

Northwest 171

Chapter 171

Its definitely Jerichos voice

Jericho started to cut the rope from the other side of the post. Lil didnt have the energy to feel disheartened about the fact that the rope was so easily cut, despite her having used all her strength to break free from them. Instead, she immediately fell to the floor like a sack of potatoes as soon as her body was released.

Jericho exclaimed in surprise from behind her.

Captain! Are you dead?

Her body had been tied up for so long that it convulsed to the point of numbness. Jericho carefully pushed Lil and turned her body over. When Lil managed to look up, she gasped as she endured the pain.

Oh! Whats this?

Ohhh, ughhh

Tsk ts. Its a spasm. Youre having cramps!

Jericho clicked his tongue and massaged Lils limbs.

Your lips are all chapped, your nose is runny, and your hair is a mess. Your limbs are convulsing like this, too. Oh boy, Captain, youre in terrible shape!

Sit Situation Agh! Agh!

Uhh, what do you mean

Hurry up

Well, to put it bluntly, the Captain is no longer the captain. Julio is the captain now. It was his condition for bringing in the Navigator Please, dont be too disappointed in us. He held us at gunpoint And he was desperate enough to sail the ship over the reefs, all right? So what else could weve done? The one who values his life more is the one who loses. He was aiming for that from the beginning

Damn it! So, he finally made his move.

Her tightly clenched fist hit the floor. Lil opened and closed her fists multiple times in an attempt to loosen her stiff muscles. As time passed, her vitality gradually returned. Lil roughly wiped her face with the water Jericho had given her and began arming herself. As she stuffed a hard piece of bread, wrapped in a cloth, into her mouth, she spoke again.

But is that really the only reason why Julio ran out of control? Damn, I thought he had a bit of sanity left If he was always this reckless, Valtano wouldnt have kept quiet about this but reported it. So, why didnt he If he has raised him from a young age, he shouldve known about Julios tendencies

Thats part of it

Lil glared at Jericho, who chewed on his hesitant lips.

What?

Mon

Come to think of it, when Alain whispered to Cesar, he also pronounced something beginning with Mon blah blah.

Lil slapped Jericho on the shoulder and demanded.

What are you hiding? Out with it, right now.

Mo the Mondovi fleet.

What?!

The Mondovi fleet has arrived. When Julio saw it, he went crazy and had us raise the anchor.

Lil dropped the bread she was holding. She needed a minute to gather herself. In complete disbelief did she look down at the fallen bread before turning to Jericho. Soon, her wheezing breath rose to her throat.

Why did you tell me this only now!

Alain said it would be better to take care of the Captain first before informing him.

As if that makes sense!

Lil struggled to rise from her position. She didnt have enough strength in her legs yet, but she managed to walk to the entrance of the cabin. Lil threw open the door and began running with a limp. She made her way through the tightly packed sea of hammocks. She passed white hammock after white hammock and even more hammocks swayed against the background of the dim deck. Despite seeing the same sight that wouldnt seem to end in forever, Lil rushed towards her goal. She ran, locking her eyes on the stairs. Her head became dizzy as she ran out of breath due to her exertion.

Eventually, Lil found herself clinging to the railing while struggling up the stairs.

On the gun deck, anxious sailors huddled and whispered. They formed different groups here and there, but what was common among them was that they all had nervous expressions. Only Marenzio was leisurely leaning against a pole, trimming his fingernails. Lil didnt stop and climbed further up until she stuck her head out onto the upper deck.

Up there, the pure white mist crawled across the wooden floor.

The Bell Rock had finally left the shallow waters and was sailing quietly. In the midst of all this, no one knew that Lil had stuck her head out. After all, everyones attention was fixed somewhere on the sea, giving Lil the opportunity to blend in. Wearing a hat with her hair tucked into it, she climbed the rest of the remaining steps. She calmly looked around her, finding the atmosphere as still as a mouse. The sailors were tightly clinging to the railings, masts, and rigging, keeping watch in all directions. Even the watchman, who stayed completely still while being entangled in ropes while holding up his telescope, looked more like a marionette.

As Lil glanced up at the stern, she saw Cesar holding the steering wheel.

Its been roughly half an hour since Cesar took over the helm. Thats not enough time to predict Mondovis route It was Julio who spotted the fleet and moved us recklessly Although were still near

shallow waters, it will be extremely difficult to not only locate the enemys ship but also our own because we didnt move under thorough calculation

With the feeling of grasping mere straws, Lil looked up at the sky. Unfortunately, the sun was only visible as a halo. With even their shadows being nothing more than blurs, she had no choice but to admit it.

The Bell Rock is at such a disadvantage. No, Cesar is too disadvantaged. The Navy, on the other hand, mustve stayed on course. Besides, that ship surely wont be alone. There will be two or even more battleships that can gauge each others position by exchanging signals with their stern lights

Along with a feeling of despair that clouded her mind was the feeling of cold fog tickling her back.

In a case like this, we have no choice but to wait for our enemy to show up first.

Her eyes, blinking nervously, kept looking up at the stern. Although it was the hourglass that she wanted to check, Lil met Cesars eyes and saw that he had already been staring at her. It was the first time she had seen his face after they exchanged their goodbyes. His hazy face in the hazy air gave her the impression that he was crying. Similarly, she felt like he saw her the same way.

Lil eventually lowered her head and moved to a different position. Even without looking, she could feel Cesars gaze, his damp gaze. She wasnt sure if there were truly tears in Cesars eyes or if it was a trick by the dampness of the mist, but Lil tried her best to think of something else.

Anyway The Bell Rock has no choice but to wait for the Navy to show up. I need to come up with a trick that will persuade these sailors to surrender. That trick is

Aahh!

..?

Searching for the source of the short scream, everyone turned their heads. The sailor, who was hanging from the main mast, pointed somewhere on the starboard side.

O Over there!

When they saw a bony and thorny figure floating through the mist, the Bell Rocks sailors gasped and collectively pointed their fingers there. Their opponent ships sails were white, and such whiteness extended to its mast and bow frame, making it look like a skeleton. Lil estimated it to be less than a hundred morts away

Move!

..?

The shout raised Lils eyes back to the stern. The voice belonged to Julio, who pushed Cesar away and grabbed the wheel.

Now that were out of the reefs, we dont need you anymore. I wont ever trust you.

The fuss was loud enough for everyone to notice. The officers exploded due to Julios act, which was nothing short of a declaration of breaching their agreement.

You madman! Hurry up and hand the steering wheel over to the Navigator!

We voted for you on the condition that you bring in the Navigator!

Shortly after, one of the sailors close to the rear deck drew his sword and sprung up the pike of the ship. But Julio was the quicker fellow for immediately drawing his gun and shooting him without delay.

Bang!

All movement stopped at once. The sailors body, which had been hit in the chest, rolled down the stairs. And then, even before everyones shock was over, Julio unhesitatingly pointed his gun at Cesars head.

This guy is next.

Lil screamed in agony.

No!

Julios eyes found her.

Whos that?

Julio wasnt threatening at all, so Lil only looked at the gun barrel pressing down on Cesars temple. The blood in her body pulsated and raced through her veins. After Julios men kicked the back of Lils knees and made her kneel, a cold piece of metal touched the back of her head.

Right, Id rather it be you, Lil Schweiz. At least hes still useful.

Lil put strength on her neck and tried hard not to lower her head. But then, she instinctively felt that their right side became empty. Her head, despite having risen in temperature, instantaneously cooled down.

Shit! The battleship is gone

Its gone again!..

What?

The Navy battleship is gone!..

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Julio glanced to his right. Because he could no longer see their enemys mast, Julio gnashed his teeth and grabbed the wheel again. In the meantime, he had cast Cesar to the left, leaving him to the rest of his men.

As time passed, the shape of the battleship appeared and disappeared twice more while constantly hiding its eternal presence. Lil was still on her knees, anxiously waiting for it to reappear, not knowing what kind of route their enemy was taking.

The feeling of missing an important detail tightened her heart, so Lil calmly reviewed the situation.

Im sure the fleet saw the Bell Rock too. Still, it doesnt make sense for them to keep the same distance as their last position. Theyre obviously hiding.

Lil felt strongly that they were trying to close the gap.

But how? At some point, the thick wooden poles, like their masts, should be seen even with the naked eye. No matter how strong the sea fog is, if they can see us from their side, we should be able to see them too

Lil had been immersed in her thoughts for a while now and belatedly realised that the muzzle that had been pressed against the back of her head had disappeared long ago. When she looked up, she witnessed that even Julios men were terrified, paying close attention to the movements on the sea.

Slowly getting up, Lil watched her surroundings.

A white hand rubbed across her elevated field of vision.

The mist was getting thicker and thicker.

And then, it faded

The Visha could move silently, without a single rattle, because the sailors only exchanged hand signals while pulling the rigging and rolling up the sails.

The shadow of a ship could be seen not far away and for an extended period of time, the Visha had been slowly approaching its target.

Ed turned the wheel slightly to the left and then kept it as it is. The impatience made his fingertips tingle, a feeling he highly enjoyed.

The Bell Rocks shadow slowly faded away again. It became visible in areas where the sea fog was light, then faded again in thicker areas. Ed took a pocket watch out of his uniform and pressed it.

It has been two hours since Clida last appeared But I already know where the Bell Rock will turn. So, theres no need to rush

Lils field of vision was completely blocked by white mist.

It was quiet on deck.

She listened attentively. She was certain. There was definitely another sound that blended with the crashing of the waves and the screeching of the Bell Rocks masts. A birds cry was heard in the distance, but that wasnt the source of the persisting sound.

Lil focused desperately.

Clap, shoot

Shallow waves whined at the hull.

Still, nobody dared to move.

As the mist ran over her cheeks, the tightly clumped white mass flowed coolly

Ed carefully relaxed his hand and gently fixed the wheel according to the all too familiar movement. Even though the Visha was considered a medium-sized battleship, it was still much

bigger than the Bell Rock. Knowing that, the image of his feet casting a shadow over the Bell Rock entertained his mind.

Ed put his left arm across the wheel and looked down at the opponents deck approaching at their starboard side

The haze of sea mist obscured everyones vision, while the tension of the sailors on board tightened to the point it could burst at any moment now.

Lil lifted her arm and swung it in front of her, trying to focus her vision in the midst of the hazy sight. She knew it was a futile attempt, but her rising anxiety would reach an unbearable height if she didnt try to do anything about it.

The ripples went on as the Bell Rock creaked

Rattled

Screeched

Theres definitely something in between the fog. Light, quite colourful, and somehow familiar Some wind Huh, the sound of wind?

