

Ravyn Phoenix

Translations

Full Metal Panic!

Burning One Man Force

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Chapter 02 part A

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Translator's Notes:

Sorry about the longer than normal delay. Both Jeannie and I had our university finals in the last month, so you can understand that we were quite busy. Finals are all done now, YAY! I'm going to try and get at least one release out a month. So please no more asking when we'll update.

I'm not sure if any of you noticed but I've disabled comment capability on my LJ for FMP update posts. I really do appreciate all the comments and support, but those LJ notifications go to my personal email account, and I want to keep my personal email as unrelated to the FMP project as possible. So if you want to comment or leave feedback, please send it to FMPnovels@hotmail.com.

I also want to apologize if I seemed rude or angry in any of the emails or comments I replied to. I know there is no excuse for it, but I've just been really stressed out because of work and school. And when I get stressed, my patience tends to drop off the face of the earth into oblivion. So, again, I'm sorry if I sounded like a B****.

I want to, once again, thank Jeannie for all her help, and for making sure I didn't pull out all my hair in frustration.

We'll also be holding a contest. The details of it will be posted a little later.

Well enough babbling.

Please enjoy Chapter 02 part A.

-Ravyn



Part 02

A illustration of a Savage sitting
before ancient ruins. Sousuke
participates in the match as the
pilot for Nami's team - "Crossbow".

02: New World

Once they are finished with the post-battle maintenance the crew heads off to a local pub and Nami raises her glass in victory. Some music plays, adding to the lively atmosphere, and glasses of beer are drained and emptied. Everyone who happens to be at the pub is treated to drinks. Curiously enough, several of the customers had actually bet on 'Crossbow' to win in the match and had come over to offer their congratulations.

For Nami, the fact that they had won is finally sinking in, and she is completely ecstatic.

"Everyone drink up! Today it's our treat!" shouts Nami.

"OOH~!!"

Lemon, along with everyone else, raises his glass with a hearty cheer and a red face. They had only met for the first time today, but Lemon and the Crossbow team are acting as if they are all good old friends.

".....and it's all thanks to that bastard Dao!"

"Anyone who bet on that asshole must be pissed! If we're lucky, maybe they'll kill him in a rage!"

"And they were only one step away from the long-awaited A class, too. Aha~ what a great feeling!"

Many people burst out laughing at that remark as they clinked their glasses together and ate their food.

Thanks to the unexpected, complete and total victory they received – even after Lemon collected his share – a large sum of prize money. With it, Nami and the other members of Crossbow repaired the broken parts on the old model Savage. They were also able to buy a few high-class computer parts.

As bleak as the day had seemed it all worked out in the end. And now the future was looking bright.

All in all, they have every reason to celebrate.

Lemon and the maintenance crew belt out lyrics to some national war song – making sure everyone hears them– as they steadily make their way across the cheaply made floorboards.



“Boss! You took some good photos, right!? You’re sure to get that Peanut prize now, aren’t ya?!”

“A ha ha ha ha! That’s just the thing, I was so preoccupied with watching the match that I completely forgot to take any pictures!” Lemon laughed.

“Then, you can take pictures of my Kami-san! I’m tellin’ you, she’s beautiful!”

“Liar!” Ash, the mechanic, cuts in, “Kami-san weighs over 80 kilos! How the hell is she beautiful!? Cut the crap! A picture of her wouldn’t be worth anything!”

“At the most it would be worth a Raspberry award!” someone else adds.

“Isn’t that a movie award!?”

“Who cares! Bartender! Another round!”

Sagara Sousuke, holding a glass of mineral water, is sitting sullenly in a corner of the pub and watching the group continue their incoherent conversation at a distance.

The pub is cheap. There are huge holes in the walls that are patched up with iron sheets, and the roof is in a similar state. The roof must leak pretty badly during the rainy season. The naked, hanging light bulbs and the weak, flickering light from the kitchen microwaves provide just enough lighting to see the worn-out Thailand movie poster and a painting of some unknown landscape on the wall. Random decorations of artificial flowers and beads glitter throughout the room. Meanwhile, a subtle stench is seeping through the thin wall that separates the inside of the pub from the alley outside. To put it bluntly, the pub is disgusting – but Sousuke doesn’t really care.

Nami breaks away from the drinking and singing group and, without any hesitation, sits beside Sousuke with her back to the wall just like him.

“Having fun?” she asks.

“Affirmative,” answers Sousuke, sipping his water.

“Strange English.”

“I said it correctly.”

