

# **One Piece: So What If I Sin, Lie, and Lust? I'm Still a Good Marine**

## **Chapter 36 - 36: Daring**

"You... killed him..."

The naked, bruised woman stared in horror at the Celestial Dragon lying in a pool of blood. Her body trembled as she looked at the blood spreading across the floor, her face pale with shock.

Everything before her felt unreal, like a dream.

"You... killed a Celestial Dragon..."

She repeated it again and again under her breath, reaching out to touch the blood seeping toward her, feeling its warm texture.

A small smile tugged at the corner of her lips.

"You killed him..."

The smile twisted into something manic.

"Hahahahahaha!!! You killed him!!!"

"He's finally dead!!!"

"Hahahahahaha..."

She burst into wild laughter, even as blood-tinged tears welled up in her eyes.

"He's finally dead... sob..."

Her voice broke. Then came the flood of sobs.

Daren looked at the woman—laughing, crying, her expression crazed and distorted—and lowered his gaze.

"You're free," he said.

"Free?"

A bitter smile crept across her face. She slowly turned her body, revealing her bare back to Daren.

Branded into her skin was the glaring red mark of the "Hoof of the Soaring Dragon."

"For someone like me, where in this world is there freedom?"

She raised her head and smiled at Daren.

There was a calm in her smile—perhaps even a sense of release.

"Thank you, Marine-sama."

She struggled to her feet, then dropped to her knees and bowed her head deeply to Daren.

"I have no reason left to live. Everyone I ever cared about was killed by him."

"Please... go do what you must."

Daren stared at her.

In her eyes, he saw an unwavering resolve to die.

He didn't know what she had endured, or how long she had suffered under Saint Xildes.

But he had always lived by one rule—

If you haven't experienced someone's pain yourself, don't judge their life.

"I understand."

"Then, farewell."

With those words, Daren turned and walked out of the cabin without hesitation.

The woman remained kneeling, watching the Marine Captain's figure disappear into the distance. She wiped the tears from her face.

Her eyes were no longer vacant or numb.

A soft, radiant smile slowly bloomed on her bloodstained face—

Like a flower blooming tenaciously on the edge of a cliff.

"Thank you... truly... Marine-sama."

"If I were to survive, it would only trouble you further..."

She smiled faintly.

Then, slowly picked up the golden pistol from the ground.

Bang! Bang!

Gritting her teeth, she fired two shots into the corpse of the Celestial Dragon.

"Father, Mother... I'm coming to join you."

Her smile was gentle, almost peaceful.

She raised the barrel to her temple.

The final bullet was meant for herself.

...

Bang!

A gunshot rang out behind him, followed by the thud of a body hitting the floor, but Daren didn't slow his pace.

He wasn't a saint.

He couldn't force someone who had chosen death to find the will to live.

Before, she had no choice.

Now, at least, she had the freedom to choose death.

Suppressing the churn of emotion inside, Daren strode toward the cabin of the official ship where the slaves were held.

The locked cabin door blasted off its hinges.

No one stood in his way as he stepped inside.

The air was thick with the stench of rot and damp. A dim yellow oil lamp flickered in the murky atmosphere.

Curled up in the corner of a cage, Lia flinched at the noise. Panic flashed across her small face, but the moment she saw who it was, fear gave way to joy.

Daren waved his hand.

The steel cage instantly collapsed, twisting and crumpling in on itself. The shackles on the little girl's body snapped and fell away.

"Marine brother!!"

The gag slipped from her mouth as she cried out, stumbling forward and throwing herself into Daren's leg, clinging tightly.

Daren ruffled her hair with a smile.

"Let's go. I'll take you home."

Lia nodded hard, her eyes red.

Hand in hand, they walked out of the cabin.

...

But when Lia stepped onto the deck and saw the bodies strung up in steel, her face went deathly pale.

She instinctively turned toward the cabin.

The grotesque, monstrous Celestial Dragon lay lifeless in a pool of blood.

Lia released Daren's hand and took two terrified steps back.

Then suddenly, she gritted her teeth and flung herself toward the mast!

Daren reached out and caught her by the collar, lifting her up like a kitten.

"What are you doing?" he asked with a frown.

The little girl's voice quivered through her tears.