As soon as she realised it, the wind blew. Starting from the bow, it swept the sea mist away as if cleaning whatever has been stagnant. Immediately after, the view that was revealed by the wind grew darker and darker. However, such darkness wasnt coming from the seas dark blue colour. It was an artificial colour close to jet black.

A shadow fell over their heads. The source of the shadow was a deck that was much higher than the Bell Rocks. It was so high that it looked like it was topped by one full floor.

Lil slowly raised her head and witnessed how the shadow of a huge hull leaned toward the Bell Rock, thereby engulfing her face. One of the ships jet-black gun barrels pointed directly at her, causing her frozen gaze to stutter along the opponent ships hull.

Above the uniformly protruding gun barrels, a noble golden band crossed its streamlined body. The engraving of the ships name in elegant handwriting on that golden background exhibited the fine taste of its designer.

Vi

When the remaining fog was pushed away, the name of the ship was revealed. The crystal clear nameplate flashed before her eyes. Her knees began to shake even before she could read it aloud. Lil couldnt control her quivering lips nor her uncontrollably trembling body.

With a groan, Lil pushed out the words she refused to believe.

[Visha]

Visha

Blood drained from her face when she mumbled the name.

Oh how did they we couldnt even see

It felt so unrealistic that she wondered if she was looking at a hallucination. Lil wished for the fog to obscure her vision again. But cruelly, the fog was gradually dissipating even further. As her vision grew much clearer, the terrifying reality weighed on her, causing her to roll her immovable eyes to check the ships name plate once more.

With it being the same, she was left with no choice but to admit their situation.

Admiral Retiro why is he here

The admirals flagship was close enough to engage in hand-to-hand battle at any time. That feeling of intimidation made Lil instinctively take a step back.

Then, a scream pierced through the silence.

That single scream triggered dozens of shouts to fill the air. The sound of panic-stricken sailors loading irons invaded Lils ears. Finally coming to her senses, Lil grabbed her waist

But, the captains horn was missing

She had no choice but to shout towards the foredeck.

Calm down!

However, Lil was in the middle of the main deck, a place where she wasnt able to grab anyones attention the way she could on the rear deck. Chaos began to spread and a group of shift workers hit her on the shoulder as they rushed forward. Lil stumbled onto the railing and raised her head to the deck behind her. Julio was busily pacing around. However, Cesar couldnt be seen.

He probably took advantage of the gap and escaped.

Lil closed her eyes tightly to think.

Stay focused. Please think Under the guise of refusing to conduct inspection, the Navy will demand our immediate surrender If worse comes to worst, I will have to take off my necklace

Lil tried hard to suppress the thoughts about the rumours surrounding the admiral. However, all the evil deeds she had heard about cut through her efforts.

I cant let my sailors fall prey to his man-eating fish. Nor let their heads be skinned Ugh!

Lil banged her head in an attempt to erase the terrible image from her mind. Needing to prevent her crew from falling into the admirals insane inclinations, she even deemed that revealing her identity would be nothing compared to her crews demise. In fact, she was prepared to be dragged away like a dog

Suddenly, the captains horn sounded overhead.

All units to battle position!

Julio planted his foot on the railing and blew the horn again. Lil doubted her ears for a moment but subsequently let out a stunned groan when the floor beneath her shook. Vibrations reverberated through her feet.

Drruckk Kung! Drruckk Kung!

The guns on her left side pierced through the gun gates one after another.

Lil looked ahead again. On the deck, half of the crew was arranging their positions in perfect order, while the other half was mindlessly wandering around. She slowly backed away and settled in a blind spot just below the railing. From there, it was impossible for Julio to see her. Lil then made eye contact with one of the sailors wandering the deck before shaking her head and quietly pointing down. When the sailor looked toward the entrance of the lower deck, Lil nodded her head.

The cabin deck will be the safest place. Even if things escalate to a full-scale battle, at least they can defend themselves down there while waiting for everyone else to surrender

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It was a relief for Lil to see that her crew was escaping to the lower deck. Her next concern was Julio. Lil acknowledges Julios anger. She knew and understood how much he wanted to tear the empire apart.

But thats also his weakness, his blindness to the situation and his surroundings, caused by wounds far too large. And because of that, he doesnt know the weight a captain has to carry. How cowardly it is for him to drag innocent sailors into his personal vendetta To make matters worse, any act committed against the Navy will be regarded as a confrontation committed by the League, so a war is doomed to break out.

Lil was determined to subdue Julio before such an irreversible catastrophe could occur. To do that, she first had to make sure that the gundeck, where Marenzio ruled, remained under her control.

Fortunately, it still is and as long as I convey the message well, Marenzio will follow.

Lil drew her gun and approached the stairs, pretending to take a fighting position while waiting quietly. Then, when a big, muscled man wandered between herself and the stern she jumped down. Lil, who landed lightly in the middle of the stairs, looked around the tension-ridden and heat-collecting deck. Several men were seen evacuating according to her instructions.

Marenzio watched his former captain fall from the ceiling and gave her a chewy expression.

Did you come to tell me not to open fire?

Yes.

Hmm.

Listen up. Annunzio may declare war on the Empire sooner or later. Or it could be the other way around for all I know. But Im sure of one thing about the current situation The League isnt ready yet. If we start this now, theres no turning back. However, this isnt me telling you to surrender to the Empire. Do you understand?

Marenzio chewed on his lip while looking back at the trembling sailors carrying around cannonballs and sticks. Their eyes were filled with the fear of dying.

Marenzio murmured while pouting.

I cant help it then

Lil nodded her head and instructed.

Put down the munition and close the gun doors. When the time comes, you need to keep your hands behind your head, just like when we were being interrogated. And one last thing, shells might start flying, so stay off the port side.

After snorting, Marenzio asked.

And as for the new Captain?

Julio

Lil's words were cut off by a loud warning coming from the Visha.

The vessel that refused to be inspected, disarm!..

Despite the order, there was no sound of dropping weapons coming from the Bell Rocks upper deck.

I repeat, the vessel that refused to be inspected, disarm!

Ed looked down at the distant and hazy deck.

I intentionally delayed our movements to appease the frightened sailors.

He then turned his head and ordered Sagastar.

They will soon surrender anyway. Make sure to capture the Captain alive.

Ed wanted to go down himself, but he wasn't confident with his movements. As a result, he decided to savour the virtue of waiting by sitting comfortably in his chair. The succeeding officers, led by Sagastar, lined up and proceeded to head down the stern stairs. Around Ed remained only a group of guards and their navy doctor.

Suddenly, there was a sound that shouldn't be heard.

Bang!

Although the sound of cannon fire died down immediately, it left behind a reverberation. Startled birds squealed somewhere in the sky

Lil gasped for breath. Following her, the rest of the sailors seemed to have stopped breathing in unison.

The Bell Rock and the Visha. For a moment, both sides remained completely still.

Who opened fire?

Who fired first?

The gundeck buzzed. Lil was certain that when she came down, the Vishas and the Bell Rocks cannons were only pulled out for show. But as soon as she tried to gauge which side triggered the first shot, countless gunshots covered the deck above her. Bullets flew everywhere and some even penetrated the ceiling of the deck.

Lil clasped her head in contemplation. After the first round of fire died down, Lil quickly climbed to the main deck.

Aaaaaaahh! Die, you Navy bastards!..

Hooked ropes flew through the air as the crossing was about to be laid between the two ships.

The moment Lil poked her head out onto the deck, she saw Courant. The sight of him nailed her to the spot. It never occurred to her that Courant could be on deck.

After all, hes a gunner A gunner who was assigned to the cannons on the upper deck The only cannons outside my and Marenzios control

After putting another shell* in, Courant aimed and lay down. As Lil started to run towards the boy, she turned her head to see where Courant had aimed his cannons muzzle. Her chin raised up endlessly. It didnt stop till her gaze reached the highest deck on the Vishas stern where someone was sitting behind the wheel

Admiral.

Lil could only think of that one title.

This crazy bastard is trying to kill the Admiral!

Lil rushed to the boy despite her aching legs. In that same instant, her eyes met Alains, who was climbing the mast, while aiming for one of Julios right hand men. As Alain was much closer to Courant than she was, Lil called out to him.

Alain!

When Alain noticed Courant, he threw himself as fast as he could. As the old mans body flew through the air, Lil lowered her eyes. It was too late. The flame had burned out, leaving only a single sound. Due to Courant being pushed away by Alain, the cannon had changed course slightly, but the shell fired nonetheless

Bang!

No!

Lil twisted her body following the trail of the smoke, only to find that the shell, which was much faster than her line of sight, had already struck the Visha

The shell barely missed the steering wheel and dug into the railing of the stern. The damage was minor, however, since the projectile was a filled shell, acrid smoke started to spread.

Ed pushed off the escorting officer who had covered him.

Admiral! Are you okay?

The surprised officer made a fuss as soon as he saw blood flow from Eds stiff face.

Admiral! Hes bleeding!

Hearing that, Guid, who managed to take cover, crawled out hurriedly. Examining the wound, he told Ed that it opened again when he hit his forehead on the floor. He was about to threaten it while

complaining that the officer gave him extra work for no reason. However, Ed struck the approaching hand of the doctor with the back of his hand.

As if possessed, Ed growled as he looked down at the enemys ship.

Which bastard did that?

What?

It cant be Liloa.

Pardon?

Was there a mutiny?

..?

Thats a possibility, right? But who? Julio? Was it that new kid? If Liloas currently in command of the Bell Rock, theres no way she would fire at the Navy like that

Ed recalled the order he had given to Sagastar. He told his commodore to only capture the captain alive.

Fuck!

Ed stood up by pushing Guiad on the shoulder and fumbled with his cane to stand upright. Without delay, he ordered the officers who stayed behind with him.

Fire only the cannons on the upper deck and aim for the mast! Theyre holding hostages. Damn it! Tell them to only aim at their mast!

Guiad groaned and asked where Ed was going. But instead of answering, his admiral continued to limp down the stern stairs.

Kung, Kung!

The Vishas upper cannons were put into position

Lil snatched the scruff of Alains neck, who had almost become one with Courant. Her pulling force was weak, so Alain had to crawl on all fours to come along with her. They eventually managed to drag each other behind a pile of boxes and lowered their heads.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The Bell Rock was shaken by a series of heavy artillery attacks.

Lil and Alain ducked down and covered their ears more tightly. But because something suddenly seemed off, Lil squinted her eyes. The moment she concluded that the floor of the upper deck was still intact, thick black smoke fell over the top of her head.

Lil instinctively raised her eyes.

Crrrrrk

The main mast broke with a cracking sound. The centre of the pillar was torn open and fell completely apart. The watchtower, descending in a semi-circular orbit, rushed toward her. Screaming in surprise, Lil rolled over and nearly escaped.

