

# NORTH X NORTHWEST

## Chapter 12

The plan to steal naval information from the Count of Amiaeng was approved at a meeting. With the strong consent of captain Lil, navigator Cesar, and boatswain Alain, everyone's support was given. After that, not only officers but also senior sailors were called to discuss the details of the plan.

"...Hey guys, think about it! Do we really need to wear those wigs? Can't we just buy hats?.."

"...No, Captain. Do we really need to sneak in?.."

"...It bothers me! Huh?.."

"...Let's just go through the gate!.."

"...Marenzio, you're right!.."

At the words of the motivated sailors, Lil shook her head annoyed.

"I think many of you don't understand what kind of situation the Bell Rock is in. Do you want me to tell you? The sailors, who got injured a few weeks ago when we looted that Garni merchant ship, are still stuck at Doctor Pons' house. Now, some people failed to get proper treatment because our onboard doctors died. You may not think of it as a huge problem, but you heard that the Admiral is coming, right? So, who would want to board a pirate ship in this situation? To properly fill up those vacancies will be hard enough as it is, but let's go through the gate and throw everything away, right?"

"...But!.."

"...We're the ocean's sailfishes!.."

“...We can swallow everything!..”

“...We’re a pack of black whales!..”

“...Woohoo! Gulp!..”

When one started to shout like that, everyone took over the lyrics. “Gulp”, “Gulp” and “Slurp” were the ship’s slogans. The noisy sailors pretended to hold and swallow everything that was around them.

*‘What, I can’t believe these are high-ranking sailors.’*

Lil couldn’t stand the chaotic scene anymore and threw her dagger hard. As the captain’s dagger slammed into the glass of beer that helmsman Joe had put to his mouth, the cheers of the surrounding area stopped.

“Anyone who opens his mouth before I finish talking will be nailed beside the Bell Rock’s figurehead<sup>7</sup>. But before that, I make sure to stuff and sew your mouth, that way you can keep your mouth shut even after death. And don’t worry about getting lonely, I will make some big holes in your body for the crows to pass in and out through.”

It quieted down.

“It would be a beautiful sight, right?”

Then Lil glanced at Cesar, sitting next to her. After looking at Cesar once, the stiffly moving sailors put everything down that they were holding and quietly returned to their seats. There weren’t many sailors that didn’t know Cesar’s temper and combat skills.

“The Black Whale is merciful, so I’ll explain it very slowly one last time. You bastards don’t know about land battles, but it’s like night infiltration. In terms of naval battles, it’s a strategy like moving an axe to another ship on a dark cloudy night.”

“Oh, then the damage will be minimised.”

Lil nodded at someone's quick understanding.

"You have to move quickly and quietly. Well, shake off the Count on the way, and stealing a few potteries should be fine."

"Aye, Captain."

"...Well, that mansion must be pretty stacked, huh..."

The sailors estimated how long the count's warehouse hadn't been robbed for, and soon the inn burst into hollers. They went up on the table and raised beer glasses while yelling loudly.

Meanwhile, boatswain Alain stood tall.

"What a blessing it is to steal from anywhere mother ocean can't reach us!"

The sound of drinks being demanded pierced Lil's ears. Shouts were heard from all over the place, promising to exchange the stolen loot. There was no need to equally divide because it was not the ship's plan. The sailors are excited to own certain loot themselves. While talking excitedly, the boatswain shouted a question.

"But captain! How are we going to sneak in?"

Lil smiled. She anticipated such a question.

The atmosphere, which had been overly exciting, suddenly cooled down. Nothing good ever happened when the captain laughed silently. The sailors who knew it well stopped moving. They stood firm and took note of the captain's next words.

"If you want to sneak into an enemy's ship, you have to move as dark as night and as faint as fog. So, how do you sneak into the mansion?"

Courant, the youngest sailor, raised his hand. As Lil nodded, a cheerful voice shouted.

“We have to make sure that they don’t even know we’re inside!”

