your life—whether brief or not—you felt as though the whole world was against you. And nothing was ever done about it. Even if something were to ever be done about it, by then, the damage had already been done.

Robin understands that completely, for someone who had never once gotten a break until now, which is why when Law and I returned to the ship on our own, we went to her. And it was in her embrace, that both Corazon and Shanks found Law and me after having to practically tear apart the entire hospital together in order to find the two of us since we left without telling them. We must have scared them—and I feel bad for doing that, but we just couldn't stay in a place where we weren't welcomed.

At the very least, I couldn't let Law suffer on his own. It wouldn't be fair.

...

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We avoided the hospital altogether, at the next destination we arrived at, preferring to try and make the best of the situation before we went to that dreaded location. Yasopp bought Law a cloak in order for the boy to have an easier time moving around without people staring at him for being so pale. Law wasn't so sure about it first until I told him we were matching.

The idea that he wasn't alone made Law feel a bit better. Meanwhile with me, I would prefer to live in the moment in order to forget what had happened and what was going to happen in a few days when Corazon and Shanks decided to give this hospital a shot. I already know what was going to happen, but I didn't want to let that ruin whatever fun I was having in this place that was celebrating the arrival of a new year.

This was honestly the first time I was ever around for such an event. It was almost easy to forget that in less than five months, Corazon was going to get a message from Doflamingo in regards to discovering the whereabouts of the Ope Ope no Mi and risk his life for it in order to save Law's life.

Almost.

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...

"How come you don't like bread?" I asked Law before taking a bite out of my sandwich.

It was lunchtime and Robin decided to take Law and me to this restaurant she came across during the past few days we have been in this town. The restaurant had a wide-variety of foods to serve and I would have gotten something even better than a sandwich, but as of lately, I've been losing teeth (whatever was left over after what I had taken out to make necklaces) and the gaps in my mouth made it hard to eat any food that isn't soft.

So when I asked for a sandwich, Robin asked Law if he wanted the same, only for him to say he hated bread. So Law ended up getting rice balls, which he could have gotten back on the ship because Corazon was honestly good at making them, for a guy who was complete shit at making anything else.
"I just don't..." Law insisted as he finished off another of his rice balls. "It's bland, common, and cheap..."

Cheap...? Wait... "Law, how much bread have you eaten before?"

"Enough to make you sick..." Law didn't even hide the disdained look on his face.

"It's not easy being on your own, is it?" Robin seemed to have understood Law's situation, as I did just now.

"No...it isn't." The poor kid must have been living entirely on bread before finding the Donquixote Pirates. I honestly wouldn't blame him for hating bread after all of that.

...

"You wanna get candy after this?" I decided to change the subject.

Law stared at me for a moment before shrugging. "I guess..."

I was about ready to smile before forgetting that Robin was in charge of the two of us today. "I mean...can we, Robin?"

Robin chuckled. "If you two want..."

"Yay!" I felt oddly happy. I wanted to stay happy as long as I could because tomorrow was the day that Corazon and Shanks were going to take Law and me to the hospital. My stomach churned at the mere thought of it. I just...didn't want to go through that painful experience again. Even though it was already terrifying as is knowing that I wasn't as healthy as I could be, considering the lack of protection my immune system had, it still wasn't worth the psychological trauma that came with being seen as a monster.

And come the next day, I had to make a small stop before I met up with Law in the hallways of the hospital because my stomach couldn't handle the stress I was experiencing. Aha...only three-years-old and I already feel this much stress—how funny...

I wasn't looking so well when I got to Law, but he didn't need to know that. Not when he was too busy bawling his eyes out, unable to keep his feelings bottled up any longer. In less than a month, Law had to deal with being called a monster. He was constantly reminded of his disease during each hospital visit, of which brought up many painful memories that were affiliated with it. He was dying and he knew it...and though he acted as if he had come to accept his death, deep down...I feel he's really scared.

And I'm scared, too. But for Law's sake, as I walked him out of the hospital, my hand holding onto his, I had to stay strong. Even though it was so difficult, even though I felt sick, even though I had my own limits as well—I just had to because I was the adult in this situation. I might have only been physically three, but mentally, I was an adult...and for once, I wanted to act like that.

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Robin wasn't too surprised to find Law crying when we arrived back at the ship. And neither was anyone else—the fact that they had expected this was sad. Of course, Beckman was more concerned over the fact that I wasn't crying.
"You okay?" Beckman truly was onto me…

"I'm fine," I said…like a liar, trying my best to ignore the sick feeling in my stomach. "I just…need to go to the bathroom."

…

Sometime afterwards, in which I ended up losing a tooth during my visit to the bathroom, I found Law hiding away from everyone else in a barrel, trying to become one with his cloak as he cried. I wasn't that surprised to find Law in this specific barrel—after all, Law would know about this particular barrel because I told him about it. I told him if he ever needed a place to be by himself, to just look for a place full of barrels on the ship—and he took my advice.

Sometimes, people wanted to be alone…but at the moment, Law needed a friend. So I knocked at the side of the barrel, unable to even peer into it due to how high it was for someone as short as I was.

Knock! Knock!

Law sniffed. "Wh-Who is it?"

"Me," was all I said.

"Oh…what you want?" Law sniffed again, barely managing to choke back a sob.

"You okay?" I'm pretty sure it was obvious that Law wasn't okay, but it didn't hurt to ask.

"What do you think?" Well, now Law sounded annoyed.

"I figured…" I smiled weakly as I sat down on the floor, with my back against the barrel. "I lost another tooth."

"And…?" Law didn't seemed to be in a mood to talk, but I at least wanted to try and get his mind off of things.

"I dunno…I just wanted to tell you that." Even though I was keeping quiet on how I lost my tooth. No one needed to know what I happened while I was in the bathroom. They especially didn't need to know that I washed my mouth out afterwards… "Law…"

"What?!" Law snapped. "Can't you see I'm not in the mood to talk?!

"I can see that, but I don't want you to be alone." I inhaled and then exhaled shakily. "I don't want to be alone either…"

"Then go with Robin," Law huffed. "I don't see why you'd want to be alone with me…"

"Because you're sad…" I frowned. "That's why…"

"…Fine." Law sighed in defeat. "Just…don't talk to me too much."

"Okay…" I can understand that. I inhaled and exhaled again, though much more calmly this time as I pulled out the stack of paper I had on me to fold. I had a feeling I was going to be spending a good amount of time here. So I came prepared.

And when I finished folding an origami rose, I threw it into the barrel. Law peered out of the barrel moments afterwards, looking somewhat annoyed as he looked at me with his red face and eyes. His
extremely pale skin made it so painfully obvious that he had been crying.

I just smiled back at him as I handed him a sheet of paper. "Wanna fold?"

Law said nothing as he snatched up the paper and went back into the barrel. About a few minutes later, a paper crane was thrown out of the barrel. My smile only widened at this as I started folding another piece of paper. I made an origami frog this time around and made it "hop" into the barrel. For a second time, Law peered out of the barrel and snatched up another paper I offered him.

This time around, I received an origami angelfish. The folds were a little sloppy, but for someone who was still learning, like Law, it was good enough. I tossed in an origami star this time around and instead of handing Law just a single sheet of paper, I gave him more than that when he reached out for a third time.

This process repeated itself many times. Law and I didn't speak to each other during this time and it was only until we both ran out of paper that Law decided to come out of the barrel. He crawled out from the top and plopped down onto the floor right next to me, carrying everything I had thrown into the barrel in his cloak.

I smiled at Law as I did the same with the origami he had thrown out of the barrel. Law didn't really smile back or anything, but he at least looked better than before.

"You're weird," was the very first thing Law told me after all that.

"Ahaha, I guess I am!" I laughed. "Saaay…do you know Bink's Sake?"

"What's that?" Law looked questioningly at me.

"It's a song that makes me feel happy when I sing it!" I replied. "Maybe it'll make you feel better if you sing it, too."

"I…don't know it." A small bead of sweat rolled down the side of Law's face.

"I'll teach you!" I was honestly happy that Law was at least considering my suggestion. Even if he doesn't sing along, at the very least, I hope the song makes him feel a little better. I know it always makes me feel better… "I mean—if you want."

Law stared at me for a moment before sighing and saying, "Do what you want."

"Ahaha, okay!" I grinned widely. I made sure to clear my throat before anything—just in case. I inhaled deeply…and then started singing, "Yo-hohoho, yo-hohoho! Yo-hohoho, yo-hohoho! Yo-hohoho, yo-hohoho! Yo-hohoho, yo-hohoho! Yo-hohoho, yo-hohoho!"

I never noticed how used to I was to singing this song with the rest of the Red Hair Pirates until now, when I was singing it on my own. It was a little embarrassing, now that I can hear my own voice…but I still kept going.

"Going to deliver Bink's Sake!
Following the sea breeze, riding on the waves!
Far across the salty depths, the merry evening sun!
Painting circles in the sky as the birds sing along!"

I felt my grin widen even more when I noticed Law trying to sing along. He was having a hard time,
since he didn't know the lyrics, but that wasn't important. He was at least trying.

"Farewell to the harbor, to my old hometown,

Let's all sing out with a Don as the ship sets sail!

Waves of gold and silver dissolve to salty spray,

As we all set sail to the ends of the sea!"

There was something oddly adorable, just listening to Law stumbling over the lyrics to a song he didn't know. I wonder if this was how everyone else saw me when they were teaching me the song. If it was, then I can see why they were always laughing and ruffling my hair whenever I made a mistake. Beckman liked to poke fun at me, but never in a mean-spirited manner. He was playful about it. I was almost tempted to do the same with Law, but now didn't feel like an appropriate time to do so.

