

Tough Girls

Von viv-heart

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Prolog:

Prologue

Something was wrong. Nami could tell so much just from a short glance over the entrance hall.

"Vivi?" the ginger called out, taking off her favourite brown leather sandals.

No answer.

She put them in the line of shoes, disturbed only by Vivi's blue pumps lying on the floor a bit away. How uncharacteristic for the usually so tidy politics student.

Nami picked them up and put the footwear on the usual place before opening the door dividing the hall from the actual living quarters.

Instead of going straight to the kitchen to get some coffee, Nami headed for her friend's room.

"Vivi?" she called out again, before pulling down the doorknob. The door opened with a quiet grate, revealing a highly concerning image.

The blue-haired girl was lying on her bed, crying. Her body shook with every sob.

"Oh my.." Nami whispered. "What happened?" the ginger asked as she sat down next to Vivi and started rubbing her back softly to calm her down.

The crying girl needed some attempts, but finally managed to pull herself together enough for Nami to understand what she wanted to say. "Kohza broke up with me."

The revelation surprised Nami. Vivi has been dating Kohza for the past four years and they have been joking about marriage a lot these past months, with Vivi finally getting her master's degree this summer and all.

"Why?" the ginger blurted out.

"He is moving to Cuba." Vivi explained bitterly in between sobs.

"Cuba? You can't be serious!" Nami couldn't help but laugh out despite the situation. She knew about Kohza's obsession with revolutionaries and especially Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, but this was plain ridiculous!

"Oh girl..." she let out a sigh. "You are better off without a moron like him. And you still have me, don't you?"

The exclamation together with Nami's inappropriate wink made Vivi smile, even though tears were still rolling down her cheeks.

"Thank you" the words were a mere whisper, but Nami caught them never the less.

"Always! And now: pull yourself together! You will get over him and get yourself a better guy, even if it takes some time! Until then, welcome to the happy single-ladies club! Do you want any coffee or tea?"

Nami's energetic way had its own magic and cheered Vivi up to the extent that she wasn't crying anymore as she spoke.

"A cup of tea, please." there was a weak smile on her lips now as she wiped the tears away.

"That's my girl." Nami grinned, as she left the room. "And be prepared to go out with me on Friday!" She called over her shoulder as she walked to the kitchen.

Kapitel 1:

CH 1

"Here you go!" Nami thrust the glass into Vivi's hands.

"What's that?" the bluenette eyed the beverage sceptically. "You know that I am not very fond of alcohol."

"It's a liqueur made from sour cherries. Give it a try. You will like it." Nami had introduced Vivi to all kinds of alcoholic beverages in the past but the younger girl simply didn't like the bitter taste of those drinks, making Nami look for sweet and mild tasting alternatives to her usual booze.

A few weeks ago, she had found this liqueur as she had been celebrating their debating club winning the regional round with her colleague Robin as the older woman ordered the beverage. The redhead had thought of her roommate immediately, but hadn't had a chance to present her new discovery till now.

Vivi still didn't seem very convinced, but took a sip nevertheless. And another. And one more. "It isn't half bad." the bluenette admitted.

A smile stretched over Nami's lips. "I knew it!" the redhead was really proud of herself. Finally!

She refilled her friend's glass and poured some of the deep red liquid in her own glass as well.

"To a great night!"

"Oh my god! Really?!" Nami had to grab Vivi's arm to keep herself standing. Her whole body shook with laughter, making it hard to breath.

"Yeah. You could see how Pell's face turned red even under all that make-up!"

The two girls have emptied two bottles of the liqueur, with Vivi drinking about half a bottle and Nami emptying the remainder as she could hold her liquor way better, and were now on their way to the redhead's favourite club, Water 7.

"Poor guy! And Igaram didn't get it?" Nami questioned after finally catching her breath again.

"Hell no! I don't want to imagine his reaction when he finds out that his adoptive son is the one who was fucked by Chaka in the palace garden! He still believes it was a girl and asks Chaka about it on every occasion he gets!"

The girls' laughter preceded them through the empty streets as they walked on the

chill evening towards their destination.

"Hello Kaku!" Nami greeted the absolutely bored looking bouncer, who simply motioned towards the door as soon as he spotted her bright red mane, saving the two girls from the annoying second security man Paulie, who didn't notice Nami only because he was currently occupied with lecturing another small group of women about how inappropriate they dressed.

Vivi stopped to listen, but was pulled inside immediately just before the blonde man turned around.

"If you don't want to spend half of the evening listening to some nonsense about how short your skirt is, you should avoid Paulie at all costs!" Nami tried to lecture her friend with a strict face, but failed miserably as she started giggling again as the bluenette glanced down on herself to check how badly she was dressed.

"Yes, that skirt is short in his opinion!" a dark-haired man commented in passing. "But it looks great on you!" he added with a wink and disappeared before any of the girls could get a proper look at him or even react.

"What the-?" Vivi stood there with her mouth open as several other party-goers pushed past her.

"Come on, let's sit down! We can look for him later." Nami pulled her friend away from the entrance and towards an empty box, making a few jokes in the process.

Knowing her qualities, Nami rarely had to buy her own drinks. It was enough to smile at a random guy and she got what she wanted. If the man was handsome, the redhead even considered a one-night-stand with him or even a proper date if he proved to be at least a bit interesting, but that happened rarely.

But today she was here with Vivi, who was pretty as well but never really acknowledged that fact and never learned to use it for her own advantage. And they were here to find a man for the bluenette, not for her after all!

The ginger looked around, searching the dancing crowd for a fitting candidate.

There was this tall, blonde guy... Quite hot, even with that obscure make up. But no, wait. He was just kissing that pink-haired chick. Definitely nothing for Vivi if he kissed random girls at parties. God, that chick took a bite of pizza in the middle of making-out! Gross!

Nami let her eyes wander away from those two.

Brown hair, quite like Elvis Presley, that might be fun. But he seemed so old...

Nami continued scanning the crowd while Vivi studied the interior. She had never been in the club before.

The redhead's eyes stopped at the bar. THAT guy...

"Good evening, ladies. May I join you?" Nami snapped back to reality. She had been staring at the stranger for quite a while.

"Oh hello." She replied halfheartedly before giving the stranger a proper look. It was the guy who had complimented Vivi before! He was cute! And he was obviously interested in Vivi judging by the way he studied her features in the dim light, one hand in his pocket to appear relaxed, but the shoulders stiff.

"Let me introduce myself. My name is Ace. It is my pleasure to meet you." the freckled man shot Vivi a charming smile.

Nami had to give him credit for overplaying his nervousness this good. But he should learn to watch his feet. The tapping betrayed his true state of mind, he was trying so hard to hide.

"I am Vivi." the younger of the women grinned back, her cheeks having turned a slightly pinker colour. But that may be the alcohol...

"And I am getting a drink." Nami smirked, deciding to go for the man she had seen at the bar.

A fucking punk! In here! Devouring a drink after another! He had to be something!

Those thoughts shot through the redhead's head as she moved towards the bar, avoiding the dancefloor as good as possible.

"Vodka Energy, please." Nami winked at Lucci, her favourite bartender. The other one working at this bar was Kalifa, a really annoying woman who accused a lot of male guests of sexual harassment, scaring quite a few of the newbies.

Lucci on the other side was cool and calm, but Nami knew he could be very different. She had had sex with him on several occasions in the past after all.

It had been really kinky as the man was a real sadist and showed this side quite excessively during those nights they have spent together.

Nami was pretty flexible with sex, being able to have her fun in a lot of different ways, but Lucci was always a good option if she ever got sick of the boring people around her and wanted to let herself go.

But today, she wasn't interested in him. She wanted that punk. And Nami got what she wanted.

With the drink in her hand, Nami walked over to the green-haired man who was standing not far away, leaning against the wall.

"Hey." the ginger grinned and let her eyes slide over him. He was tall and muscular,

had short green hair and three earrings in his left ear.

"Hey" the man smirked, checking her out shamelessly as well. "What's up?"
"You look bored." the ginger replied and took a sip from her drink.

"I am." the punk muttered and drank the remains of the beer he had been holding in his hand in one gulp and put it on the small table standing next to the passage that lead to one of the other floors.

"Wanna do something about it?" Nami was sure she had the man's interest the way he looked at her and thus she didn't think it necessary to hold back with shameless flirting.

There were lips on her own before she could even blink.

He tasted like alcohol.

"Hey, watch out!" the ginger growled into the kiss as she tried to put her glass away as well. He didn't break the kiss and even grinned into it as he took the glass out of her hand and put it on the table behind him.

"We should leave." Nami decided after a long while of making out and grabbing in the full club. It was getting uncomfortable as the place got fuller and fuller with every minute and she had gotten an elbow into her back.

"Zoro." the man introduced himself as they waited for their jackets at the cloakroom.

"Nami. Even though I doubt you are sober enough to remember my name in the morning."

Zoro laughed at that. "I am not half as drunk as you believe me to be. I can hold my liquor pretty well."

"Well, I hope you can prove that in bed." the ginger replied, her cheeky smile enlightening her face once again.

It went without saying for Nami that she took Zoro to her place, especially if Vivi wasn't home, as it meant that she avoided going home, looking absolutely wrecked and didn't have to fear getting treated like trash in the morning.

Thinking about her friend, the ginger had seen her talking and laughing with the freckled guy, who's name she had already long forgotten, where she had left them.

Like this, she could leave without feeling too bad. Vivi had found a guy pretty quickly after all. What an extraordinary lucky evening!

"Want some coffee before you leave?" Nami grinned lazily at the man lying next to her. She was feeling rather great and wouldn't even mind to have the punk stay for breakfast, what was quite rare as she found most men she had had an one-night-stand

with, turned out to be super annoying in the morning. But the greenhead was rather quiet, except for occasional rather sarcastic comments. "Even though my roommate might be back by now.." the ginger's voice trailed off.

"A glass of water would be great before I leave." Zoro sat up, letting out a yawn as he stretched.

"Oh, does somebody have a hangover?" Nami teased, getting her panties from the floor.

"Nah. I just don't like coffee." Zoro admitted and followed her example, dressing himself.

"You can have some orange juice as well if you want to." Nami wanted to keep her chances of sleeping with this guy again, having enjoyed herself pretty much last night. He might become her favourite next to Lucci if this became routine.

"Thanks, but water is fine. What time is it, by the way?" the man asked as he put his t-shirt on.

"It's past ten." the ginger answered after a short glance at the alarm clock.

"Fuck. I should be going then." he checked his pockets for keys, wallet and whatever seemed important to him.

"Alright." Nami smiled again. "Wanna give me your number?"

"Ah. Well... I don't have a phone. A working one at least." the man shrugged.

The ginger shot him a disbelieving look but didn't say a word. If he didn't want to see her again, she wasn't going to push that matter even if his excuse was plain ridiculous.

"Okay. I'll show you the door." were the words she spoke instead. This was exactly why she preferred taking men home, instead of going to their place. They simply had to be nice to her when they wanted to avoid a scene on foreign territory.

"Well, maybe we will see each other again sometime.." Zoro grinned awkwardly before kissing Nami good-bye in front of the door.

"Maybe.." the woman tried to hide her confusion about the contradicting actions as she watched the punk walk away.

"What's wrong?" Vivi's head popped up from behind the door.

"Nothing. I just met an interesting person yesterday."

"Interesting? How unusual! But come in! You don't wear more than panties and you nightdress after all!" the younger woman pulled her friend inside.

"I am going to make breakfast. What do you want?" the blue-haired girl continued.

"Toast and orange juice, please." Nami followed her into the kitchen, sitting down on one of the barstools.

"And here's your coffee." Vivi grinned, putting a mug down in front of her friend. "I thought you would appreciate it, as I saw the guy leaving. You don't seem to have gotten much sleep."

Nami didn't respond and took a sip from her coffee instead.

She watched her friend make breakfast in silence, emptying her mug in the process.

"So, how did it go yesterday?" the ginger asked when a plate with toast was set before her, together with jam, honey, Nutella and butter.

"I got his phone-number and we have a date on Wednesday." Vivi announced happily. "But I'm not sure if it isn't too early... I mean, Kohza broke up with me not even a week ago..."

"Listen, nobody expects you to fall in love with... what was his name again?"

"Ace."

"Well. Nobody expects you to fall in love with Ace immediately, but you should give him a chance. You date somebody to get to know them, and to fall in love with them. That's how it works!" Vivi could see Nami grinning even though she tried to hide it behind a cup.

"You are one to talk. How long are you single by now?" the bluenette teased.

"Two years and four months." it took Nami some time to get the exact time span. "But I have dated a lot..."

"And you had even more one-night-stands." Vivi added, smirking.

"So what? I want my fun." Nami shrugged, making her friend giggle. The ginger simply knew what she wanted. "Speaking about dates.. I have one on Monday evening. Just that you know."

"With whom?" Vivi asked with full mouth, curious as ever.

"His name is Sanji and he is a cook I met online."

Kapitel 2:

CH2

Vivi was sitting on the couch covered in blankets, hot chocolate in her hand and a chick film in the TV when the door opened.

"You are back early..." the bluenette stated. "Was the guy that bad?"

"Is that a DVD?" Nami motioned towards the television.

"Yup. 27 Dresses. I started watching it like 10 minutes ago so it won't be a problem to start from the beginning. Wanna join me?"

"Give me sec." Nami disappeared again, just to come back in her sweats and an old shirt instead of the dress she had been wearing before, and with a cup of chocolate, chips and blankets in her hands.

"So how did it go?" Vivi asked again, wanting to get at least the gist of what had happened that her friend came back after only two hours.

"You won't believe me.." Nami muttered while arranging her blankets so she could sit down.

"We will see.." Vivi gave her a reassuring smile.

"First of all, the guy acted just way too crazy when he spoke to me. Calling me princess and other weird stuff and trying to make everything perfect. Don't say anything! I know that it sounds quite cute, but he was just so overdoing it." Nami shook her head in disbelief. "As I said, he is a cook and he had invited me to his place to show me his skills. I was fine with that, since you rarely get to date a cook of all things, and he had said that he was the best in town. And let me tell you: the food was delicious. The guy may have been weird as hell at the beginning but when it came to food he calmed down somehow and I even enjoyed myself, despite the lack of normal conversation. But when it came to dessert, things got even crazier. That guy can't hold his liquor for shit..." the ginger sighed.