Nami laughs. Sousuke doesn’t take any offense.

“You’re Japanese right?”

“Correct.”

“Were you in the Japanese Army?”

“No. Such a career isn’t possible for someone my age. Besides, Japan doesn’t have an ‘Army.’ They have a ‘Self-defense Force’ organization.”

“What’s the difference?”

“I’m not sure. It has to do with some legal interpretation problems though. Probably because they are a defeated country.”

“Oh.”

Nami quietly wonders how the topic she had started so casually had turned in to such a formal conversation.

“Where did you learn about AS technology?”

“Afghanistan.” Sousuke replies simply, “The first AS I piloted was the same model as the one I operated today. It was approximately 6 or 7 years ago. Since then I’ve learned maintenance and servicing of other AS models from all over the place. RK-91 and RK-92 Savage. Mistral. Cyclone. Bushnell. Gernsback–”

“‘Gernsback’? The M9?”

“I lied. Just forget it.”

“...?”

The M9 Gernsback – the first of its kind – is the latest and most powerful AS that is officially undergoing OPEVAL (operational evaluation) by the United States Forces. Super high performance, super expensive. Even if it were second-hand, any pilot would be extremely lucky to control such power and maneuverability in combat. From what she’s read about it – assuming the data in the specialized magazines is to be trusted – it wouldn’t be unreasonable to describe this new model as a ‘monster.’ But even that one word description doesn’t do the M9 justice.

There’s no way some mercenary brat could have experienced operating a state-of-the-art AS like the M9.

“Afghanistan you say? They have Japanese immigrants there?”

“No.”

“But you said you were Japanese. How did you get there?”

“There are various reasons.”

“Doesn’t your story seem a bit strange? No matter how I see it, you and I are roughly the same age. Plus, back then, Regular armies were the only ones that had access to Savages.”

“That information is incorrect. The Guerrilla forces used ASes they stole from the Soviet forces. I have been a soldier and pilot since I was young – for as long as I can remember.”

“Oh, I see– wait, Guerrilla?! Why would a Japanese kid become an Afghani Guerrilla –”

Nami cuts herself off when she notices Sousuke casting his eyes to the floor silently.

“I’m sorry. I’m being too nosy.”

“It’s fine.” Sousuke shakes his head then looks at Nami. “Do you mind if I ask you a question?”

“Sure. What is it?”

“You’re young. That in itself is not unusual in a town like this. However, getting your hands on an AS, even in this place, is very difficult. Where did you get that AS?”

It is a reasonable question. In fact, it’s a question everyone she meets usually asks. Having nothing to hide, Nami obediently answers.

“I picked it up after my home town was destroyed.”

It only happened one or two years ago, but she talks about it as if it happened decades ago.

“It was collapsed and abandoned on its back in one of the crop field ditches, blocking the way completely. Diesel oil leaking from the tank severely damaged the crops. Not that it mattered... by that time most of the townspeople had fled or were dead.”

“A war?”

“Yes. A war between Government troops and Rebel Forces. National Troops were appearing all over the Country, burning villages and towns, and snatching away property and assets as they saw fit. Men were conscripted into the army and sent far away to fight, never to be seen again. Women...were abducted, beaten, and raped by soldiers who were

saying the towns needed to earn their food and board somehow. But that's pretty common in situations like that."

"You managed to stay safe."

"I was lucky. When my town was attacked, I was visiting the neighboring village. When I returned—"

The scene that welcomed her home back then flashed before her eyes. She thought she had finally reached the point where she could talk about it easily. But it looks like that is impossible after all. Creasing her brow, Nami shakes her head, attempting to shake off the looming shadows of that nightmare from her mind.

"That Savage had helped reduce more than half of the town to ashes. And for some reason the pilot had abandoned it. It had been shot – there were bullet holes scattered here and there – but it could still move. I claimed it, even though the surviving townspeople were dead set against the idea."

Nami gazes up at the ceiling.

"But, I want to rebuild that Town."

The bitter memories will never fade. Nor will the faces of the townspeople who died. Faces forever frozen in despair, fear and surprise.

"That's why I came to Namsak. I needed to find a way for one young girl to earn a large income. Not like those pitiful children that tend to live in places like this, standing on street corners, selling their bodies and doing everything necessary to earn every bit of money they can. And still all they can afford to wear are worn-out rag-like clothes.

"But the Arena is different. Today's winnings were pretty impressive, right? As long as you have the skill to win, you can earn an amazing amount of money. Especially if your team advances to A class status."

"I see."

