

Words: 656

Under the stretch of the burrow's cavernous sky, Jasper watched as Dan's heaved his hammer up and over his shoulder: the wood worn and old from years of use.

The master of the mochi shop had finally agreed to show Jasper how to make his famed seasonal mochi, but as with all of Dan's requests, the other bun had to prove himself capable.

Dan grunted, his eyes sharp, "For this first lesson, I will hold the hammer and you will knead the mochi with your hand."

Jasper grinned, his eyes sparkling with perhaps a little mischief, "Aw why can't I hold the hammer? I'll be careful."

Dan gave Jasper a blank look and sternly shook his head, "I have years of practice and I know I will not hit your hand. However, I do not want you to risk hurting my hands."

Jasper playfully huffed, "I would never try to hurt you, Dan, it would be a waste." His wink was openly ignored by Dan, as the older bun moved to press a ball of mochi dough into a large wooden bowl.

Dan rolled his shoulders as he looked at Jasper again. "After I pound the mochi, you knead it and take your hand away. I will not be held responsible if you're not careful, do you understand?"

Jasper pouted, wanting to cross his arms and huff about not being trusted, but that desire was quickly lost when Dan raised his arms and held the hammer high. It might have been the lighting outside or the way Dan's biceps flexed, but he did look handsome when he was at his element.

Jasper opened his mouth, probably about to spout off about Dan's arms, but Dan was quick to cut him off. "Get ready and stop staring."

Jasper's mouth clicked shut as he got into position.

The first few pounds of the hammer were easy, all Jasper had to do was fold the dough each time, but as Dan kept going, the other bun seemed to realize this was a lot more labor intensive than he assumed.

Dan was a powerhouse of energy and it seemed he took mochi as serious as everyone assumed, he wouldn't stop until the dough was perfect. Even as Jasper felt a burn in his hands as he tried to keep up.

Who knew he would have to knead it so many times or that Dan would give no clues to how long they would keep this up? Jasper opened his mouth to ask for a break, but before he could, Dan reached a hand off to feel the dough.

He nodded at Jasper, "That should be enough."

Jasper sighed with relief. "Finally! I mean of course those big arms of yours could go without stopping, but my arms were about to give out."

Dan raised an eyebrow, for a split second Jasper could have sworn he looked amused. "Practice makes it easier."

"So you say," Jasper teased, before placing his hands on his hips. "Now what?"

Dan reached out to pick up the dough and place it in a smaller bowl. "We go inside and fill it." He started to walk towards the shop's back door, a slow pace so Jasper could quickly catch up to him.

Jasper's tail wagged. "What kind of filling? Can we eat them soon?"

Dan held up a hand, moving the bowl to his other arm. "Don't rush... but if you're really curious, we'll be using ice cream.."

Jasper grinned, following after Dan and boasting about how many ice cream mochis he got each year around the winter holidays.

Maybe there was something to learn about making mochi, the dedication and drive a succubun needed to make this a key point to their life. There was no Dan, if he wasn't making dangos and mochi.

Especially when Jasper got to eat as many ice cream mochis as he could, before Dan told him off for it.