Bam!

The watchtower, which had rushed in at a high speed, smashed the boxes.

Aaaaahhh!..

Lil looked at the navies coming down the crossing in a wave. Seeing the sailors on deck drawing their swords, Lil had no time to celebrate her survival. She turned to the stern at once. At that moment, Julio jumped off the railing and rushed forward.

Lil shouted in reflex.

No! stop him!

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Her screams fell on deaths ears. She considered it would perhaps be better to shoot him herself, but the deck was already in a state of chaos. Even though the navies were easily distinguishable due to their uniforms, it still wasn't easy for her to fix her aim as the officers were tangled up with the sailors as if they had become one body.

Lil chased after Julio towards the bow and had to slide down as a sail blocked her way. In the midst of it, she continued screaming until she had run out of voice.

Stop! Stop it!

While running, a bullet grazed the side of her ear and a blade passed over her head, but Lil merely shrugged her shoulders and pushed through the muscled men ahead of her. She then separated a navy officer and a sailor who were at each others throats right in front of her. With the sailor falling towards her, she yelled again.

Stop! Lower your sword!

What the hell?!

The man, belonging to Jarles crew, roughly shook Lil off. She almost tripped, but managed to keep her balance and proceeded to chase after Julio. All kinds of blades jabbed and slashed within the distance between Lil and Julio. Eventually, Julio jerked back, drew his gun, and aimed it toward her. But Lil instinctively knew that she wasn't his target.

Lil screamed as she unhesitatingly moved forward.

Dont shoot! Put the gun

Bang!

A navy officer with pierced temples collapsed in front of her eyes. And just like that, Lil became covered in blood and flesh that splattered all over. The navy, with half his face blown off, plummeted to the floor. His indistinguishable coloured uniform became stained with the blood that poured out of his head.

Shit!

Lil held the fallen petty officer in her arms. She was sure he died without the need of checking his pulse.

Her hands trembled.

Julio no matter how much he suffered and no matter how experienced he is, he was never truly a member of the League. If he thought about the sailors that would be left behind after this for even a moment, he couldve never acted out like this How big a massacre will this conflict lead to? The League is yet to establish a defence strategy. We shouldve never committed the first offence against the Navy For this reason alone and only observed their movements. But now that it has come to this, the Navy will retaliate harshly, and hundreds or thousands of Julios can be born

Lil closed the officers eyes and gritted her teeth.

Julio and his followers have to be separated from the Bell Rocks crew. Otherwise, the Navy will overturn the whole ship by force, including the innocent members of the League To do so, I have to meet Admiral Retiro. Or at least find and talk with Commodore Sagastar. They have to be informed that there are both rioters and hostages on this ship, that these two factions have nothing to do with each other, and that the hostages are under my protection.

Lil blindly ran toward the railing where the crossing was positioned.

The only flaw in her plan was that she didnt know what Admiral Retire looked like.

If I jump in front of a random Navy officer and ask him to take me to the Admiral, who will be willing to do so?

Lil belatedly tried to recall her vague memories.

I cant think of anything other than the fact that he was very tall and slim

Without further delay, she raised her head. There was no time to lament her poor clues.

Battles occurred everywhere around her, but Lils focus was on the Vishas stern.

I dont see anyone on the stern who towers over his escorts and commands his people below. It seems he fled and possibly came down after Courants attack.

With a glimmer of hope, Lils gaze skimmed the main deck starting from the Vishas stern.

Surely, a man whos one head taller than the rest will definitely be visible. The Admirals height should stand out here as well.

The fact that it wasnt the case made Lil move forward.

If I manage to get on board the Visha, Im able to confirm ones rank by looking at their uniforms. And if luck is by my side I may even meet an officer who recognizes Liloa and is willing to help me.

Lil anxiously observed the dense cluster and counted the heads that protruded above the crowd.

One, two, three, Damn it!

However, it was difficult to remain secure with a group that was constantly moving. Lil didnt give up though and checked on the fourth officer

Her feet came to a standstill.

Nailed to her spot, Lil looked up at the Vishas deck. The fourth officer she had her eyes on was rapidly crossing the main deck. He was clearly an officer but one in a crimson red uniform. His face flickered over the railing.

Lil, who had been standing there dumbfounded, came to her senses when her shoulder was hit by someones bouncing elbow.

Meanwhile, the officer had disappeared from her view, making her run in the same direction as him. She soon regained the face she had lost due to the difference in their angle and saw the officer turning his body toward her. Looking at his face, her whole body became weak and her floundering hand had to clutch the rigging.

Lil muttered as she looked up at the face that was stepping on the crossing

Ed?..

Earlier.

Sagastar drew his gun and fired a shot into the air.

Take the Captain alive!

The advance party passed Sagastar and descended the crossing. After the second round of gunfire died down, Sagastar himself made his way to the enemy ship with his officers. The angle was steep due to the difference in height between the Visha and the Bell Rocks upper decks, leaving his body completely exposed. The commodore pulled out a dagger from his waist with his left hand. The dagger the size of his forearm functioned both as a weapon and a shield.

As soon as he set his foot on the deck of an enemy ship, Sagastar asked.

Wheres the Captain?

It looks like its him, Commodore!

Captain Long pointed his finger at a man jumping off the stern railing.

Who? The one from the stern?

Yes!

Sagastar was about to move without delay but suddenly hesitated.

Why does he look like that? From what Ive heard, the Captain of this merchant ship looked like an Imperial.

I dont know!

After his answer, the captain grabbed the collar of a nearby sailor and pushed his blade against the mans throat.

Is that your Captain?

I, I dont know

Answer me.

Heuk!

As the sailor closed his eyes and didnt budge, Captain Long thrust the dagger into the sailors shoulder. After twisting at once, the sailor twitched and screamed.

Next, Ill pierce your chest.

Thats right! Hes our Captain! We voted and elected

Bang!

The captain let go of the sailor who had a hole in his forehead. After a moment of thought, he turned to Sagastar.

The owner of this ship is also a citizen of the Empire. Ill try to secure his whereabouts and look for him.

However, Captain Long noticed that Sagastars attention wasnt focused on him. So, he followed the commodores gaze and rolled his eyes over the fallen mast. The moment he was about to ask what was going on, Sagastar inserted the gun back into his holster. His then empty right hand drew his longsword.

Ill leave the capturing to you. It seems like I have something else to check.

Like a thorough soldier, the captain saluted before leaving.

Yes, Commodore!

After being left alone, Sagastar looked along the Vishas upper deck.

Hes moving beside the railing following Sir Edgar

His gaze then flowed to the sailor standing tall between the masts of the merchant ship.

As if hes trying to make a connection.

Sagastar couldnt see a face as the sailor wore a hat obscuring it.

Sir Edgar is about to step onto the crossing, while that madman has his eyes fixed on him.

Sagastar quietly approached him. The grip on both of his hands was tight. The closer he got, the clearer this sailors voice became.

This man keeps calling the Admirals name. Over and over again

Ed!

Lil called Ed with all her might.

Ed!

But Ed didnt seem to see nor hear Lil, though. It was no wonder as the smoke still hung like a veil over the Bell Rocks deck, and Lil stood near the collapsed mast. His view was easily blocked by the sails surrounding her.

Lil thought of further approaching Ed over the towering pole.

I dont know how Ed is still alive, but its a huge relief. Im glad he seems to be safe. Such a relief

However, her feelings soon became complicated. She thought it was a great chance to meet an officer she knew, but Ed was the one to show up out of nowhere. It reminded her of how terribly cruel she was to him.

Will Ed even want to help me?

Amid her worries, a sharp voice cut in.

Who are you? And why are you targeting Sir Edgar?

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The owner of the voice swung his sword while uttering words that were incomprehensible to her. Lil lowered her body on pure instinct. If she had been a moment later, she wouldve had her shoulder slashed.

Her heart thumped loudly.

What are you Ack!

Hes from the Navy.

Lil frantically scanned his epaulettes.

A commodore. Judging by the fact that he was aboard the Visha, hes definitely the commander of the fleet Red hair and a large physique

Lil actually didnt know much about the Mondovi Navy, but she could easily tell from these clues whom she was dealing with.

Commodore Sagastar?

Thick eyebrows rose.

And who are you? Identify yourself.

Lil couldnt believe her luck. It had only been seconds ago that she felt a complicated sense of gratitude upon seeing Ed. And now, a prominent person like Sagastar walked toward her on his own. Lil tried to explain the situation without delay.

Commodore! This ship is carrying Viscount Noirmonts cargo. Rioters caused a mutiny on board

Sagastar indifferently cut off her words.

I said identify yourself!

A sword, loaded with heavy power, descended diagonally. Lil hurriedly raised her arm and managed to block his sword with hers.

Teng!

As the clashing power was no joke, her back foot was pushed out a span. Some of her ribs were still strained due to her fall off the stern a while ago, but now even her healthy ones felt like breaking as well. Lil broke out in sweat and explained herself more quickly.

Were hostages that have nothing to do with this attack! Let me see Admiral Retiro. I have something very important to tell him!

So youre after Sir Edgar, after all? What are you trying to do?

What?

You bastard! What are you up to!

I am

Teng! Teng!

Lil did her best to say something between the attacks, but as Sagastar resolutely ignored her, it was to no avail. And every time they collided, her remaining strength drained further away.

Lil couldnt understand why Sagastar was so suspicious of her.

If this continues, I can only dream of meeting the Admiral.

The more she was convinced of that prospect, the more Lil looked back at Ed.

Instead of Sagastar, who clearly cant be reasoned with or Admiral Retiro, whom I havent even seen yet, Ed will undoubtedly be the most helpful.

So in the end, Lil ran towards Ed after deflecting Sagastars sword. She had to push the sailors in front of her, run up the broken mast and jump from it.

Where do you think youre going?!

Sagastars sword managed to nick her back. The sudden burning pain didnt fade and made her tumble over. Lil eventually managed to regain her balance and had to quickly turn around to block his incoming sword.

I have something to prove my identity!

Shut up! Who do you think will fall for such trickery?!

Let me meet the Admiral No, just call him here! Ill prove it!

This time, Sagastars red eyes burned like torches. Lil still had no clue why Sagastars reaction was so intense.

You bastard Who dares to know the Admirals face?

What?

How do you know the Admiral? Answer me!

As if she had been kicked in the head, Lil instantaneously came to her senses.

The Admiral? Admiral?!

Even in the middle of his questioning, Sagastar had relentlessly been swinging his sword.