"With the money I earn here, I can restore the desolated crop fields and repair the roads and bridges too. I'm sure the surviving townspeople will come back if I do that. If that happens – I could go back to school there. That's what I'm aiming for anyway."

"School?"

“Yeah. It was the only school in the town. The building was destroyed in the bombing, and the kind teacher was killed when the ASes attacked, but it really was a good school.”

“A good school...” Sousuke muttered and looked down. His voice held a tinge of longing – as though he was homesick. Memories of a far away place play through his mind. Memories of a completely different world he knows well, but cannot be a part of.

“Uh-huh, it was a good school. They took me in, even though I was part foreign blood.”

“You’re part Japanese?”

“How could you tell?”

“Your name isn’t very common.”

“Yeah, apparently my father was a Japanese business-man, or something. I don’t know if that’s true, but that’s what my deceased mother told me. She died before the town was destroyed. She stepped on a mine.”

Sousuke murmurs something, but because he is taking a sip of his water, all Nami can hear is ‘history...’

“What’d you say?”

“I said, every human being has a history.”

“I like that. It’s a good saying.”

“But it’s only common sense.”

Nami smiles and laughs.

“Yeah, I guess it is... what the–, Monsieur! Master Lemon!” Nami shouts toward the group of men.

“Are you making excuses for sabotaging your own work? Shouldn’t you be collecting data for your story before you get pissed-drunk?”

“Wha~? It’s no use Nami-chan. I can’t when it’s so dark out! A ha ha ha ha ha! Come over here, come on!” says a very drunk Lemon as he raises his glass of beer in good humor and beckons Nami over.

“You see, I can collect data~ this way too. Like, for example, your bust-waist-hip measurements~ ha ha ha ha! No, just kidding. That’s rude.”

All the men burst into laughter.

“That’s fine, Monsieur! Listen! Measure if you like! Go on, get measuring!”

Nami answers with a teasing smile

“I would never~ ‘cause you see, I am a gentleman – somewhat anyway. Why Nami-chan, that AS? ...wait, I meant, why do you have a robot? I really want to know~ It’s for my research! See? I can do my job just fine~”

“Why don’t you ask Sagara? He knows the story now, he can tell you.”

“Aah! Sagara-kun you know? Not fair~ Tell me too, ‘kay? Please?”

“I don’t mind... but the problem is whether or not you will remember it tomorrow morning.” Sousuke says seriously.

Lemon, who strongly reeks of liquor, promptly bounds over and embraces Sousuke. Sousuke just grimaces and turns his face away so he doesn’t have to smell Lemon’s breath.

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It is well past midnight before the celebration is over.

Since Lemon is so drunk he can’t even walk straight, it was decided that Ash, the mechanic, would accompany him back to his hotel to make sure he gets there safely. After that, everyone goes their separate ways. Sousuke’s hotel is on the way to Nami’s place, so they walk part of the way together. They pass the still bustling red-light district, and when they reach the quiet –unattended– park, the two of them go their separate ways.

“There is no match scheduled this week,” Nami says before they part, “but we have a lot to do tomorrow. There are various part-buying and maintenance processes you have to learn about. Come to the AS hanger by noon tomorrow, Okay?”

“Roger.”

“Goodnight.”

After giving him an exaggerated salute, Nami walks away. When she glances back she can see Sousuke’s figure standing before the entrance to the cheap hotel.

She keeps walking for a while after that.

The apartment she calls home is only four blocks away. It may be a small, old, and uncomfortable room, but nevertheless it is always there waiting for her when she

returns home. All she wants is to go home and relax. She is dead tired from the, all together, stressful day she had.

This neighborhood is only a little ways away from the red-light district, but it is fairly quiet right now. It is almost unbelievable that the daytime hustle and bustle can quiet down enough at nighttime for one to think clearly. A dirty old taxicab passes her by and music blares through the open window, but the tune fades into the night air as the taxi drives away.

Sensing someone watching her, Nami suddenly looks around.

“.....”

She doesn't see anyone. No—

Suddenly, a man emerges from the alley right next to the sidewalk and grabs Nami's arm. She instinctively tries to shake free, but the man's grip is too strong.

“Didn't you know its dangerous walking alone at night?” He whispers into her ear.

“!?”

A moment later her attacker's face becomes visible. She knows the hideously deformed scar on his cheek as well as that pigheaded voice and that arrogant way of speaking.

It's Dao.

Had he been following her since she left the bar so he could ambush her? Nami doesn't dare take her eyes off of Dao. He has a large piece of abrasive plaster on his nose. He also has bandages wrapped around his head. Both injuries are most likely the results of today's match.

