

“ — i'mma' great cook! ain't nothin' t' be afraid of. ”

“ now, or like ... when you were a human person. ”

“ the when doesn't matt'a! i still got it, frankie. don't worry 'bout nothin'. ”

anyone sane of mind would be worried. fontaine was, after all, a cat. a plush one, at that, standing on the kitchen counter with burner flame simmering. frankie was a considerably dimwitted man, enough so to help his fluffy companion. heavy pot is retrieved at his demand, currently rooting about the fridge. clam chowder, the meal of champions, (*and of those specifically from the new england area*). “ — it's a generational recipe! word'a mouth only, nan ain't want nobody to steal it, y'a know? she taught pa, who taught me, and i'm teachin' you! ” he's dragging sloshing cup of water across the granite while he speaks, huff of determination as every ounce of energy goes into heaving it over pot's edge. the metal hisses with addition, glass brazenly thrown aside now that it's done with. by sheer luck alone, the tumble it takes doesn't cause it to shatter. thing rolls aimlessly, clatters safely into the sink.

fontaine is much more focused on newest ingredient haul, frankie dumping the armful besides him. they're meticulously picked through, plushpet searching for only the best. thickest of bacon strips are ripped from plastic packaging, greenest sticks of celery, largest onion possible. with more vegetables being plucked from the pile, it's quite clear what has to happen next. he's going for the knife, friend managing to beat him to it with his human motor skills. longer arms, actual fingers; he was bound to win from the start. “ — let me cut these, man, y'ain't even got falangis no more! ”

paws defiantly find their way to hips. “ — i'll have you know i ain't even know what that means. i'mma' reasonable guy, i'll let you have your fun. ” frankie left to chop their crop, fontaine was needed elsewhere. a near identical repeat of his process to get the tap in, this time with clam juice. it stinks to high heaven, permeates his nostrils more than the nearby onions. all of the discoloured liquid must go, chugging into what he insists would eventually be their dinner. frankie's tossing in as he dices, leaving bipedal cat in charge of stirring the thing. wooden spoon is fetched from its bin, almost big as he was. it's used to nudge recipe book first, closed and unread.

while its contents weren't of interest, the thing made a fine step stool. tips of toes no longer had to be balanced on, could see into their stew no issue from up here.

while it's hard to say if fontaine was telling the truth about this being some manner of family legacy, he sure does appear pleased with himself. eyes are to a half lidded close, hummed tune of satisfaction rattling about in him somewhere. even his tail is swishing side to side, a display of glee with every step forward. frankie makes good on his half of the tasks, (*even if his cuts are a little on the sloppy side*). by the time he's adding their cups of cream, chowder was reaching its boiling point. all that's left to add was the star of their show, their meals pizzazz. “ — y'a got the clams? ”

“ — clams. ”

a pause. the duo stare at one another in amounting silence, only interruption found in the form of bubbling liquids. another second, and fontaine furrows his bushy brows.

“ — frankie, it's clam chowda'! y'a think we ain't need clams for that? ” the man rubs at nape of his neck, looks sheepish. plushpet bellows a sigh, rubs paw over the bridge of his snout. “ this - can be savoured. veggie chowda'. never seen before! we're pioneers! ”

“ that doesn't seem true. ”

“ shut up. get bowls. ”