

Northwest 36

Chapter 36

Logically speaking, he has a point. But this isnt enough to convince me. Especially after seeing him shamelessly trying to pass over the existence of that low-ranking officer. Its highly likely he was just pretending to be unconscious, he might have been awake for quite a while. That way he could buy some more time to get his story straight. Even with that particular personality of his, he would know that this situation is too sensitive to just skip over it like this.

I witnessed his connection with the Navy first hand, and it hit me hard. Its too dangerous to keep this guy around. It doesnt matter if his real intention of boarding the Bell Rock was to escape the Admirals grasp or not. My intuition is telling me that I should get rid of this guy Thats right, it will also be better for my own peace of mind, Im on the verge of going crazy by this constant doubt. Eliminating him is the best course of action, its the only way to ensure his silence.

However, his body needs to be dumped in a place where it isnt easy to find. That reduces the chance of a chase and gives us time to erase all evidence associating him with the Bell Rock. There are probably some witnesses at Marchands Pier remembering him, so he needs to stay alive, at least for now.

But first, we need to escape from this pirate ship. And from a strategic standpoint, I may need his help. Although thinking of working with him gives me the creeps, he might be useful one way or another. We should come up with a plan together.

Youre a pain in the ass, you know that? From the very first time I saw you, youve always acted fishy.

Are you sure about that? The fact that you couldnt leave my body behind, tells me that your attitude has changed. I think you already accepted me as part of the crew.

Dont worry, Captain. Even if I get abandoned and arrested later, I wont betray the grace youve been giving me. Do you believe me now? Even if you dont believe me, you dont have a choice but to trust me for the time being.

Youre a bug-like bastard. I feel like even if Id step on you, youll survive somehow.

Hehehe

Ed started to laugh like a madman. Lil, getting goosebumps, glared at him in the dark.

Did you go crazy?

Well, youre always ignoring me, so even your insults are a nice change of pace.

Quit it with that crazy behaviour and answer my question. Where have you met that bastard with the bald head before?

I dont know.

Well, he seems to recognise you?

He called you Retiro. Im sure I heard that right.

Ed smirked.

Based on that bald mans tone of voice and his actions, he must have been completely unaware of the truth. Now that I think back on it, its reasonable to assume that he didnt actually know who I was. If he had recognized me as the Admiral, he would have peed his pants on the spot. And unless they had completely lost their minds, the bastards who fled all the way to Marchand to survive wouldnt have been so brave to fight me. At the end of the great war of extinction, the notoriety of Admiral Retiro had grown so much around the Anatole Sea, that there wasnt a single pirate ship willing to sacrifice themselves. Therefore, the war was easily won by means of surrender.

Even if he saw me on the Visha or on a pirate ship for that matter, there is a high possibility that he would just mistake me for any common sailor. Although Im always the first one to board an enemy ship, I rarely wear my uniform, nor am I an active participant in hand-to-hand battle. I always prioritised searching the cargo above all else Besides, Sagastar, who leads the fleet in his uniform full of medallions, looks way more like an Admiral than I do

The Captain has a very aggressive temperament.

I told you to call me Lil.

And youre always so curious.

Watch your mouth.

You observe, then you ask. You have an amusing personality.

So, what? No, dont answer that, quit this nonsense. Tell me, why did the name Retiro come out of that bald heads mouth?

Well, isnt it obvious? He must have seen me aboard the fleet.

Do you really think he knows the name of a mere doctor like me? He must have been reminded of the Admiral who scalped his fellow crewmen.

How could he have seen you if you were working on the lower deck as a doctor?

I worked on the upper deck.

Actually, I worked quite diligently on the ship before that Admiral ripped my life apart. He must have seen me bustling around. Well, this does solve your suspicion if I really was a sailor on the Mondovi fleet, doesnt it, Captain?

Nonetheless, Lil gave him a slightly annoyed look.

My doubts dont go away no matter how much I listen to him. However, I dont want to question Ed any further as he appeared to be dehydrated. Fighting them would become difficult if he collapsed again. For now, we have to be allies.

Alright.

What?

For now, we have a temporary alliance. Im sure you want to avoid an unnecessary death here, too. So, cooperate. And Im telling you in case it slipped your mind, but there wont be a single soul on this ship who doesnt know that youre from the Navy. Navy officers on pirate ships are treated worse than rats, so you should actually be thankful that your body is still intact.