“Yes, you are right. We’re going to pretend to be Madame Rouge’s employees.”

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Georges Darlan, the Count of Amiaeng, was originally a person that had been appointed governor here. After a few large-scale naval battles, the Southern Pirates, who succeeded in defending the Amiaeng Islands, took the Governor as a prisoner. As the navy lost, they weren’t able to return. The count sent letters to the mainland several times requesting a rescue mission. But the emperor couldn’t create an imperial decree without a single nobleman in charge of the place and ignored his petition every time.

Still, the emperor had a bit of conscience left, and demanded that the count shouldn’t be harmed in any way — given that the count came from an influential family — so instead an order was issued to push the Amiaeng pirates away. When the Count heard the news, he lost his mind and tried to escape. He was caught by pirates shortly after and thrown into his house again.

Not surprisingly, it was only the beginning. Now several years have passed since then. The count formed a strange mutual relationship with the pirates. Taking bribes, and then getting looted. The stolen items came back the next day as a bribe and were stolen again after some time.

Lil had never robbed the count’s house before. Although it was small, it had a private army trained by the empire. The Amiaeng pirates used to pick on the count especially when they were drunk. At that time, they considered it a ‘justified assault.’ They would rush in and pick up anything their eyes could see.

Amiaeng was one of the toughest places within the Southern League of Pirates. Here resided also raiders that were not members of the league, and criminals that fled the empire hid in Amiaeng. As expected, the number of casualties was never minor.

*‘While being assigned in Amiaeng is the same as a demotion, an unit that’s imperially trained is still a formal unit, no matter how insignificant.’*

Lil never joined the madness to avoid losses within her crew. Hadn’t it been for the information they needed to acquire, the count’s private property wouldn’t have been stepped on.

The cheap wagon rattled loudly.

“Oh, god!”

“Oh, my ass!”

Because there were two big guys cramped in such a narrow space, the seats were even more uncomfortable. Lil pushed Marenzio who had been leaning towards her.

“You’re exaggerating.”

They weren’t accustomed to riding in a wagon and were going as far as saying that they were dying. Marenzio shouted while banging on the driver’s seat.

“Why aren’t we at Madame Rouge yet? How long have we been on this road? Maybe it’s faster to walk? Mate! Are you even heading in the right direction?”

“You bastard. Are you in a position to be angry at Cesar?”

The carriage stopped. It was an abrupt stop without a single warning. All four of them, swept away by the waves of tardiness, spread across the floor. Even the big Marenzio flew up and covered the much slender Courant.

“See? This is what happens when you piss off Cesar...”

Courant, the youngest and smallest sailor, was not even visible anymore. Lil raised her free leg and kicked the door. Cesar was standing outside and only bothered to help Lil up. Alain was already beside Cesar and took care of the other three.

Lil brushed off her clothes and looked around the dark forest road.

“We’re almost there.”

It took about four days to prepare for today. There was no major preparation required for this plan, but it was delayed because, in addition to selling the loot and dividing the dividend, it was also necessary to be prepared for departure at any time. The plan was drawn up hastily. A total of six people, including Lil, would disguise themselves as prostitutes and employees of Madame Rouge, entering the eastern side door and trapping the count without him even realizing it. With the count subdued, the group would split into two. Lil and Cesar will head to the study, while the rest of the men focus on securing the valuables in the count’s warehouse and bedroom. Keeping the fact that the admiral could arrive at any moment in mind, taking the count’s valuables was also a precaution.

*‘The Admiral’s intervention.’*

“...Damn it. That damn Admiral...”

Lil pinched the bridge of her nose. Once she started to worry about it, she couldn’t help but have a hard time.

*‘Sweeping all the treasures of the house wouldn’t be enough. What if the Admiral wages an all-out war in the southern seas?’*

Lil felt the fear now more than ever.

*‘We need to obtain accurate information.’*

“Captain. Someone’s coming.”

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*Footnote:*

*7. Figurehead: An image of a person or animal attached to the forefront of a ship as a decoration.*

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