"Did he try something weird?" Vivi questioned, looking a bit worried.

"Oh no. He didn't try something weird. He just somehow confessed to me that he was gay as hell, but enjoyed the company of women way too much and as he was currently single, he decided to date them, hoping to fall in love with one of them."

"Are you serious?" the bluenette giggled. "What a weirdo."

"Definitely. We chatted for a while, but drunk as he was, he was even more annoying than sober, but I have promised him to take him to some parties so he could meet my female friends before leaving. He was a nice guy after all and the cooking skills.. just

wow... Anyway, are we gonna watch that movie or not?" Nami finished her tale, not sure how she should think about the evening at all.

"You really have some weird luck..." Vivi commented just as she hit "Play".

"I obviously do."

"I guess I don't have to ask how your date went." Nami looked up from the tests she was correcting when Vivi entered her room.

It was already Thursday afternoon, but the girls hadn't seen each other since before Vivi left to meet Ace the evening before.

"How so?" Vivi shot her a confused look.

"You are shining brighter than the sun, and that wouldn't be the case if Ace had turned out to be the biggest prick alive." the ginger commented with her best teacher voice.

"You are right! He is just sooo sweet and well-mannered!" Vivi seemed truly happy.

"So when's the next date?"

"Tomorrow evening! Unfortunately we can't get out today as he has to work."

The last comment got Nami's interest. She didn't care about the guy Vivi was dating till they truly got into a relationship, but there weren't many jobs where you had to work late in the evening. She had to make sure that Vivi didn't fall in love with the wrong guy again.

"He is a firefighter." Vivi explained, her cheeks getting a rosier tone than before.

"Let me guess, you imagined him in his uniform right now?" the amusement in the ginger's voice was obvious.

"Hell no!" Vivi turned even redder. "What are you doing, by the way?"

"Just correcting some mathhomework..." Nami yawned demonstratively.

"Have fun!" Vivi laughed and closed the door behind herself. She wasn't going to disturb her friend from the very interesting work, knowing that if she did, the poor kids would have to wait centuries to get their stuff back. And everybody hates that, right?

"What the hell is wrong?" Nami could have imagined a better greeting from her sister, but proceeded to hug her anyway, ignoring the question.

"Nami?" the older woman asked. "Helloooo?"

"The flight was just terrible..." the ginger muttered and walked towards the living room.

"Is Marco home?" she asked, searching her sister's fiancée.

"He went shopping as he was too lazy to do it yesterday and we need something to eat." Nojiko explained, joining her sister in the living room. "So what happened?" she shot her a curious glance. Nami was looking truly terrible with her hair being a mess and the bags under her eyes.

"The flight was hell. That's all." the ginger repeated.

"Oh come on, tell me what happened." Nojiko didn't intend to give up before she knew what she wanted.

"Can I get some coffee first?" the younger sister yawned.

"Get it yourself."

Isn't it great to have siblings?

"Well, the first reason why I look like this is the fact that you have to be at the airport two hours before your actual flight. That means at 6 am when your flight comes at eight and you have to wake up another two hours earlier just to get there in time." Nami explained with annoyance. "Why the fuck do you have to live on an island of all things? Getting here by car would have been so much easier!"

Nojiko glared at her sister, but she didn't manage to hold the act up for too long. "Is that all?"

"No. The worst was the man sitting next to me in the plane." Nami grumbled. "He stank like cigarettes.. And you know how much I hate that smell."

"Indeed..." Nojiko grinned at the memory of how Nami made Marco quit smoking.

"As I couldn't sleep due to the smell, I tried to make some conversation with the man. He was grumpy and unfriendly, but it was quite fun. I guess it was just his general way..."

"That sounds like Smoker." Marco's voice came from the hallway. "And hello Nami." the blonde went straight for a hug from his sister in law.

"Smoker? That fits.." the ginger sighed. "Anyway, everything was fine until we left the plane. I walked some steps behind Smoker when he suddenly stopped and turned towards me. He muttered something like "Please play along" and took my hand. He dragged me along, muttering some weird stuff and kissing me on the cheek. Stunned as I was, I allowed him to lead me to the package station where I finally woke up and wanted an explanation. Of course he didn't give me one and begged me to wait until we are in a taxi. At that point, I was pretty angry and wanted to call the police, when a

pink-haired woman approached us just so slap Smoker."

"Hina?" the surprise was clear on Marco's face. "What the hell is she doing here?"

"Anyway, she turned towards me and started to lecture me about dating older men. It was just so surreal..."

While Nojiko frowned more and more with every word, Marco started laughing when Nami fell silent.

"What happened next?" his fiancée wanted to know the end of the story, ignoring the man.

"I gave them both a weird look, grabbed my things and left. Neither of them followed me and I took a cab to come here. Tada. I don't even want to know what the fuck was up with those two..." the ginger finished her story.

"Well... I know them." Marco has finally calmed down.

"So much was obvious." the blonde was interrupted by Nojiko. "You know their names after all.."

"Whatever. Anyway: Hina is smoker's ex-wife. Those two broke up because Hina was transferred to another city and Smokey didn't want to leave this place because he was needed or some reason like that. Of course Hina got pissed that work was more important to him than she was and left, having a lot of affairs since then. The joke is, they are legally still married. As far as I know Smoker hasn't had a single thing going on since their break-up two years ago and that's why I believe he took the chance to piss off Hina, using you. He is a good guy, but talking about relationships between people he is a complete idiot."

"And how the hell do you know these weird people?" Nami asked, watching Marco sceptically.

"They work together." Nojiko explained before her fiancée could as much as open his mouth.

"WHAT?" Nami couldn't believe what she heard. "They are police officers? Those freaks?"

Marco nodded. "Inspectors. Both pretty successful and especially Smoker is really feared among criminals."

"Hard to believe." Nami shook her head, but the blonde only grinned.

"How about you make us something to eat?" Nojiko kissed Marco on the cheek, changing the topic successfully.

"When you tell me what you want..." the man stood up, not even trying to protest as he had resigned a long time ago as Nojiko couldn't cook anything that didn't contain mandarines.

"I hope you didn't get lonely without me!" Nami shouted, opening the door to the flat. She was in a good mood, as the flight back home had been way more pleasant than expected.

"Welcome back!" Vivi appeared from her room. "How has your trip been?"

"Pretty nice. Even though it is about time for Nojiko and Marco to finally agree on a wedding date." Nami sighed. "Two years already and they still didn't really think about it. Why?"

A soft smile appeared on Vivi's lips. "Don't push them. They know what's best for them."

"I know. But when Nojiko gets pregnant you can bet who will have the pleasure of planning their wedding.."

"Marco has enough brothers to help out, doesn't he?" Vivi tried to argument.

"First of all: brothers. Second: I don't know even half of them as they work all around the world."

"Then don't worry. It will be okay. And you can't know if they are even planning children or working on it. And I guess we both don't want to know. Don't worry about such things. Is it your phone?"

Nami pulled out her phone from her bag, quite surprised to see Nojiko's number there.

"Nojiko? Why is she calling?" Vivi looked even more confused than the ginger. "Did you forget something?"

Nami shrugged, since she already hit the answer button. "Yeah?"

"Hey there. Did the flight back go without trouble?" Nojiko' voice came from the speakers.

"Yup, Everything was fine." the ginger answered, still confused. "But I doubt that's why you are calling."

"Indeed." the older sister laughed softly. "I wanted to tell you the end of the Smoker-Hina story from Saturday morning."

"Why should I be interested?" Nami couldn't help but question.

"Because it is quite funny! And you are interested! So listen!" Nojiko silenced her effectively, pointing out the truth once again. "Smoker and Hina are back together as Hina is coming back! And somehow they are going to adopt a little girl called Tashigi, who's parents' murder Hina has investigated some months ago. They think it will do them some good to have a third person there and as the girl would have been sent to an orphanage in any other case..."

"Lucky girl." Nami muttered "But will those two be able to care for a child?"

"We will see." Nojiko's voice was soft. "Anyway, that's all. Say hello to Vivi from me."

"Okay? See ya?" Nami didn't get her sister sometimes...

"Come to speak of relationships, how was your date with Ace?" Nami asked as the two young women walked into the kitchen, intending to grab something to eat.

"Not date. Dates." Vivi winked at her friend.

"Dates?" Nami asked surprised. "How many? I have been away only three days!"

"Well. Counting Friday, three." the bluenette was grinning from ear to ear.

"Pretty nice."

"They have been wonderful!" Vivi swooned. "And guess what!"

"What?" Nami wasn't too sure what to expect at this point.

"We are officially together now!" The girl exclaimed happily.

"You are joking!" Nami was grinning by now as well. This was some good news as it meant that Vivi took her advice seriously and did her best to get over Kohza. And a cute nice guy like Ace made it even easier. Besides, the revelation proved one theory Nami had had: Kohza and Vivi had been together only because they were used to it, not out of love for the last year or two as it seemed. Somehow, she was thankful to Kohza. Even if the breakup and especially the reason for it was the silliest thing ever.

But all that didn't matter now. Vivi was happy and already in a new relationship, two weeks after she parted ways with her previous partner. She didn't love Ace, but obviously had a huge crush on him. That was enough for the time being!

"Congratulations!" the ginger hugged her friend, still grinning.

Kapitel 3:

CH 3

College parties were fun, even if they were organized by your ex's new love and you were a tad too old for them. Or felt like that at least.

"I haven't been to such a party in two years." Nami sighed as she put on her shoes.

"Oh my gosh. You are only three years out of school. Stop complaining!" Vivi shook her head while she looked for the keys.

"Just wait! You will understand when you graduate!" the ginger winked at her friend. "Anyway.. We should go... Or your dearest boyfriend will have to wait."

The two girls left their apartment and made their way to the meeting-spot in front of the Big Bell.

"It's already past ten..." Nami muttered after a short glance on her phone. "We agreed to meet at half past nine, right?"

"I am already trying to call Ace." a deep frown was on the bluenette's face. "But he doesn't pick up."

"Calm down. He has another fifteen minutes and if he doesn't come by then, we go without him." Nami announced as she sat down on the bench in front of the monument. Luckily, it was summer so she didn't have to fear getting sick.

"Okay.. It's just that he is always on time..." Vivi sat down next to the ginger.

"Wasn't he coming with his brothers?" Nami asked out of the sudden.

"Yeah?" Vivi didn't need to do more than follow Nami's gaze to get why her friend was asking. A slim, dark-haired boy was racing towards them, a wide grin on his face, followed by two older looking guys yelling at him. One of those guys was Ace.

"HELLOOO! ARE YOU TWO VIVI AND NAMI?" the boy was shouting and waving in the direction of the two waiting friends as he ran and eyed them carefully when he finally came to a stop.

The two girls didn't say anything. Exchanging meaningful looks was enough in a case like this.

"I am SO sorry!" Ace arrived next, followed by the third guy. Both breathing heavily. "Calm down Luffy, and introduce you properly!"

"I am Monkey D Luffy!" the boy obeyed and his grin seemed to stretch even wider to

Nami's surprise.

"I'm Sabo." the third guy introduced himself, looking Nami straight in the eyes as he shook the ginger's hand while Vivi and Ace kissed in the background. "And I am terribly sorry that we are late. Luffy got lost." he explained, running his hand through his messy hair, looking a bit exhausted.

"Nami. And it happens..." the young woman shook her head. "Can we go now?" she turned to Ace and Vivi, indicating that they should take the lead. The freckled man took Vivi's hand immediately and they started they walk.

The way to Kaya's house went without problems as Sabo and Nami made sure that Luffy wouldn't wander off. The ginger was somehow surprised that it was more difficult to keep track of this one young man, Luffy turned out to be 19, than of a full class of 5th graders.

"How the hell do you endure this all the time?" Nami couldn't help but question when Sabo had to run after his brother once again.

"You get used to it." the blonde man shrugged and pointed at Ace who was led by Vivi. "He isn't much better either. That's why he always leaves the house one or two hours earlier to arrive at time."

"My condolences."

There were a lot of people already dancing and drinking when the small group arrived. Nami greeted the hosts, Usopp, her ex-boyfriend she was still good friends with, and his girlfriend Kaya, before deciding to look around the mansion Kaya had inherited from her parents.

The first person who rose her interest was a tall blond man with long, curly hair and long bangs, staring out of the window while he drank his beer absentmindedly.

"Hey." Nami stood next to the man, watching him carefully for any kind of reaction as it was hard to see his face due to the dim light and long hair.

The guy's sole reaction was to glance at her for a second and then return to watching the outside immediately.

"I'm Nami, nice to meet you." the ginger wasn't going to give up so fast. "What are you doing here all alone?"

"I would be rather anywhere else than here." the man muttered, still not turning to Nami. "I fucking hate parties and the music is terrible."

"Oh, than why are you here?" the young woman questioned with interest. It was obvious that she wasn't going to have 'fun' with this guy, but he seemed to be at least a decent conversation partner as long as he spoke.

"Let's say it's the fault of a certain idiot." the blonde finally turned away from the window, looking quite displeased. He would have been really handsome, wouldn't it be for the terrible scars stretching over his nose, cheeks and lips. He pulled up the scarf he was wearing and covered the lower half of his face with it, just like the bandits in the old western movies did.

Nami had to laugh at that statement as she understood it quite well. Besides, she could cover up her surprise like that and ignore the questions that had popped up in her mind at that sight. She forced herself to return to the topic of conversation. Years ago, when she started her studies, she had hated parties as well, feeling out of the place all the time. "Don't worry, if you actually look around, there are some decent people here."

"That doesn't change the fact that the music is shit."

"Well. What kind of music do you listen to?" the ginger was determined to keep the conversation going as she had just seen Valentine, one of her co-workers from her formal part-time job, who was one of the most annoying people she had ever met. Being in a conversation would hopefully save her from any interaction with the blonde woman.

"Is is that hard to guess?" the man looked at Nami in disbelieve, tugging at his long hair with one hand.

"Oh well.. Sorry.. " the ginger grinned sheepishly. "You know, one can listen to more than one music genre." she added.