Dao isn't alone. Three other men, mechanics from Dao's team, surround her completely. The triumphant look they have on their faces would make one think they have caught over a hundred enemies in their trap, instead of just one woman.

“I didn't get a chance to thank you for today, so I came by to express my gratitude. Understand?”

“Geh...”

“Whoa there. You're carrying a pistol, aren't ya? Where are you hiding it? Here? Or here?”



Dao persistently runs his hands across her waist, thighs, and crotch in search of the revolver even though she knows for a fact that he had detected it in her pocket a while ago.

“Oh, found it!... good grief. A kid shouldn’t be carrying such a thing.”

Dao takes the revolver and shoves it into his pocket easily.

Nami’s voice trembles with a mix of anger, fear, and hatred. “Is the defeated dog getting his revenge? You really are rotten. You pathetic bastard–!”

A hand strikes her hard across the cheek.

“!”

He hits her again. A muffled moan escapes her before she has the chance to stop it.

“Let me warn you, every time you say vulgar words like ‘Defeated dog’ or ‘Pathetic bastard’, I’ll automatically hit you. If I don’t like your tone of voice, I’ll hit you. Even if you say nothing at all, if I feel like it, I’ll hit you. Those are the rules. Understand?”

“.....”

“Good girl. A while ago, at the Arena, I told you ‘I don’t like you.’ That was a lie. In truth, your beauty makes me shiver in excitement. Do you understand? Like this–”

Nami’s head is yanked back forcibly by the hair – exposing her entire throat – and a sense of dread slams into her. Dao runs his tongue along the muscle of her neck. All the air leaves her lungs in an instant, and – of its own accord – a scream rips from her throat.

“Ah, delicious. But, relax. We’ll get along just fine. I’ll use anything, even drugs, to make you my woman.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me! I’d rather die–”

Another slap across the face.

“I told you the rules didn’t I? Ah, here they come. That’s our ride.”

A second-hand station wagon pulls up and Dao’s friends are driving it. When the car stops in front of them, one of Dao’s lackeys opens the back-seat door quickly.

“Oh, by the way. About that brat you hired as your pilot. I don’t know his name, but I had that guy followed.”

“!”

“You seem worried. I didn’t order anything in particular. But – well, it’s possible that that idiot is dead in that cheap hotel, with his head shoved in the toilet. Even if that’s the case, I’m not taking responsibility. It’s a shame we’ll be making work troublesome for the policemen though.”

“You’re inhuman! Fucking bastard! God damn you! He only fought in the match, because you killed my pilot! He had nothing to do with this! You–”

Two consecutive backhands across her face stop Nami’s rant short. As promised he hit her, twice in a row.

“Yes he did, he played a big part. He humiliated me in front of everyone didn’t he? Acting so high and mighty. Right about now, he’s probably kissing the inside of a toilet bowl with his arms and legs flailing,” Dao says, and his lackeys guffaw and laugh.

Then–

“So, is that what happened to me?”

Everyone turns to the new voice, and there, standing in the shadows on the sidewalk, is Sagara Sousuke.

“You must be Dao. Your friend is sleeping with his head in the toilet.”

“.....what’d you say?”

“Release her. Get in the car and leave. I’ve also been through a lot lately. So if possible, I would like to avoid any trouble.”

Dao throws his head back and laughs, causing his grotesque face to warp even further.

“You intend to negotiate? You’ve got guts, kid. You should have escaped alone while you had the chance–”

Even if I do want your help, Dao is completely right, Nami thinks.

“It’s dangerous! Run away! It’s better if at least one of us escapes...” Nami cries out as complicated feelings stir within her.

“I can’t do that. You’re my boss after all,” Sousuke answers calmly, and Dao gives the signal to attack.

“You’ll regret that decision,” Dao says.

Knives and pipes gleam in the moonlight. Sousuke sighs as the men step forward.

It’s a long suffering sigh.

“Good grief... it’s hectic right from the first day,” he mutters, and takes a fighting stance.

There are four people in front of him and two men in the car.

There are no firearms, but his opponents are armed with iron pipes and knives. Some of them have had military training and are holding the knives in a backhand grip and the iron pipes like baseball bats with their hands separated slightly. Against that, one unarmed punk wouldn’t stand a chance.

Even Nami can understand that.

Civil war and border disputes have continued in this area for a long time. Most of the young men that live here are masters at handling weapons. Murder is practically an art form in this place. That’s why street fights here are completely different from those that take place in some towns in peaceful countries. This fight will get ugly.