"Going to deliver Bink's Sake!

Today, and tomorrow, our dreams through the night!

Waving our goodbyes, we'll never meet again!

But don't look so down, for at night the moon will rise!"

For a brief moment, I almost thought I saw Law smiling. It was a nice look for him…he should smile more, like Robin.

"Going to deliver Bink's Sake!

Let's all sing it with a Don, a song of the waves!

Doesn't matter who you are, someday you'll just be bones,

Never-ending, ever-wandering, our funny traveling tale!"

Feeling a little mischievous, I decided to stop singing there and then. I grinned as I was treated to the rather cute-sounding Law as he finished singing the last of the lyrics. When he noticed that I wasn't singing along with him, shortly after he finished singing, his face turned red. He glared at me as I giggled, unable to control myself. Despite looking rather annoyed, Law managed to surprise me when he started laughing along as well.

For the first time since I've met him, I actually heard Law laughing. I'm not sure how long it must have been since the last time Law had ever laughed, but he certainly seemed to be having a good time and I'm glad. He deserves to find a reason to laugh.

So when Law and I finally left the area to meet up with everyone else, we managed to surprise Shanks and Corazon with our good moods. This was the first time they had ever seen us look so happy after a visit to the hospital. Robin seemed rather relieved, as did Beckman and Yasopp.

"Mako, did you lose another tooth?" Shanks was quick to ask upon noticing the new gap in my teeth.

"Oh…yeah—I did!" I laughed awkwardly as I recalled what happened, but decided to keep quiet about that. I didn't want to worry anyone, after all—not while everyone was in such a good mood.
Well, as much good as it can get after a hospital visit, I mean, because I'm pretty sure Shanks and Corazon are still pissed off, but details. "It fell out on its own, though!"

"That's good to hear." Shanks seemed rather relieved and I wouldn't blame him. "So what's with all the origami?"

"Aha, Law and I made 'em!" I grinned widely as I showed off the origami Law made. "Law made these—I made the ones he's carrying."

"You did all that?" Corazon asked Law, looking rather impressed.

"Y-Yeah…" Law responded rather awkwardly. Him and Corazon still had a long ways to go, but they were at least doing better than before, when Shanks and I first met them.

If things progress the way they did now, maybe—just maybe—Corazon won't have to die and Law won't have to cry. Maybe…things will turn out for the best.

Chapter End Notes

Hello everyone, guess who's not dead?! Yeah, university life bitch-slapped the hell out of me these past few months and I got sidetracked by my other stories, and as of recently, I've been obsessed with Eyeshield 21 (read it, because I need more people to drag into this fandom, it's barely alive). And yet, somehow, I managed to update this fic in the end.

By the by, as far as I can say, you can expect a lot of updates come next month because I'm most definitely in a writing mood. You can also expect a couple of Eyeshield 21 fanfics involving a female Kobayakawa Sena, so that's definitely a thing. Anyways, let's get to talking about this chapter.

So yeah, it started rather comical and then shit got serious. Yeah, there's honestly no way I can do this any other way because really, the treatment Law and Mako received is abysmal. For Law, that shit's canon, for Mako, she's just dealing with racism and it's not something she's dealing with so easily, considering how badly it's starting to affect her despite her tendency to smile.

Also, working with twelve-year-old Law is fucking difficult when he's changing so much due to the interactions he's had with Mako and Robin. Just…the three of them get along so easily because the world has not been so kind to them. Misery loves company, after all.

At the very least, Law and Corazon are starting to get along, so that's good. Oh, and don't mind me putting in my own explanation as to why Law doesn't like bread. I honestly feel Law came to hate bread because it was all he had been able to eat before he met up with the Donquixote Pirates.

So like Mako isn't doing so well, but she's not telling anyone about it, which isn't exactly good for her, as shown by the fact that she's been feeling sick because of the stress she's been experiencing. Physically, she's only three-years-old, but mentally, she's trying to act older than she actually is. Which isn't a good combination when her body and brain aren't developed enough to handle something she was able to do so as an adult.
in her past-life.

Being an SI OC isn't easy, after all.

Anyways, shout out goes to Mikoto-chan92 for making adorable fanart of Mako:
http://mikoto92.deviantart.com/art/Mako-550777794,
http://mikoto92.deviantart.com/art/Too-cute-550778448

I also made a thing as well on my deviantart account:
http://klonoadreams.deviantart.com/art/Mako-557080780, but that's nothing compared to what Mikoto-chan92 did!

Once again, I apologize for the late update, but on the bright side, waiting this long means that the whole Corazon and Law scenario was finally animated, so there's that! There was also more stuff that happened in One Piece canon (like with Sabo, oh god, my heart), which makes it easier on me to plan out events and such. So yeah, don't expect quick updates from this fic, but know I won't ever abandon this fic. Rule of thumb, if I haven't deleted a fic, then it's not abandoned.

So that's about it for now, so I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! Until next time, everyone!
Smiles

Chapter Notes

Hooooly shit, I don't think I'd ever have to do this, but I'm not taking any chances and just…please read at your own discretion…

Warnings for: attempted kidnapping, implied attempted pedophilia and rape, and brutal violence.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"Ahahaha…"

"Uhh…"

"You two look…nice…" Robin was rather amused with the sight sitting before her.

Mako and Law were covered in white foundation. It was sloppily applied, as it was Mako who had applied it to herself and Law. Law had no idea how to react to the make-up covering some of the splotches on his face. He just continued to stare into the mirror in his hands before looking at Mako, whose blue skin was haphazardly concealed with white foundation.

"You like?" Mako grinned widely.

Law had no idea how to reply. He looked…normal? Was that even something he could say?

…

No, it wasn't. Because this wasn't the skin tone he was born with—it was too unnaturally pale. It nothing like the warm, brown skin he once had. The paler his skin became, the more aware Law was of the remaining days he had left until his Amber Lead Syndrome finished him off.

*How much longer do I have left again?*

Law paused for a moment, before snorting when he realized he had less than nine months left. It wasn't that difficult for him to believe…and yet—Law was hesitating to acknowledge it. Even though he had long since accepted his impending death, his stomach was still bubbling uncomfortably with nausea.

*Th-Thump th-thump! Th-Thump, th-thump!*

And the near-audible palpitations of his heart…

*Why is it like that?*

Law was confused—he just was. He was so confused, that he didn't notice the trail of tears streaking down his cheeks until Robin reached out and gently wiped them away with a tissue.

"If you need to cry—go ahead," she said softly. "It doesn't do much good to hold it in."

"I'm not…I'm *not* crying." Law was already determined not to cry anymore after that last visit to the
hospital. He wasn't weak… And yet…his heart still ached, as his eyes continued to burn from the tears that refused to stop. "I'm not…"

Law stiffened when he felt a pair of small arms attempt to wrap themselves around his waist. He… hadn't expected it—Mako was never like this towards him. As often as she invaded his personal bubble, she never exactly went so far as to initiate physical contact as intimate as an embrace—until now, that is. It was…really strange, having such a small girl so close to him, with her ear placed against his chest.

"It's…okay to be scared…" Mako stated in a firm, yet quiet voice. "Being scared just means you're—it just means you're alive."

"Can you hear that?" she asked him. "It's your heart—and it's telling me how scared you are. You're scared because you're alive."

"A-Alive…?" Law repeated, his voice cracking—that was something that was starting to happen as of lately. It was a sign he was getting older… Of course, right now, his voice was cracking because he was struggling to stay calm…and he was failing.

"This world isn't fair…" Mako sounded absolutely irritated. "It isn't fair—and we all know it…"

"That is correct," Robin says with a wistful smile as she continues to wipe away Law's tears with the tissue in her hand. "But just because the world isn't fair, doesn't mean you have to lock away every emotion you have to stay strong—not when you aren't alone."

"Alone…" That's right—Law wasn't alone anymore.

"You have us!" Mako was quick to say. "We're here…and so are Corazon and Papa…"

"Corazon…" Law still didn't trust Corazon…but it was because of Corazon, that he wasn't alone anymore. As rough as this month has been on him, with the hospital visits…Law wasn't alone.

Of course, he wasn't alone, either, when he was with the Donquixote Pirates. Except…there had been no one to hold him like this—to extend some warmth in an attempt to convince him that nothing was wrong, even though it was. There was no one there to wipe away the tears that sometimes escaped without his knowledge, such as the times he woke up from such terrible nightmares consisting of traumatizing memories of the past—or like now.

He wasn't alone anymore.

There were people who cared for him. People whom…

People whom he was going to leave behind the day he died.

Th-Thump!
"I don't want...I don't want to die..." his voice sounded so weak—so pitiful as he sniffed. The tears kept coming and his nose was running. His arms were shaking as he hesitantly wrapped them around Mako's small frame. "I dun' wanna die..."

It was so easy for Law to accept his death, after losing everything he loved. It was all too easy... because there were no more connections to hold him back. All he had was a burning desire for revenge and destruction. And maybe—just maybe—a small hope to reunite with everyone he lost in death...because he was alone.

But I'm not alone anymore...

All because there had been someone there, who refused to accept that he was dying. Who wanted him to live—when he had given up on living. Who tried, despite the pain that was inflicted on his heart each time he was referred to as a monster.

A monster...

"Is it...fine for a monster...to wanna live?" Law wouldn't know... His hands were no longer clean, due to how cruel and cunning he had become so that he could destroy everything around him. Even disregarding what his disease had done to him, he was still a monster because of his actions. "Is it...?"

Law had no idea if he was asking Robin, Mako, or himself.

...

...

"Even monsters like us have a desire to live..." Robin smiled warmly as she held Law's face within her hands, her thumbs gently wiping away the tears. "No matter what others think of us, they can't tell us how to feel—if they even think we can feel."