"I'm not allowed to live, am I?"

"If I do, I'll bring a lot of trouble for Marine brother..."

Daren froze for a second, then let out a quiet sigh.

He remembered how her father had tried to smash his head against the wall earlier. The resemblance between them was undeniable.

He scooped her up and said firmly,

"You survived. That means you live."

"Your father's waiting for you to come home."

"I took your money. That means it's my duty to protect you."

The little girl blinked, a little embarrassed.

"But... but the money I gave you... it wasn't much..."

Daren smiled.

"It's enough."

A metal hoverboard drifted toward them. He stepped onto it and began to rise into the sky.

Hovering high above, Daren cradled the grimy little girl in one arm. He looked down at the blood-soaked World Government ship below. Raising his hand, he spread his fingers and made a distant grabbing motion.

Rumble...

Clang, crackle!

Drawn by the metal hull of the ship, the entire vessel began to compress, crumple, and twist under a strange magnetic force.

With a thunderous boom, the ship's gunpowder and cannons exploded. A massive fireball erupted skyward, engulfing the ship in flames.

The blast's heat and shockwave surged upward. Instinctively, Lia buried her face in the Marine Captain's chest—like it was the safest place in the world.

The ship slowly sank, and the World Government's flag—symbol of supreme power—was reduced to ashes in the blaze.

Black smoke curled toward the heavens.

From the heavy clouds above came flashes of lightning and rumbling thunder. A long-brewing storm was finally arriving.

In the flickering, distorted firelight...

Daren saw faces—faint, shifting, like a dream.

He saw Gion on the street, eyes vacant, clutching a rose.

He saw Tokikake slamming his fists into a wall.

He saw the man kneeling before him, offering a pile of coins in desperate plea.

He saw the woman, smiling as she lifted the golden pistol to end her life.

He saw the twisted, grinning face of the Celestial Dragon...

One face after another. One memory after another. Surfacing in the roaring blaze.

Daren exhaled a long breath.

The suffocating frustration in his chest... finally dissipated.

And in its place, a surge of emotion and strength welled up within him—too powerful to hold back.

Crack!!

A blinding white bolt of lightning split the dark sky, illuminating the entire world.

Then came the storm, fierce and unrelenting.

Wind howled. Clouds surged.

Suspended in the air, the Marine Captain's aura rose higher and higher. His wide cloak billowed behind him like a rampaging dragon.

A tremendous, domineering force exploded from his body—echoing the storm around him.

The world trembled.

At that moment...

In Daren's awareness, a new "item" quietly appeared.

Conqueror's Haki: 20

The aura of a king... awakened.

(40 Chapters Ahead)

/ PinkSnake

## Chapter 37 - 37: World Destroyer

At the same time...

On the blood-red cliffs, the towering Red Line rose like a blade into the sky.

Holy Land Mary Geoise.

Blue-roofed, white-walled buildings lined the immaculate streets. Vegetation, artificial hills, fountains, and sculpted gardens surrounded grand and ancient structures nestled on flower-covered hills, like something out of a dream.

This was the realm of the gods—the sacred and noble sanctuary where the Celestial Dragons resided.

Suddenly, a terrified scream shattered the peace of the gods' domain.

"This... how is this possible!?"

Inside a lavishly adorned hall, an official responsible for overseeing the daily lives of the World Nobles collapsed to the floor in shock. His face turned pale as he trembled uncontrollably.

His cry quickly drew the attention of nearby officials.

When they rushed into the main hall, they were stunned speechless. Their eyes locked on a Vivre Card slowly burning into ash. Breath caught in their throats. Their minds went blank.

"Saint Xildes-sama..."

"That's Saint Xildes-sama's Vivre Card..."

"According to the latest intel, wasn't he just in the North Blue, having recently boarded the return voyage?"

"This... how could this happen..."

The officials on duty exchanged panicked glances. Their throats tightened, each unconsciously swallowing hard, their mouths dry as sand.

Saint Xildes, a Celestial Dragon... was dead.

"Quick! Report to the Five Elders immediately!"

The leading official jolted to his senses. Clenching his teeth, he forced his weak legs to stand and shouted with all his strength.

The news spread like wildfire.