Im supposed to be thankful? Me? Really?

Watch it!

Im just kidding. Im going to follow the Captain of course. Thats what my contract says anyway, right? But just in case you forgot, according to the Bell Rocks contract, the Captain is also obligated to protect my life

Now then, thats settled. Lets move on So, theyre the scum of the West.

Yes. I first suspected it when I saw their swords, but after hearing that they used blue powder to knock you out, Im sure of it. Ive had a bit of trouble with them in my early days because they like to spray it during close combat fights on deck. After escaping the Admirals exploits, they probably came to the South hoping to make a living by selling it.

Why havent I heard about this before? There arent any of their kind in Amiaeng and when I occasionally went to Marchand, I never seen nor heard of the remnants of the Anatole pirates.

How should I know? Ive never been outside of Amiaeng before.

Useless bastard.

Youre too harsh, Captain.

Lil let out a suffocating breath.

If you think youve recovered enough, get up and check the wall for cracks.

What?

The ones on my side are too small, so I couldnt see anything.

For what?

Figures, youre only familiar with those fancy Navy ships, right? The wood used for a low-quality ship like this one often has holes and cracks in it. So, look for a crack big enough to be useful. We must figure out in which sea were floating.

Ed sighed and stood up. Not only his wrist but also his ankles were tied up with chains, so he had to shuffle sideways with small steps, while leaning his hands against the wall. When he brought his face closer, he could feel a faint wind blowing, meaning there were indeed spaces between the planks. He looked carefully at the wood grain.

It was so damp that it was nowhere near comparable to the Visha, which was made with the finest oak wood from the northern continent. Judging from the state of the woodwork, it seemed that it had already suffered from several storms. It was then that Ed feared for his life for the first time. He was on a boat that would be overturned with ease if it was hit by a wrathful storm.

I think this part has been smashed by a cannon before, its repaired now but there are still some gaps between the planks.

Look at the sky.

Ed turned his head to an unnatural angle and found the brightest star in the night sky.

I see the Mariners star.

What about the horizon?

I cant see it. But we seem to be headed northeast. I suppose they took your compass and your watch, right?

Aye.

How long have we been asleep?

How should I know? Its the first time Ive been exposed to that drug. Youre the doctor.

Oh yes. That powder

Ed raised his eyes for a moment, looking back at the constellations.

I have a bad feeling about this.

Are you still feeling hazy?

Uhm, a little? My mind is returning to normal.

That blue powder is a drug that affects women much longer than men. Half a day could have easily passed. But the problem is that Ive been out longer than Liloa.

Ed was clenching and opening his fist without realising it. His palms were damp. His breathing, as well as his pulse, were faster than normal. All those symptoms indicate that he was nervous.

Did you feel any cramps?

Uhm, not now.

How long have you been awake before I woke up?

It wasnt that long. I dont think it was more than an hour.

Then it must have been half a day.

At this speed, half a day northeast from Marchand?

Ed looked at the sky again.

The Alvenis Triangle is No, I dont see it.

Apart from that, is there anything you can see in the ocean?

I cant see the horizon Hm? Theres something there. It looks like a reef, but I cant be sure. I think Ill be able to take a better look at it in the morning.

I have a rough idea of where this may be

Shhh

Sounds like they just dropped the anchor.

It was silent for a few seconds, followed by a splashing sound and a dull piece of metal colliding with the bottom of the sea. For a while, the scrapping sound of the anchor dragging over the surface continued.

Thud!

The ship came to a halt. Both spoke simultaneously as they had been waiting in anticipation.

Its not as deep as I thought

Why have they stopped?..

Again, they answered at the same time.

If Im right, theres probably a lot of coral around here. Southerners used to come here to swim and have a good time before the world went crazy

I wonder if were going to be executed here tomorrow, its a tradition for the western pirates to flay their prisoners half to death, before tossing them into the sea

Lil, who was listening quietly, flinched.

What?

But on the eve of the execution, they like to enjoy a feast.

What are you saying?

It just means we have a new reason to get off this boat as soon as possible. The state of this crappy ship is now the second reason. But it wont matter anymore, because when the sun rises tomorrow, we will be as good as dead