It hurts...

"So it's okay if you wanna live..." Mako's embrace tightened, her strength catching Law slightly by surprise. "Because I want you to live..."

It hurts it hurts it hurts... it hurts...

Robin chuckled. "And so do I..."

Ihurtsihurstsithurtsihurstsithurtsihurstsithurstsihurstsithurts... 

Law choked back a sob.

It hurts so much...

...

...

Outside the room that contained Robin, Law, and Mako, was Corazon, who leaned against the wall, just to the side of the doorway. He had been listening in on the conversation inside for some time, now. How long, he had no clue—it was easy to lose track of time. But it wasn't that difficult for him
to create a soundproof field to ensure no one interrupted the three when Law started to cry.

Each sob Corazon heard felt like a knife to his heart. It was one thing listening to a child say that he was going to die soon. It was another, listening to that same child admit that he wanted to live. There was no way in hell that Corazon was going to let Law die—not after this... Even if it meant...Law was going to get hurt, because of how others were so quick to see him as a white monster.

Corazon decides, then and there, that he isn't take any chances when it comes to finding a cure for Law.

I can't.

That night is especially lively, and Law finds himself singing along with everyone else the song that Mako had taught him. He still has issues with the lyrics, but Mako and Robin help him out. He tries his best and manages to laugh when he hears Corazon clumsily singing along as well.

And though Shanks is not allowed to drink, he seems content. Law is just as content, even though he is still terrified of the future. Nine months isn't a lot...

But it's enough.

It's enough for Law right now, when he can comfortably live in the present. It isn't too difficult anymore, now that he has stopped wishing destruction on everything around him. He is still angry at the world for everything it has done to him... But it's okay for him to feel angry...just like it's okay for him to cry, if he wanted to. Because...

Because I'm alive...

He's still alive...and he intends to make that loud and clear to everyone else.

Th-Thump, th-thump!

Just as his heart had long since done so for him.

Th-Thump, th-thump! Th-Thump, th-thump!

And it'll continue to do so until the very end.

... ...

Corazon is more desperate to take Law as fast as he possibly can to any nearby hospitals. Shanks notices a change in his demeanor, but doesn't ask why. Instead, he just tries to the best of his ability to help Corazon. After all, Mako still needs to get checked out...if only he could find a doctor that would actually look beyond Mako's heritage.

The two have no such luck come the next two hospitals. No matter how many times he punches the doctors that keep looking at Mako as if she were a monster, it doesn't take away from the damage that has already been done. All it does is temporarily ease some of Shanks's rage.
Corazon isn't doing any better with Law—it's the same shit as usual. Shanks could only wonder how it is that he and his crew have yet to be discovered, due to the trail that he and Corazon leave behind after each hospital visit.

Shanks feels as though he's pressing his luck. He feels like drinking, but decides to push it off as he sits down to observe Law and Mako. The two are folding paper again. This time, it seems that Mako is teaching Law how to make an origami rose. The outcome is just as sloppy as usual, but it's still better than what Shanks would expect from Law. Mako seems to think so as well, from how annoyed she appears as she stares at the messy origami rose in Law's hand.

Later that day, Law yells out loudly in annoyance when he goes to the bathroom, only to find numerous slices of bread spread out throughout the bathroom. It is bizarre—and not to mention, unpleasant to look at. He hates it because he's reminded of the godawful days when he ate nothing but bread, because it was all he could afford with the little money he could collect.

His eyes narrow when he hears the familiar laughter of a certain fishman hybrid. She had been following him this entire time—just to see his reaction to the prank she pulled on him. Why she even wanted to do this, is beyond Law's comprehension, though he feels it might have to do with the origami rose he folded earlier. Sometimes, Mako is petty...

So he decides to be just as petty by tackling her onto the ground, as she laughs, catching her completely by surprise. The two begin to wrestle, with Law having the upper hand with his larger size, while Mako has the advantage in strength. Of course, Law can tell Mako is holding back, which annoys the crap out of him, but there's not a damn thing he can do about it.

After all, little Dellinger is a fishman hybrid and at only two years old, he is able to lift cannonballs without any issues—meaning that even the smallest application of force could potentially fracture a bone. Law doesn't know what Mako is capable of, but he can only assume from what he has seen with Dellinger. She's older than the fighting fishman hybrid by only a year, so chances are, she might even be stronger.

Law would rather not find out, but he still presses his luck as he and Mako roll across the floor as they scuffled.

Fifteen minutes later, the two are separated by Corazon and held up in the air, arm's length apart. Law and Mako continue to kick and punch as they are held by the back of their shirts. Their struggles are futile and they eventually tire themselves out, much to Corazon's amusement.

"You two done?" he asks them, receiving only heavy pants from the two in response. "Okay then—it's time for dinner."

Only a few steps forward, Corazon manages to miraculously trip on air and fall flat on his face like a majestic tree felled by an axe. Law and Mako do not appreciate the bad luck they have, as they groan in pain while Corazon stays silent. He is too used to tripping, after all.
Days pass and Law grows used to seeing Mako mess around with the make-up Robin bought. Robin knows a lot about make-up, due to the years she spent on the run. She knows how to disguise herself with enough subtly so she doesn't stand out...or so Law is told. Robin likes to keep certain things to herself—this isn't any different, from what Law begins to expect from her.

Sometimes, Law finds himself being used for make-up practice by Mako. He...doesn't have that much fun, because Mako's still learning. So Corazon teases Law after each session, finding it funny with how Mako insists on testing out different shades of lipstick on him. Somehow, this leads a suggestion to use make-up on Mako in order to hide some of her most distinct fishman features. It doesn't end there, as it quickly extends to Law and Corazon.

On the day they finally head off to the hospital, Shanks does not wear his iconic straw hat. Mako looks more human than fishman, albeit she's still pale as a ghost and has to continue wearing her cloak to hide her dorsal fin. Law is almost as pale and Corazon...Corazon looks like completely different person after Robin is through with him.

Make-up is used to conceal the tattoo under his right eye and the red lines extending from the ends of his mouth. Corazon does not wear lipstick for the occasion and wears Beckman's clothes, so as to throw off anyone looking for a blond-haired man with a feather coat and a heart-patterned shirt. Wearing Beckman's clothes accentuates the muscle Corazon possesses that is usually hidden by his regular clothes.

For once, Law can't help but feel intimidated by Corazon, since he can now take the man seriously.

Then the man manages to trip on his own feet and crashes into a wall, forever reinstating Law's poor opinion of the man.

Some things never change, I guess...

And just like Law's opinion of Corazon, the outcome of the hospital visit is the exact same, make-up be damned. All it takes is Corazon mentioning the dreaded, "Amber Lead Syndrome" and everything goes to hell almost instantly.

Law is too tired to even cry this time around. All he does is just leave the room and wait in the hallway for Mako to come out, so that the two of them can walk back to the ship together. He has gotten used to this specific routine.

Of course, when he sees Mako, Law is slightly concerned with how exhausted the three-year-old appears. He doesn't think it's even healthy for someone so young to look like that...

"Are you okay?" Law can't help but ask.

Mako blinks a few times and smiles widely. "I'm fine—look what I got!"

Law makes a face when Mako holds up a large wallet for him to see. "Wh-Where did you get that?"

"I stole it off that doctor after Papa punched him!" Mako laughs. "Hey—let's go shopping!"

"What?!" Of all the things—this is the last Law ever expects. He doesn't really have much of a say either, as Mako is quick to drag him by the hand. Sighing, Law resigns himself to his fate and asks, "How did the doctor find out?"

"When he told me to open my mouth..." Mako is pouting and Law can't help but laugh.
Really, it was so stupid of them to think that they could pull a fast one on these doctors. If anything, it's sad—because Mako continues to go unchecked because she's half-fishman. Just like it's sad that no one wants to believe him when he insists Amber Lead Syndrome is not contagious…

Law huffs as he tugs down on his hat. "Where do you want to go?"

"Let's get some ice-cream!" Mako gleefully exclaims, as she deliberately ignores the screams of terror and the chaos they leave behind.

…

With the carefully applied make-up still on them, Law finds that he and Mako can go into town without their hoods on without any issues. No one really stares at them and when they enter the ice-cream parlor, Law is surprised that the shop owner actually treats them like children. It's so jarring, because Law is not used to this—it's been too long since he had last been treated like a child.

Mako goes all-out on her ice-cream cone, with the multiple scoops of different flavors. "I want that one, that one and—ooh, that one!"

Law cannot even begin to fathom how such a tiny little girl is going to eat all of that ice cream. So when it's his turn to choose, he just points at a flavor and says, "Just one, please."

"No!" Mako suddenly says.

"Wha?" Law doesn't understand. "I thought—"

"More!" Mako insists as she waves the wallet around.

"I don't—" Law is bombarded with repeats of "More!" from Mako until he does what she says. She laughs when he starts picking out random flavors that catch his eye. He doesn't really know what to expect from the taste, all he recalls are the times he's bribed Buffalo with ice cream.

Afterwards, Law has no idea what to even think about the stack of ice cream scoops he has to eat, once Mako finishes paying for the both of them. For someone who has little experience with money, Law would think Mako would ask him for help…but she manages just fine without him.

Somehow…

Law finds himself looking at Mako as the two of them sit in a booth within the parlor. Mako sits right across from him on the other side of the table. She doesn't seem to notice he's looking at her, only really doing so when she tells him his ice cream is melting so that he could start eating before she goes back to eating her own ice cream. With not much to do, Law starts eating his ice cream.