Panic swept through Mary Geoise. CP agents in suits darted through the streets like shadows. Holy Land guards galloped down pristine roads, startling civilians into hiding.

Officials turned fearfully toward the Celestial Stairway, their hearts pounding.

A Celestial Dragon—sacred and supreme—was dead.

This was the first time since the God Valley Incident eight years ago that a "god" had fallen in these seas.

...

North Blue, somewhere on the open sea.

The sky churned with darkness. Black clouds roiled like the crumbling walls of a fortress, threatening to collapse at any moment.

A torrential downpour drenched the world, and the warship pitched violently on the raging waves, as if tossed again and again by some invisible giant.

Boom!

A barrage of cannon fire erupted from the ship's gunports. Muzzles flashed one after another, the barrels glowing red from heat.

Explosions lit up the distant sea, sending towering pillars of water skyward as shells thundered into the ocean.

"Byrnndi World! You won't escape!"

On the warship's bow, Sengoku—wearing black-rimmed glasses and a tightly braided black beard—planted one foot forward and roared toward the pirate ship in the heart of the bombardment.

Rain poured down in sheets, bouncing off the deck and shrouding the warship in mist.

Marines worked swiftly amid the storm, reloading the heavy cannons. Each blast sent a tremor through the vessel.

"Barorororo!! Sengoku, you're a long way from being able to catch me!"



On the pirate ship, a towering figure stood confidently at the bow, arms crossed, grinning with savage delight.

He wore a blood-red captain's coat and a horned helmet. His gray-green beard quivered with his laughter, radiating a deep and overwhelming presence.

The "World Destroyer" Byrnndi World!

Captain of the World Pirates. Bounty: 200 million Belly!

A legendary pirate, a man who stood shoulder to shoulder with Whitebeard and Roger!

Explosions burst around his ship, sending waves and smoke into the air.

But Byrnndi World paid them no mind. His eyes locked onto the warship with a vicious glint—and a cruel smile slowly curled across his face.

"When it comes to firepower, I've never lost to anyone."

Byrnndi World's figure vanished like a ghost.

Through the torrential rain, a shadow darted across the downpour at such speed that it carved a brief vacuum tunnel through the sheets of water.

In the next instant, he reappeared on the far side of the deck, both hands gripping a cannon.

"Alright, boys! Adjust our heading! Let those World Government lapdogs see what the Ward Pirates are really made of!"

He shouted loudly.

Roar!!!

The crew of the Ward Pirates erupted with fanatic energy, raising their fists and shouting in unison.

Amid the crashing waves, one pirate gritted his teeth and forcefully turned the ship's wheel.

"Hard to starboard!"

The moment the words left his mouth, the ship groaned and tilted sharply under the pressure of wind, waves, and cannon fire.

The deck slanted dangerously, and pirates clung to the slick rails to keep from being flung overboard.

Rain pelted down in sheets, splashing violently against the wood.

Byrnni World clamped down on the cannon like an iron vise. As the ship shifted, the barrel slowly pivoted, aligning with the massive warship in the distance.

"All this fuss just for sinking one Celestial Dragon's pig boat... And you've been chasing me for a whole day and night?"

He scoffed, then let out a crazed laugh through the storm.

"Come on, Sengoku! Let me show you... the power to destroy the world!"

He yanked the cannon's fuse.

Boom!!

A black cannonball exploded from the barrel, cutting a blazing path through the rain.

"More-More Fiftyfold Cannon!!"

With Byrnni World's sharp call, an invisible force surged outward.

White shockwaves burst from the shell as it whistled through the air.

Then—something unbelievable happened.

The cannonball suddenly swelled, its size multiplying in a flash. In the blink of an eye, it expanded dozens of times over!

The black projectile, now over 20 meters in diameter, also rocketed forward with even greater velocity. At the peak of its arc, it plummeted straight toward the warship where Sengoku stood!

Its speed, weight, and sheer scale tore through the air, generating blazing red shockwaves. From a distance, it looked like a meteor tearing through the clouds, descending from the heavens.

This was Byrnni World's ability.

The Moa Moa no Mi—capable of amplifying both the speed and size of objects.

And with that amplification, the destructive force of anything it enhanced rose exponentially.