"You don't say." the blonde's voice was dripping with sarcasm. "I listen to everything except crap like this."

"Sometimes, I ask myself if there are actually people who like party music or if everybody somehow agreed to tolerate it.." Nami muttered.

"I don't know, I don't care." the man replied and pulled out his phone.

"That's rude, you know!" the ginger sighed.

"So what? I was just checking how long till I have fulfilled my half of the bargain so I can leave."

"Great." there wasn't much sense sticking around for Nami either as her conversation partner didn't seem to have interest in social interaction and it slowly became annoying. "See ya."

The guy hummed in response, searching his pockets for whatever, really. Nami didn't care and left him standing.

She decided to grab a drink from the kitchen before continuing her house tour and made her way back, still searching the crowd for either familiar or interesting looking people.

It didn't look too promising at all, but she has been only in like two rooms so far and was still sober.

Just as the ginger grabbed a bottle of beer, somebody else reached for it: a tall and muscular redhead with weird make-up.

"Geez. Take it, under the table is enough more." he muttered and lowered himself to pull the whole beer crate and put it on a more accessible place. "See, I told you." he turned back to Nami.

"Well, but how did you know that it was there? I didn't notice." the ginger admitted. She had been looking for people, not things.

"The first thing at a party, I get to know about the alcohol. It pays off."

"Oh really? How?"

"First of all, you get into a conversation half of the time when people look for it and you can help out. Take yourself as the best example. And second, if the party is shit, and a lot currently are, you know where the good stuff is better than anyone and can simply drink till you have fun or don't remember a thing. Depends on the night, I guess."

Nami let out a deep laugh, the kind that comes out when something is so sad or stupid that you can't cry anymore and have to laugh. "So what kind of night do you think this one will be?"

"I don't know." the man admitted, scanning the crowd in the kitchen. "But I want to get out of this room. It seems everybody wants a drink right now. Wanna come with me?" he grabbed another bottle of beer.

The ginger shrugged and followed the guy to the living room, where she had been talking to the blonde. He was still standing by the window, now chatting with a beautiful raven woman, looking absolutely annoyed.

Funnily, the redhead was aiming in his direction.

"Hey, Killer. Everything okay?" he held the spare bottle in front of the blond.

"Where the fuck have you been, Kid?" Killer growled, taking the beer and pulling out his lighter to open the bottle.

"Chill, mate." Kid laughed, acting as if he hadn't noticed that his friend was pissed.

"And who are you?" the redhead turned to the black-haired, quite sparsely dressed woman, staring demonstratively at her breasts instead of her face.

"Al-" she tried to respond, but was interrupted by Killer. "A stupid chick who doesn't

get it when you tell her to fuck off."

"Oh really?" Kid's expression shifted. The look of mild curiosity disappeared and was replaced by what Nami couldn't call anything but a cruel smirk. "That would explain why you have to try and sell yourself like this." he looked at her with disgust. "And seriously, this bikini top with that jeans and shoes? You must be kidding." he mimicked one of those bitchy, over-theatrical stylists from TV before she could do as much as open her mouth, that had been pressed together to a thin line before.

The woman glared at him. "Asshole." she hissed before finally storming off, leaving the two laughing men behind, while Nami watched in silence.

"And I'm leaving too. Killer announced after finally calming down. "Time's up."

Nami croaked an eyebrow, taking a gulp from her beer.

So the guy he referred to earlier had been Kid.

The redhead only shrugged when Killer held his phone in front of his face to show him the exact time. "I already have company for today anyway."

"What makes you believe that?" Nami asked with bemusement, getting the man's attention immediately.

"You stayed." Kid noted.

"So did I. And now I'm leaving." Killer walked between the other two without a proper good-bye and disappeared in the ever-growing crowd.

"What a weirdo." Nami murmured, looking after him.

"So, do you want to keep me company or not?" Kid asked again, his stance completely relaxed, as he was holding his beer, but his eyes gleamed.

Nami seized him up, taking in every detail. He wasn't handsome. He was a prick. But he seemed different, interesting.

"Okay." she finally agreed. "But let's get some harder stuff first." she placed her already empty beer bottle on the table.

They drank and mocked each other and then drank even more and more, finding themselves in a spare bedroom of the mansion at some point.

Nami felt every bit like a teenager once again on a high-school-party and all when she stripped in front of Kid, laughing like mad.

The bets of meeting again were pretty low, so why not get all the fun and pleasure out of it?

Kapitel 4:

CH 4

Nami froze in tracks. She couldn't believe her eyes.

"Nami, this is Mister Eustass Kid. He will be the student teacher you are in charge of for the next two weeks. Kid, this is Miss Nami Mikan, the homeroom teacher of class 5 A." Robin explained with a neutral voice, but the sparkles in her eyes told Nami that she caught on the fact that something was wrong. The ginger cursed the older teacher's observation skills.

"Thank you, Robin. I will take over from here on." She said instead, while Kid stared at her from behind the raven.

He wasn't wearing any of the make-up from Saturday, looking even weirder in Nami's opinion. He was still clothed in black, though.

"Follow me." the ginger tried to keep a neutral tone as she led the man to the class room.

"We will have math with my class first. You should introduce yourself at the beginning of the lesson and then sit down in the back and watch. We will discuss everything else during the break. Any questions?" she glanced back at the man behind her just as they arrived at their destination. The kids were already inside. Eustass was staring daggers in her back. She hoped he wouldn't scare the pupils.

"Nah." Kid muttered, following her through the door.

To Nami's surprise the children liked Kid very much. They asked him a lot of questions about his flaming hair and other things, making her fear that there would be a lot of phone calls from worried and angry parents demanding an explanation of why their children wanted to wear nothing but black and get weird hair colours.

"What's up?" Kid brought Nami back to reality as he sat down opposite her at the small coffee table in the math-teachers' room. "What did you want to talk about? Saturday?" he asked innocently.

The ginger rolled her eyes. "It was a one-time-thing, so no. Sorry to disappoint you." she said sarcastically. "We need to discuss the lessons you will teach. That means time, class and topic. I am your supervisor for both, Maths and English, so we need to go through everything. And about Saturday: I would really appreciate it if you never spoke about it again."

Kid bit his lower lip. "What's your problem?"

Nami looked at him over the the rim of her reading glasses. "I don't like it when my private and professional life mix up. And that's the case right now." she replied calmly. "The last time it happened, the school had to be closed for a week."

The man stared at her with slight disbelief, but commented nevertheless. "That's a story I really want to hear."

Nami put her glasses down. "Okay. How about a deal? I will tell you the story on your last day here, if you never mention Saturday to anybody here and behave."

A wide grin split over Kid's face. "Yes, ma'am."

Nami could barely stand on her feet anymore when she arrived home. She even missed that Vivi's shoes were nowhere to be seen.

The day had simply been a mess. The ginger cursed herself for her taste in men. Why did they all have to be such assholes? Ah right, she wanted a challenge. And she got one.

She undressed herself and threw her things into the room, not even looking inside. Instead she went for the kitchen in the desperate need of some coffee.

The process of putting the filters and everything in the coffee maker was something she could do in sleep. Her thoughts wandered back to the men in her life. There have been quite some. But not many played a role important enough to care.

She filled her favourite cup, the one with small oranges on it, with coffee and turned around, still in thoughts.

It was a pure coincidence that she noticed the note on the table.

"I'm out with Ace. I don't know when or if I'll be back. I hope you had a nice day. Love, V."

The ginger smiled weakly. Vivi was such a sweetheart. At least she had such a good friend. Not like the men...

Especially Enel.

Nami remembered her time with Enel way too good.

He had been her first big love after all, not her first boyfriend, but the first big love.

The redhead shook her head, but couldn't help but get over their story once again, while drinking her coffee. The cup was empty faster than she wanted to believe.

They had met when she was 18, having her finals and graduating high school and they started dating not a month after.

The time of their real relationship was something the girl still cherished deep down in her heart, even though it was still stained by her mother's illness and death.

Nami cringed. What followed had been a painful queue of break-ups and coming back together, their friends with benefits relationship and the return to "I love you."

Not to mention the too hurting betrayal on his part, where he had slept with somebody else when she had been out of the country.

They weren't dating. She hadn't had the right to complain back then. They hadn't had rules.

And didn't make any, except that he would tell her, if it ever happened again.

The redhead stood up and walked over to the liquor cabinet, taking the bottle of vodka and a shot glass.

One.

For some months, nothing like that happened. She had met a lot of handsome and interesting people though, but decided to stay faithful to that blonde idiot as he was to her at that time. How foolish!

Two.

But then again, she had left the country to visit a friend. She had asked him to not repeat the last time. He did. It hurt even more. He had truly disrespected her. But she had decided to fight.

Three.

Tears rolled down Nami's cheek. She still wasn't over it. The wounds were too deep. She knew he had loved her. Maybe he still did. But she knew that the love for her would never be able to complete with his love for himself.

Four.

They had agreed on an open relationship, even though he had always told her that he didnt want one, after their first real fight. She had felt like shit days after, but was able to overcome it in the end.

Five.

All this led to her becoming the person she was now. Nami snorted. The open relationship and the anger and the pain made her sleep around, show Enel what he was doing to HER.

And he did.

She had stopped to give him all her love, to care for him from the bottom of her heart. She couldn't. But she still loved him deeply.

Six.

They fought a lot from that point on. Both hurt, but couldn't find a way to solve things or end it. They knew that they would come back to each other time after time. And they did – more than enough.

Seven.

That was when Nami decided to go and get to a place where they couldn't meet. She went for an exchange program offered at her university and looking back, it was the best decision she had ever made.

Eight.

It had been the only way to end the madness in her way, and it had worked. At least it seemed so at first.

They had ended it right before she left, deciding to cut all ties and to never meet again.

Nine.

The exchange had been a very refreshing and great, but also rough time for Nami, but she used it to heal and get over the moron.

She still loved him, but it hurt less with every day.

Ten.

Coming back, she hadn't forgotten him, but they had decided to let go and she happily did. It was a great relief. She did everything necessary to avoid him, just as planned.

At first, it worked. They didn't see each other for another three or four months, in which Nami had found a new love: Usopp.

Eleven.

Poor guy, she had hurt him so much and he still stayed friends with her.

Till Enel had showed himself once again, they had had a nice harmonic relationship and Nami had even begun to think that she was blessed with a new love so soon after. She had wished deeply that she would fall for Usopp.

But she didn't. She couldn't.

Twelve.

Instead, she had realized that it was too soon.

She broke up and decided to stay single until a new guy who would take her breath away as much as Enel did would turn up.

She had tried, but nothing had lasted. Not one was able to make her feel the things she had felt with him.

She was alone. Alone and hurt. It was never more obvious than on nights like these with Vivi out with her boyfriend and her drinking all alone in a dark living room.

How pathetic.

Thirteen.

Nami woke up due to the sun shining directly on her face. It took her a while till she remembered the evening before and the reason why she had fallen asleep fully dressed on the couch and the vodka bottle standing on the table next to her.

She glanced at the clock on the wall. Eight o'clock. Luckily, she started at eleven today.

Fuck. She had had one of those episodes again. Fuck.

"I'm a dragon. I am a fucking dragon." the redhead repeated to herself, noting the lack of a blanket, what meant that Vivi hadn't come home.

At least something.

"I'm a dragon. I will manage. Fire can't kill a dragon." the ginger continued repeating those to her magic words. They had helped her in a lot of situations before and would help her get on her feet today as well.

"You may cry because of a man, relationships are often painful. But you have to learn from it, get over it. Use the experience to get happy. Girl, you are a princess, you are a queen, you are a fricking dragon." Nami undressed herself and went straight for the shower.

Water would help, water would wash the frustration away. She would feel better.

A shower, cleaning her teeth, drinking water, getting for a run, a bath, beauty procedures.

She will be fine. She is going to shine. She will make herself happy. She will.

Nami sighed, as the hot water hit her back. She was feeling alive again.

The ginger opened her eyes, seeing clearer than before.

She knew who she was and others knew it too. Nobody could spoil her that.

She won.

There was a smile on her lips when she greeted Kid on the way to the classroom.

Kapitel 5:

CH 5

The water for spaghetti was boiling and Nami was just about to get up when Vivi entered the kitchen, a weird expression on her face.

"What's wrong?" the ginger asked as she stood up and walked over to the counter to grab the spaghetti to put them into the pot. "But wait, first tell me if you are going to join me with dinner."

Vivi nodded and sat down.

"Now, talk." Nami commanded as she joined her friend at the table while the noodles cooked.

"Is it normal to not want your partner to meet people of the other sex alone? I have never had second thoughts about it and with Kohza..."

Nami frowned. "Why exactly are you asking?"

"Pell and I studied together and Ace wasn't too happy about it." Vivi pouted. "I don't get it. Pell of all things... He is like a brother for me!"

"He is probably jealous." Nami noted and stood up to heat the sauce.

"But there is no reason to!" Vivi protested, sounding a bit upset.

"Tell him, not me!"

It was surprising how well Kid worked with the pupils. Maybe it had something to do with his name.

"Is everything clear?" Nami leaned against the table while Kid wrote some things on the blackboard in preparation for the lesson he was going to teach.

"Leave me alone. I need to concentrate." the redhead growled. His manners towards her were still.. rough.

"I am your supervisor and as such, I have to check that everything is going well." Nami replied with her sweetest voice. She knew by now that it pissed Kid off more than anything. Great.

"And I am telling you that I don't need supervision." he hissed back.

The ginger smiled. "But you do. Look, you misspelled "arithmetic." Only one h, not two."

"Can you just please shut up?" Kid turned around, a wide grin on his lips but it was obvious that he had to do his best to not break something, preferably Nami's spine.

"You shouldn't grin like that. It will scare the children." the ginger motioned to the door, just as the first students arrived and stood up, still smiling. "I will be in the back when you need me."

The chalk in Kid's hand didn't even break. It was pulverized as he watched Nami walk to the back of the classroom.

"Mister Eustass?" one of the pupils, a girl called Aisa approached him. "Is it true that you are going to teach us today? I have been sick and took what the others said as a joke."

He looked down on her, his face relaxing into a real smile immediately. "Yeah. It wasn't a joke. And I hope you are feeling better now."