The flavors didn't match, but…they still tasted nice. Mako embarrasses Law by saying she saw him smile and out of spite, he refuses to admit it. They leave the parlor half an hour later, their hands sticky from the ice cream. Law still has no idea what to think and sighs as Mako continues to drag him around town, her tiny hand gripping his.

…

Somehow…

Law has no idea why Mako is scrambling around for glue sticks, pens, markers, crayons, and paper in a shop they have just entered. She also grabs a light blue satchel to put everything inside, which, after purchasing the satchel and items, she gives to Law to wear. Law just wears it without asking
any questions—he feels it would be best to not ask. At the very least, he is in possession of the wallet, because of how bulky it is for Mako to carry on her person.

He continues not asking any questions, even though he has no clue where it is Mako is taking them. She has better confidence in her sense of direction than he does when it comes to this particular town. He never bothers to memorize any particular routes, anyways—unlike Mako.

Of course, Mako seems to be picky with what she memorizes and Law can only wonder why it is that, of all the routes she memorizes, it's the route to the library.

"Weren't we here the other day?" Law recalls how much disdain Mako showed towards a particular children's book he suggested to her to read.

"Yes!" is all Mako says. "But I have some unfinished business!"

Unfinished business, apparently, turns out to be vandalizing all copies of *Liar Noland* that the library has to offer. Mako uses the markers to cross out words and the pens to write over the crossed out words. She had been thinking a lot when she chose which markers to use, because the pen is easily visible over the marker's ink. Then, using the pieces of papers she had bought, as well as the crayons, she draws out new pictures.

Her art skills are by no means any good, as they are decent at best. Even so, she manages to sketch down some pictures—her backgrounds are better than the characters she draws out. She glues the paper over the art in the book until she is done, before moving onto another copy of the book to repeat the process. When Law looks over what Mako has done to the story of *Liar Noland*, he reads about a greedy king who acted on rash decisions. Two thousand warriors turned into two hundred soldiers and a king who went along with the adventure turned into a king who stayed behind, having prioritized his safety above others due to his cowardice and selfishness.

The supposed Liar Noland became a scapegoat to cover up the embarrassment of a misunderstanding. And so Liar Noland was someone who suffered because of someone else's lies.

*People lie.*

*And lies…*

*Lies can hurt people.*

Law has no idea why he resonates so deeply with those words—he just does. And somehow—just somehow—he finds himself helping Mako out with her vandalism. His drawing skills might not be as great as hers, but his writing sure is a hell of a lot better, much to her annoyance when he mentions her penmanship could use some work.

"Who asked you?" she pouts.

"You did—just now." Law grins.

He gets smacked in the face with some papers—but Law knows he's won.

…

…

They don't get caught. Law has no idea how it happens, but it just does. They just don't get caught… they walk out, as if nothing had happened, even though if anyone were to check out the children's
section for a copy of *Liar Noland*, one could tell that something is especially wrong the instant they opened the book. The fact that no one has managed to come across the two while they were messing with the books is what surprises Law the most.

*You'd think they'd keep an eye on their books…*

But then again, Law and Mako appear like any other children people would see on a daily basis. There is nothing strange about them—they're just new to the area. That's all—nothing more, nothing less.

*Growl.*

Law blinks and looks at Mako, who laughs as she admits, "I'm hungry—let's get something to eat!"

Law has no idea how Mako could still be hungry, after all the ice cream they had eaten…but stops questioning it when his stomach starts to growl as well. He sighs and just tells her to lead the way. They end up settling down at a restaurant that had only just opened its doors for lunchtime.

Everything is going well…up until the point that Mako offers Law a bite of her sandwich. Law is quite fine with the onigiri he had ordered, but curiosity gets the best of him when Mako says the bread is anything but bland. After all, he feels he can trust Mako at this point—they've been through a lot.

She's seen him cry more times than he's comfortable with, because he'd rather not cry at all anymore. She understands what it's like to be called a monster. She might not be dying, but she still wants to live as much as he does. So Law looks at the sandwich Mako offers him and takes a bite out of it. And Mako is right—the taste is anything but bland and even the texture is different…but not *enough*.

Law soon finds himself rushing to the restroom. He barges into a stall and empties the contents of his stomach into the toilet. It is…not a good time for Law. But on the bright side, he no longer feels full…

But he also feels terrible.

"I'm…sorry…" Mako looks absolutely guilty. "I didn't think—I'm sorry…"

"It's okay…" Mako couldn't have known…because neither did Law. He just thought—for one second—that he could eat bread again. But apparently, the bad memories regarding it did not want to leave…not now, nor ever.

…

…

They make a return to the ice cream parlor not long after and Mako ends up surprising Law by ordering a cake made with ice cream. It…surprises Law, because—he doesn't think he's ever had a slice of ice cream cake.

"Try it!" Mako urges him. "Err…just a little—to see if you like it."

And so he does—and Law finds that he likes what he tastes. He continues eating until there is none left. He ends up grabbing another slice of the ice cream cake, while Mako is still working on her first slice. By the end of it, Law has eaten more slices than Mako and Mako is slightly miffed, but mostly—she's relieved.
The two leave the ice cream parlor rather full, their clothes somewhat stained from the cake and ice cream. Their make-up is still on, so they continue on without any issues as they head off to the park to just enjoy the scenery.

They spend half an hour just sitting on the bench, resting as they watched other children play on the playground. A few times, children walked up to the two of them and asked if they wanted to play. Law and Mako decline, of course—they just don't want to risk it.

"Hey—why a cake?" Law finally decides to ask.

"Hmm…?" Mako pauses for a moment. "Well…I wanted to see if cake was the same as bread to you."

"Ahh…" So that's why she told him to try a little… "It's definitely not like bread, then…"

"I'm glad!" Mako smiles. "Cuz it would really suck if you couldn't eat cake!"

Mako's smile is contagious, as soon, Law is smiling as well. "Then I guess I'm lucky."

"We're both lucky—because that doctor had a lot of money!" Mako's laughter never fails to be its distinctive self.

Law laughs as well…because he's just so content.

…

…

Their next stop is at a pet shop, for reasons Law does not know, except that he has to be quick on his feet if he doesn't want to lose Mako.

"H-Hey—wait up!" Law does not like how quick Mako is to let go of his hand. He also does not like how much bigger the pet shop seems on the inside, now that he's lost sight of the fishman hybrid. "Mako!"

*God dammit…*

It takes Law almost ten minutes to locate Mako within the pet shop. He finds her making faces to the fishes swimming inside the many fish tanks lined up against the wall. He…has no idea what to think. He can't—he just can't.

*Is she…talking to them?*

Mako *is* in fact talking to the fishes—all whilst making funny fish-like faces. Somehow, she manages not to laugh—Law doesn't either. He just continues to stare…and stare…and stare…until he finally decides to ask, "Mako, are you okay?"

"Hmm?" Mako turns to him, her face still contorted into a funny expression.

"Uhh…" A small bead of sweat rolls down the side of Law's face.

"They're really bored!" Mako explains, as if it's obvious—when it's not.

"Is…Is that right…?" Law decides not to question Mako anymore and just…*lets it be.*

Another five minutes pass before Mako decides she wants to see something else. This time, she grabs
onto his hand and doesn't let go.

...

If the reason they're in a pet shop is because Mako is looking for a pet, Law has no idea what it is exactly that she's looking for, because she can't seem to decide what to look at. Mako just gets into everything and it worries Law to an extent, because the shop owner is staring at them with watchful eyes. Sometimes, Law has to give Mako a boost on his shoulders, because they're both so short and the animals are only within reach with their combined heights.

It's how Mako manages to get a bunch of parrots on her person. She laughs as a parrot nuzzles her cheek while the others just stay perched on her arms and shoulders. Some are on her head, just there—squawking. As Law carefully lowers Mako onto the floor, he finds himself face to face with a red parrot that has perched itself on his hat. It looks down at him, upside-down, its large beak so close to his face.

"Uhhh…” Law has no idea if he's comfortable with this…

Mako laughs. "Say hello!"

"H-Hello…” Law says, somewhat uncertain. He gets a loud squawk in response and a large beak tapping his forehead firmly. "Ow!"

...

Ten minutes later, Mako returns the parrots to their cage. Law rubs at his forehead, the red parrot having taken an interest in tapping its beak against it. It hurts as much as one would expect, so Law is quite glad that the parrots are out of their reach. He hopes Mako is done—he wants to leave.

"Wait!” Mako insists. "I know what I want!"

Law suppresses the urge to groan when Mako starts dragging him by the hand again. The two must be a sight, because the shop owner certainly finds them cute, the way she starts giggle behind her hand. She at least helps them out by bringing out a stepladder for them to use when Mako wants to look inside a glass tank that is too high up for them to see what it contains.

Inside are a few dozen baby Den Den Mushi of differing skin and shell color. All are without equipment that would make use of their abilities for communication. Some are sleeping peacefully, while others are crawling about. Mako practically has stars in her eyes as she continues to stare at the baby Den Den Mushi.

To her, they are absolutely adorable. To Law, they are just weird. He's not so used to seeing baby Den Den Mushi, as the most experience he has is with Corazon's Den Den Mushi. Corazon's Den Den Mushi, of course, is much larger (and older) than any of the Den Den Mushi in the tank.

"Do you know which one you want?” the shop owner asks as a light blush tinges her freckled cheeks red.

Mako looks around, deep in thought. "Hmmm…”

Law doesn't know much about baby Den Den Mushi, but he at least knows it's much cheaper to purchase one in the long run. Of course, he doubts Mako knows this, as she really wants one, regardless of what it can do. This is only further proven when Mako chooses the smallest of the Den Den Mushi—the runt of the litter, from the looks of it. Its skin is a soft pink color, which looks nice on its own, but completely clashes with its blue-green shell. It's so small, that it can fit in the palm of
Mako's tiny hand.