He orders me to give him answers, but doesnt give me a chance to properly answer Its also becoming more and more difficult to deflect his attacks even if I use both hands. The collisions not only leave my arms shaking, but the vibrations reach all the way to the bones of my upper body due to the overwhelming difference in power. Not to mention, hes still holding that dagger in his left

hand using it as a shield, easily intercepting the longer trajectory of a longsword. Sagastar wields such an inexhaustible skill If my body had some more strength left, I wouldve tried to use my flexibility to my advantage, but my arms are already too worn out

Teng!

Unable to withstand his strength, Lil bounced off. Falling backwards, a thick arm slid through the gap she had involuntarily opened. As she was unable to defend herself any longer, she had no choice but to give up her neck.

Ugh!

Is the portrait of Sir Edgar leaked? How do you know? Now! Answer me!

Ed

With a squeezed voice, Lil tried to call Ed, but doing so made her remember his name.

Ed.

The short word cut through her brain like a blade.

No way.

It almost seemed like a coincidental connection.

It cant be, no, it cant be

Ed Edgar Retiro?

Dont you dare put his name in your mouth!

That that man is the Admiral?

Sagastar didnt bother to answer such a stupid question. He did, however, tilt his head a little in wonder. Lil used that small opening to thrust her knee hard into his abdomen. The hand holding her collar let go. While losing her balance, Lil struck the hand that was pressing a sword against her throat and Sagastars arm bounced off.

Knowing she was running out of time, Lil deliberately rushed towards Ed. Meanwhile, Ed, with a face covered in blood, looked around busily as if searching for something. Seeing that bloody face and drawn sword, Lil could easily assume he had already slashed a few people. However, she had no time to be puzzled or tremble at the sight of his betrayal. It was because Sagastar had quickly caught up with her.

Lil, who instantly lowered her posture, managed to stay out of Sagastars range.

Stop! You bastard!

Sagastar quickly rolled his eyes and ran toward her.

His movements show obvious signs of desperation and he isnt even paying attention to his swaying posture. There has to be some larger cause than this battle for him to have such wrath in his eyes

Lil shook her head to dispel her illusions. She opened her eyes again and focused on Ed. An epaulette, three gold stars, and the symbol of an admiral, which had previously been invisible

because of their distance, were all resting on his shoulder. It was also then that the group of uniforms around him caught her eye. Four officers were escorting Ed in a circle.

Lil came to a shocking realisation. She couldn't believe it, but there was no time to think about it too deeply. She finally understood why Sagastar had pushed himself so hard.

Admiral Edgar Retiro Its only natural that someone belonging to a Southern ship and knowing the Admirals face would be deemed suspicious. After all, this Leagues ship is just another group of pirates to them and the one to which Ed almost lost his life to. Furthermore, our ships have already exchanged attacks. The likelihood of being charged with any type of indictment is high. This misunderstanding cant be resolved by simply proving that the ship belongs to Viscount Noirmont. Theres only one way to end this battle.

Lil quickly manoeuvred her body to the relatively calmer left side just before Sagastar broke the air where she had been standing. Lil was relieved for a moment until Sagastar suddenly twisted his wrist with phenomenal force. The blade that changed its trajectory rushed toward her neck, but Lil instinctively dodged Sagastar and shoved his sword away with her own. She wanted to run again, however, her surroundings were filled with battles, leaving her with nowhere to go.

Sagastars attacks never stopped and Lil had to defend herself in a hurry.

My arms are so numb it feels like they can fall off at any moment

Additionally, she was becoming increasingly burdened by her body, which was already full of injuries.

My stamina is bound to run out soon as well

Running out of viable options, she figured there was only one way left. But it was a risky one as the gap she could be leaving open would render her defenceless

I guess it cant be helped.

Lil risked it all and tore off her necklace.

From a distance, someone shouted a roaring cry.

Sagastar!..

Lil, who threw away her necklace, belatedly raised her sword again. And as she had feared, she placed herself in a position where she couldn't properly defend herself. Lil shouted, looking at the edge of a sword that was being deflected by her own.

Commodore! I

Suddenly, her abdomen took a heavy blow. Unable to breathe, her back bent forward. For a moment she fought that she was hit by his fist, but that wasn't the case.

Lil looked down at a blade piercing her belly

If youre enjoying the story, please rate us on Novel Updates, we highly appreciate it. Love, P&F

Chapter 176

Headnote: The following scene may be distressing for some readers, warning for gore.

Lil never anticipated that he would strike using the weapon in his left hand, but even if she did, she wouldn't have been able to stop it. Her breath came spasmodically in a fit of hiccups and every time her eyelids fluttered, her vision flickered too. As Sagastar's monstrous strength surged through, the sound of something breaking and piercing through her abdomen reverberated inside her. Even though everything happened so fast, she could clearly feel the tip of his dagger cutting through her insides and reaching her back.

In an instant, she was much closer to Sagastar.

Watching his red eyes flash in astonishment, Lil dropped her sword. She felt cold. Freezing cold. Lil shuddered and the cold sensation travelled through her blood vessels all the way to her finger tips.

I am

A shout was heard from not far away.

Liloa!..

Her long hair scattered with her falling hat.

Sagastar couldn't believe that there were suddenly black locks swaying in front of his eyes.

A woman?

I I

When Lil grabbed Sagastar's hand, his mind became even more stunned by the sight of her ridiculously small hand on his.

Ugh heuk! Heuk

Every time Lils lips twitched, blood spattered. Tickles red liquid flowed from her mouth and nasal passages.

Sagastar had instinctively sensed that something was wrong when a woman appeared in front of him out of nowhere, but there was nothing he could do anymore. He thought it would've helped if his intuition had been a little quicker, for the tip of his dagger has already pierced up to the woman's back.

She will die soon Stabbed to death

Regretful, Sagastar was about to retrieve his dagger, knowing that no one has ever survived such a penetrating wound

But before he did, his right thigh tingled eerily.

{ Being alive despite having something lodged into you means your vital organs are still functioning. When that happens, you need to think about how to preserve your breath }

No, there were survivors.

At that time, he was sure he was on the brink of death too.

Due to the feeling of being scratched, Sagastar lowered his eyes. Lils cold hands twisted and squeezed his uniform. Her palms, soaked in blood, kept slipping. Nonetheless, she was determined to hold onto him. Lil didn't have any physical strength left, but her will was immense.

The Sir Edgar from his memory spoke gently, serving as a guide.

{ The only thing you will accomplish by removing the object from your body while your heart is still pumping is dying from massive blood loss. Next time, try preserving your breath rather than fixing the affected side yourself, all right?.. }

Sagastar hurriedly supported Lils back and knelt along with her collapsing body.

The blade will move if I take my hand off it

The Emperors messenger

..?

When Lil gripped her stomach, more blood gushed out. It was the same for her mouth as every time she tried to speak, blood dripped from her teeth, painting them red.

Three three golden flags

She spoke, but her eyes remained unfocused. In the midst of her incomprehensible words, Sagastar belatedly realised that she was answering his questions about her identity, but it sounded more like gibberish.

Whats your identity? Not everyone can name themselves in that way. Emperors messenger? Three golden flags?

Sagastar, who had been repeating it to himself, continued the phrase till a sudden realisation slapped him on the cheek.

Three spears, three shields, three flags

Sagastar hurriedly responded before Lil would say anything more.

Miss Liloa?

Lil didnt have the strength to nod and only her bloody eyelids fluttered down. However, Sagastar felt conflicted over whether or not to believe this unconventional self-introduction.

The ship belongs to me right now stop the battle

Sagastar stopped trying to find the familiar beauty buried in Lils bloodied face. Whether it was true or not, the risk was far too great to simply disregard it.

Shes claiming they were being held hostage, if all she wants is to stop the fights and protect the hostages, a pause in the battle wont be a bad choice.

Sagastar raised his head towards the stern and immediately spotted Captain Long running about.

Captain Long! Stop the battle now!

But the captain didnt look back.

Captain! Julbert! Jul

Sagastar held his breath when he felt his right temple freeze over. He noticed a black cane with a golden hoof from the corner of his right eye. He didnt know since when he had been standing there or why he felt so afraid.

But suddenly, the fantasy he had regarded as ridiculous, flooded his mind. Back then, Sagastars assumption that Ed might have been looking for a woman, whom he passionately loved to the point of overusing his dying body just to pursue her, was dismissed as nothing more than a vain imagination

*flashback**

But but Sir Edgar Ahem! Hmm! Thats Love

..?

As Ed looked up to listen, Sagastar wiped away his cold sweat and straightened his shoulders.

Love is a very gentle and peaceful emotion. Of course, sometimes its as intense as a flame, but its definitely different from the feeling of destruction. I may not fully understand Monferrands inner feelings, but Im certain of one thing. Had Monferrand searched for Alvenis to love again, he wouldve gone for the stable kind of love. Meaning, if Alvenis had agreed, it wouldve been the typical happy fairy tale ending. But if she had refused, Monferrand would have had no choice but to respect her choice and give up on her. He would never have the heart to strangle her if he came in the name of love. Sir Edgar, arent you confusing that part? Calling such madness love can be passable, but its more appropriate to call it obsession or plain madness. Its no different from a pervert satisfying himself.

Even though it was obvious that Monferrand was special to Alvenis?

Sagastar, speechless, looked down at Ed with a much more serious look than before.

Alvenis may acknowledge that Monferrand was special to her, but also, she may not. In case of the latter, as a gentleman, he must politely give up. Who knows if that shining compass was really a piece of her heart. It couldve easily been something Alvenis made out of boredom. Or maybe it was just all in Monferrands head. So no, he could never have grabbed her by the collar or strangled her in search of answers.

Im not talking about strangling a weak woman. Alvenis was so strong that she couldnt be compared to a mortal like Monferrand. Her presence was so great that Monferrand resented Alvenis as if he were blaming a God. If he cant even do that, then what else can Monferrand do about his rage? And his quest for revenge?

Love requires patience and sacrifice. If he truly loved Alvenis, he shouldve been able to endure his wrath and keep his composure. The passion to hold himself down for the sake of the other person, to be blinded by love. Isnt that true love?

How can such a thing be called true love? Then, brought it Alvenis happiness to see Monferrand suppressing his pain?

Im certain that his anger or urge for revenge wouldve melted like snow the moment he saw Alvenis smile. There wouldve been no more pain. That miracle is love.

No. Anger and love can coexist, Sagastar. There was no other way to pay him back than with cruelty. Once he got to grip her neck, what do you think was it that he would want to hear the most? I think I know now.

Well, I hope he didnt expect to hear anything like I love you if he really did something like that Sagastar shook his shoulders as the mere thought gave him goosebumps.