"Really? I can't wait!" the girl looked really happy.

Nami chuckled to herself in the back. It was amazing to watch how fast that idiot could switch personalities.

The bell rang.

"Good morning, brats." Kid greeted the class, looking proud over them. "As announced, I am the one teaching you today."

The class cheered. It was weird.

"And as I want all of you to remember this as the most awesome lesson of all times, we are going to do what everybody loves: group work. And not any group work: we are playing special agents. Each group is one agency and all of you want to stop the villain, your teacher sitting back there who will get her own set of tasks, and each one wants the credits. That means, the one who is done first, wins and catches the villain. I wanted to make you all villains but Miss Mikan said that it wouldn't be ethical or some nonsense like that." Kid winked at the children. "Now sit in groups of four. Let's go!"

Nami rolled her eyes as Spandam called her name on the floor, only a few steps away from the exit.

"Yes?" she turned around, her best fake smile on her lips. The vice principal was one of the most annoying people she has ever met. And one of the dumbest as well. And arrogant, egocentric, ugly, and.

"Have you received my note?" he asked, walking towards her.

"What note?" Nami rose an eyebrow. He had the tendency to send an unnecessary

amount of notes at the weirdest time, so she never knew which one he was talking about.

"The one about Nico Robin." he whispered, finally close enough to her.

"Which one?" the ginger repeated her question, the smile long gone.

"The one about the funds."

"Discuss it with principal Jinbei." Nami turned on her heel and walked away. Spandam was such an asshole, trying to ruin Robin and everything. Idiot.

Slightly upset, her good mood destroyed by the vice principal, she decided to go shopping in the nearby mall. She needed a new bra anyway.

The ride with the tram was fine and Nami even calmed down somehow. Aiming for her favourite shop, she marched through the masses of people towards the huge complex, ignoring everybody around her. She didn't want to speak to anybody except the shop assistants before she got what she wanted.

"Nami?" It was as if somebody had called her name, but she wasn't sure and didn't feel like looking around stupidly, especially if she had imagined it.

The ginger continued walking as if nothing had happened. She was almost at the entrance when somebody grabbed her arm.

She turned around in surprise, and grimaced. "What is it, asshole day?"

Enel laughed. "So old and still quoting "10 things I hate about you?" Really?"

"Unfortunately, I really hate you." Nami stated, pulling herself free and turning on her heel yet again and marching away.

"As if you ever could!" Enel called after her, but luckily knew better than follow her. They both knew that it would only bring them even more trouble. Why the hell did he talk to her?

Nami decided to put a new dress on the shopping list. She needed it today. Even if it sounded so cliché, clothes made her feel better.

"Now talk." Kid commanded from behind his glass of beer. "We are out of that stupid school and my internship is over. I want to hear the story, and stop acting as if you were better than me." he added with annoyance.

"Oh, was it getting on your nerves?" Nami teased, but decided to let it be when she saw Kid's expression. "Okay. I will tell you the story."

The ginger leaned back.

"It was during my own internship." the ginger grinned. "He was a chemistry teacher and only a year or two out of school."

Kid laughed. "He was quite hot?"

Nami nodded. "Anyway, he wasn't my supervisor and we got into a conversation completely on accident."

That exclamation was met with a skeptical look.

"Okay. I guess we both wanted the same and arranged it." she admitted with no shame. "We agreed to meet in the chemistry cabinet, which proved itself to be a huge mistake." Nami chuckled. "Things got heated and as it happens, we banged against one of the shelves with chemicals. Some of the glass bottles fell down and the stuff mixed together. We ignored it for the moment, not noticing at all. Only as the smell got like hellish, we stopped kissing and noticed the mess. But it was too late. We had to leave, as it got worse with every second and as we ran downstairs and alarmed the principal, the whole school stank like hell. The firefighters commanded the school be closed for a week. Luckily nobody got what happened. We pretended that the shelf broke by itself."

Kid was laughing like crazy by now, some other people in the bar turning to look at him. "You are seriously crazy."

"So are you." Nami replied, smirking. "What are you going to do now?"
"Pick a god and pray that I manage my studies."

This time it was Nami's turn to laugh. "And other than that?"

Kid grinned. "There's a doctor I am the special kind of friends with."

"And so what?" the ginger questioned. "You seem to have a thing for women with authority."

"A man." Kid stated. "I don't care about the gender as long as they are hot."

"Understandable." Nami nodded. "So when did you say you have to go?"

Kid checked the phone. "I am already late. Happens. Thanks for the drink. See ya." he stood up and left, letting Nami sit there and watch him leave.

Kapitel 6:

CH 6

"So how are you doing?" Vivi let herself fall on the couch next to Nami, who was reading something. "And what's that?" she peeked over.

"I'm tired, need something like vacation and the men frustrate me." the ginger sighed. "And this is some new stuff from the ministry. Rules and shit. Seriously, it's the middle of year... idiots.."

"You really need a break. How about going to the cinema on Friday evening?" Vivi suggested with a sympathetic smile.

"On Friday? And what about Ace?" Nami looked up from the papers, surprise over her face. Since they were dating, Vivi has spend all Friday evenings with him.

"You know, you are not the only one who needs a break." she joked.

Nami had to laugh at that. During her relationship with Kohza, Vivi would never have said something like that because the two of them had had a weird way of keeping distance. Ace on the other hand seemed like somebody who needed a lot of care and was a bit clingy. It obviously wasn't always easy for Vivi to deal with that.

"So which movie were you thinking about?" Nami asked.

"I don't care as long as it isn't 50 shades of Gray." Vivi muttered. "Seriously, even the fanfics we wrote as teenagers were better than that..."

"You know, I actually would like to see that one. But not in the cinema. Not going to give out money for it, especially when the actors themselves hate it. Luckily there is the internet~" Nami giggled.

"So, what do you want to watch?" Vivi asked.

"I have no idea what movies are shown to be honest." the ginger confessed.

"Well, let's check it out." Vivi pulled out her phone and started tipping. "Gosh, there are so many good movies right now... How about Imitation Game?" she turned the phone to Nami so she could read the description.

"Sounds good." the ginger yawned. "I guess we can agree on that."

The tram stopped suddenly.

"We are truly sorry for the inconvenience but due to an unexpected problem the ride

has to be interrupted for a moment."

Vivi shot Nami a questioning look as she noticed that her friend was staring out of the window, obviously looking for something. Unfortunately, the tram has stopped in a tunnel, so there wasn't all too much to see.

"What's wrong?" the younger woman asked.

Nami raised her hand to signalize that she should wait a moment, continuing to stare out of the window.

Vivi tried to get a glimpse of what her friend was watching too, but she couldn't see anything.

"Somebody jumped in front of the tram." Nami whispered, finally turning away. "I wasn't sure about it but then the doctors came and it was clear. I couldn't distinguish if it were medics or not, at first. Sorry."

"That's sad."

"It's selfish." Nami replied. "The poor driver and we are going to be stuck here for some time. Maybe an hour or something."

The girls spend the time in the tram with small talk and discussions about what they could do if they missed the movie. After all it was running for a while now and that meant that it was showed only once a day. They have left home half an hour earlier to have time, but like this they would miss it anyway.

Usually, Vivi insisted on getting there earlier to get the tickets, but they didn't expect many people in the cinema so it didn't seem necessary this time.

How wrong they have been.

Of course they arrived at the cinema almost an hour after the movie started.

"What now?" Vivi looked at Nami.

"Let's take a look at what they are showing." the ginger suggested. "If nothing is of interest we still can think about an alternative."

There was only one woman in front of them when they arrived at the box-office.

It was a beautiful, tall woman with a blue afro and the most flawless chocolate skin Nami has seen before.

"Excuse me, are you showing Selma in the future by any chance?" she asked the cashier, a young pink-haired boy with huge glasses.

"I-I don't know." he stuttered, face red as a tomato. "W-Which movie is that?"

"Selma is an Oscar-nominated piece about Martin Luther King jr." the woman explained coldly. "Could you check if you are showing sometime soon or if I have to look for a less racist cinema?"

"Poor guy." Vivi whispered as the boy dug through some papers, searching frantically for the plan for the next few months.

"Well, she is right." Nami whispered back. "There are some cinemas that don't want to show that movie because of ideological reasons. If I remember correctly, the whole Donquixote cinema chain won't show them."

"You are joking!" Vivi was seriously scandalized. She had darker skin herself, with her father being the Marokkian ambassador in the US and fought against discrimination at all levels.

"Y-Yes, we are showing the movie. But for some reason the premiere is in two weeks.. I have no idea why." the boy explained to the lady, who thanked him and left, nodding at Nami and Vivi on her way out.

"I need to ask you for a favor." Ace approached Nami, his tone gravely. "It's about a wedding."

The ginger shot Vivi, who was standing behind him a questioning look but the girl gave her only a reassuring smile.

"What about it?" skepticism swung in her voice.

"You remember my brother Luffy-?"

"Yes." Nami interrupted, slowly getting pissed of that Ace wasn't able to place his request properly, even if he usually acted so sure of himself.

"Would you please accompany him?" the man finally places his request. "And maybe look out for him?"

"So you want me to babysit him, acting as his partner or something?" Nami questioned with amusement.

"Yeah. If you want to put it like that. Nobody will believe you are dating anyway, so don't worry about it." Ace tried to reassure her. "There will be lots of food, drinks and people who love to party."

"Who's wedding is it anyway?" the ginger wanted to know before deciding.

"The woman who is something like our older sister, mom, cousin and aunt in one is going to marry the man who saved Luffy's live once upon a time and is something like a father figure for him?" Vivi giggled at the explanation while Nami only rolled her eyes. She made a note to ask Sabo about it during the reception.

"Alright. I will do it." she agreed and it was quite obvious that she lifted a huge burden from Ace's shoulders.

"Thank you so much!" he pulled her into a hug.

"I am doing it for the free booze." she hissed, trying to free herself while Vivi laughed in the background.

"I am worried about you." Vivi was leaning against the doorframe of Nami's room. The ginger herself was lying on her bed, staring at the ceiling.

"I don't see why." she muttered, closing her eyes.

"Seriously?" the younger girl asked sceptically. She had expected for Nami to play everything down but that didn't mean she liked it.

"Yeah. There is no reason to worry."

"It isn't as if you have been acting weird or anything these past weeks." Vivi sighed. "You stopped going out, you didn't have sex since the thing with that redhead, you stare a lot and don't draw your beloved maps at all. So no, everything seems absolutely normal." she added sarcastically.

The ginger grabbed a pillow and put it over her face and let out a groan. "You are right. Nothing is alright, but that's never the case. I am an idiot who has no idea what to do in life. Sure, I am a teacher, but am I truly happy with it? I don't fucking now. " She took in a deep breath, put the pillow away and sat up. "It's the same with men. It's weird how lonely I feel half of the time but I really really don't want to start a relationship right now. I don't even want sex at the moment. I feel just so empty and repulsed by the thought of sleeping with a man right now."

Vivi sat down next to her friend and pulled her into a hug, not saying a word. Nami relaxed considerably, closing her eyes again and leaning in against her friend.

"Do you want to share a bed tonight, like we did when one of us didn't feel good when we were younger?" the bluenette asked after a while.

Nami nodded, enjoying the hug a little longer.

"Nami?" Vivi whispered into the darkness, her body pressed against the others. "Are you still awake?"

"Mhmm." the ginger hummed in response, pulling the blankets closer.

"So what happened with the redhead that you have one of your worse phases now?" the bluenette couldn't help but ask.

The ginger rolled on her back, grabbing the others hand. "You know only about the thing we had on Kaya's party, right?"

Vivi nodded before remembering that it was too dark to see before she mumbled the response again.

"The very next day he became the student teacher I had to take care of." Nami hissed, covering her face to muffle her own laugh. "It was so fucking stupid."

"Is that the reason why you act like you act?" Vivi asked in surprise. She had been very busy with her university stuff over those weeks and Nami had been barely at home, so they hadn't talked much.

"That was only the cherry on the top. I met Enel. It was weird. He wanted to talk to me, but I ran away in fear of what might happen if I didn't." Nami sighed.

"That's thought. Did he try to call you since then?" Vivi asked, her voice full of concern. She knew everything about Enel. After all, that was the time when Nami and her grew really close.

"No." the ginger replied weakly. "But enough of that.. Let's talk about you and Ace." she said with a lot more enthusiasm.

"He is really really sweet, but sometimes I feel like he fears something." this time, it was Vivi who didn't sound all too happy.

"What exactly are you talking about?" Nami asked, now turning to face her friend, her brows furrowed.

"He is somewhat- clingy? I don't really know how to call it. I really really like him, I guess we aren't too far apart from calling it love, but he seems to have something he fears a lot. It's really hard to explain." the bluenette explained hectically. She simply couldn't point the finger on what exactly was wrong.

"Alright, I will watch him a bit when he is over." Nami promised, pulling the blanket tighter over them and closed her eyes.

Kapitel 7:

CH 7

"Hey!" Somebody shouted as the elevator doors started closing. Nami pushed the button to hold the door open instinctively, almost spilling the groceries she was carrying.

"Would you hurry? Or I'll let the door close." she called out, when the door started closing again. The apartment in which Sanji lived had weird and really slow elevators, but she wasn't going to take the stairs to the fifth floor carrying the heavy bags full with the stuff he had asked her to buy. She had no idea why he needed soya beans or three sorts of oil, but it wasn't her business anyway.

The cook had asked her to help him with groceries and some other stuff since he was sick and didn't want to bother his father. Nami hadn't gotten the explanation at all in between the lovely-dovely babbling of the cook, that was worse than usual thanks to his faver.

"Sorry, I had a little trouble carrying it through the door." A body behind a huge mirror huffed as both, the person and the mirror, finally stood opposite Nami inside the elevator.

"Which floor?" Nami asked, before pushing the 'close' button since the man was blocking the signals.

"Fifth." he huffed, and lowered the huge piece of furniture. "Thanks." Nami stared in shock at the man she was sharing the small space with. The man stared back.

"Zoro?" she asked as they missed the second floor. It had taken her some time to remember his name. She had been pretty drunk that evening and had marked him under "hot punk" in her head.