Without exaggeration, if that cannonball landed, the resulting explosion could easily flatten an entire town.

A crimson glow spread overhead. A massive shadow blanketed the warship's crew.

The pressure from the descending shockwave crushed down from above. The entire vessel groaned under the strain, and the deck let out a sharp cracking noise.

"Damn it!"

Sengoku roared, eyes bloodshot.

If that cannonball hit, everyone aboard the warship—himself included—would be swallowed by the fury of the sea.

His boots slammed against the deck as he launched himself into the air like a missile.

A brilliant golden light burst across the sky.

The Marines watched in awe as their Admiral transformed in an instant into a towering golden Buddha, hurling a massive palm strike at the incoming shell.

"Impact Wave!"

Boom!!

A colossal golden shockwave slammed into the cannonball.

After a brief moment of eerie silence, a thunderous explosion erupted in the sky.

A fireball over a hundred meters wide blossomed above them, and countless fragments of the shell rained down like a storm of fire.

In midair, Sengoku returned to his human form, his expression tightening as he shouted:

"Borsalino!"

"Roger that..."

A lazy voice drifted through the rain, followed by a flash of golden light streaking into the sky.

"Yasakani no Magatama."

A torrent of glittering energy bullets rained upward, striking and disintegrating the falling fragments midair. The sky blazed with light, driving back the darkness.

Through the billowing smoke, Sengoku landed steadily on the deck.

The wind blew the haze away. His eyes locked on the pirate ship vanishing into the distance, slipping into the storm. He clenched his jaw, about to give the order to pursue—

But a raspy voice cut in behind him.

"Stand down. We've got a situation."

Sengoku turned with a frown.

A CP0 agent in a mask marked with strange patterns stepped quickly out of the cabin.

This operation against Byrnni World was a joint effort between the Marines and CP. Most of the intel had come from the CP division.

"Retreat? We've cornered Byrnni World. He's got nowhere left to run—especially not in these chaotic waters. In this weather, he won't get far!" Sengoku snapped.

But the CP0 agent shook his head.

"Byrnni World no longer matters."

He pulled out a military Den Den Mushi and handed it to Sengoku.

From the receiver came a cold, aged voice.

"Sengoku. Withdraw immediately."

Sengoku stiffened.

"Elder... the mission is nearly complete. Byrnni World has walked straight into our trap—just give me a little more time—"

He was abruptly cut off.

"We order you to retreat. Now."

Sengoku gritted his teeth.

"Why, my lord? The government and Marines have invested tremendous resources in this operation..."

"Saint Xildes is dead. In the North Blue."

The voice from the Five Elders froze Sengoku in place.

A Celestial Dragon... dead?

How was that even possible?

"Sengoku. As the Marine Headquarters' only active Admiral, your top priority is to investigate the death of Saint Xildes. Do you understand?"

"All other matters are irrelevant."

The voice of the Five Elders left no room for argument.

On deck, soaked by the relentless rain, Sengoku drew a long breath. The fire in his chest was smothered by the cold downpour.

"I understand," he muttered through clenched teeth.

The CP0 agent nodded, put away the Den Den Mushi, and disappeared back into the cabin.

Just then, golden particles began to converge beside Sengoku, gradually forming a humanoid shape.

A tall man in a yellow-and-white pinstripe suit, with exaggerated toad-shaped sunglasses and a thick beard.

Rear Admiral. A rising "monster" of the new generation... Borsalino.

"Shall I go after them, Admiral Sengoku?" Borsalino asked casually, eyeing Sengoku's darkened expression.

Sengoku glared at the distant pirate ship, now just a shadow in the storm, and suddenly slammed his fist into the railing, shattering it.

"No. We're heading back," he growled, face like stone.

Borsalino was strong—far beyond a typical Vice Admiral.

But against someone like Byrnni World, a pirate who once rivaled Whitebeard and Roger, he still wasn't quite there.

Sending him alone was a risk the Marines couldn't afford.

A future Admiral, someone with monstrous potential, couldn't be thrown away so carelessly.

What stung Sengoku the most was how close they'd come. So many resources, so much planning—just one step away from capturing Byrindi World...

And now, it was all for nothing.

He hated it.