As Ed glanced down at the deck, Sagastar followed his gaze. The misty night deck was calm and quiet. However, Ed seemed to see something different from Sagastar. With a flushed face as if he were seeing flames, he raised his hand imagining that there was really someone in front of him. When he centred all his strength to the tips of his fingers, he imagined that he was truly grabbing a persons neck.

He must have strangled her in his fantasies dozens or hundreds of times. He hated her enough to want to kill her, but he soon realised

..?

The power that had radiated from his veins began waning from his fingertips. Soon enough, his hand curled up like a withered flower and fell off.

His weak hand then rubbed his face helplessly.

That even though he longed for revenge, he couldve never been cruel to Alvenis. He could forgive Alvenis at any time, and that all he really wanted to do was to forgive her. Hed rather die than admit it to himself, but what could he have done? In the end, even if he appeared to want revenge or punishment, he was just losing his mind because he simply wanted to be happy with Alvenis

Then, I was right, wasnt I? It all comes back to love again. I still wonder how strangling her would fit in all this, but anyway

Because staying patient and sacrificing wouldve brought this kind of ending. If he had quietly endured it, neither Monferrand nor Alvenis wouldve ever realised it. That was probably what he really wanted

end of flashback

While Sagastars gaze rose, their long conversation fled from his mind. His flickering eyes stopped at the collar of Eds uniform, then anxiously climbed up a span.

There wasnt a hint of anger or frustration. Eds shocked face was only sewed with fear

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Sagastar stammered with his words, not knowing what to say.

Sir, Sir Edgar. This is

Ed knelt next to Lil. He then slowly stretched out his hand and checked for her pulse and breathing. Sagastar on the other hand fumbled in the air, looking terribly clumsy.

When Sagastar gazed nervously at his side, an incredibly calm voice was heard.

Hold it.

What?

Hold it properly. Or else, it will kill her.

Sagastars throat dried up, for he understood it without the need for further explanation and gave strength to the hand still holding the hilt of the dagger.

Liloa.

Ed carefully slapped Lil on her cheek. When her chest no longer rose and fell, his voice rose higher.

Liloa!

Just before Ed got to the point of shaking her shoulders, Lil opened her eyes. Her half-exposed pupils rolled around lifelessly before stopping again. She tried to lift her wrist, but failed, making it snap instead. When Ed grabbed it without hesitation, her lips parted slightly.

You see Commodore

Noticing that the blood that regurgitated in her mouth made a boiling sound, Ed pleaded and begged.

Stop talking now! Damn it!

Stop fighting

Guiad! Damn it! Get here right now!

My name is

Shut up! Please shut up!

Whats the matter?

After arriving in a hurry, Guiad caught his breath. However, instead of answering, Ed snatched away the doctors medical bag. He then tossed it open, dug through various instruments, and pulled out the laryngoscope and tube*.

Guiad, who sat down next to Ed, bent his upper body to examine Lil. As he scanned her body from head to toe, he muttered to himself.

Looks like shes about to die soon

After the intubation, Ed pulled him by the collar. Guiad, who was suddenly dragged down, stiffened and closed his mouth as soon as he encountered Eds deadly face.

Shut up and move her to the captains room. If she doesnt wake up

Blood drained from his face upon imagining that unbearable ending. Ed, becoming as pale as a corpse, let go of the doctor. Understanding his admirals words, Guiad lifted Lil with Sagastar. As the escort officers began clearing their still cluttered path, Ed ordered one of them to go ahead and clear the table.

In an instant, they rushed into the captains room, laid Lil down and settled around her. Guiad and Ed then frantically arranged their tools among them, making Sagastar the only one who had the liberty to look into the captains room and encounter a completely unexpected person.

Sir Cesar?

Hearing that familiar name, Ed raised his head.

Cesar stood motionless behind the messy desk like someone whose soul had left its body.

Based on the chaos around him, he seemed to have been destroying evidence linking Liloa to the Bell Rock.

Seeing Lil like that drained the colour away from Cesars face and caused him to bump into the corner of the desk and stumble over the chair.

Ed couldnt bear to hold himself back from saying something.

Is this how you planned to do it? You kept saying that you would protect her no matter what, but what are you doing at a moment like this? Im surprised you even have time to care about such documents.

Safely surrender I was looking for the documents

If Liloa ever wakes up, explain that to her.

Cesar didnt seem to hear Ed any longer. Looking down at the flat, corpse-like patient, he muttered hollowly.

Liloa?..

What the hell is this

This is the kind of ending where you no longer have to deny anything at all.

Ed struck Cesars wrist that was extending towards Lils unconscious hand.

Put that away before I cut it off.

Cesar didnt have the spirit to get angry. Only tears streamed down his dazed face. His lips moved, but no voice came out, making it look more like quivering.

After disinfection, Ed took over the hilt from Sagastar and gripped it tightly. He then ordered without looking back at them.

Take him out.

Sagastar expected him to resist, but although his steps were a bit clumsy Cesar followed silently. Cesar was clearly in a state of panic, making it unable for him to notice that he was being dragged out by someone.

When the door shut behind them, Ed looked down at the piece of paper Cesar had dropped, before turning his head away.

Guiad nodded faintly.

Im ready.

Ed bit his lip and tightened his grip on the hilt of the dagger, turning his knuckles white. Like a man obsessed with perfection, Ed carefully pulled the handle while maintaining the right angle. And eventually, a red blade emitting faint steam was removed from Lils body.

Dark red blood gushed out immediately. To make matters worse, they also had to deal with the bleeding that continued from her back. Time was running out, so Guiad quickly brought his hands to work. Ed, however, couldnt do much because his left hand hadnt fully healed yet.

No, even if my hand was fine, I dont think I wouldve been able to

Ed opened and closed his cold, trembling hand. His knees were in an equal state, trembling as if they could collapse at any moment. As a test, he pushed a finger on top of his forceps. The shaking of his fingertip was so apparent that he could easily see it with the naked eye.

Time passed without any favourable results. Blood-soaked gauze piled up under the table and the water buckets have also been replaced several times. It was becoming more and more unbearable for Ed to watch Lil slowly lose her life. But even though he was going crazy from anxiety, he managed to hold himself back in pressing Guiad.

Just before his patience was running out, Guiad declared as if to surrender.

Shes bleeding too much.

Find it.**

I cant see it

What the fuck are you talking about!

Right at that moment, one of Lils blood vessels burst and a stream of blood spurted out. Eds face, which had been hovering above the surgical site, was completely covered in it. The hot red liquid trickled down his forehead, the bridge of his nose and down his temples. Ed looked down at the liquid dripping from his chin and wetting palms, clearly taken back.

Guiad started to frantically search for a gauze.

In the midst of it, Ed only blinked absent-mindedly. Lils blood pooled and seeped into his eyes. His face had been covered in blood from countless patients before. But now, it felt unfamiliar as if it happened for the first time in his life. The fishy smell of blood filled his nostrils. It smelled like death. Lils face, covered with hair, shards of wood and medical instruments, was suddenly hard to recognize.

Ed was suffocating in the thickening smell, when Guiads miserable voice resounded.

Its cardiac arrest. Admiral, its over

Wiping his face with his forearm, Ed murmured.

Get out of the way

His unexpected comment made Guiad stare blankly at Ed.

Ed moved around the table, shoved Guiad, and stuck close to Lil. He then pressed down on her chest vigorously

One.

Two.

He constantly pressed down while calling her name, as if he was hoping for an answer any moment.

At some point, the numbers had lost their meaning. Nobody knew how long it had been. But during that endless period of time, Ed never gave up. Guiad wiped the sweaty brow of Eds exhausted face, while the unconscious body shook under constant and intense pressure.

As the table rattled with force, its wooden legs creaked and scraped

Chapter 177.5

Hi guys!

As usual, we wrote a recap for volume 5. We hope it helps to refresh your memories before we dive into volume 6.

Happy reading and see you on Wednesday!

Love,

Pru and Formidable

Vol. 5

We begin this volume onboard the Visha. Accompanied by several Legardon sloops, Sagastar and consorts are making their way towards the coordinates where their admiral was either thrown into the sea or jumped in himself. Not long after, they receive word of a person spotted on a deserted island and Ed is found.

Even though he was just rescued and only given his body a few days of rest, Ed was already out and about. After waking up, Ed immediately made plans to follow the Bell Rock towards Serlio, knowing that if Lil and Cesar reached it, they would probably disappear for good. During this time Ed was still struggling with the betrayal he faced and hoped that Lil was somehow not involved in it.

After Ed made his plans, we find ourselves back on the Bell Rock. Lil is searching through Eds possessions when Courant is brought to her. It pained Lil that Courant showed no remorse whatsoever and that he thought that his actions were justified. Trying to put her complicated mind to ease, Lil immersed herself back in Eds journeys and comes to a shocking discovery. On one of the last pages Ed had drawn on was a picture of a sleeping woman and that woman was clearly Liloa. It was at that moment that Lil realised that Ed had seen her as a woman and all his suspicious or downright odd behaviour started to make sense

Alain pays her a visit, his conscience had been weighing on him and he felt the need to relay his last encounter with Ed to his captain. He then told Lil that Ed always claimed to be innocent. This late confession makes Lil question everything that had happened.

In a dazed state of mind, Lil made her way to Cesars cabin, suddenly suspicious about the note he had read with so much confidence. Lil demands to see it, but Cesar only claims to have lost it. Cesar then tries to bury the fact he lost the note by putting the blame on Lil. Saying that she made him do that, that he felt desperate enough to stub so low and ask her if she trusts a navy spy more than him. Normally when a confrontation like this happens, Lil would eventually back out to keep the peace, but something snaps and she stands her ground for a chance, making the fight escalate. It slowly becomes clear to Lil what the problem is; jealousy. Cesar was jealous of Ed, thinking he would lose her. Unfortunately for Cesar, Lil isnt giving the answers he wants to hear. He only wanted to hear that she loved him, that she chose him and never saw Ed as a man. Cesar realised that even after all those years, Lil hasnt changed. She still didnt love him the way he loved her and the fact that Lil

thinks that love can be taught makes it clear that she probably never will. Eventually, Cesar collapses emotionally.

Mortu enters the cabin and Lil concludes that she was never alone in his castle, Cesar had always been there with her. Suffering in the same way. Their conversation gets cut off by the news of a Legardon ship, the Ashtoro, being spotted.

The Bell Rock is asked to drop anchor for inspection and complies with that request. This vessel of the Legardon fleet belongs to the scouting squadron Sagastar had set up to find the ship that had held their Admiral. Their mission changed to identifying the owner and captain of the ship, due to Eds request. During this, Cesar manages to bribe one of the officers and learns that Ed survived.