"I have to admit that I have forgotten your name." he confessed after more awkward silence and the elevator slowly passing the third floor.

"Nami." the ginger looked awkwardly into the mirror. "So, um. Do you live here?"

"Nah. My sister is just moving in." he shrugged. "You? Did you live here?" he looked at her in confusion, just as the elevator stopped.

"No. I am visiting a friend." she replied, waiting for him to leave since he was standing next to the door. "But could it be that you are not only bad with names, but have a terrible sense of direction?" She asked cheekily. "Or have you been that drunk?"

"I am never drunk." Zoro barked as he maneuvered out of the elevator. "And I am good with both!"

"Wh- What the hell are you doing marimo?" Sanji, who just came out of the door, yelled in between coughs. "Who do you think you are to talk to a lady like that?"

"Shut up, you shitty cook!" Zoro yelled back, knocking on the door opposite Sanji's. "Rona! Open the fuck up!"

"Stop talking to ladies like that!" Sanji was barely breathing but still picked a fight with Zoro, who was hidden behind the mirror.

"Sanji, here are your things, I am going." Nami announced. She pushed the things into his hands and walked to the stairs. "Get better soon Sanji! And Zoro, don't get lost again!" she giggled, just as a pink-haired girl opened the door Zoro had been knocking on and looked at all of them with annoyance. "Do you have to make so much noise?"

Nami walked into Vivi's room and sat down on the bed, next to her curled-up friend.

"Is is that bad again?" she whispered, touching her arm softly.

"Seriously, I feel like my uterus is trying to eat me from inside out." the younger hissed.

"Do you need something?" Nami asked, a sympathetic smile on her face. She knew that Vivi sometimes couldn't move at all when on her period as her cramps were extraordinary painful.

"Could you please get me some pain-killers from the kitchen, hot chocolate and maybe ice cream?" the bluenette whimpered. "It would be super nice."

"Of course." Nami patted the others hand and stood up, making her way to the kitchen.

When she came back, there were tears falling down Vivi's cheeks.

"What's wrong?" she asked, putting the tablet with the things Vivi wanted down on the nightstand.

"Nothing." the other sobbed. "Just the pain. Fuck. Just kill me already."

"Everything will be fine..." the ginger whispered and held the meds in Vivi's direction. "Just take these and call me if anything happens. I will let my door open."

"Thank you."

"What's wrong?" Nami sat down next to a really exhausted looking Robin in the teacher's room.

"Nothing, really." the older woman replied, giving the ginger a weak smile.

"I don't want to pry, but you really don't look too well..." Nami voiced her concern.

"It's just a small headache. It will be fine." the raven shook her head. "Don't worry."

"Are you sure? Can I get you something? Coffee or some meds? I always have something on me because of my best friend." the ginger suggested. She liked her older colleague a lot and didn't miss the fact that Spandam had been giving her a hard time.

"No, no coffee. I guess I am just not myself today."

"You don't want coffee? Are you ill?" Nami couldn't hide her surprise. And then it struck her. "Are you pregnant?" she whispered, her eyes wide with excitement.

The older woman nodded. "But I would like if this stayed between us." she whispered. "You know how it is with maternity leave and everything." she added bitterly.

"Oh, I do. After all they lecture us on that topic like twice a year at least." Nami snorted. "But congratulations! You and Franky have been trying for a long time now after all!"

"Why do we have to do this?" Luffy whined, pulling at Ace's arm.

"Because we have to look good for Makino!" the older of the boys explained. "I hate shopping too, you know!"

"Come on, it isn't that bad!" Vivi laughed, giving her boyfriend a light kiss on the cheek.

"It is!" Luffy pouted, ignoring his brother who shook his head.

"Luffy! Come and try this on!" Nami held up a red dress-shirt. "I believe this colour will suit you!"

"I want this one!" Ace held up a dark blue dress-shirt with really big yellow dots.

"You have to be joking!" Nami and Vivi said in union, expressions of horror on their face.

"No! It's awesome! This one and no other!" the freckled man exclaimed.

"Ace, it looks terrible!" Vivi tried to talk him out of it, but Luffy has already taken the shirt.

"It IS awesome!" he cried out, making Nami cringe.

"Do whatever you want to do." she muttered. "But I won't pick my dress based on your ridiculous fashion sense, got it?"

"We are going to pick up dresses too? Whyyyyyy?" Luffy whined, making the others roll their eyes.

"You seriously don't have any other interests than meat and adventure, do you?" Nami took the red shirt and put it into his hands. "Now try it on and you and Ace may get a break while we pick up the neckties!"

Kapitel 8:

CH 8

"I am so sorry!" Sabo whispered. "But it's safer to not have Luffy and Ace sitting at one table during a meal."

"What are you talking about?" Nami asked in confusion, looking between the blond and his two brothers who were laughing about something not far away.

"They have a weird habit of fighting over food, or better: they have the tendency of staling each others food, causing a mess in the process." he explained, looking a bit exhausted. "That's why Makino and I agreed on placing you two at a table with Mihawk's kids and Ace, Vivi, my partner and me at the table next to it. I hope that will work. Again, I am sorry that you can't sit at the same table as Vivi."

"That's fine." Nami waved it of. She felt something like pity for Sabo, an emotion very unusual for her. "I already told Ace, that as long as there is booze, everything will be fine."

"Thank you... Oh God!" suddenly, Sabo ran into his brothers' direction. Nami, who had been facing them with her back turned around, her eyes widening at the sight of Ace lying on the ground.

"What's wrong?" she asked as everybody, even Luffy, stood there calmly and acted as everything was normal. Well, except Sabo who was checking Ace's head.

"He didn't hit it." he looked up from where he was crouching.

Nami cracked an eyebrow.

"Ace falls asleep randomly due to some neurotic conditions I don't get." A cute girl with brown hair, Nami hadn't noticed before explained. "I'm Koala by the way, Sabo's girlfriend."

"Nami. Nice to meet you." the ginger introduced herself, still eying Ace warily.

"We should go. The new-led pair is already inside." Sabo muttered, throwing one of Ace's arms over his shoulder. "Just go, I will manage and he should wake up any moment anyway."

The girls made their way into the restaurant together with Luffy, who was looking at everything around him curiously. But not as curiously as when they finally entered the dining room and the boy saw all the food that was already on the tables; all kinds of snacks and cakes.

And to Nami's delight a lot of alcohol.

"I know where we are seated." Sabo called from behind them, followed by an awake Ace, before the waiter, a stressed looking boy with "Penguin" written on his cap,

could open his mouth. "Just please take care of him." he motioned at a person coming after them, a man Nami recognized from the news as Vice Admiral Monkey D Garp.

"Just follow me." Sabo led the way to two almost empty tables. Only a single pink-haired woman in a black and pink dress was sitting at one of them, looking rather annoyed.

"Nice to see you, Rona." Ace greeted her, smiling brightly. "This is Vivi, and this two are Nami and Koala." he introduced the girls to each other.

"Where have you left your brother?" Sabo asked, looking around.

"Where have you left yours?" Perona posed the question herself, making everyone look around hectically. Somehow, Luffy managed to already get scolded by Garp.

"Do they know each other?" Nami looked at Vivi in confusion.

"Oh god! I forgot to tell you!" the bluenette exclaimed. "It's their grandfather!"

Nami shook her head and sat down, looking around with interest.

"So who's the guy sitting next to the groom? Are they holding hands?" Nami looked at Perona, who has been watching her the whole time.

"That's Ben." she explained. "It's quite a complicated story. Dad has explained it to me so I know, but most people don't get it at all."

"So what's it about?" Nami questioned, sipping from her wine.

"It seems that Makino, the bride, Shanks, the groom, and Ben are having a relationship." Perona made a triangle with her fingers. "Apparently they are all happy with it since it has lasted for over ten years now."

"Really? But the bride looks so young!" Nami blurred out. This was way more interesting than expected. She had heard about polyamorous people before but seeing a working relationship that went for so long was a first.

"She's in her early thirties." the woman explained. "But Luffy can tell you more since he was there when they met. Shanks lost his arm while saving him and Makino, Benn and him grew closer during that time."

"Crazy..." the ginger whispered. "But why do they marry now? And why Makino and Shanks? What about Benn?"

"Apparently Makino is pregnant, that's why they are getting married. Legal reasons and stuff. Benn is fine with that, since he is repulsed by sex as far as I know and that makes Shanks the father so they decided to sort this out." Perona shrugged, still watching Nami.

"And why do you know all of this? Or is it something most know?" the ginger decided to ask a last question.

"My dad is Shanks' best friend and he comes and cries his heart out every time something happens. It's just so not cute. I am so glad I moved out..." the pink-haired woman stopped talking for a moment. "Now I remember! You have been the gal who was arguing with Zoro and the cook!"

Nami shot her a confused look but then it struck her. "You are his sister, aren't you?"

"Exactly!" Perona grinned, happy that she finally figured out why Nami looked so familiar. "So how exactly did you meet Zoro and what is your relationship?"

"That's none of your business!" Zoro hissed from behind Nami, causing her to jump a little as she hadn't expected it.

"Zoroooo!" Luffy sprung at the man, making him go back a few steps, allowing Nami to get a look. She had to admit that he looked really hot in the suit he was wearing.

"You are late! That's not cute!" Perona pouted, glaring at her brother.

"I got lost. This place is hell to find!" he hissed, trying to free himself for Luffy's tight embrace.

"It isn't!" she argued back.

"Shut up and sit down!" Ace commanded from the table next to them. "Ben is going to deliver a speech!"

"A drinking contest? Are you serious?" A tall, really handsome man in maybe his forties sat down at the table where Nami and Zoro were arguing in mid of a drinking contest.

"You did that with Shanks when you were younger, too!" Zoro emptied another bottle demonstratively.

"I was forced to..." the man said, sounding resigned. "By the way, my name is Draculle Mihawk, nice to meet you." he greeted Nami, despite looking quite disapproving at her own bottle.

"Nami Mikan." she replied. "Why didn't you tell me that your father is this hot?" she hissed at Perona while the two men argued again.

"Hot? Isn't he a bit too old for you?" the girl rose an eyebrow. "That's so not cute!"

"You know, you can tell if somebody is esthetically pleasant and looks really bangable even if you wouldn't want to have sex with him." Nami explained with a grin. Perona seemed so innocent, it was refreshing. Especially as Nami herself wasn't too keen to have sex in the near future, even with Zoro of all people sitting next to her.

"Are ya giving up?" the green-haired man rose another bottle as his father stood up and made a way to another table, obviously giving up on his son's drinking habits.

"You can bet that I don't!" Nami sneered. "But what's up with you three not looking like each other at all?"

"We are adopted." Zoro shrugged. "It seems that one day he felt like getting a family so he did. Picked the two weirdest and least similar kids he could. End of story. Not that I complain. Our old man is the biggest weirdo alive but he did a pretty good job raising us."

"I am a bit unsure if-

"No, no mother. There never was one and he never showed interest in anybody." Perona interrupted Nami's following question. "How about you?"

"I'm adopted too. My mother found my sister and me on a battlefield after a war and took us home. There was a man but they never had anything more serious in front of us." Nami downed the bottle in one go. Usually she went slower but talking about this made it necessary.

"Holy shit!" Zoro whispered out of nowhere. Nami turned around to look what had surprised him so much.

Some of Shanks' crew as the others had called them were holding up a barrel and Shanks was letting the beer flow directly into his mouth. Nami looked instinctively for Makino just to find her in a corner together with Ben and Garp, discussing something heatedly.

"It's a wonder that gramps can stand Ben." Sabo appeared behind Nami. "He would kill Shanks if he was allowed to, but somehow he can be civil around Ben. I don't get his logic. It's probably the same with me and the two others. I am just so happy that Luffy fell asleep after you gave him that cognac."

"I fear what will happen when he wakes up." Nami muttered.

"Well, it can't be worse than a drunk Shanks being chased by an even drunker gramps." the blond shrugged, cringing at the sight of his grandfather opening a bottle of rum.

"Talking about families, what is the case with yours?" Perona asked out of a sudden, bringing the topic back on the table. "We know each other for a long time now, but I never heard that story."

A sad smile appeared on Sabo's face. "Luffy is Garp's biological grandchild, Ace and I are kinda adopted but we are like real brothers and nobody can convince us otherwise. That's everything you need to know. But now, if you excuse me, I have to look for Ace and Vivi. I don't want her to be stuck somewhere because that moron fell asleep out of the sudden."

"What happened?" Nami was genuinely concerned.

"Just a little fight." Sabo whispered, before making his way to the exit, letting the

ginger with her thoughts, a lot of ale and two very weird siblings she couldn't decide what to think about.

"I am sorry." both Nami and the waiter she had noticed earlier said in unison after they bumped into each other.

The ginger rubbed one of her eyes, grimacing when she noticed that her eye make-up rubbed down on her arm, and stopped in tracks just to turn around slowly.

Behind the smaller waiter, there was another person she has already seen before.

"Aren't you that guy from the party some weeks ago?" She asked, making him look up from the notes he was taking.

He didn't reply for a while, but then there was something like realization showing on his face, at least on the part one could see. "You are that chick who was with Kid that night, right?"

"Exactly!" she laughed. "Oh god, this evening is weird."

"Indeed. I have never dreamed of meeting somebody as the boss of R.E.D industries, the national navy hero or the world's number one swordsman in person. Especially not on a single evening." he shook his head.

"R.E.D?" Nami's mouth fell open. "Are you serious? I thought he never showed himself in society?!"

"It's the groom?" Killer replied, looking at her doubtfully. "But who the hell are you?"
"Just a person with the weirdest luck." Nami muttered. "By the way: where the fuck are the toilets?"

Kapitel 9:

CH 9

"Vivi?" Nami entered her friend's room. The girl was lying on her bed, earphones on and watching something on her laptop.

The ginger stood there for a while, waiting to be noticed, watching her friend.

Vivi turned around after a while, looking at Nami in confusion. "How long have you been here?" she asked as she put her headphones down.

"Just a couple of minutes." Nami laughed. "I wanted to ask if everything is fine. Sabo told me that you had a fight with Ace at the wedding, so I was concerned."

"He was jealous since one of the waiters has been overly friendly with me, since he knew me from some of my father's receptions."