But he knew—he couldn't defy the World Government.

A Celestial Dragon had died. In the same sea.

And he was the only Admiral left at Marine Headquarters. No matter how he felt, he had to let everything else go and find out the truth.

Still...

"In the North Blue... who would dare lay a hand on a Celestial Dragon?"

Sengoku stood in the rain, water streaming down his pale face.

His expression darkened. He fell silent, lost in thought.

(40 Chapters Ahead)

/ PinkSnake

## **Chapter 38 - 38: Kong and the Five Elders**

Late that night...

Fleet Admiral Kong was abruptly awakened by his personal aide. Suppressing the irritation of being pulled from sleep, he boarded his flagship and made a night voyage to the Holy Land of Mary Geoise.

Upon reaching the inner river atop the Red Line, he transferred to an official World Government vessel, then switched to a carriage along the way. After three grueling hours of travel, the weary Fleet Admiral finally arrived at the inner sanctum of the Holy Land—Pangaea Castle.

Despite being nearly 80 years old, Fleet Admiral Kong showed no signs of frailty or decline. His spirit was sharp, his gaze piercing.

With a mohawk of steel-grey hair standing upright like needles, and a face etched with cold determination, he cut an imposing figure. His burly frame, bared chest chiseled with muscular definition, and bronze skin gave him a rough, violent beauty.

He radiated the towering majesty and overwhelming strength of a mountain. The marshal's cloak, adorned with golden wheat epaulettes, billowed in the wind, adding to his commanding presence.

Caked in dust from travel, Kong looked up at the snow-white stairs before him, as if they led to the realm of the gods. Under the watchful gaze of countless hidden, ghostly white figures lurking in the shadows, he stood tall, chest out and back straight. True to his title of "Marshal," he began his ascent up the sacred Celestial Stairway.

Before long, he completed the climb. Passing through a serene garden filled with birdsong and blooming flowers, he arrived before a small Western-style villa nestled among the blossoms.

The villa's walls were a pristine white, with ivy clinging to the corners. Time had left speckled marks across the surface, and the pointed dome rose sharply like a giant sword.

"Fleet Admiral Marshal Kong."

Two attendants in black suits and white gloves stood by the entrance, bowing slightly in greeting.

Kong gave them a nod, drew a deep breath, and pushed open the villa door.

Inside was a modest but elegantly furnished meeting hall. On an intricately carved coffee table, a pot of tea had already come to a boil.

Five elderly men stood or sat, each radiating an aura of unapproachable authority.

These were the highest powers in the World Government... the Five Elders.

"Fleet Admiral Kong, reporting to the Five Elders."

Kong stepped forward with steady composure, his tone firm and respectful, yet neither humble nor arrogant.

He glanced at the Elder seated furthest to the left—a bald man in a tailored black suit, sporting a drooping mustache and a striking scar across his face.

"Congratulations, Saint Topman Warcury, on your landslide election to the highest seat of power."

The newly appointed Five Elder, Saint Topman Warcury, waved his hand and said hoarsely, "Spare me the formalities, Kong."

"You should know very well why we've summoned you here this time."

Kong replied in a low voice, "Of course I do. But before that, there's something I need to ask..."

He paused, his gaze turning sharp.

"Why did you bypass me, the Fleet Admiral, and issue a direct order to Admiral Sengoku to retreat?"

"The operation to capture Byrndi World had been in the works for a long time and was finally on the verge of success. If we let this chance slip by, it could spell endless trouble in the future!"

"Kong, are you questioning the government's decision?"

Saint Topman Warcury frowned, his tone turning cold.

"According to protocol, any offense against the Celestial Dragons must be punished by a Marine Admiral."

"Saint Xildes died in the North Blue, and we haven't even held your Marines accountable for their failure yet."

"Or are you saying that the life of a World Noble is less important than some arrest mission?"

At those words, the other Five Elders turned their cold gazes on Kong, and the pressure hit like a tidal wave.

Facing the highest authority of the World Government, Kong felt a chill run down his spine—but he didn't bow.

"The safety of the Celestial Dragons is, of course, important. But capturing Byrndi World is just as urgent."

"He's dangerously ambitious and terrifyingly powerful—he holds the power to destroy the world!"