In the meantime Ed is really struggling with his health, pushing himself too hard. It will eventually lead him to collapse.

After being left alone, Cesar loses himself in his thoughts. Even though he was being stubborn, he knew things couldnt go on like this anymore as he and Lil both were suffering. But Cesar loved her so much that he couldnt possibly be the one that let go first.

The visit of the navy left the crew of the Bell Rock in a tense atmosphere and Courant made a crucial choice. He thought that his captain didnt take his concerns to heart and was of the opinion they would all die at the hands of the navy if he didnt do anything about it. So eventually, Courant found himself in the presence of Julio.

Days went by. The tense atmosphere remained, Cesar locked himself in his cabin and to add to all of it, the Bell Rock found itself first in rain and thunder, before sailing into thick mist. In search of Courant, Lil wandered into Eds cabin. Even though days had gone by, the cabin was the same as on the day he was thrown overboard, covered in bloodstains. When she sat at his desk, immersed in her thoughts, the cabin door opened and Courant was thrown in. We then learn that Courant has indeed betrayed Lil and confided everything to Julio. Julio took advantage of Courants naive mind and used the information to set up a mutiny. A change of captain was only possible if half the crew and half the officers voted positively. Julio may have won the sentiment of the crew, he couldnt win that of the officers. So to give himself some more time to change their minds and for Lil not to mingle with his plans, he locks her up and takes the helm.

It was then that we went back to the Visha. Ed, Sagastar and the captain are staring at the sky. In the middle of Sagastars attempt to get Ed back to his room, Ed starts to speak about a story about the Alvenis triangle and where that name comes from. Sagastar got more and more the feeling that the story Ed was telling had similarities to what Ed had gone through, as in his story a man was betrayed by his lover and sought revenge. However, after hearing Eds explanation, Sagastars opinion differed from Ed, who only thought that the man wanted revenge. Sagastar concluded that the man only wanted to live a happy life with his love instead of hurting her.

Being tied in Eds room gave Lil the time to think about everything that had happened and everything that was yet to come. In the middle of that misery, she made the decision to escape Mortus castle and set Cesar free, meaning they needed to break up. It was then that Cesar was brought to the room as well. Instead of defending the Bell Rock, Cesar chooses to be locked up with Lil. That was the last straw and a long conversation between them unfolds. It all started with Lil not feeling respected and Cesar thinking that he was doing enough. Then the topic shifts to their differences in worldly perspectives. Lil wants to change the world, whereas Cesar thinks its

impossible. He also questions the fact that Lil is getting angrier and angrier. Their shout fest will be concluded with their break up.

In the meantime, the watchman spots a vessel of the Mondovi navy in the fog and chaos on board will unfold. Their anchor is raised in a hurry and the Bell Rock starts to set sail. However, due to the mist and Julios inexperience, the ship wanders in shallow waters and constantly scratches the floor of the sea. Then with a list, Julio managed to make himself the new captain in exchange for bringing in the navigator (Cesar). Alain is the one that frees Cesar but leaves Lil behind. Not long after Jericho will come for Lil and shes freed too. After Cesar manages to get them to deeper waters, hes threatened with death, leaving Lil with no choice but to speak up and give up her cover. But before any of that had major consequences everyones attention was focused on the appearance of an enormous battleship. To Lil horror, she notices the name of the ship and instantly knows that this is the one and only ship of the admiral himself.

Instead of surrendering, Julio commands to open fire and fight back. With the help of Marenzio, who is in charge of the gun deck, Lil managed to refrain them from firing. But to everyones surprise, a cannon is being fired anyway. Its Courant, firing the only canon beyond their reach. Lil makes her way towards the boy in the hope to stop him, but she and Alain are too late and a second shell, aimed at Ed, is fired. It misses, but its the start of the retaliation from the navy, who takes down the Bell Rocks main mast.

With the attack on the Visha, Ed suspects the Bell Rock to be overthrown and there is a different captain. As he had only ordered to capture the captain alive, Ed panics and makes his way to the crossing.

Close combat fights occur and the deck of Lils ship turns into a battlefield. Lil reasoned that the only way to stop it and save the many lives of her crew is to speak with the Admiral himself. To do so, Lil needs to find an officer that recognised Liloa or get on the Visha herself. While searching the deck of Visha, she comes across a familiar face, Ed. Following him because he cant hear her, makes her look suspicious in the eyes of Sagastar, who entered the ship to capture the captain. Sagastar attacks Lil as she refuses to identify herself. During this fight, she learns that Ed is actually the Admiral. As a last resort Lil removes her necklace, but doing so leaves herself defenceless and in the end, she will be stabbed by Sagastar.

This volume ends with Ed and the navy doctor Guiad trying to save Lils life, when she slips into a cardiac arrest

Some quick and important trivia:

Years ago, Sagastar was tricked into becoming Eds subordinate. The Naive Commodore believed Eds exaggerated sob story about possible kidney failure and basically sold his soul to the devil.

Sagastar and Cesar never met in the academy.

Alvenis is the youngest child and daughter of thunder God Gromer. After Gromer took pity on his daughter, he put her into a star. Before she left the earth, she left different keepsakes to her lovers. Monferrand received a shining compass.

Monferrand strait is named after the fisherman Monferrand. In his desperate conquest for the love of Alvenis, Monferrand sailed his ship towards the Alvenis triangle multiple times. One time was his last and Monferrand died at sea. When his ship strands on the Northern Continent, a local buries

him. After Eds ancestors travel to the central continent, they learn about the name of the Fisherman of the south, the sea is then named after him. After Monferand dies, Gromer also pities the Fisherman and also puts him in a star, one that could always look at the Alvenis triangle, the Mariners star.

After Lil escapes Mortus castle, the hallucination of Mortu himself disappears with it.

Lil and Cesar broke up.

As a reward for Eds rescue, Sagastar is granted the island of Maynier. Which was once bestowed upon Eds grandfather by the (former) Emperor.

Ed had tried to shake off Sagastar, who insisted on remaining by Eds side. In the end this failed and Sagastar and Captain Long accompanied Ed on his chase.

After the checkpoint, the opinion of the crew was divided. One group wanted to carry on with their mission, one group wanted to go back to Panichi and one group didnt care.

Even if Lil wanted to turn the ship around and get back to Panichi, it wasnt possible. Due to a shortage in supplies, they would never have made it and they had no choice but to go to Serlio.

After Lil and Cesar were captured, Julio had no choice but to drop anchor. Biggest part of the crew refused to set sail after several of their colleagues died that night.

In a way to stay out of sight, Ed came up with a camouflage strategy. He had the carpenter use white cloths wrap the frame of the mast, making them blend in with the mist. In their battles with the Western Pirates, Ed had come up with similar strategies.

Years prior, there was a sailor who caused a mutiny and killed his former captain and part of the crew who didnt want to follow him. When landing on Panichi, he was beheaded by Anuchio. His nickname was Despicable Dato.

According to the Leagues rules, replacing a captain is possible with a vote. When more than half the crew and half the officers vote against the current captain, he will be replaced.

Cesar actually agrees that Lils morals and dreams will create a better world. A world where everyone is equal. But where Lil wants to fight for that, does Cesar not. Cesar believes that they dont have the power to archive that and it will only remain a dream.

Before the Visha attacked, Lils plan was to go back to the Duke and live her life as Liloa again.

New characters in this volume:

The Mondovi Navy:

Guiad;

Navy doctor/surgeon.

Guillaume;

Another commodore in the fleet.

The Legardon Navy:

Guerin;

Lieutenant that led the first inspection.

Other:

Viscount Noirmont;

The Bell Rocks alibi for being a merchant ship.

Captain Duphy;

Lils alias for a merchant captain

Places:

Maynier;

Resort island near Mondovi.

Ships:

The Legardon Navy:

Ashtoro;

Part of the scouting squadron.

Others:

Philly;

Lils doll when she was younger.

Monferrand;

Fisherman from the legend.

Alvenis;

Goddess of defence.

Prus mini-thoughts on everything that happened in the story so far:

What a ride! A tough ride, a fun ride, a giggly one, a sad one. In some parts, even a terrifying one. And to think its our first time being a translator. But at the same time, its been so, so fulfilling. Im glad that despite having read the MTL, I didnt stop there and instead followed my heart into pursuing this passion project. But more than that, Im grateful that I found a translation partner and dear friend whos equally, I think even more than me, enthusiastic about translating this gem so that we could share it with all of you. I sincerely hope were giving justice to the authors genius by being able to properly describe the beautiful and vivid scenes, the complexity of the characters thoughts, and the depth of their dialogues.

I dont know if its just me, but one of the many things that deeply haunts me about the authors style is how she seems to describe inanimate objects right after the saddest scenes. Its like theres a camera panning away from the characters after a tragedy. I noticed this in ch134 when Ed was thrown out to the sea;

The ray of light rolled over the floor and fell into the sea below. It disappeared without a single trace in the waves that were as calm as ever.

The moon was bright, and the stars were shining.
The waves that reflected the night flowed dazzlingly.
They flowed dazzlingly even after swallowing a person

Chapter 178

Lil held up her trembling eyelids, for some reason it was hard to open her eyes.

The blinding light stung her eyes miserably. As she widened them further, an unknown substance flowed out of them. In her current state, Lil was still unable to distinguish it as her tears. She tried to rotate her head, but her neck didn't turn properly. So instead, she tried to cover up the light with her hand, but it didn't move either.

Ugh

Lil, still struggling, eventually closed her eyes again. Unfortunately, the persistent light even dug into the smallest gaps. She closed her eyes even tighter, causing her forehead to wrinkle. Meanwhile, she concentrated on every part of her body. Efforts to move were continued, but none were successful, including her legs. She didn't even seem to be able to wiggle her toes.

When she realised her crippled condition, a terrified feeling crept in.

Where the hell am I?

She took a deep breath.

Elegant scent it smells like furniture, pleasant air in a large space. Damn it! I don't know

Looks like you woke up.

..!

Startled, Lil's breath hitched. She opened her eyes reflexively but immediately closed them, spitting out curse words.

I didn't realise someone else was here. I can't afford to be ignorant unless I'm determined to die How could I not have known with him being so close

Is it too bright?

..?

A man, Sesbron accent Damn it, what happened? Am I lying in front of a nobleman?

Lil desperately began to retrace her memories.

I don't understand what's going on.

She couldn't grasp the situation.

Damn it! Why am I like this Why can't I move? What happened? I can't move I can't

Lets turn off the anaesthetic incense first.

Anaesthetic incense? For what?