"This one!" Mako happy exclaims as she shows the baby Den Den Mushi to the shop owner.

The shop owner stops smiling, her lips forming into a small frown. "A-Are you sure?"

"Yes!" Mako insists.

The shop owner looks uncertain and turns her attention to Law. "Wh-What about you?"

Law blinks a few times and shrugs. "Why not?"

"W-Well…if you say so…" the shop owner sighs as she tucks a lock of her strawberry-blonde hair behind her ear. "Tell you what—I'll give you the baby Den Den Mushi at half its original price."

Law arches his brow at this. "Really?"

The shop owner nods her head. "Yes…"

"I'm gonna call her Regina!" Mako is quick to name the baby Den Den Mushi, who just yawns and withdraws back into its shell.

...

Law and Mako leave the shop ten minutes later, with Regina being kept safely under his hat. There is still money left over in the wallet, but all Law wants to do now, is head back to the ship. It's getting late and Law is quite sure they're going to get a lecture, so he'd rather get it over with than prolong the inevitable. Mako agrees, but she still wants to visit one more shop first before anything.

"Robin's birthday is coming up!" she explains as she continues to drag Law, who has resigned himself to his fate. "I wanna get her something!"

"I see…" is all he really says. He doesn't have much to say…but he does consider getting something for Robin, too. He thinks about it when they enter a gift shop, a tiny bell notifying the owner of their presence as they entered through the door.

For once, Law allows Mako to go on her own—she seems fine on her own, anyways, as she looks through the jewelry that is within her reach. If she needs any help, Law knows she'll come to him…So he looks around, taking in what the shop has to offer.

Minutes pass and Law has decides to get Robin a birthday card. He is looking through the various cards when he hears a bell ring, alerting everyone within that someone else has entered the shop. Law ignores it and continues searching for the right birthday card for someone, such as Robin. He finds one eventually, after five minutes. With nothing else to do, Law decides to go to the register to pay for the birthday card.

Though, as he's making his way there, Law passes by a shelf full of various bottles that catch his eye. He recognizes them, much to his slight displeasure as his heart pangs with bittersweet nostalgia.

Memories of his friends pop up in mind, reminding him of times they wore fake tattoos on their skin, using the substance found within the bottles that lay before him. The substance itself came in various colors and the bottles usually came with an applicator to make intricate designs—designs of which would last a week or so before it came off.

Law usually declined whenever he was asked if he wanted to try it. Now, as he looks at the bottles, a
bell ringing in the background, he starts to regret the times he declined, if only because his friends were no longer alive. He furrows his brow as he holds a bottle in his hand and contemplates a decision he could make. He isn't short on money—in fact, he is currently in possession of the wallet Mako had stolen. The bottles themselves don't cost much, either, so…

…

**Why the hell not?**

Law grabs as many bottles as he can carry in his arms. He makes sure to get at least one of each color before heading off to pay for everything. The satchel he carries over his shoulder feels much heavier than usual, but he doesn't mind it much. A small smile briefly crosses his lips as he leaves the register to find Mako. He wonders how exactly she'll react to what he has bought…

Then he notices she's nowhere to be found within the store. Law is beyond confused and maybe starts to panic, because he's sure he heard no one leave—

*Wait…*

Law feels his blood run cold when he does recall hearing the bell in the doorway ring, as he was looking at the bottles he had only just bought. "M-Mako?"

No response…

"Mako!" Law repeats, much louder than before.

"If you're looking for the little girl, she left with the Marine who offered to take her home," the shop owner remarks with a reassuring smile.

Law feels anything but reassurance and runs out of the gift shop without saying another word. He starts looking around, as he runs, for the dreaded white and blue of a Marine uniform. He feels sick when he sees nothing and regrets ever letting Mako out of his sight.

*I didn't know…*

He didn't know that a Marine would come across them.

*How could I?*

It was just bad luck.

*Why Mako?!*

Law starts to feel really sick, because he knows Mako has a bounty. And while the make-up makes it harder for people to recognize her, there's still a chance that someone could see right through it. Deep down, Law hopes this is all some sort of sick practical joke—he just hopes, because he's just so anxious.

*It's not a joke.*

Because Law eventually finds Mako—and he does not like what he sees at all. She's being dragged by the arm by a man wearing the standard Marine uniform. He is tall, muscular, and good-looking, with blue hair and a smile that just seems so trustworthy—but he's not. The uncomfortable expression on Mako's face as she tries to break away from the man's grip says otherwise. She's on the verge of tears as the man promises her that he'll take her home after he's done.
Law wants to throw up, now—because he recognizes the look the man gives Mako. It's the same look that some people give Baby 5. With her indigo-colored eyes and wavy, black hair that compliments her adorable looks, Baby 5 has been the unfortunate target to attention that is not so innocent. She's only two years younger than he is, and more than once, has Law witnessed Doflamingo killing people for trying to take advantage of Baby 5's inability to turn down any favors.

Once—just once—Law has seen someone direct that same gaze towards him, during his time with the Donquixote Pirates. He recalls throwing up, because he ended up killing that person. He recalls being comforted in a way only Doflamingo can manage. It's fucked up—it's so fucked up.

But it's real. It's happening before his very eyes. And Law feels so much disgust and rage that just burns within his chest. His body is shaking, hot tears stinging his eyes as he charges forward. He doesn't think. He just acts and does the very first thing that comes into his mind once he's close enough—he kicks the man hard in the crotch.

The man yells out loudly in pain and goes down so easily, but Law does not relent—instead, he continues kicking and kicking until he's certain that he's left the man incapable of ever reproducing. He wants to do even more damage—just so much, because there is nothing the man can ever do to redeem himself. For going after Mako, who is not even four years old—for reminding Law that this world is such a shitty place for forcibly depriving many children of their childhood—for also reminding him how corrupt Marines could be—Law wants this man dead. He wants this man dead—but he knows he can't do much right now.

Not when the last thing he and Mako needs is attention. His yellow eyes are glistening with unshed tears as he spits on the man, giving him another hard kick in the crotch, before turning to Mako, who's shaking uncontrollably. She can't even begin to speak and she's just so close to crying, that Law decides there and then, that it's time for them to leave.

They run all the way back to the ship, where Beckman is the first to greet them. He is reasonably cross with the two of them, for taking so long to get back from the hospital. He tries to lecture them—tries to get it across that he's so concerned. He means well, but it's just unfortunate that Mako ends up vomiting. Law does the same almost after, due to how disgusted he still is with everything that went on with that Marine. He feels horrible—so, so horrible…

Beckman gets the message that a lecture is the last thing Mako and Law need. He gives them a sympathetic look before grabbing them by the backs of their shirts and taking them into the ship. He ends up tossing them into the bathroom and tells them they're not allowed to leave until they've taken a bath. Everything is awkward as hell as a result, for both Mako and Law—Law especially, since he's never been too fond of bathing with others for reasons that involve exposing the blotches of white that cover his skin to others.

Law pushes away his discomfort in order to get things done and over with—but not before handing his hat over to Beckman, because Regina is still inside. He doesn't give Beckman a chance to ask any questions about the baby Den Den Mushi, as Law is quick to close the door.

The make-up comes off so easily, thanks to the application of warm water and soap. Law tries to ignore the fact that Mako can probably see the blotches that cover his body. Most blotches are very faint, but others are completely white and stand out so painfully on his sickly pale skin. It's not a pretty sight and Law feels so self-conscious about his body.

But Mako says nothing—she's still so silent. She's also not looking at him, but at her arm, where the
Marine had grabbed her. She's scrubbing vigorously with soap until her skin starts to look a little red. Law has to stop her because she's scrubbing her skin raw and he doesn't think that's healthy.

Mako still looks like she wants to cry, but somehow—she doesn't. She just nods her head and stops scrubbing so hard. Law lets out a sigh and goes back to washing himself. Neither of them speaks to each other, nor do they look at each other.

It's only when they're in the bathtub, relaxing in the warm water, that Mako finally speaks to Law, breaking the silence between them.

"I'm sorry..." Mako apologizes for reasons Law cannot even begin to understand. "I didn't mean for everything to turn out like this..."

What?

"Why are you apologizing?" Law doesn't understand. Mako is the last person who should even be apologizing, because— "I should be apologizing!"

I shouldn't have left you alone.

"It's not your fault though," Mako insists. "You couldn't have known."

I couldn't have...

"But I still shouldn't have left you alone!" Law feels so guilty. "And it's not your fault either, so don't apologize—especially when it involves that scummy Marine."

"Then don't apologize either!" Mako stares at Law with a firm gaze when he tries to argue, so he stays quiet. "Let's just...admit that today was a bad day. A really, really bad day...that shouldn't have happened, because we should have just gone back to the ship instead..."

...

...

"Scummy Marine aside, I...really did have fun today..." Law isn't going to lie. He appreciates all the positives of today, as it really did take his mind off of what happened at the hospital. "Thanks, Mako..."

"N-No problem!" Mako finally smiles again and in turn, Law also smiles—he just can't help it.

Chapter End Notes

HELLO EVERYONE I AM STILL ALIVE AND HAVE NOT GIVEN UP ON THIS STORY. So please don't ask me about updates...on this or any other of my fics. Please? D:

ANYWAYS, this was like supposed to be a happy chapter, but somehow, shit happened and just I DON'T EVEN...YEAH...

Major thanks to Plouton and kurobook, who have drawn lovely fanart of Mako, which you can check out here
They have also been HUUUGE help for this chapter! EXPECT THEIR NAMES TO POP UP FROM TIME TO TIME! Also, check out their One Piece SI OCs, Murphy's Law and Barrel of Fun—just do it! Send some love to them, because they are awesome people!