"Let's not forget, it was Byrndi World's attack that led to Saint Xildes-sama's shipwreck in the first place."

"As long as Byrndi World remains at large, this sea will never know peace."



"Besides, I can assign someone else from Marine Headquarters to investigate the cause of Saint Xildes-sama's death..."

"Who could you possibly send?" the blond Five Elder cut him off coldly.

A mocking sneer curled at the corner of his mouth.

"There are only three Admirals in Marine Headquarters. Zephyr has stepped down, and Garp has refused promotion time and time again... What now? You plan to send Garp to investigate a Celestial Dragon's death? Or are you going to the North Blue yourself?"

Hearing the relentless questioning, Kong opened his mouth but had no response.

Frustration welled up inside him.

Though he appeared to hold immense authority as Fleet Admiral, in truth, there were very few he could truly command.

Take Zephyr for example—after the tragedy he endured, he had long since stepped away from frontline duties.

If Kong hadn't personally pleaded with him, and if not for the bond they shared as teacher and student, Zephyr would have already left the Marines altogether.

Though he still held the rank of Admiral, Zephyr had all but withdrawn from active service, devoting himself entirely to training new officers.

Even Kong, as Fleet Admiral, couldn't go against his personal will.

And as for that bastard Garp...

Send him to investigate the death of a Celestial Dragon?

What a joke.

That bastard would probably celebrate the news with donuts in hand, laughing and saying, "Serves them right."

Given all this, Sengoku really was the only viable option.

Realizing this, Kong gritted his teeth and clenched his fists.

The danger level of the "World Destroyer" Byrnni World was rated extremely high by Marine Headquarters—so much so that he even surpassed Roger and Whitebeard.

Roger and Whitebeard may have been stronger in terms of power and influence, but they didn't typically attack civilians or towns without reason. Roger, though known for following his impulses, usually didn't target non-combatants. He even "cooperated" with the Marines during the God Valley Incident. Whitebeard had little ambition; he roamed the New World, recruiting new crewmates and building his so-called "family."

But Byrnni World was a different kind of madman.

His motto was "eliminate everything in my way." His methods were brutal, and he wouldn't hesitate to destroy towns, harm civilians, or even strike Marine bases to achieve his goals. He harbored a massive ambition to overthrow the World Government, and with the terrifying destructive power of the Moa Moa no Mi, the threat he posed to world peace far exceeded that of Whitebeard or Roger.

And they had been so close—so close to capturing him...

Saint Topman Warcury looked at Kong's unsettled expression and said slowly:

"Kong, CP has already infiltrated the World Pirates. Byrnni World has nowhere left to run."

Kong was momentarily stunned.

CP... had already gotten to Byrnni World's crew?

The bald elder, dressed in training robes and calmly polishing his katana, said flatly:

"This matter ends here. We're not wasting any more words on it."

"The death of a Celestial Dragon is tied to the reputation of the World Government. The truth must be thoroughly uncovered, and the Marines must fully cooperate to give us an explanation."

"And beyond that—lock down all information. This incident is to be kept strictly confidential."

"...Understood."

Kong knew that at this point, continuing to argue was pointless.

Not all Celestial Dragons were arrogant, spoiled fools, dripping snot and barking orders.

But being born into unimaginable power—granted immense privilege from birth—was a breeding ground for idiots, monsters, narcissists, and lunatics.

Even so, among them existed a small number of elites who possessed real talent, intellect, and strength. They received the finest education from the best tutors across every field, rigorously trained and selected until, upon adulthood, they gradually moved into the core leadership of the World Government.

If every Celestial Dragon were a deranged pig, the World Government would've collapsed long ago. There's no way it could've lasted for 800 years.

The Five Elders standing before him—wielders of the World Government's supreme authority—were the elite among elites.

Their lineage naturally aligned them with defending the rule and status of the Celestial Dragons. That was inevitable.

To them, the Celestial Dragons were supreme—gods of this sea.

That was their bottom line. Their iron law. Unbreakable. Non-negotiable.

Yet... from the Five Elders' final words, Kong sensed something else.

Keep it under wraps...

(40 Chapters Ahead)

/ PinkSnake

## **Chapter 39 - 39: Serves Him Right**

North Blue.