With no time to think about it, an unbearable pain started, spreading all over her body. Lil tried to suppress making any sound but ended up letting out a shriek. When her limbs in response to the pain started to tremble, she somehow tried to raise herself.

Ugh! Ugh, damn it!

Her reckless attempt, of course, failed. Even though she concentrated all her nerves in her body to follow her instinct and somehow get out of this unfamiliar place, in the end, she could only breathe heavily.

So you can talk.

No matter what the man said, she was too distracted. It felt as if the skin of her stomach had been torn to shreds. And judging by the vividness of the pain, that really seemed to be the case. However, she couldn't remember when or how she had sustained such an injury.

You don't seem to be interested in me at all.

The man's words are so strange. From the annoying tone to the content, it isn't something to say to someone clearly writhing in pain

Lil struggled to turn her head. But as expected, it still didn't move properly, and she only managed to shift the angle a bit. Since there was no movement, she began to have various ominous speculations. In addition, the tormenting feeling was spreading all over her limbs, making her wonder if her whole body had been mutilated.

The man looked at her confused face and explained kindly.

Oh, I administered some poison a few days ago. I'm sure your muscles are stiff because of that. Seeing you struggle to get away, I think it was an excellent choice. I can't just let you run away, right? After all, it was my mission to capture you.

It's only some Maltine*, so that must be fine, right?

What nonsense is he talking about?

Mad

Oh, don't say that, I'm not a coward. It was either this or cutting off one of your limbs. I'm actually quite proud of myself, especially if you consider my infamous reputation.

Only then did the hazy memories begin to stir her head. The recollection, that came to mind like a shipwreck, showed the sight of her being stabbed by a dagger.

Yeah, it was a total mess. I recall being anxious because of the fog, but I never expected them to hide their ship so perfectly

Looking at her current state, she thought that she was at least beaten half to death.

Retiro.

The man seemed to laugh.

It's an honour you remembered, Captain Lil Schweiz.

Madman get out and die

Lil moved her pupils to find the admiral through the cracks in her eyelids, but her vision was still not functioning the way it should.

If you hear that kind of curse every day, its not so impressive anymore. Cant you come up with something new?

She didnt have the energy to respond to such a childish question. Not knowing when her body would lose consciousness due to the strange drug, she concentrated on her own thoughts.

All right, focus.

She decided to list the places that roughly come to mind.

The Admirals fleet

Captain

So, it can either be the Southern Sea

Lil Schweiz

Or.

A gust of wind brushed through her hair and Admiral Retiros face suddenly appeared right in front of her.

Agh! Ack! Ah ugh

While her whole body trembled and twitched in surprise, Lil barely managed to swallow the rest of her screams.

She then glared at the admiral. Although his face was neater and much more human-like than the bloodied one from her memory, she still wanted to spit at it. However, in this state, it was almost impossible to even reach the tip of his nose. Shed be lucky if it didnt slip straight down her own chin. In the end, she had no choice but to lay there stiff as if locked in a coffin, watching the admiral push his face closer and closer to hers. As his breath touched her cheek, she felt sick to her stomach.

No, Id rather die!

Lil tried to turn away from him with all her might, making every part of her body scream.

Argh! Argh

Her terribly distorted face was suddenly caught. His touch felt as if needles were piercing her skin, creating terrible goosebumps.

Let go You bastard!

She bravely raised her arm. The movement, however, was too straining for what her body could handle, so Lil had to bite the inside of her cheek to endure the pain. The admirals hand easily fell off as if he hadnt thought she could move this much. Unfortunately, the pain that followed engulfed her as if to devour her.

Aww! Damn it Damn it, damn it!

Oh no. Id stay still if I were you

You fucking bastard let me out of here!

Because the Bell Rock wont be safe.

..!

Her feet, that she was kicking around like a madman, suddenly stopped. Bloodshot eyes turned to the Admiral. He was observing her with an amusing gaze.

Lil couldnt make a sound and was panting like an old dog.

Thats more like it.

She was out of breath and unable to move, with messed up hair and sweat flowing down her forehead. To the man standing in front of her, she looked shabby and helpless. When Lils heart started to pound and it almost felt like it was going to burst out of her body, a very relaxed voice hovered around her head.

So please cooperate, your Bell Rock is safely anchored in Devito. However, your crew was brought to Gualthiero.

Gual thiero

The famous prison.

Then this is

This is my house on the Mondovi Peninsula, and youre all alone. Why, do you want to go to Gualthiero too? Id rather stay here.

At the same time, he silently glanced over her body. His gaze went down before he met her eyes again.

Suddenly, the Admiral waved a necklace with a crude red jewel in front of her face. Only then did Lil realise where he was looking at and a cold shiver ran down her spine.

Who knew that Lil Schweiz

She wanted to cover her chest.

Am I wearing clothes right now? This fucking bastard

Is in fact a woman.

..!

No way

If you dont want to be exposed to the whole world

What did you what did you do

Lil caught the hem of his clothes that had flowed down onto the bed, but her fingers, which only contained a ridiculously small amount of force, couldnt pull it well. In response, the admiral, or Ed, struck away her hand like he was getting rid of a bunch of worms. His face that was looking down at her was horrifyingly expressionless.

Hes angry.

The anger that was wriggling to strangle Lil at any moment felt so hot.

The situation suddenly felt vastly different from just a while ago, when Ed responded with a snort or snicker every time Lil attempted to do something. Now, she became terrified of the intimidation brought by his title and the unfamiliarity of facing each other. Moreover, a dreadful realisation dawned on her.

I made a mistake.

At this point, the sense of betrayal she felt upon knowing that Ed was the admiral has diminished to nothing. The fact that Ed cheated on Lil wasnt even worth crap.

Ed, who watched her changing complexion, slowly opened his mouth.

I guess you remember now.

Ed is only thinking of the pain and betrayal he has suffered. Time mustve stopped when he was abandoned in the sea on a cold night with near-death injuries. Otherwise, theres no way he was so determined to follow me. Theres probably only one word running through his mind right now
Revenge

Footnote:

Maltine: medicinal preparation made from or containing malt.

Chapter 179

The pain from all over Lils body rushed up her throat and into her eyes. The sensation was so intense that it felt like her eyeballs were tossed into the hot water. The tyranny and evil deeds associated with Eds title as the admiral blinded Lil, and the torture he enjoyed against the Western Pirates came to her mind in gruesome illustrations.

What happened to my crew? What about Cesar? Im sure Ed wouldnt simply let them go

An unfathomable fear grew beyond her control, making her burn with horror.

I have to escape.

Lil started to pant impatiently.

But where am I?..

Her vision flickered.

Why am I here like this?

Her eyelids didnt droop, but her vision began to blur anyway.

I need to find my crew as soon as possible

In the end, her eyes darkened

Lil woke the moment she realised she had fallen asleep.

By instinct, her body shrank, wary of the opponent who might approach her at any time. She flinched, and her shoulders reflexively trembled. Only after sensing that there was no sign of anyone else in the room, did Lil quietly roll her eyes.

The room was dark. A thin layer of smoke flowed from somewhere and gave off a burning smell. Lils gaze went against the flow of smoke and found a candle. Its black wick, which used up all of the candle wax, had nowhere left to go and could only squeeze out smoke. Noticing a strange fragrance mixed with the burning smell, Lil figured it had to be the source of the drug that Ed had mentioned before.

Remembering this, she understood why she was able to wake up.

Lil tried wiggling her fingers and found that albeit dull they moved at will. The same was true for her toes. The haze that clung to her whole body slowly unravelled like a thread. As she exerted a little more strength, a sensation settled in her body as though she was coming down from floating on clouds. Eventually, she could feel the touch of her blanket and as she moved her leg, the blanket stirred.

Lil removed the blanket with her still stiff arm. When she brought her chin downward, she saw a white negligee¹ covering her body.

Thank god, Im somewhat properly dressed.

Lil squirmed her body up. When she managed to raise her upper body halfway, an intense pain split through her abdomen. Lil held her breath and pressed the arching area with her left hand. Her right hand stretched out into the air, frantically searching for the nightstand.

Ugh!

When she managed to stand up with the help of the nightstand, she was finally able to look around the room.

Strange instruments made of glass and porcelain were lined up in front of the bed. Her heart nearly dropped at the sight of the bizarre tools. Half obscured by the darkness, they looked monstrous enough.

Lil moved her stride while squeezing her thumping chest. When she went around the instruments, she got a better view of the space.

This must be someones luxurious mansion

As though she had been splashed with cold water, Lil suddenly froze.

It takes more than a month to reach the Mondovi Peninsula from the southern route to Serlio. What did Ed say again?

{ This is my house on the Mondovi Peninsula }

This is on the Mondovi Peninsula?

Lil whipped up her head. But the chandelier hanging in the dark was the only thing she could see. It felt like her head began spinning. Amid her dizziness, she looked around and saw a curtained window. Lil moved her feet hastily while denying the possible reality.

I cant have been asleep for that long. If so, its been over a month, thats unbelievable. Ed couldve been lying No, he mustve made it up to scare me.

Like someone suffering from seasickness, Lil started to feel nauseous.

A desk, a table, strange-looking pottery, and decorations flashed past her dazed eyes. Lil couldn't keep her head straight, so when she continued to walk, she eventually came across the fireplace.

I thought I was heading for the window, but I guess I wasn't.

Lil first bumped into the couch near the fireplace before finding a decorative sword stuck to the wall. Her trembling hand stretched out above the fireplace. Upon grabbing the sword's hilt, she had to tug at it vigorously for she didn't get to pull it out right away. But shortly after, the sword unsheathed with a rattling sound. For a mere decoration, it was a fairly sharp blade regardless of Lil being completely oblivious to it. Knocking over a vase and a chair at the tea table, she finally headed towards the window. Like a person catching a fugitive, Lil outstretched her hand and snatched the curtain. Her rough breath came with a wheezing sound, and she sweated heavily despite not having done much, drenching her negligee.

Lil moved the curtain, revealing a reddish sunset that slowly invaded through the gap. She then pulled it further as though she was ripping it off.

The red scene hit her.

The early evening sagged with sparsely scattered clouds while the sun was disappearing under the weight of the horizon. At the border between the sky and the sea, a small sloop was seen enjoying a leisurely sail with white foam following its stern like a tail. On the left side, a squadron of four sailboats entered the harbour. The mark of the Mahin Royal Navy was clearly evident on their sails which were dyed crimson by the sunset. At the sight of all this, Lil groaned and the small flow of air spread a white film over the glass window.

She lowered her eyes along the pathway of the squadron.

Large battleships with double-decked artillery decks were moored endlessly along the pier. Like troops during a parade, it was neat and tidy. Their mast with lowered sails and sturdy bow poles soared proudly, and the rigging on the mast lines hung proudly like a soldier's insignia.