"Jealousy, huh?" the ginger scratched her arm. "He really has a problem with that, doesn't he?"

Vivi grimaced. "He wants to do something about that. I hope he really does."

"I do to." Nami agreed. "It seems to bother you a lot."

The bluenette shook her head. "I can deal with it as it is now. Don't worry too much."

"Why does everybody have the need to tell me that?" the ginger pouted.

"Because you worry too much, Nami!" it was Vivi's turn to laugh.

She felt like vomiting. It hadn't been this bad since she had seen Enel the last time, but once again, Nami felt the more than unwanted state of her mind and feelings. She knew she had to act as if nothing was wrong, she had to. After all, she was in the middle of a lesson. The kids shouldn't have to worry about her or even worse, to feel sorry for her.

Those were teenagers, 16 and 17, but she was sure they wouldn't understand what was going on. Maybe some would, but those were these few who had experienced such an anxiety attack before.

Nami cursed herself. She had to go back to her usual lifestyle with sex and no commitment, she didn't have a choice.

She knew that she wasn't ready to love, and even if, she didn't want to fall for somebody like Kid, or even worse: go back to Enel.

No, she had to keep going. Maybe with a woman. She needed the sensation, she

needed something to keep her away from love.

And most of all, she didn't need students to cry because of a broken heart. That's what triggered her. She saw herself in that girl in the back, in the who had to go through school even after her boyfriend broke up during one of the breaks.

She was exposed and weak, but she didn't care. It seemed to be a real drama in her eyes, and it probably was.

Nami had felt heartbroken because of Enel more than enough, and even now, she still wasn't over it.

The ginger shut her eyes, took a few deep breaths and opened them again.

"I may be teaching maths, but I think we need to talk about respect now." she stood up, her voice clear.

"I want all of you to understand, that making fun of somebody who cries is wrong. If you believe I haven't noticed how you look at Baby 5, you are wrong. It isn't her fault that she fell for the wrong guy, one can't know how the other will act in a relationship. It takes time to get to know the other. So stop. It seems to have hurt her a lot and you are making it worse. Think about all the times you have felt hurt, felt like crying. No, tears are no sign of weakness. They only show that you feel something. So shut the fuck up. Everybody has a right to cry if he or she needs to." she looked over the class. "We are human, we want and need to express what we feel and think."

Nami downed another glass of whiskey. This wasn't good. She didn't even know why she felt like going out on this Friday evening, all alone. She could have asked her friends, but she didn't want to. There was a party Usopp had invited her to. She had said no.

She ordered another drink.

Nami felt like crying, once again. Usually she had something like inner peace, but those last few weeks and months, it had been disturbed by something. She didn't have an idea by what exactly, but something was wrong. So much was clear.

There have been a few guys who have tried to chat her up, but she had told them to fuck off.

She wanted to drink in peace. And still, it felt as if she was waiting for something, something that would give her her peace back.

Sadly, she had no idea what it was.

It was her fifth drink, when somebody sat next to her, silent. She didn't listen when the person ordered her drink, she didn't look up. She knew that the thing she had been waiting for had arrived. But she feared what it would be.

Like this, they sat there in silence.

Only after the seventh drink, she dared to look up.

Her worst nightmare and the best dream came together crashing.

"What are you doing here?" she whispered, looking at him, her eyes wide. She was drunk, drunk but peaceful. His presence was enough to soothe her.

"I don't know." he admitted, turning to look at her himself, smiling sadly.

She nodded, believing and trusting him for the first time. She knew he had this soft side, the one only she had ever seen, the one where he knew what to do, when she needed him most.

"I have missed you, Enel." it was barely a whisper, but when he pulled her into a tight embrace, she knew he had heard her.

"I have missed you too, Nami." that's when the tears walled out of her eyes. She was sure it would leave a stain on his shirt, but she didn't care and obviously he didn't either.

"Can we just talk?" she asked, finally pulling away.

He nodded, pulling out his wallet to pay. She wanted to protest, but he shook his head. He wanted to help her, and he was going to, no discussion about checks needed.

They walked and walked through the empty streets, emptying their hearts in front of each other.

Nami knew, that enough time has passed for them to be like this, intimate yet distant. They have found their places in life. They knew that their paths didn't belong together right now.

Nami felt free. She felt as if she has lost a huge burden with every word.

She felt like finally letting go.

"Thank you," she whispered, before she kissed him goodbye on the cheek, knowing that the next time they met, she might fall in love with him all over again.

But not tonight. Tonight, he had set her free. And that's all that counted.

The next day, Nami felt a sudden urge to do something.

She had so much energy. Her memories weren't too clear, not because of the alcohol, but her emotions had gotten the best out of her.

"You seem to be in a very good mood." Vivi remarked with surprise. "How rare these days."

Nami couldn't but smile her brightest smile. "I feel, like it's over. I'm fine again."

The younger woman didn't even try to hide her interest, sitting down on the couch next to her friend. "What happened?"

"Nothing special." Nami shrugged, closing her laptop. She had found what she had been looking for. "I met Enel yesterday."

Vivi's eyes widened at the revelation, but she didn't say a word. Hard to tell if the reason she kept quiet was surprise or confusion.

"We talked. Nothing more and nothing less. We are going to keep it like it had been till now, no contact or anything." the ginger stood up. "And now excuse me, I am going for a run. Don't forget that the march against racism is today!"

Sneakers, leather jacket, a sweatshirt with a hood, jeans, sun glasses and a scarf – both Nami and Vivi wore the clothes they knew to be safest for such a march, especially if neonazis were the counterpart.

"Here." Nami gave her friend a bottle of water to put into her old bag. There was no use in taking a newer one, since the possibility to have to drop it wasn't that low, thanks to the police violence.

"But we aren't going to take a part in a blockade, aren't we?" Vivi asked with concern. She never liked the idea of having to run away from cops.

"Definitely not." Nami reassured her friend. "I am definitely too old and out of shape for that. Besides we both know that it wouldn't do any of us much good."

Vivi laughed. "How many arrests of blockades do you have?"

"Maybe five or six?" the ginger shrugged, grinning proudly. "Out of almost 50 blockades?"

"I still don't get how you managed to become a teacher."

"Me neither." Nami admitted, still grinning, and put her bag on her back. "Do we have everything?"

"Water, dry clothes, keys, some money and our Ids. I believe that's all." Vivi listed the stuff she could think of.

"Alright. Let's go!"

When the girls arrived at the meeting place for the anti-racism-march, quite a lot

people were already there.

"Do you see anybody we might know?" Vivi, who has been looking all over the place, asked Nami who stared in one direction.

"Not directly. Just the woman we met in the cinema." she replied, finally tearing her eyes away and looking for some of their friends. "Are Ace and his brothers coming?"

"Ace wanted to, but Sabo said no, because it would be really a problem if he suddenly fell asleep. We can't risk that. But Sabo and Luffy might come." Vivi explained.

"I believe I see him." Nami muttered.

"Ace?" Vivi was slightly shocked.

"Ace? No?" the ginger looked confused. "Luffy! And if I am not wrong, Zoro and Sabo are with him. I have seen green and blonde hair."

"Shitty punk!" the shout welcomed the girls as they approached their friends. It was enough to tell that not Sabo, but Sanji was standing there with the two others. And apparently Zoro and him were fighting again.

"Nami! Vivi!" Luffy cried and pulled them into a tight hug.

"Nami-swan! Vivi-chwan!" Sanji called out, starting a weird dance, while Zoro didn't stop his float of insults.

"What did he call us?" Nami asked in confusion, but Vivi just shrugged. "I don't even want to know."

"So, what's the plan?" the ginger threw into the round, getting all the attention she needed.

"Apparently we are going to walk a certain route to cut and stop the nazis, but direct blockades are illegal as always. As far as I know, there will be some though." Sabo appeared behind Luffy just in time to stop him from wandering of.

"The two of us aren't going to take part in the blockades." Vivi announced.

"Well, but I am." Zoro grinned.

"So am I!" Sanji glared at Zoro. "There is no way I am going to do less good than him."

"I want to do it too!" Luffy did his best imitation of puppy eyes on Sabo, who looked quite indecisive, as he stood there, playing with his hair.

"Okay. If it's fine with you two being alone, the four of us will go and block them." Sabo shot them an apologetic smile. "I need to look out after them." he managed to whisper before following the other men, leaving the girls behind.

But that didn't matter. Some good punk and ska was playing and people started to dance. The girls decided to do the same, and soon half of the crowd did.

Nami felt quite disappointed, when the music stopped and somebody decided to speak. She couldn't see the person, but the man introduced himself as Doctor Trafalgar Law and started giving them instructions.

"Follow the van with music. The driver, Daz, knows the route we have decided on. Be ready to see the fascists at any given moment." he announced with a steady, clear voice. "Hey, calm down officers! We are not going to do anything illegal here! It's them who tend to start attacks! And YOU don't usually stop them and blame it on us!" he raised his voice as apparently some policemen tried to interrupt him. "This is completely legal so stay the hell away from our guys!"

Calmer again, Law turned towards the demonstrators again. "The people wearing the rainbow matches are part of the organization team. If you have any questions, ask them. And one last thing: we cut the number of speeches this year, because it's hard to understand them anyway, and you guys know why we are here. Now, let's go! Alerta, Alerta, Antifacista!" he yelled and the music started playing again, while the protestors repeated the slogan together with other left-wing and humanistic sayings.

Nami and Vivi walked with the crowd, singing along with the songs they knew, jumping and dancing together with the mass.

It was unusual, but Vivi's bright blue hair didn't stick out for once, with all the people with green, pink and purple hair.

"This year, it really is one huge party." the bluenette commented, when an elderly woman danced next to them with an one-legged man, both probably high.

"I hope it stays this way." Nami muttered, her brows furrowed. One could never know what the policemen were to do. Unfortunately, being part of the left-wing-protestors bore some risks as of being attacked. Years ago, she and other protestors have been surrounded for no apparent reason and kept like that for almost an hour. It didn't matter at that time that there was a mother with two small children who just wanted to get home and wasn't even part of the demonstration.

Suddenly, the group stopped.

"We have to stop here for a while." Law was speaking again. "I have no idea what's going on, but we are currently trying to figure it out. Stay calm and don't allow anybody to provoke you."

As Nami and Vivi were quite at the outskirts of the mass of people, they saw that most of the policemen were coming closer, while some walked in the direction of one of the alleys.

"Do you think it's because of the blockade?" Vivi whispered into Nami's ear. The ginger was tense, watching everything with utmost concentration.

"Probably. And I don't like this one bit." she whispered back.

Just as these words left her mouth, a group of people stormed out of the alley and in between the policemen, who were too overwhelmed to react.

No wonder. Even though they wore heavy protection, about twenty young and well-build men in black were storming in between them at an extraordinary speed.

Nami managed to catch a glimpse of green, yellow and black somewhere in the middle. But that was soon forgotten as she realized that Luffy was running at the front together with nobody else than Kid.

Only Vivi shouting at her brought her attention back to their problem with the policemen. One was coming forward, directly towards them.

Nami was pulled back by a strong pair of hands before she could even react. The policeman who didn't care if he hit anybody else, reached out for the person who had been standing behind her and pulled a man with his scarf over his nose towards himself.

"You alright?" the person who had pulled Nami towards himself asked.

The ginger turned around as she saw Vivi standing safe next to a smaller boy, just to realize it had been Killer who had pulled her out of the path.

"Yeah. Thanks. What are you doing here?" she asked in confusion, seeing his face clearly for the first time since he has put his hair out of his face for once.

"Probably the same as you." he shrugged, waving at the boy next to Vivi.

"Sure." the ginger replied. "But what's up with that hair?" she pried.

"I simply don't want to get pulled out because my face is covered too much and endanger others like that idiot did." he muttered. "I hate all people equally, but that doesn't mean I want anybody to get hurt because I break the rules. That's Kid's part."

The smaller boy laughed, adjusting his hat so one could see "Penguin" written on it.

"You are the boy from the wedding, right?" Vivi asked before she thanked him again.

The demonstration went without further problems, and Law promised to take care of all the mess and make sure that the officers would pay for their actions. It wasn't okay to hurt peaceful protestors after all.

At the end of his speech, one could see him getting a kiss from a very sweaty Kid, and a group of people laughed like crazy, probably because they were so done after the long run.

Kapitel 10:

CH 10

With the feeling of freedom and balance, Nami's sexual urge has come back as well. But somehow, the thrill of catching a man's attention and seducing him hadn't.

The ginger realized that even before the first man who had approached her, opened his mouth. He was so boring, unexciting and shallow, she didn't want anything but escape from him.

Especially as he tried to kiss her out of the blue, his weird turban sliding a bit to the back.

Nami blocked, stood up and made her way to the bar, the man following her, not getting the hint.

"Hey, Lucci." she greeted the bartender, who shot her a bored look. "You free tonight?"

"I am working as you can see." he grinned at her, baring his sharp white teeth.

"Sure you are. I was talking about later." Nami rolled her eyes.

"Depends." he winked at her, before looking at the man who had been hitting at her. "But I don't do threesomes." he added with a completely blank face.

"Neither do I as I've already told you." she replied, her expression equally blank.

"I am not sure that the guy standing behind you got the hint." Lucci shrugged, while serving a waiting customer their drink.

"W-What?" the man who had been hitting at her stuttered. "We didn't talk about anything like that!" he shrieked.

"No. Actually, I didn't talk much." Nami turned around. "You didn't let me. And let's be honest: I don't want to. You are simply not my type. That's what I tried to tell you from the beginning but you kept interrupting me. The only reason why you aren't talking now, is because my friend here," she tapped on the counter, "is staring daggers into you, his teeth bared and that freaks you out like hell."

The man nodded slowly.

"Good. I hope you have gotten the hint now. Bye bye!" Nami turned back to the bar after she was sure the man left.

"Have you seriously called me a friend?" the bartender was laughing, an animalistic air

around him.

"I believe it isn't his business what our relationship truly is." the ginger shrugged, ordering a drink. "Besides, it would have made him believe he had a chance if I told him that we are simply fucking."

"Maybe." Lucci was still grinning, but continued his work.

"So, did you have fun?" Vivi came out of her room, yawning.

