

Northwest 20

Chapter 20

Ed attempted to capture what he assumed to be a memory. He chased after the fleeing figure which appeared to be in the form of a woman. Following quickly, he grabbed the figures shoulder and turned it around. And when he saw her face, his eyes lit up.

Ed shook his head to clear his mind of the tingling afterimage.

Lil?

He got up half-fazed and started to rummage through his desk.

Liloa?

The pile of papers that had been swept around fell now off completely.

These reports say, Lil?

Ed scoured the papers. Soon after, he found a crumpled piece of paper on the floor.

[Ed, or whatever your name is. Im writing to tell you that, I, Lil, have punished you with grace and respect in accordance with the Sesbron custom]

He picked up the looting certificate that had fallen to the floor as well.

I, the Black Whale, Lil Schweiz,

Ed didnt even notice that his voice was shaking.

[have punished you with grace and respect in accordance with the Sesbron custom]

have pillaged Sir Augusts ship with grace and respect in accordance with the Sesbron custom Damn it, this woman!

He crumpled up the note and turned towards the terrace. The gently swaying sea filled the horizon. Ed altered his gaze. At the northern marina, there were ships lined up in straight rows.

Theres a way for Ed to tell the ships apart.

Its a simple task that only needs a few investigations.

His sharp gaze slid down the mast line as he started counting the cannons. Then he suddenly changed his mind.

No, this isnt the first step.

He focused on Liloa again.

The similarities between the two, who seemed to be completely unrelated, are questionable. But she refers to herself as Lil and uses the same phrases as Lil Schweiz. She kept a close eye on the Admirals movements, stole naval secrets and is most likely dressing as a man. On the other hand, the majority of the ships looted by Lil Schweiz were Garni merchant ships.

Its said Lil Schweiz has a small posture and mixed-race appearance. And the Captain said

Ed grabbed the report again.

Well, isnt it my job to turn suspicion into facts?

Her yawn brought tears to her eyes. It was the same for Alain and Marenzio, sitting next to her.

I dont know how many nights I stayed up

I know, Captain.

Its the first time Ive been working so hard since we docked the ship. Has it been a week?

Lil gently patted Marenzios forearm, who was rubbing his tired eyes.

Everyone did a great job, Ill compensate you generously once we get out of Amiaeng.

Aye, Aye.

Marenzio, come to the gun deck with me. Alain, go to Cesar now.

Yes, Captain.

Come find me after you finish recruiting new crewmembers.

Yes.

Our departure is at eleven oclock. Dont be late and get ready right now. Jericho and the new recruits are below, make sure to let them read and sign the contract.

Alain nodded with a big smile. Leaving the captains room together, Lil encouraged Alain with a pat on his back. The grinning old man crossed over to the dock. Marenzio and Lil made their way to the gun deck, where she inspected the cannons lined up on the left.

Marenzio, do we have enough sand?

Itll be enough, I guess, itll do anyway.

You guess? What do I always tell you?

While checking the right cannon barrel, Marenzio replied slightly annoyed.

Come on, Captain. Its rare for a captain to make a list from one to ten and check it as thoroughly as you do.

You say I made it? Cesar did.

Wasnt it the Captain who ordered it?

Hmph.

If we have some, we can use it and if we dont, we dont. Why do we have so many things to take care of?

If you dont understand it, then be quiet. Even if youre that ignorant, theres no need to show it.

Whats that now?

Do you know how hard Ive been working to feed you?

What did you say, Captain?

Marenzio raised his voice with a flushed face. Lil was in the middle of teasing him when she heard a call from above.

Captain! Captain!

Looking up, she shouted back.

What!

Come out!

Lil ran to the upper deck.

Why? Whats wrong? Can you see another fleet coming?

Courant, standing on the upper deck, pointed at the dock. From above she could see Bell Rocks crew huddled together.

Not another fleet.

Lil stroked her chest, stepped on the crossing and went down.

Whats going on?

She passed through the roaring crew and approached the owner of the brown hair, which she believed to be the cause of the disturbance. He was particularly tall, but all she could see was the top of his head, as she herself was a bit smaller than the rest of the crew. Lil tapped Alain on his shoulder, he was the last person blocking her way. When Alain recognized her as the captain, he stepped aside, revealing the mans face.