Also, during my time away from this fic, the Hunter x Hunter series has laid claim to me, so now there's another SI OC that exists—her name's Silvia, by the way, and she's got a language barrier to endure…eventually. The story's call De Mí a Usted (translation: From Me to You) if anyone's interested.

Credit goes to kurobook for the bits of dialogue used in this chapter, such as the ice cream part and the pet shop scene where Mako talks to the fishes and Law is just super done. Credit goes to Plouton for the suggestion of Regina's color and fleshing out certain scenes in this chapter, like, seriously, thank you guys so much! I'm so glad we are writing comrades!

There's not much to really talk about in this chapter—in that I feel that the chapter does enough on its own to get the message across. Though, I do have this headcanon in that Robin is good with make-up because of various disguises she had to pull off when she was on the run.

So like, there's a lot going on in the One Piece fandom and just…part of the reason I'm taking my sweet time is because Sanji backstory—MIGHTY NEED. But then talking to Plouton and kurobook change all of that, especially as these two lovely people are working on their own OP SI OC fics! So yeah, once again, give their fics a look and send some love!

That's all I have for now, don't know when the next chapter will be up, so please be patient! Until next time, everyone!
Heyo, I’m not dead and I’d highly recommend rereading this fic in order to refresh your memory of what has happened so far, otherwise, read on!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Beckman stares questioningly at the baby Den Den Mushi that sits on his shoulder. He stares at it, as it stares back at him with half-lidded eyes. Beckman’s never seen a baby Den Den Mushi this small —but there seems to be a first time for everything. What perplexes him the most is where in the hell did Mako and Law get enough money to even buy a baby Den Den Mushi?!

He’s pretty damn certain that neither of the two have access to the funds.

“Regina, huh?” Beckman recalls the name that was used to refer to the baby Den Den Mushi as he taps on its shell. “That’s one ugly Shel—”

Chomp!

Beckman manages not to flinch when two tiny sets of surprisingly sharp teeth clamp down onto the tip of his index finger. It doesn’t exactly hurt, but déjà vu is certainly something Beckman experiences.

“No doubt about it...” Beckman doesn’t even need to ask who the owner is, because Regina made it clear on her own. After all, baby Den Den Mushi are highly impressionable from the very moment they are touched by their owners. It was just his luck that the feature Regina took from Mako was her teeth...

...

...

Beckman confronts Mako and Law about Regina when they exit the bathroom. He goes about it as gently as possible, to avoid unsettling them anymore. They might look a lot less tense than before, but he isn’t taking his chances with these two kids.

“Where’d you get the money for Regina?” It’s a simple question, really, one that doesn’t seem to pry into what might have upset the two.

“Mako stole a doctor’s wallet,” Law doesn’t even hesitate when he answers Beckman’s question.

“There’s still money left in it if you want,” Mako murmurs as she averts her gaze.

Beckman stares at Mako. She’s such a tiny, three-year-old girl...and somehow, she managed to steal the wallet off a doctor. How the hell?! “How?!”

“He was too busy making Papa angry!” Mako laughs, though her laughter sounds slightly hollow—as though she’s hiding how she actually feels.
Beckman notices this, but says nothing. Mako has had such bad experiences with doctors so far, with all of them refusing to see her because of her fishman heritage. It really isn’t fair, and the same can also be said about everyone else’s mistreatment of Law. He runs his fingers through his hair and sighs, shaking his head seemingly in disapproval…before a smirk crosses his face.

“Is that so?” He decides that Mako deserve some praise for it. “Well then good job.”

A part of him wishes to discourage Mako from ever doing such a thing again, but he knows better than to do so. Mako always does as she wants—he can only hope that Law can at least keep her in check when he isn’t there to do so…

That evening, not long after they’ve set sail, Law and Mako get an earful from Shanks and Corazon. It’s not as bad as it could have been, since Shanks only laughs when he finds out about Regina. Corazon, on the other hand, tries not to make it that obvious that he knows that there’s something that Law and Mako aren’t telling them. He doesn’t want to bring much attention to it, since it might do more harm than good.

Still, he’d prefer it if they told him eventually, so as soon as he and Law are alone, he says, “Whenever you’re ready, just tell me.”

Law tugs down on his hat. He looks uncertain as how to react, so he waits a moment before saying, “Okay.”

It takes every fiber of Corazon’s being to hold back the urge he has to punch a hole through the wall. Law has never been this quiet… Whatever it was that had happened—it can’t be any good.

Law doesn’t get much sleep that night. His nightmares are especially vivid, tormenting him with thoughts of what could have happened. He decides to head outside for some fresh air, hoping that it would help him take his mind off things…

It helps—not a lot, but it’s better than nothing.

“Feels nice.” Law likes the way the breeze feels on his skin. It’s cold, but not enough that he’s freezing. The moon is full, making it easy for Law to move around in the darkness of the night. He finds Robin sitting at the main mast of the ship, looking somewhat surprised to see him. Law is just as surprised, since he was expecting to be completely alone.

Except he’s not—and neither is she, which is why she starts smiling as she pats at the empty space right next to her. Robin says nothing as Law sits down beside her. Instead, she points upward, directing Law’s attention to the vast number of stars glimmering brightly in the dark sky. It’s a breathtaking sight—one that’s enough to break the silence between them.
They talk to each other about their pasts, discussing the times when they were completely on their own. It’s not the first time that they’ve shared such information with each other, so they’re used to it. It’s only when Law starts talking about his family when their discussion heads in a different direction.

Law talks about times when things were relatively fine. He tells Robin about his friends, giving her a name and description for each of them. He didn’t have to, but Robin lets him anyways. She listens intently to Law as he shares snippets of his childhood with her. He keeps talking and talking, until tears start falling from his face.

Robin reacts first, wrapping her arm around Law’s shoulders and pulling him closely to her side. He breaks down seconds afterwards, screaming about how much he hates the World Government and all that stand for it. He screams and he screams and he screams…

Eventually, he calms down, having screamed his throat raw.

“How’s it going?” Robin asks as she rubs soothing circles on his back.

“Hmm…” Law sniffs a few times.

Robin and Law don’t talk much after that. They pass most of the night just watching the stars in the sky. Soon, dawn begins to break and it’s only once the sun has started to rise that Law finally speaks.

“Robin… why do people like the Marines exist?” It takes Law a lot more effort to speak, since his voice is so hoarse. “How—How can they live like that? Working for the World Government, I mean…”

Robin pauses for a moment to think. “Well… sometimes, people think they’re doing the right thing.”

“But they’re not!!” Law choke out, memories of yesterday’s incident still fresh in his mind.

“I know.” Robin nods her head. She understands that quite well. “But they don’t know that, and I think that’s what’s most frightening about them.”

…

…

“My throat hurts…” Law decides to change the subject.

“Would you like me to make you some tea?” Robin offers. “I usually make myself something to eat during this time, so I don’t mind if you come along with me to the kitchen.”

“Sure.” Law doesn’t have anything better to do. He thinks it’s strange that Robin would be in the kitchen at this hour, but he doesn’t question her. Stranger things have happened and if Robin wants to be an early bird, then so be it.

…

…

Robin calmly sips her tea as she watches Law sleep. It hasn’t been that long since he had passed out. Robin is surprised that he hadn’t done so earlier, when she was making tea.
“No matter.” It’s not much of an issue anymore, so Robin continues drinking her tea. She pays little attention to the plate of food that she’s left on the table. Rather, she listens closely for a certain guest of hers that’s due for a visit.

*Tap, tap, tap.*

A small smile forms on her lips. “*There we go.*”

The footsteps are as quiet as ever, sounding ever so hesitant as they move closer and closer. Robin never turns her head towards the source, choosing to feign ignorance instead. Out of the corner of her eye, she catches a glimpse of blond hair. Her ears pick up on the sound of a chair being moved ever so carefully. There’s a small gasp, likely in reaction to Law’s presence at the table.

“I wonder if I should get him a blanket,” Robin suddenly says. “He’s sleeping so soundly, I don’t think anything will wake him.”

There’s a brief moment of silence…then the sounds return. She chuckles quietly at how eagerly her guest eats.

“So…are you ready to tell me your name?” Robin finally turns her head, her gaze focused on the scruffy-looking boy that sits at the table.

…

…

Law doesn’t talk much during the next few days. His throat is still recovering, so he chooses not to speak. It’s not like he has much reason to, anyways, since he and Mako are more interested in interacting with Regina than anyone else.

Of course, that all changes when Robin’s birthday pops up. Without meaning to, Law finds himself joining in the celebration. Mako reminds him of the birthday card he had bought for Robin.

“Are you sure she’ll like it?” Law isn’t so sure about it anymore…

“It’s fiine!” Mako reassures him. “You can just get her something next time!”

“…Okay.” Law isn’t so sure if there will be a next time. He keeps that to himself, deciding that it’s not worth it to dampen the mood. “What did you get her?”

“You’ll see!” Mako smiles widely at him.

…

Law honestly doesn’t know what he was expecting, because it certainly wasn’t a ribbon bookmark. It’s a nice shade of dark blue, with violet-colored beads hanging from one end and a silver charm on the other end. The charm is what catches Robin’s attention the most, as it is in the shape of a robin.

“How fitting,” she says, sounding especially amused.

“It’s also a bracelet!” Mako pipes up. “There’s a thing on it that connects the ends together.

“You mean a clasp,” Robin gently corrects her. “You’re getting better.”