"Were we too loud?" Nami scratched the back of her head, grinning sheepishly. Lucci had agreed to go home with her, just in case the asshole from earlier, Absalom or whatever his name was, didn't do anything stupid.

Lucci himself wasn't a good guy or anything, but he was able to draw a clear line concerning women: he would never rape or abuse one, but he would fight her if she attacked him. Simple, yet clear rules, Nami liked pretty much.

"I really don't understand why you don't go to the guys' place." the younger woman made her way to the kitchen and Nami followed her.

"Because I really don't like being thrown out because his girlfriend is coming back. Or worse: being greeted by his parents. That is the ultimate nightmare." she shuddered.

"Did it even happen to you?" the bluenette couldn't but ask. "The parents thing?"

"To me? No." Nami laughed. "But Enel has told me a lot weird stories. I only had the pleasure to hide from the girlfriend. I would have told her and that I didn't know, not that I care, but he assured me that she would have killed me, not him and somehow I believed him and it was the right choice."

"Which one was that? And why?" Vivi asked, pouring herself a glass of orange juice before leaning against the kitchen counter to listen to her friend.

"Buggy, the guy with long blue hair. He was dating that model, Alvida or whatever her name was. I am not sure anymore. Some time later I have read an article somewhere about how she had attacked a girl who had had an affair with him." the ginger shrugged, before starting the coffee machine. "But how is it going with Ace? Everything fine?"

"Well, except our occasional little disputes about friendship, love and jealousy, everything is perfect." Vivi sounded slightly annoyed.

Nami nodded, waiting for her friend to continue, but the younger girl drank her juice in silence.

"Miss?" Nami looked up from correcting the papers when one of the boys in the back called after her.

"Bellamy?" she replied, not even trying to hide her skepticism. The class had gotten a bunch of math problems to solve and Bellamy was never one for trying too hard, not asking questions at all.

"Baby 5 is such a whore, she has another boyfriend already!" he called out and started laughing like a hyena.

Those few words caused Nami to stand up abruptly, a very angry expression on her face. "Stop calling your classmate a whore or anything similar!" she said harshly.

"But she is one! A slut!" the boy repeated and some of his friends laughed again.

"Whore and slut aren't words to be used in school or general. The term, one should use for women selling sex is prostitute." Nami took a few breaths in. "Meanwhile, Baby 5 is just an ordinary girl. There is nothing wrong with falling in love as often as she wants."

"You have no idea! My uncle told me that a pussy gets loose from having too much sex. Stupid teacher!" Bellamy roared, almost falling down from his chair.

"Enough." Nami whispered with so much force, everybody in the class stopped breathing, causing Bellamy to stop laughing abruptly, his eyes wide. It was rare that the ginger lost control in school, and all her pupils knew that.

"Brat, tell your idiotic uncle that what he is spreading is utter bullshit. A baby can fit through a vagina, so no stick he calls a penis could do much damage. And you, you will apologize to Baby 5, write an essay about 10 pages on why we need feminism and what is rape culture and now pack your things and go visit the headmaster. I will write a note. Don't do something stupid, or I guarantee you to make this even worse for you." she threatened calmly, but there were dark clouds over Nami's head, as she scribbled something on a piece of paper and gave it to Bellamy, who miraculously obeyed without further comment.

As he left, Baby 5, who had been sitting in silence with tears flowing down her cheeks, spoke up, her voice shaking slightly. "Thank you, Miss. But you are aware, that his uncle is Doflamingo Donquixote?"

"Why am I not surprised?" Nami rolled her eyes. "But let me tell you a thing: I don't fucking care. I have dealt with worse than an elitist asshole who isn't able to open a simple biology book or use google. And now finish your work or I will collect it right on the spot and correct what have you written till now. Hush hush!" the ginger sat down, massaging her temples. There were not many things that managed to piss her off this fast, but Bellamy had pulled just the right strings.

"Excuse me, do I know you?" the second time that day, Nami was addressed when she expected it the least.

She had decided to visit the gallery opening Robin had invited her to, and was currently looking at a very abstract yet beautiful painting of a woman.

The ginger turned around, just to find herself face to face with the gorgeous dark-skinned woman she remembered from the cinema.

"I believe we have never talked before." Nami shot her a charming smile, sure that it couldn't match with the woman's.

"Paula." the dark-skinned beauty held her hand out.

"Nami." the ginger took it without hesitation.

"So tell me, why I believe to have met you before." Paula adjusted the top of her dress, causing Nami to look on her breasts involuntarily. She always knew that she liked women even though she definitely preferred men, but this one was extraordinarily charming.

"I was waiting in the line for tickets, when you asked about Selma if I remember correctly." Nami tried to concentrate on looking into Paula's eyes.

"Oh, I must have made a totally horrible impression!" the woman covered her mouth with one hand theatrically.

"You didn't. However, you made it quite clear what your ideals are and that you are ready to fight them." Nami cursed herself for sounding so stiff.

"I'm relieved." Paula chuckled. "But was it the only time we met?"

"I believe you remember more than you want me to believe." Nami winked at her, thinking back at the protests.

"Maybe." the response was short, yet playful. "So how do you like the exhibition?"

"The paintings are amazing. I barely dare to imagine what a beauty the model must be." Nami swooned.

"She is standing next to you." Paula was chuckling again.

"You seem in an extraordinarily good mood." Vivi remarked, watching Nami cook once again. "And it's different than after you met Enel. It's as if you were extremely relaxed or something."

"You really notice everything, don't you?" Nami laughed and poured some water into the pot. "I was at the exhibition Robin organized yesterday."

Vivi rolled her eyes. "You might like art, but you are not as bad as Robin or I, so there is no way a picture of something could have put you into such good mood."

"Well, I met one of the women who stood model for the artist and it happened to be the Selma-woman." The two girls have called her that when they admired her looks, long after she was gone, so Nami decided to stick to the stupid nickname to make the

explaining easier.

"And?" the bluenette continued her questioning with anticipation.

"Well, she has a boyfriend. But lucky me, it is an open relationship and let me tell you: she really knew what she was doing."

The comment made Vivi laugh. She never had much sex because somehow she didn't have the need to most of the time, but she always loved Nami's stories and comments about her adventures. She had the habit to call it scientific curiosity.

Kapitel 11:

Ch 11

It was dark, the streets empty. One of the street lights wasn't working.

Nami sped up a little. Usually, she didn't have a problem with walking home alone, in the middle of the night. But today, today she felt uneasy.

At the club, everything has been like always. She drunk, chatted with people and got a number, but she hadn't felt like bringing a guy home. That wasn't as rare as one may have thought.

She glanced over her shoulder.

Nothing.

She searched for her keys anyway. Better safe than sorry. That's what she thought.

She walked, the keys in her hand. She was ready to use them if necessary.

Steps.

Nami turned around. Somebody was coming closer. Unfortunately, the person was just under the light that went out.

What now?

Wait? Run? Walk? Act is everything was fine?

"Are you alright?" he called out. She recognized the voice.

"Killer? You scared me!" Nami laughed, relieved.

"Why the hell are you walking alone this late?" he asked in a tone one would use to talk to a little child.

"I always do. It's calming. And you sober up." Nami shrugged.

"Than it shouldn't be that easy to scare you." Killer noted.

"I don't know. Something doesn't feel alright today." she confessed, aware that she was blushing. Naturally red hair had a lot of advantages, but your face turning red easily wasn't one. She had learned to control it somehow, but alcohol always managed to fuck it up.

It seemed as if Killer was thinking, but he pulled his phone out of his pockets before

Nami could ask.

"I'm gonna give you my number. If something happens, call me." he muttered.

"Your nickname may be scary, but you are a good guy." and with this, they parted.

Nami felt somehow lighter, safer, with the number in her phone, holding it in the other hand than the keys.

She was probably overreacting anyway.

Only another fifteen minutes and she would be home, safe and sound.

She hadn't heard or seen anything before she felt the hands on her arms.

A loud cry.

She had stepped with full force on his right foot.

Wheezing.

Right elbow into his chest. The air has left his body.

Another cry.

Left elbow aiming for his nose.

Something warm dropped on her neck, but his grip was loosening.

Right punch between his legs.

The hands left her body just as the loudest cry she had ever heard echoes through the night.

Nami run. She didn't dare to turn around. She had paralyzed him for the moment, but what if he wasn't alone?

Killer's number! She called, explaining everything, still walking faster than ever.

"So he tried to kiss you and harassed you in the club some weeks before?" Killer stirred his coffee.

Nami nodded. "Yeah, I turned him down and made a run for it, even asking a friend to bring me home that night."

The two of them were sitting in a small cafe, talking about the past events.

"Absalom, this guy, how long did he know you?" the blond man leaned back in his

chair.

"Not even five minutes and he would have married me on the spot." Nami shuddered. "It was scary. I don't get it."

"Neither do I." Killer muttered. "I don't understand how some people can ignore the feelings and wishes of others, even their dignity, like this."

"It's mostly men." a woman from the other table called. "Men are savages!"

"Women rape too." Killer replied in an instant, not even looking at her. "They murder and abuse the same way men do. The difference is, that we teach women to act like decent human beings and sometimes forget to teach men the same thing."

"How-" the woman was about to speak again, but the other girl, sitting at the table with her interrupted her. "Boa, let it be."

She grunted, but turned back to her cake and conversation.

"Are you a feminist?" Nami asked after a short pause.

"If I was, would it change a thing?" Killer questioned. "Kid and I went for the guy because he did something stupid. Rapists are some of the lowest people alive. That's all you need to know." he drank the coffee in one go and stood up. "Thanks for the coffee."

"So what don't you understand?" Nami asked, smiling at the young man in front of her encouragingly, but Penguin only gaped.

"Seriously, Pen, if you want to pass the stupid math class you have to do something for it." Killer whispered to his friend.

"Don't push him." Nami rose her hand. "It will only make it worse for him."

"Yeah, but you have come all the way here and he isn't even able to tell you what he doesn't understand." the blond muttered. "Usually he isn't that shy around people, only his tutors are a huge problem."

At this words, Penguin sacked into himself even more than before.

Nami fell silent for a moment, studying the boy in front of her.

"Why doesn't one of his friends tutor him?" she asked.

"Because they are all really bad at it." Killer sighed.

"Well, a study group may do it then." the ginger suggested.

"No!" Penguin joined the talk for the first time. "I-I don't want to!"

"Why?" the two others turned to him in surprise.

Again, the boy only gaped, his face slowly turning red.

"You can tell us. We really want to help." Nami spoke in her teacher voice. "Killer has told me that you have good marks everywhere except maths but want to graduate high school as good as possible and become a nurse. That's really admirable. So please tell us what is wrong so we can solve the problem."

"I-I really don't want Shachi to see how much of a failure I am!" the boy has pulled his hat almost completely over his face, but it was obvious that he was as red as a tomato by now.

Nami would have sworn that Killer had rolled his eyes, but she couldn't see it because of his bangs and be sure about that.

"Then let me help you." Nami tried again and this time Penguin nodded, still hiding behind his hat.

"Good. Than make a list of what you don't understand till we next meet I suggest next week the same time. And now, I guess you need to calm down somewhat."

"Yeah, we should go." Killer agreed, relieved that they solved the problem, at least for now.

"He has such a crush on that Shachi." Nami giggled after they left Penguin's home. "You really must be jealous."

"Why should I?" Killer questioned, his voice gruff.

"Don't you have a crush on Pen?" the ginger glanced at the weird blond who has somehow become a friend over the time.

"Nah. He is like a younger brother to me." he grunted. "Thanks to Kid I have the weird habit of taking care of such idiots."

"Really?" Nami teased. "Than you aren't gay?"

"I am pansexual." Killer shrugged. "But it happens rarely that I'm attracted to somebody at all. And now shut up. You are the last person I want to discuss my non-existent love-life with."

"I feel like I'm not doing anything else than sitting in a cafe with friends and drinking coffee." Nami joked after greeting Perona.

"But cafes are cute!" the pink-haired woman protested.

"That's true." Nami had to agree. "So what's the urgent matter you wanted to talk about?"

"Weeeell, let's order first!" Perona already had the menu in her hand. "I really feel like eating cake and the matter will be even more fun with it!" her eyes were gleaming diabolically.

Nami had to admit that her curiosity was getting the best of her, but all the cake looked so delicious, she decided she rather wanted to wait for the story than for the heavenly baked goods.

She had heard about the Skypia cafe, but has never been inside before, so she had agreed to go and meet Perona there without discussion when the older woman called.

"Oh god. This cake tastes so amazing." Nami swooned over the fruit parfait she had chosen.

"They are all amazing." Perona grinned. "Dad used to order some once in a while. But it's the first time I am inside of the cafe itself."

"Does he like sweets?" Nami questioned, thinking back to when she met Mihawk at the wedding.

"He does. But mostly it's when Shanks or Luffy are over." The pink-haired woman explained.

"Interesting.. By the way: are Zoro and Luffy close?" the ginger asked with interest, taking another spoon-full of her cake.

"They are. Luffy has somehow managed to fight his way into Zoro's heart. Speaking about Zoro, the matter I wanted to talk to you concerns him." there was a weird smile on Perona's face.

"So what's up?" Nami wasn't too sure what to think about it.

"You know Sanji as well, right?" the gleam in Perona's eyes grew stronger and stronger.

"I do."

"They are secretly dating!" the pink-haired woman squeaked. "I can't decide if it is totally cute or absolutely not, but they try to hide their relationship! But that doesn't work too well as I live next door to Sanji and Zoro permanently gets lost, making me see him outside all the time!"

It was entertaining to watch Perona talk and somehow even fangirl about her brother's relationship to her gay neighbor, especially as she changed moods between totally happy and disgusted, or rather annoyed.

"Sometimes, I hear them banging." she muttered with a grimace. "Mostly in the middle of the night, thanks to Sanji's work times."

At that point, Nami lost control and started laughing. It was all too surreal and

adorable, yet somehow entertaining.

"I will have to ask Sanji about that." she winked at Perona.

The girls chatted like that for another hour or something before finally asking the cute waitress for the bill.

"Give me a moment." the girl, whose name tag told the guests that her name was Conis called from behind her register.