The grand naval base, the Devito Harbor.

It couldn't have been more overwhelming. And, it couldn't have been more real.

From where she was standing, she could see hundreds of warships lined up from the left all the way to the far right. It was no exaggeration to say that the harbour itself was designed around this very mansion. There was no doubt about it, Lil was looking over the fleet from the seat of the admiral.

The Mondovi naval flags fluttered not only above the highest but also the lower watchtowers. Hundreds of flags swayed briskly like a haze in front of her eyes. It felt like a mirage. And Lil found all of this unimaginable. Refusing to believe the amount of time that has already passed since her accident, she felt like gasping for breath as if it would stop at any moment.

No no, no!

Lil released the curtains and searched around in panic. Seeing a door at the end of the darkness, she quickly scurried towards it. While the soles of her bare feet felt fresh and cold with each step, her sweaty negligee started to cool down and her spine became chilly. The blade of the sword she was still holding onto, scratched over the marble floor. Lil's nervous grip on the handle tightened. Upon reaching the carpet, the dull noise from her metal weapon emanated. Reaching the door at once, she grabbed the doorknob, and turned it. After stepping into the hallway, she walked to her right and

headed towards the front window. Just to be sure, Lil raised the sword in front of her. And although her arms trembled, she held the sword with all her might.

Sweat seeped into her eyes and stung them.

Lil kept turning her head to the point where her body staggered while she looked around. The walls to the left of the hallway were lined with portraits. She shook her head vigorously, afraid that she might witness a portrait of Ed in uniform. She didnt want to see even a single piece of evidence that this absurd situation of hers could be real.

Its a mirage. This is only a dream.

As she walked while brainwashing herself like that, she heard voices from somewhere.

Shh, dont say that

What? Am I wrong though? Hes like that. It isnt the first time he brings in a dying woman and then makes a fuss. Even after 10 years, he hasnt changed. He still does it

If youre going to talk like this anyway, make sure to keep your voice down

Shouldnt he spend his remaining time with that dying person, holding her tight and talking to her, instead of trying so hard to treat her? If you ask me, what hes doing is insane

Lil didnt understand what the murmurs were about. All she knew was that there were people and that their voices came from the stairs below. Knowing that the stairs were about ten steps away, she swung her head left and right looking for a place to hide.

Simultaneously, a tall figure popped out from the stairs.

Who are you?!

Chapter 180

Lil took a deep breath and looked ahead. No, she had to look up, for the two heads that showed up were taller than her. A northern continental man and woman with pale skin and black hair were clearly shocked to see her. The man, however, immediately drew his sword and held it. The tip of his blade was undoubtedly pointed toward Lil. In an attempt to defend herself, Lil also brandished her sword despite her clouded mind.

She swung it. Or, so she thought.

Zeng!

Lils blade slammed on the marble floor. Her hand, which had let go of the sword halfway, swung through the air in an empty trajectory. This action caused her to lose her balance and Lil staggered forward. As soon as her stomach was squeezed, she burst into tears from the pain and she threw up a foreign substance. To check what was pouring out of her nose and mouth, Lil rubbed her face with her hand.

Wet..?

Ah

Lowering her gaze, she witnessed her own blood dripping down, staining the white hem of her dress. Not long after, her legs began to tremble like she was having a seizure and morbid tremors

ran from her head, through her shoulders, to her back. To make matters worse, her tongue curled up on its own and blocked her airway.

A scream came from the woman with the blurry face.

Linhardt!

What the

The mans face came closer as if he leapt forward. At the same time, Lils vision continued to fade away. In her world where the lights were dimming, only inaudible voices came and went.

But before long, even before her sense of hearing was lost, Lil had already lost her mind

The port city of Roahn.

The Marquisate of Rohan, which included the Mondovi Peninsula, was a region bestowed on the Retiro family by the first emperor. The first in their lineage, Eichendorff, was an explorer from the Northern Continent who shouldve been captured when he set foot on the land. But instead of doing so, the emperor granted them territory instead. This provoked strong opposition from the aristocracy, who claimed that the emperor was bestowing a title on a mere foreigner. In the end, the emperor had no choice but to give them an unappealing piece of land. The Sesbron nobles eventually accepted the new estate of Retiro, due to the fact that it was on nearly barren land. To them it felt like they were giving away trash.

Roahn had previously been an outlying village where farming was impossible, so no one wanted to embrace it. Roahns rapid rise as a sophisticated city was accomplished due to the exploration of the Western Continent. When the Western Navy was formed around the Mondovi Peninsula, the mansions of officers and the home of merchant associations were intermittently built. Following these military developments, culture and art progressed naturally. Now, more than a century later, Roahn has grown into one of the empires leading cities.

The Retiro mansion, overlooking the Devito Harbour, was a structure that had been built on the top of a low cliff. Its official name was the Residence of the Marquess of Roahn, but it was more often referred to as the Retiro mansion, like how its owner was usually addressed as Admiral Retiro rather than the Marquess of Roahn.

At the bottom of the cliff, the harbour shrouded in thick darkness was quiet. A man standing in front of the mansion looked down at the pier of the Devito Harbour. His elongated, mono-lid eyes carefully examined the port.

Its time for him to arrive. Why cant I see him yet?..

While muttering, he turned to the other side and saw the city with sparse lights down the hill of the Marquess residence. Shortly thereafter, a dark figure approaching the residence caught his eye. Watching the person come up along the well-marked road, Linhardt chewed on the leaves in his mouth, causing a refreshing mint scent to be released. The smell of mint, wafting in the autumn night breeze, filled his nose. A sudden rustle made Linhardt turn his head. Butler Grits spoke to him as he was walking out of the main buildings entrance.

Sir Linhardt. This

What is it?

This is a petition related to transportation tariffs on the canals. There seems to be an urgent problem, so please take a look.

Ha, damn you Edgar, you bastard Even for issues on tariff duties, Im the one who has to do them myself. At moments like this Im starting to wonder who the real Marquess actually is.

Linhardt accepted the papers and quill. With the amount of work constantly piling up, he seems to have no time to go out for a break.

Damn

Of course, it was only natural for Roahns governor, Linhardt, to be busy. However, customs duties were under the jurisdiction of the Marquess, Edgar. In spite of Ed being back in the mansion, Roahns master and the person responsible for the signature, the whole management of the estate was still bestowed upon Linhardt, and this fact annoyed him dearly. This was all because Eds presence here was kept a secret. Not that Linhardt wanted to stop working, but given the good harvest year, he felt like he deserved a break.

Linhardt signed while chewing the leaves like he was chewing meat.

Hows Levi?

I think shes still taking care of the patient, I mean, Visha. She needed a change of clothes.

I see.

Linhardt nodded and handed back the documents. While he and the butler talked, the figure, which had been getting closer for a while now, reached the entrance of the mansion. It didnt slow down even after entering the garden. Evidently the man on horseback instantly headed to the front of the main building and jumped off his horse.

Linhardt snorted at the mans sloppy disguise as a mere private soldier.

You thoughtless bastard. What kind of soldier tramples the garden of his masters mansion as if it were his own grass?

..?

Ed, who was picking up the luggage he had brought, glanced at his opponent picking a fight. Similarly, Linhardt blatantly looked at Ed from head to toe.

Dont you know that wearing such an inconsequential costume is even more conspicuous? I thought that your stay here should remain a secret?

I dont care.

What a prick.

Why so savage? Do you have too much free time on your hands now?

Why do you think so? I like talking to my cousin whose status is up there.

Ed kept his mouth shut, not feeling the urge to reply any further. Normally, that wasnt really like him, but for now, he was so tired that he couldnt be bothered.

Servants who approached him unloaded his belongings and slung them over their shoulders.

Ed took off his glove and squeezed his stiff neck. He has been feeling tense while riding his horse, so his neck and back ached. Meanwhile, Linhardt stayed silent as he watched Ed unload the new medicines. Ed suddenly felt a strange premonition and looked down at Linhardt's feet before looking straight at his opponent chewing leaves. At first glance, Linhardt seemed preoccupied with chewing, but in fact, he was waiting for Ed.

Ed had a hunch that something might have happened.

What happened with the patient?

Linhardt only chewed indifferently.

Hmm.

Damn it.

Ed passed the hat and gloves to Linhardt. Leaving behind Linhardt, who received his luggage, Ed rushed to the hall on the first floor. Linhardt, who suddenly became a porter, explained while catching up with him.

That patient No, Visha Oh, its inconvenient that we don't know her real name, but the anaesthesia seemed to have worn off. She walked out into the hallway and swung a sword at us Well, it wasn't a significant attack. Actually, there was no attack. She immediately collapsed while coughing up blood. Nothing else happened after that, as the Maltine probably hasn't yet gotten out of her body. It isn't surprising, since she has been drugged all this time and then exerted so much strain on her body right after waking up.

Ed, who was climbing the stairs, stopped walking.

Wait, what did she do?

Levi forgot to replace her anaesthetic incense. I'm saying this in advance, don't you dare blame Levi for this.

What did the patient do?

I said don't you dare blame Levi Hmm? Oh, she jumped out of the room and swung a sword at us, no, should I say she was trying to hide her presence? If I remember correctly, she was clumsily moving along the wall I think.

In which hand did she hold the sword?

Linhardt immediately answered Ed's strange but not difficult question.

Right hand?

Did she get to say anything?

Huh?

..?

Oh, right no, but I did. I was about to confirm that. She did seem to recognize people's faces and had good muscle memory

Linhardt shook his head and muttered alone while watching the back of Eds head. The marquess climbed the stairs in an increasingly wide stride. After passing through several rooms and coming out of the hallway again, he finally reached Lils bedroom which was at the end.

Ed shouted while pulling open the double doors.

Levi!

The room was filled with the smell of medicine and fresh linen. A machine made of wood and porcelain turned with a constant sound. Levi, who was at the bedside adjusting the patients clothes, shouted.

No, wait!

..?

Levi tied the ribbon on the apron as quickly as she could and put the blanket over the patients body.

When Ed entered without hesitation, she threw him the nightcap she was holding.

What are you doing, you idiot!

Ed frowned at the nightcap he had snatched up. He didnt really like the look of its thin lace, let alone its warming function.

Why would you put something like this on her?

I didnt intend to put it on either. But what else am I supposed to do with what the maids brought me?

Levi scowled at Ed. She was the daughter of a vassal of the Eichendorff family, and an international student studying advanced medicine at the Imperial Clairaut. Although she and Ed were distant in terms of bloodline, being a daughter of a vassal, she has been with him since they were children, so she had no qualms even with Ed.