Lil didnt recognize him at first. Staring at him blankly, she thought he was just some bright young man that had no reason to be on this pier.

Hes handsome.

With his smooth sunlight-kissed skin, clean jawline without a hint of a beard and hair fluttering in the wind, he was definitely a person that did not fit between the sailors. It was appropriate to say that his appearance would even make the Sesbrons woman scream.

Lil finally looked at his eyes. Green eyes were staring right into hers.

She shouted reflexively.

Ah!

Captain?

What! Whats this bastard doing here?

Lil yelled at Alain but suddenly stopped.

I only met Ed when I was a woman. Lil Schweiz is a stranger to him. Damn it.

She cleared her throat a few times.

Hm, I mean, whos this guy?

Hes a new recruit, Captain.

Recruit? Who wants to be recruited? I thought the recruitment ended at dawn. Why is this the first time I hear about this?

Cesar said it was okay.

What? Where the hell is he?

Uh, Captain.

Bring Cesar right away!

Captain.

She felt her surroundings narrowing and had a rough guess why. They tried to stop Alain from running back to the ship.

What is it?!

Hes a doctor, Captain.

Lil had the impression that she saw Ed smile from the corner of her eye. She felt a chill running down her spine.

What are you up to? What, whats he laughing about?

What?

He has quite the experience. Hes from the mainland and received formal education.

Hes Navy.

When asked how she knew the stranger she saw for the first time was from the Navy, Lil insisted it was her gut feeling.

Just trust me and keep your guards up.

Alain, on the other hand, shrugged as if nothing had changed.

Wasnt Depp too?

What? Are you trying to sell out the Bell Rock?

Dont yell at me, go see Cesar, Captain. He said he already talked to the guy.

The navigator? Did Cesar really approve it or was it someone who claimed to be our navigator?

I dont know.

You idiots! Cant you see hes just trying to get on our ship by lying about Cesar?

Come on, wait Captain!

She looked back at Ed, who was chasing after her. He had a clueless face, with I dont know written all over his forehead. Lil couldnt stand the anger boiling inside her.

Its all a fucking act. This guy is crazy!

Captain, I can explain!

Im not your captain.

Ed hesitated with an innocent face as if he really didnt know anything. Lils nose was so stuffy that she couldnt even breathe properly.

What a scam. He looks just like a lost puppy. I now understand why Cesar didnt recognize him. Seeing him now without that scruffy beard and messy hair, I think hes probably four or five years younger than Cesar.

Lil glared at him as if she was trying to tear him apart with her eyes. However, Ed not only calmly accepted her gaze but also made her shiver by looking at her with a face that seemed helpless. It was a response that seemed to be well aware of the fact that his good looks were a powerful weapon. It was the same for Lil, making her see right through his strategy.

Damn it, that filthy bastard.

Lil shuddered once again as if shaking off a spider, then pushed the sailors to make way.

I need to quickly ask Cesar the full story of this bizarre coincidence. If it was indeed Cesars decision, hed know for sure that he was the same pervert we met ten days ago. So why did he agree to let him join our ship?

Oh, get out of the way!

She stretched out her arms and scowled at the sailors who didnt step aside quickly enough. It was as hard as to swim against a tidal wave.

Suddenly she realised she was in the minority, and itd be almost impossible to throw him out.

The crew is already sold by the fact that Ed is a doctor, theyll never take my side, even if Im the Captain.

From time to time, Lil glanced sideways. Her crew were of no help and by now were busy showing interest in Eds luggage.

What kind of drugs do you have?

I heard that theres a device on the mainland that can reattach severed arms and legs

All kinds of curious questions went back and forth.

Doctors are very rare. Of course, that doesnt apply to Sesbron. Most of the well-educated people, such as doctors, served their duties in the Navy as soon as they received their degree from the Imperial academy or worked as physicians for a noble family. There was no shortage of doctors in the capital. The problem was everywhere else. Especially in the South, doctors were scarcer than the rare, speckled dolphin. The physician on Varese Street, Doctor Pons, was considered the only prominent doctor in Amiaeng.

Still, Lil hadnt forgotten when the old man sutured a wound by pouring boiling oil on the patients injured area.

Therefore, it was natural for her crew to swarm around Ed. Lil, squeezing herself through the crowd, lost her temper when someone tapped her shoulder.

What now?!