“Yay!” Mako claps her hands repeatedly. “Law also got you something!”
It’s a lot more embarrassing, now that all attention was on him. Law reluctantly hands Robin the birthday card he had gotten her. She happily accepts it, giving his shoulder a few comforting pats.

“Thank you, Law—I appreciate it.” It means a lot to Robin to see Law trying to make the most of his limited time. Hopefully, they find a cure for him soon, because Robin wants him to live.

She saves a slice of cake for no one in particular, waiting until everyone has gone to sleep before heading toward a room full of barrels. She remembers this place quite vividly, as this is where Mako took her to hide away from the Marines. It’s where she finds the scruffy-looking boy with blond hair.

“I saved you a slice.” She smiles warmly at him as she hands him the plate. “Don’t eat too fast.”

She’s had to clean up after him more than once—it’s bothersome, but nothing she can’t handle. She’d just prefer it if the food remained in his stomach. It’s easier that way.

“So…how about today?” she asks him.

The boy doesn’t answer her and instead, continues eating the slice of cake.

“Take your time, then.” Robin isn’t going to rush him. That’s the last thing she wants to do, since he’s made so much progress already. “Just let me know when you’re ready.”

For now, she’s just content that he’s no longer running away from her.

…

…

The days go by and Law decides to finally show Mako the bottles he bought at that shop. She’s confused at first, with what he’s showing her. Then he explains what it is, opening a bottle containing a silver-colored substance. He grabs Mako’s hand and, using the applicator that comes with the bottle, he begins to draw random patterns on the palm of her hand. That’s when it finally clicks for her.

“Body paint!” It’s more of a paste made out of dye than paint, but it’s similar enough that Law doesn’t bother to correct her. “Can I draw on you?”

“Only if you let me draw on you.” Law wants to make up for lost time. “Just be warned—these things last a week.”

“Got it!” Mako laughs. “Hey—that tickles!”

“Stay still or I’ll mess up!” The last thing Law wants is for Mako to keep complaining about how ugly it looks. He’s doing well so far, for someone who’s had so little practice. Little by little, the patterns start to look like flowers. By the time he’s done, Mako has a bouquet of roses on the palm of her hand, decorated with intricate-looking leaves. “I…was having fun.”

“I can tell!” Mako seems pleased. “Okay, my turn!”

The two spend hours and hours, drawing various pictures on each other’s skin. Law tries to keep it simple at first, but boredom pushes him to be more complex. Mako, on the other hand, just sticks to what she knows best. It’s all the same to her, since she’s having so much fun just drawing hearts.
Eventually, Shanks finds himself getting dragged into this mess when he comes across the two in his room. He becomes their canvas, allowing the two to draw all over his body. It’s annoying that he’ll have to deal with it for at least a week, but he’ll live. This is the least he can do for them before they arrive at the next island…

Maybe this time, they’ll be lucky…

“Maybe,” Shanks thinks.

…

…

Law feels like throwing up when he sees the hospital. It’s been more than a month since he and Mako had last visited a hospital and yet—the memories are still fresh in his memory. He still hasn’t told Corazon… He’s been meaning to, but he just can’t. It’s too difficult for him to bring up something so serious, when the days have been so peaceful.

The nightmares have stopped, allowing him the chance to actually get some sleep. Mako’s been smiling more, though he feels that there are more gaps in her teeth than usual. It’s probably just a phase…

“Probably.” He exhales shakily, feeling extremely uneasy after entering through the hospital doors. That’s when a tiny hand grabs onto his own. It happens so suddenly, that he just freezes…

“S-Sorry.” He relaxes almost immediately when he finds that it’s just Mako. She smiles reassuringly at him, likely hoping for the very best. For once, he decides to do the same.

…

…

In the midst of all the chaos, Law waits for Mako. He ignores the screaming nurses that run past him. He’s used to it by now. It hurts, but not as much as it used to.

*I have Mako.*

So he isn’t alone.

*This is fine.*

Except it isn’t, because when Mako shows up, Law quickly notices something is extremely wrong. He takes note of each wobbly step that Mako makes as she approaches him. Her hood is down, allowing Law to see a pair of glazed pink eyes. Beads of sweat are rolling down her face as a noticeable blush colors her cheeks red.

“M-Mako…?” Law doesn’t like what he sees…and his eyes widen when Mako suddenly empties the contents of her stomach onto the floor. “Mako!”

“Uuuuu…uuuuuuu…” Mako’s eyes begin to water as she clutches her stomach. She collapses onto the floor and starts to cry, no longer able to keep it in.

Law doesn’t know how to react, as he’s not used to seeing Mako cry like this. The last time he’s
seen her cry was when she started losing teeth.

“Speaking of teeth…” Law can see a few of them within half-digested remains of the fish that Mako ate for lunch. It’s disgusting at first, but then a certain memory pops into his head…

“I lost another tooth.”

That’s when he realizes that Mako never told him how she lost her tooth…

“Oh, god…” Law almost wants to throw up himself, because now he has an idea of what’s been happening. “Is that why she’s missing so much teeth?”

There are just so many gaps in her teeth…

“M-Mako?” he calls out to her.

She doesn’t respond—she just keeps crying and crying.

Just like a child.

Then it hits him—Mako is a child. She’s three, almost four, and somehow—she hasn’t cried after each visit to the hospital, as he had. She didn’t even cry when he saved her from that shitty Marine. It’s only while she’s feeling so horrible that she finally lets it out. Law feels just as horrible, because how could he not notice that something was wrong with Mako?

How?

It’s easy to forget how young Mako is sometimes and Law regrets it as he hefts the little girl onto his back. He can practically feel the heat radiating off her face with how close her head is to his own face.

She’s sick…

He needs to get her back to the ship fast, because they’re sure as hell not getting any help here. It fucking sucks big time, but there’s not a damn thing he can do about it—that’s why Corazon does what he does.

Because he’s mad.

Corazon is mad because these hospitals fail to do the one thing they’re supposed to do, which is help people. And Law can’t help but feel the same, because it’s not fair—it really isn’t fair.

“Hey—hey…it’s going to be okay!” Law tries his best to calm Mako as she continues to cry. Her crying hurts his ears, because of how close she is to him and how loud her sobs are. But compared to the screams of terror in the background—it’s honestly bearable. “C’mon—just hang in there until we get to the ship. Shoosh, shoosh…c’mon…shoosh…”

Mako hiccups and manages to lower the volume of her voice, but she still continues to cry. She’s just not having a good time…

“I know it’s bad—but we’ll get there, okay?” Law wonders how it is that a three-year-old girl can manage when he’s crying, because he certainly can’t do the same, now that their roles have been reversed. It’s rather disturbing that a three-year-old girl can even handle a crying twelve-year-old boy. Not only is he older than she is, but he is also taller…and yet, she always just grabbed his hand and calmly walked him back all the way to the ship. “It’s okay, it’s okay…”
It’s not okay—how did she do this?!

Law doesn’t know and he feels like crying because he doesn’t know. He feels he should—especially since he once had a little sister. Of course, Mako is anything but his little sister (no one could ever take Lami’s place)... but Lami was once Mako’s age... So Law feels he should have known better, but he doesn’t and he seriously wants to cry, too.

Don’t cry, don’t cry, don’t cry!

Tears are pricking the corners of his eyes as he continues to walk down the hallway, carrying a sick three-year-old girl on his back. It’s not that difficult of a job—Mako is rather small and doesn’t weigh much. But Law still has difficulties keeping his emotions in check.

Don’t cry!

He can’t cry—not now! Not when Mako was feeling so horrible—he had to be strong. Even though it was difficult, with how much his chest continued to ache, he had to be strong for the girl who was always there for him.

Maybe that’s why she never cried...

They’re outside the hospital building now, while Corazon and Shanks still inside, wreaking havoc upon the doctors that refused to see him and Mako. By the end of the day, the hospital would meet the same fate as the hospitals before it. Corazon and Shanks are vindictive when they can be and Law can’t help but appreciate their actions now. It really doesn’t do much, but... it makes Law feel a bit better...

Maybe... just maybe...

He can also try to make Mako feel better...but how, is the question.

How?!?!

...

...

An idea crosses Law’s mind and though he’s not too certain about it, it is better than doing nothing at all. He clears his throat and tries, to the best of his ability, to sing the one song that Mako said always makes her feel better when she’s down.

“Yo-hohoho... yo-hohoho...” Law’s voice is uncertain and slow, because he’s still so new to the song. He hasn’t heard it enough times to hammer it into his memory... “Yo-hohoho... yo-hohoho...”

He knows he’s going to mess up, but that still doesn’t stop him from singing.

"Going to... deliver Bink's Sake...

Following the sea breeze... riding on the waves...

Far across... the salty depths, the merry evening... sun...

Painting circles in the sky... as the birds sing along..."

He’s pausing too much and already, he’s struggling with remembering the rest. So he stops singing and starts to hum, because at the very least, he can remember the melody. It’s not much, but it does
Mako isn’t the only one who’s sick—Robin finds out the hard way when Beckman shows her the stowaway he’s found.

“I’m going to assume that he’s the reason why food’s been going missing.” Beckman’s comment is almost accusatory, so Robin doesn’t know what to say. “How long?”

“A…A couple of months.” She found the boy following her during one of her outings. He was always avoiding areas that were full of crowds, which is why he latched onto her, having seen her on her own… “He was following me, so I tried talking to him.”

“I’m guessing it didn’t go well.” Because Beckman couldn’t talk to the boy at all, since he was too busy trying to get away from him as he was sobbing so hysterically. In the end, Beckman had to knock him out for his own good.