She brought the bill and put it on the table, so the women could place the money on the small plate. "What are you doing?" Nami leaned over to whisper into Perona's ear as she pulled out a pen out of nowhere and scribbled something on the back side of the bill.

"Something cute." she mumbled, smiling happily, before putting the money under the piece of paper and letting the pen disappear once again.

"Did you really leave your number?" Nami had to laugh.

"So what?" Perona pouted. "She was really cute!"

Kapitel 12:

CH 12

"I can't believe it!" Vivi was raging.

Nami had to admit, that it was surprising to her to see her friend this upset.

"He really does not want me to meet Pell alone! And he doesn't listen when I tell him, again and again, that for one he is like a brother to me, and second, that he is probably gay as hell. The only relationship he has ever had was to Chaka! I told you the story with Igaram, didn't I?" she turned to Nami, who was sitting on the couch and watching her friend walk up and down in the living room, gesticulating wildly.

"Yeah, the evening you met Ace." the ginger confirmed.

"Oh god! But do you know, what the worst part is? He acts as if it was completely fine even if he goes out with thousands of girls, like Haruta, and that's fine even if they are all alone at her house!" Vivi huffed.

"As long as I know, Haruta is non-binary." Nami remarked. "They are one of Marco's siblings. And as far as I know, taken since a few years."

"Really?" Vivi looked at her, eyes wide. "So you are telling me, I am overreacting?" she let herself fall, sitting down on the spot.

"No, I am not." Nami sighed. "I am telling you, to rethink everything. It bothers you a lot. You should talk to Ace and maybe ask him about why he feels so insecure. I believe, talking to him this way will have more effect than trying to convince him that there is nothing to worry about. He probably has some self-confidence and self-love issues. I don't know. And if he doesn't want to talk, consult Sabo on that matter. I believe he may be able to help."

"I might do that." Vivi considered. "But I won't take that any longer. I am going to meet my male friends, no matter what he says! I am not going to allow a guy to control my life!" she said with determination.

Once again, Nami asked herself why she had agreed on doing something. When Perona called to ask her if she was interested in a double date, she didn't want to agree at first, but the other girl had convinced her to come along. She said something along the lines that one could never know how such a blind date would go.

So there she was, getting dressed and putting on make-up in the hope that she wouldn't hate herself for agreeing to get along.

It was a chance to meet somebody new and since she had decided to avoid clubs for the time being after the incident with Absalom, it was probably one of the few she

was going to get in the near future.

"Hey." She greeted Perona, who had already been waiting at their assigned meeting place. "Already nervous?"

"I am!" the pink-haired woman blurred out. "I am really looking forward to it!"

Nami chuckled. Even if Perona was older than her, she often acted like a child, or rather a spoiled princess. Most of the time it was cute, like now, but Zoro had told her that it could become a nightmare at times, like the one time she had tried to dress him up as a bear.

"Sorry for being late!" Conis called out as she approached, walking a little shaky on her high heels.

"Don't worry, you aren't late." Nami assured her, aware that she had arrived ten minutes earlier herself and it was impossible that so much time had already passed.

Perona stepped forward. "I'm Perona and this is Nami." she introduced the two of them to Coni's friend.

"Laki. Pleased to meet you." The woman replied with a smile.

She was tall and had long ebony hair and lanky limbs. Nami was sure she was a model or something.

After suggesting different places, the four women agreed on an Italian place Nami had visited once before. They had the best pizza in town and everybody knew that.

The supposed dates took place across each other so it was easier to talk, while Nami sat next to Perona and Conis next to Laki.

The talking went smooth and the ginger had a lot of fun, even though both her and Laki agreed that they weren't exactly each others type.

At one point, Nami asked Laki if she was a model, causing the girl to laugh. She was working as a martial arts instructor while going to college and considered applying to join the army after finishing her studies.

A huge discussion broke out between the two and they decided that it wouldn't be too bad to meet from time to time for such talks.

In the meanwhile, Perona and Conis ignored those two and Nami even dared to suggest a bet of when the first kiss falls. She was sure it would be that evening. Laki had refused as she never made bets.

Even before dessert, it was clear that Nami would have won, as both girls suddenly leaned over the table, causing the discussion to stop.

"Can we talk?" Vivi opened the door to Nami's room.

"Sure?" the ginger looked up from the papers she was grading. It was the part she hated most about being a teacher: all the work she had to do at home, worse than any kind of homework could be.

"It's about Ace." the bluenette confessed, but Nami couldn't say that she was surprised at all. She had even expected such a talk.

"I have done as you have told me and talked both to him and to Sabo." the bluenette was still standing in the door.

"Come in and sit down or something." Nami shook her head. "And tell me everything." "Ace himself didn't want to talk about it at all." Vivi sighed, still not moving. "All he admitted, is that he knows that he has a problem. When I suggested he should do something about it, he didn't want to and the talk basically ended there."

"That's strange, like really really strange." Nami muttered. "Did Sabo tell you why he acts like that?"

Vivi nodded. "He brought some light into that matter, even though he tried to not say much. You know about the guys being adopted and Luffy being the only one who is related to Garp?"

After a short affirmation on Nami's side, the bluenette continued. "Well, it seems that Ace's biological father, who passed away even before his birth, is the reason why he has hated himself since he was very young because everybody who knew about it detested him because of his heritage or something."

Nami stared at her friend blankly. "That's plain stupid!" she called out. "And who the fuck was his father that the people hated him that much?"

"I have no idea. Sabo didn't want to tell. He told me so much just so I can decide if I'm ready to cope with Ace's behavior or not. It was fair that I know at least something in his opinion." Vivi fell silent again.

"What are you going to do about it?" Nami asked after a while of watching her friend. "Now that you have a fair idea what might be going on."

"I don't know. I really don't know." Vivi whispered.

"Okay. Listen: take your time, think about it. You have a break from university now anyway so take your time and we will meet on Friday evening in the Rip Off Bar and talk about it, when you had time to sort it out in your head, okay?" Nami suggested.

"Alright. Thank you. And have fun with grading these." Vivi stood up, obviously in thoughts.

"Good Night." Nami called after her, when the bluenette left the room, and returned to the papers still lying in front of her.

Nami rang the bell on Penguin's house. She had prepared some different tests he would take, allowing her to determine how bad he exactly was and how well he could tell where his weak points were, or the strong ones for that matter.

Killer had given her the list the boy had put together earlier and it had been quite messy.

"Nami?" Laki had opened the door and was now looking at the ginger in surprise.

"I am looking for a boy called Penguin." the ginger said. "I am pretty sure this was the house where he lived but if not, I'm sorry-"

"Are you his tutor?" Laki's face lit up. "He has told me that somebody is coming over today! I didn't know it was you!"

"Well, he couldn't know that we know each other." Nami replied, a bit confused.

"Ah yes, he is my younger brother." Lake explained after seeing the ginger's expression. "Do you know where his room is?"

Nami assured her that she did and made her way upstairs. It was a weird coincidence, but she felt herself lucky that she had met a friend and not somebody else. By now, she believed anything to be possible.

"Here you go." Nami gave Penguin the stuff she had prepared after a short greeting. "You should solve these now, as you are still somehow motivated. It will be everything we do today, as I need to determine where exactly I need to pick up. Without proper basics, you can't do higher math." she smiled at him.

"Are you Killer's girlfriend?" the boy blurred out, before even looking at the papers.

"No, I am not." Nami replied with amusement. "Why are you asking?"

"Do you think he might like Laki?" he asked hopefully. "I believe they are both lonely. Since Wiper, he was Laki's boyfriend, died in car accident, she has been alone. And in my opinion they would be perfect for each other!"

"Maybe you should introduce them." Nami tried not to laugh at that thought. She had hit on both and they have become her friends, and now, somebody who knew them both as well wanted to set them up. What a funny world.

"And now solve the math problems and I might even help you get Shachi!" she joked, making Penguin turn red again, but he didn't say a word and got to work.

"Robin?" Nami looked at her friend who was standing at the window, looking out of it. "Is everything alright?"

The raven turned around, smiling. "It is. It's just that I don't want to imagine Spandam's reaction when I tell him I am pregnant."

"That doesn't sound like you." Nami commented with concern. "You usually don't fear that cocky bastard."

"I am pregnant, Nami." the older woman repeated. "And I have to announce that during today's teacher conference."

"What's wrong with that?" the ginger asked.

"He is waiting to get rid of me for ages." Robin shook her head. "And I believe he will try to do anything possible to do it right now. He won't get a chance like this again anytime soon. And I really don't want to be a housewife. I know that I will enjoy taking care of my child, but I know that I live for the knowledge and sharing it. I don't want Spandam to take it away from me."

The raven's confession saddened Nami.

"I will make sure that you don't lose this job." the ginger spoke up, a fire raging inside of her. "I won't allow that bastard to take that away from you! And now cheer up! I believe it isn't good for the baby when the mother is in such bad mood."

Robin smiled weakly and followed Nami to the meeting room, where half of the teachers were already waiting, most of them looking rather bored and annoyed as it was Friday afternoon.

Some of them looked as if they were about to strangle Spandam on the spot when he entered to start the meeting.

Nami didn't listen at all, sure that there would be a paper hanging in the teachers' room on Monday anyway. She was waiting for Robin to announce her good news, praying for support from the other colleagues.

When the point finally came, everybody was incredibly supportive, congratulating Robin and wishing her just the best.

Even before Spandam could open his mouth, one of the older female teachers, Tsuru, announced that she would help Robin sort out any legal problems concerning her work as she had enough experience being the mother of three, causing Spandam effectively to shut up and lifting a huge burden from Robin's shoulders.

Epilog:

Epilogue

It was already late when Nami arrived at the Rip Off Bar. She cursed Spandam for putting the teachers' meeting on Friday afternoon.

"I am so sorry for being late!" Nami blurred out upon her arrival inside of the small establishment.

Vivi was sitting at the counter and chatting with Shakky, the owner of the place and an older man she had never seen before.

"Let me guess: Spandam couldn't come down from his mighty horse?" Shakky looked at her with a bemused smile.

"Spandam?" The older man shot the bartender a questioning look. "What is that idiot doing these days?"

"Teaching." the woman replied with disgust. "They should have imprisoned him long ago, especially after assaulting those children..."

"You have to tell me that story!" Nami demanded, sitting down on the free barstool on Vivi's side.

"Nami, this is Silvers Rayleigh. He is something like Shakky's boyfriend." Vivi introduced the guy and started laughing, as both of the mentioned people started arguing on the spot.

"Well, seems like a working and healthy relationship." Nami joked, getting all four of them to laugh.

"It miraculously is." Silvers commented, while Shakky served one of the other guests. "If something doesn't work, I simply disappear and come back when I believe it to be solved."

"Does it work?" Nami asked doubtfully.

"Nope. But I mostly get into trouble and can't come back earlier." Silvers laughed.

"You are a fucking idiot." Shakky sighed. "What do you want to drink?" She asked Nami and took her order.

"Shakky, you know everything and everybody, right?" Vivi asked out of the sudden. "What do you think about Gol D Roger?"

The bartender didn't reply for a while. "I believe it isn't my opinion you should seek. Silvers was one of his men." With that, she walked over to some customers who have been demanding her attention.

"Why do you ask?" Silvers whispered.

"Personal reasons." the bluenette replied, looking him straight in the eyes.

Nami watched the scene in silence, sure that she was getting her part of the story later.

"He was a magnificent man." Silvers stated. "You should be aware that the people he really knew would never say a bad word about that man."

He drank some of his beer. "Is that what you wanted to know?"

Vivi nodded, staring in front of herself with an empty expression.

"Well, I should be going." Silvers stood up after a short glance on the clock. "Stuff has to be done. Have a good night." he disappeared out of the door before the girls could react, just in time to let the knife Shakky threw after him struck the door.

"That idiot didn't pay again." the woman sighed with annoyance. "I will fucking kill him one day."

"You rather shouldn't." Nami commented, earning herself an angry look.

"I bet you will end up with somebody just like him." Shakky muttered and walked away.

"I bet I will." Nami whispered, before turning to Vivi.

"What was up with that?" she questioned, her curiosity getting the better of her.

"I believe he was Ace's father. Ace is the son of Gol D Roger." the bluenette whispered in an upset tone.

"How did you find out?" Nami wanted to know. This was some other news.

"Pell." Vivi admitted. "You know how good he is with stuff like this. Remember how he dealt with that guy who annoyed Nojiko? Well, he has gotten even better at getting information."

Nami shook her head, stunned.

"But what are you going to do about your relationship now that you know?" she asked carefully. Not that the news changed anything about how she saw Ace or something like that, but now she understood his psychical and emotional condition and as it seemed, he had even more problems than she had initially assumed.

Vivi didn't reply. Instead she motioned Shakky that she wanted two tequila shots.

"I broke up with him already." she finally confessed when Shakky put the glasses in front of them. "It was even before I got the news about his father from Pell."

This time, it was Nami who stayed silent.

"This afternoon, I went over to his place and talked with him about everything. I told Ace that I am not longer capable of dealing with his jealousy. Nami, I really really love him, but there are certain boundaries he has overstepped and I can't no longer date him."

"It's fine. You did what was best for yourself. Don't feel guilty about it." Nami tried to snoot her friend, but was stopped by Vivi turning to face her directly.

"No. You don't understand." the bluenette's eyes were clear and her face lighting. "I don't feel guilty. I feel completely fine. I know that I did what was best."

She fell silent again.

"I feel free. Just like you said. I am happy now as it is." her smile stretched from ear to ear.

"That's great." Nami hugged her friend. "That's really great."

"Ace and I have decided to stay friends. We consider to try it again later, whenever we feel like it, but he has to deal with his problem and he knows that. I am going to help. But for now, for now all that doesn't matter." she gleamed. "But are you happy, Nami?" she whispered into her ear as they were still hugging.

"I am." the ginger replied in a steady voice. For once, she believed it herself. "I am over Enel now, I have met a lot of interesting people and I am sure even more will come."

"Than let us be happy together." Vivi ended the hug just to get her glass. Nami did the same. "To happy singles! Cheers!" both emptied their glasses in one go, starting to laugh uncontrollably just after.

"This will be a great evening!" Nami couldn't but comment.

THE END