Surprisingly, the confrontation between Sousuke and the others ends rather quickly.

“How troublesome.”

When Dao attacks, Sousuke dodges easily, grabs Dao’s wrist, and snatches the knife away so quickly that those watching can’t see what happens until it is too late. Sousuke twists and pins Dao’s arm behind his back, mercilessly pressing the stolen knife against Dao’s throat.

“...!!”

15cm below the ear, half of the blade sinks into the flesh, however there is little bleeding. Dao isn’t dead yet, either. His ugly face is distorted more by surprise than fear as his eyes widen and stare in shock.

“You’d better not move,” Sousuke informs Dao’s Lackeys as he turns himself and Dao to face them.

“Respiratory tract. Nerves. Carotid artery. I avoided them entirely when I cut you. However, if any of you try anything...”

“Wh...!?”

“Do you understand? You’ll either die drowning in your own blood, or you’ll live and be bedridden for the rest of your life.”

Everyone freezes. This town's tropic heat is terribly humid and muggy, but in this small area alone it is completely different. Everyone here can swear the temperature has just dropped at least ten degrees.

"Give up on the girl. The team too. Never get involved with them again. Swear it and I'll release you. This compromise is more than fair, considering you're Rick's murderer. How's that?" Sousuke asks.

"...che"

"Swear it slowly. An artery is already damaged."

"...I...I swear...to not...meddle...with...th...them an-...anymore..." Dao replies, breaking into a cold sweat while he does so, he looks like he is close to wetting his pants.

"How about the rest of you?"

Startled, the other men exchange significant looks, and with expressions of disgust they reluctantly, but unanimously, concede.

"We get it. We give our word."

"You win."

"So let Dao go."

Watching them cautiously Sousuke removes the knife from Dao's throat.

"Leave," Sousuke says, and pokes Dao in the back with the knife.

Dao staggers forward unsteadily and, supported by his men, he is taken to the car. Casually, one of the men stays behind waiting for a chance for Sousuke to drop his guard, but there isn't the slightest bit of an opening. Sousuke just stares at him calmly. The look is fairly unsettling and, shivering uneasily, the man edges backwards awkwardly.

"What are you looking at?" The man stutters weakly. "C-creepy bastard."

The insult is as pathetic as a coward's fleeing remark.

The car engine roars to life and once all the men are inside – before the doors are even closed – the car takes off down the road toward the city-center of Namsak.

"I'm Sorry," Sousuke tells Nami as he watches and makes sure the tail lights disappear into the distance.

"Wh...why are you apologizing?"

“I probably should have killed him after all. He doesn’t seem like the kind of person that will back down quietly.”

Nami watches his profile as he gives his reason, and some feeling awakens inside her.

In a punk fight in some other peaceful town, this fight might not have been sensibly resolved with one or two exchanged curses. That’s because they wouldn’t realize Sousuke’s strength. But for those who grew up in battle, like Nami, Dao, and the others who live in Namsak, they understand it well.

Sousuke is strong.

He clearly has an experience of bloodshed that others just can’t compare to. If the enemy has five or ten men, he could still silence them.

It isn’t only his body language or the way he speaks. During the fight his behavior was relaxed – not showing even the slightest bit of tension – Isn’t that appearance enough to indicate the power he possesses?

“I wonder,” Nami finally answers while quieting down her excited feelings. “It’s true that your opponents were idiots, but do you really think they didn’t realize how strong you are?”

“That’s only speculation, I am only one man, after all,” Sousuke says. “I know all too well, there is only so much one soldier can do.”

Strangely enough, his voice is slightly forlorn and self-mocking.

“Humility...man, that’s an extreme weakness. I don’t understand you more and more.”

“Is that so?”

“Yeah, but thank you for saving me.”

Considering the fact that she was always acting tough with the people around her, saying stuff like ‘Help? I don’t need it’, she was pretty shocked herself that her eyes and body could express her gratitude so genuinely.

“You’re my boss. One should protect their employer.”

“...That’s the only reason?”

“Also because you are a good woman.”

He says this with such a serious face, Nami is taken aback.

“Uh, um w-what... do you mean by that?...”

“I mean you are a good person. That’s what I’ve thought since you told me your story at the pub.”

“Ah, that...”

Way to completely ruin the mood, Nami grumbles internally.

“As I thought, I don’t understand you at all. You’re just too.....weird.”

“Weird?”

“Uh-huh, weird. Really weird.”