“You’re right—so I had to approach the problem in a different way.” Robin knew she should have told Shanks, but…she was too afraid of losing sight of the boy. “I lured him onto the ship by leaving food out for him. Once we’d set sail, he had nowhere to go, so I tried my best to build up enough trust, so I can finally introduce you all to him.”

“Well, that’s the end of that plan.” There’s no turning back. “We’ll talk more when the Captain returns. In the meantime, try to watch over him since you’re the only one he trusts.”

“I plan on it.” Robin feels absolutely terrible for keeping such a secret… “And I’m so sorry for keeping this from everyone.”

“Look—I’m not mad.” Beckman wants to make that clear. “Things happen, and this? This was out of your control, so you were trying to make the best of it.”

“I still wish I had confided in someone…” Maybe then, Robin wouldn’t feel so guilty.

Beckman runs his hand through his hair and sighs. “Don’t beat yourself up…it’s not your fault. I’m sure that Shanks will understand, considering the circumstances involving Mako herself.”

After all, her mother was a stowaway herself.
That doesn’t make Shanks feel any better, since there’s always a chance that things can get worse. When he finds out about the stowaway that Robin’s been hiding, his mood only worsens, because all he can think is that this is how Mako must have gotten sick.

“That little shit was passing his sickness around!” Shanks almost wants to scream at the boy, but refrains from doing so, because of how vulnerable he looks to be confined to someone else’s bed.

“I’m sorry,” Robin apologizes for what feels like the umpteenth time as he wipes away the sweat on the boy’s brow using a damp towel. “I shouldn’t have told you earlier…”

Shanks pauses for a moment to collect his thoughts. He inhales deeply, and then exhales. “It’s fine… just lemme talk to him when he feels better.”

“Hopefully, he’ll listen.” Robin hopes the boy doesn’t run away. “No one’s going to hurt you, okay?”

The boy says nothing and just averts his gaze.

…

…

Corazon is on his own when Law approaches him. “Is something wrong?”

He almost wishes he hadn’t asked when Law looks at him with such a solemn expression on his face.

“I’m…ready,” he says, his voice cracking.

…

…

That evening, Corazon makes a private call on his Den Den Mushi. It takes every bit of strength he has to not cry when he recounts the information that Law had told him to his adoptive father. It’s hard, because it’s not fair that something so terrible had to happened to a child like Mako. It also hurts, because if Law ever found out who he actually was…

“He’ll definitely hate me…” And honestly, Corazon wouldn’t blame him.

…

…

The days go by and Mako eventually recovers, much to Shanks’s immense relief. She catches everyone by surprise, from the way she just sneaks out of her bed. Why she does it, she later explains to Law that she wanted to see the boy that was in Robin’s room.

Surprisingly enough, the boy doesn’t scream when he sees Mako. She’s young enough that he doesn’t consider her much of a threat, though he’s still rather wary of her sharp teeth.
“Hello!” she greets him with a wide smile.

He doesn’t respond, not knowing if he should talk. His body tenses when Mako rushes over to the bed and starts to climb up it.

“My name’s Mako!” she tells him, blissfully oblivious to his distress. “What’s yours, blondie?”

The boy doesn’t appreciate the nickname that she’s given him, but he remains silent.

“I’m not gonna bite,” she reassures him. “Just wanna talk…you okay?”

…

“Hmm…I’mma go!” She hops off the bed and runs out of the room. She returns minutes later, carrying stacks of colorful paper in her hands. She sits on the floor, deciding to give the boy some space. She doesn’t say much, so the boy tries his best to ignore her.

He manages for more than five minutes before his ears pick up the sound of her voice.

“One…two…three.” She repeats it many times, starting over each time she reaches the number three.

After ten minutes, the boy turns his head and sees that Mako is organizing her papers into stacks of three. Eventually, she stops and starts folding paper. She’s far too immersed to notice that he’s staring at her.

She only notices after folding three origami roses, when she turns to call out to him. “Oh! You were…watching?”

The boy averts his gaze, his cheeks heating up with a blush. He’s somewhat embarrassed, since he wasn’t expecting her to do that. He stays still when he hears her moving closer.

“Here—they’re for you!” A red-colored origami rose lands in his lap, which is soon followed by a pink rose and then a yellow rose.

Slowly, he turns his head to look at the origami roses. They’re folded so neatly…and there’s three of them…

“Why three?” he asks out loud, catching himself by surprise. His hand slaps over his mouth, his eyes wide as he stares at Mako, who’s smiling widely.

“You talked!” she exclaimed. “Hey, hey—do you wanna make some origami with me?”

She doesn’t give him much room to answer before she’s collecting all the paper off the floor and climbing onto the bed to join him. She pushes a few stacks of paper in his direction and goes back to folding more paper.

The boy watches her, not knowing what else to do. After about a minute, he reaches out and grabs a sheet of paper. That’s when Mako starts talking to him again. She teaches him how to make an origami crane. He has some difficulty at first, but by his third attempt, he gets it.

“Three…” he murmurs, feeling a little empty inside. It’s not as bad as it used to be, but it’s still there…

“Wanna make more?” Mako asks him, offering him more paper. “I can teach ya.”

The boy thinks for a minute, then says, “Sure.”
About an hour later, after scaring the absolute crap out of Shanks when he woke up and found Mako missing from her bed, he finds her with the blond-haired boy, the two of them passed out on Robin’s bed. He stares at them, somewhat bewildered by how close they have gotten. At the very least, he now knows where Mako is…

“At least they’re getting along,” he sighs, deciding to leave the two alone for now.

…

A few days later, Mako introduces the boy to Law, now that he no longer feels so hesitant and frightened to interact with other people. It helps that Mako is there for him. It also helps that he’s become a lot more talkative now, since he no longer has much reason to be afraid.

“I’m Sanji,” he finally says. “And I’m seven years old.”

Law looks up from the newspaper he’s reading. “Huh, how funny—with you, we make three.”

“Three!” Mako loudly exclaims as she pulls Sanji and Law closer to herself. “There are three of us!”

“Is that why you made three?” Sanji recalls the origami roses that Mako made that day.

Mako doesn’t give him an answer. Instead, she just laughs. “Heyyy—whatcha reading?”

Law blinks a few times, a small smile forming on his lips as he shows Mako the front page. “Look—it’s him.”

He knows he probably shouldn’t be reminding her of such a terrible encounter, and yet, something about the way she just continues laughing makes him feel a lot better. Knowing that the Marine that attempted to kidnap her was dishonorably discharged can do that to a person, especially since he was executed shortly afterwards. Apparently, there had been a lot of crimes the man had committed that had been swept under the rug… Only now, were they finally coming to light and Law couldn’t be any happier.

Karma is a bitch, after all, and he hopes that it sends a message to other Marines so that they’d think twice before taking advantage of their position.

“Let’s go show Regina to Sanji, okay?” Law changes the subject as he drops the newspaper to the ground.

“Who’s Regina?” Sanji furrows his brow.

“You’ll see!” Mako chirps. “C’mon—she should be awake right now!”

Later on, Robin finds them sleeping on the floor, with Regina stuck in the center of them. She laughs quietly at the sight as she goes to collect Regina. It’s for safety reasons, as she doesn’t want any of them to accidentally roll over the baby Den Den Mushi. Otherwise, she’s quite happy with the progress Sanji has made. She still regrets keeping him a secret for so long, but that doesn’t matter much anymore.

Not when he’s safe—just like Law and Mako.
HELLO EVERYONE, IT’S BEEN TWO FUCKING YEARS AND I JUST WANNA SAY, ABOUT GOD DAMN TIME!! I’VE BEEN THROUGH HELL, LIKE...

To give a recap of what’s happened since I last updated this fic, one of my friends committed suicide, another of my friends died in a car accident, I failed a few classes (I got better though), one of my cats died, I lost control of my car and crashed into a tree, my OTHER car broke down so I had to get another car, I’ve dealt with a toxic boss at my former job, but I got another job at my university’s library so I’m doing much better, though before I went back to school, my maternal grandfather died. A lot of shit happened in these past two years, but I’m doing so much better, so don’t worry too much about me, ‘kay?

Seriously though, I’m just....so happy??? To finally be back on fics I haven’t update in a couple of years. You know what that is?? Progress.

ANYWAYS, I mentioned this many times before to other people, that I was waiting until the arc with Sanji in One Piece was finished so that I could decide what will happen next. This is why—because here he is, Vinsmoke Sanji, who has just recently escaped from the Germa Kingdom. Considering the abuse he’s dealt with while he was there, I wouldn’t expect him to be so eager to interact with anyone after leaving.

Which is why Robin had such a difficult time getting him to open up. And why Robin? Because she’s a pretty lady, so Sanji should still have a soft spot for such. The fact that Robin is the way she is just makes it all the easier for Sanji to get put in one place for so long.

And since interacting with Mako, he’s opened up a bit, since in his mind, she doesn’t look like much of a threat. It kinda helps that she’s so fucking small and young, so in Sanji’s head, he thinks that he’s safe. He kind of is, since most of Mako’s destructive tendencies are aimed at people who deserve it.

Anyways, credit goes to Plouton for the bottles of colored paste. They’ve suggested it to me as something like henna, just available in different colors. In the world of One Piece, I wouldn’t be surprised if that was a thing. I should mention that it’s what Corazon uses for the markings on his face. Also, credit to Sukila for inspiring the scene in this chapter, involving a sick Mako. They suggested for Mako to get sick and for Shanks to flip his shit because of how important doctors and medicine is in this world, so I just took it and ran with it.

That’s about it for now, so I hope you guys enjoyed the chapter, because I sure did! Feel free to comment, because I DO crave that validation and it REALLY comes a long way for me since it keeps me motivated to keep writing, even if it’s just a jumble of words. So until next time, guys!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!