“I’ve been called that before.”

“Why doesn’t that surprise me.....Hah-, ha ha ha ha!”

After laughing for a while, Nami calms down enough to say, “... well, this street seems to be dangerous at night. Will you be walking this helpless, beautiful girl back to her home?”

Sousuke does escort her home, but leaves immediately afterwards. There is nothing she needs to worry about. He just isn’t interested in that sort of thing.

Oh well...

A lot had happened in one day. Nami’s adrenalin is still pumping. She really needs to cool her head and get a good night’s sleep.

After having a cold shower, Nami puts on underwear and a tank top and climbs into bed.

The moment her head hits the pillow, the doorbell rings.

It couldn’t be Dao and his lackey’s again, could it?

Nami gets up and silently pads over to the door. Unlocking it, she opens the door cautiously and peers outside.

Standing right in front of her doorway is none other than Sagara Sousuke – knapsack and a big heavy duffle bag in hand.

“Wh-what’s the matter?”

“I was kicked out of the hotel. I need a place to stay.”

The hotel owner had found out that Sousuke had nearly killed the member of Dao’s gang, who had attacked him, and left him in one of the hotel’s toilets. When Sousuke had returned, the hotel owner had told him, “Leave.”

“...b-but. You see? I-... by my-... but I live alone,” Nami manages to say. Suddenly she remembers her state of dress – she’s half naked! – and quickly hides behind the door.

“I know that,” Sousuke answers, clearly not seeing what the problem is. “It will be more convenient in case Dao and his friends decide to target you again. I’ll become your bodyguard. I don’t mind if you subtract the lodging fees from my pay.”

“Eh, but, um, something like that is...”

“You don’t want to?”

“...I understand what you’re saying, and it makes sense. But, you see? This kind of thing... isn’t it strange?”

“I’m not sure what you mean. Perhaps you would like it if it was me along with another person?”

“Eh? No, that’s not what I meant-... *sigh*, whatever.”

Hearing the vague, hurried reply, Sousuke nods.

“Understood. Then, get dressed.”

“Huh?”

“I’m going to Lemon’s place. You’re coming too. His hotel is some distance from here, so it will be difficult to run there if you’re wearing that.”

“Eeehh? Why do I have to~”

“I’ll lodge here then.”

“Ah, geez.”

Nami finally gives in and heads over to where Lemon is staying, trying to fight off her drowsiness during the 1 km walk through the Namsak night.

The next morning, Michael Lemon wakes up from his half-dead drunken stupor to find Nami sleeping peacefully in bed beside him, wearing only her underwear.

“Eh? No way! What? EEEHH!?”

I got drunk and slept with a minor?! Lemon panics at the thought. Face draining of color, Lemon lets out a shriek as he scrambles off the bed, and lands in a heap on the floor.

Ok, now he’s really confused.

Lemon takes in the scene as he stares underneath the bed.

Sagara Sousuke is sleeping soundly under the bed.
His eyes slide half open, sending Lemon an enquiring look.
And in one hand he grasps a knife.

~*~

When all is said and done, Nami and Sousuke end up living together with Lemon. Surprisingly this isn't a result of Sousuke's insistence, it's Nami's. This way she doesn't have to worry about Dao targeting her again and the hotel Lemon is currently staying in is considerably high-class in this town. It's simply too good of an opportunity to pass up. This ulterior motive on her part, of course, is more than clear.

"Look, I'm pretty," Nami informs Lemon nonchalantly. "It wouldn't look good if a girl like me lived alone with a man. I'm Catholic. So, if the three of us live together, that shouldn't be a problem – that's what I think anyway."

"You have nothing to worry about, because I'm not that kind of guy at all," Lemon answers.

"Then do you want to kick Sousuke out and have you and me sleep together?"

"You're such a pain."

"I knew it! That's your ulterior motive," Nami laughs.

"Why has it turned out like this!?"

"There, there. It's fine, isn't it? It's only for a little while anyway. That's just how it is. So, look after us, ok? Now that this talk is over, I'm going to borrow your bath."

Ignoring any further objections, Nami makes a beeline for the bathroom.

Sousuke is silently unpacking his bags and Lemon's shoulders sag in defeat. He still has little more than a month scheduled to stay in this town, and he has a feeling both Nami and Sousuke have every intention of rooming with him for the rest of his stay at the hotel.

And so, these three peoples' life together begins.

With Nami sleeping on the bed, Lemon on the couch, and Sousuke under the bed. For some reason, it turned into that kind of an arrangement.

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