Area where a World Government official ship sank.

The vast sea stretched endlessly under a gray sky, where snowflakes as big as goose feathers continued to fall.

"Yes, Marshal Kong... According to the route provided by the CP department, I've arrived at the scene."

Aboard the warship, Sengoku held a military Den Den Mushi in his hand, reporting with a grim expression.

He adjusted his black-rimmed glasses and quickly scanned the surface of the sea.

"There aren't many clear traces at the scene."

"Understood."

He hung up the Den Den Mushi and let out a long, heavy sigh.

"The diving team has already been dispatched. The higher-ups are taking this incident very seriously."

A ghostly figure draped in a silk robe and wearing a mask with strange patterns appeared beside Sengoku. A hoarse voice echoed eerily from beneath the mask.

Sengoku gave a nod, though inwardly, he was unimpressed.

The sea churned violently. Only a few pieces of wreckage floated atop the water, with the occasional scorched, rotting limb—completely unidentifiable.

According to the Holy Land Mary Geoise, the exact time of the incident was determined by the moment Saint Xildes's Vivre Card burned to ash.

And from that moment to Sengoku's arrival at the scene...

Three full hours had passed.

Three hours—enough for the raging sea to swallow up any remaining traces or evidence.

At this point, what good would sending a diving team even do?

All this effort over a dead Celestial Dragon... They'd even let Byrnni World slip away in the process. Sengoku couldn't help but feel a bit irritated.

Still, no matter how absurd it seemed, this was a direct order from the World Government. No matter his discontent or misgivings, Sengoku would carry out the task to the best of his ability.

The government had already issued a gag order.

If word of this incident got out, it would tarnish the government's authority and damage its image.

And this case involved a Celestial Dragon—sensitive and complicated. It was a real headache.

Sengoku subconsciously glanced toward a nearby section of the deck, and his mouth twitched uncontrollably.

While he, the Fleet Admiral, was running himself ragged, his adjutant Borsalino... that bastard was lounging on a beach chair sipping watermelon juice like none of this had anything to do with him.

"Borsalino!!"

Sengoku gritted his teeth and roared.

"We're in the middle of a mission!"

Hearing Sengoku's shout, Borsalino raised both hands in mock surrender and grinned.

"I'm coming, I'm coming..."

He slowly set down the juice, got up from the chair, and walked over.

"What did you find!"

Sengoku snapped impatiently.

"Let me take a look..."

Borsalino stroked the stubble on his chin with one hand, pushed up his sunglasses, and stared intently at the "crime scene."

Two seconds later, his mouth opened slightly as if he'd stumbled upon something amusing. He said in an exaggerated tone,

"Spooky stuff. The Celestial Dragon died so cleanly... Not even a scrap of flesh left behind..."

The air turned cold.

The deck fell into an eerie silence.

"Caw... caw..."

A few crows flapped across the sky.

Sengoku: ...

CP0: ...

Marines: ...

Borsalino: (ヾ▽ヾ)

Sengoku: ...

Feeling the killing intent rise from the CP0 beside him, Sengoku's eye twitched violently. He fought the overwhelming urge to slam that yellow monkey into the ground, gritting his teeth as he growled,

"Borsalino, you damn brat! Get the hell out of my sight!"

Borsalino raised his hands again, face full of innocence.

"Alright, alright..."

He walked back with a look of regret, muttering,

"You were the one who asked me to help, you know..."

Then he laid back down on the beach chair and leisurely picked up his watermelon juice.

"Nothing I can do about it..."

Hearing Borsalino's mutter, Sengoku's face turned pale, then white. His expression twitched as his fists clenched and relaxed repeatedly.

He wanted nothing more than to slap himself across the face.

If only he'd made Sakazuki his adjutant instead!

The two of them had graduated from the Naval Academy together at the top of their class, both hailed as "monsters."

At least that gloomy brat Sakazuki wasn't so infuriating!

How did I ever choose Borsalino, that damn bastard?

Sengoku groaned and held his forehead.

But there was no use regretting it now.

Sakazuki was far too extreme—paranoid, ruthless toward pirates, and prone to disobeying orders.

That was something Sengoku absolutely couldn't tolerate.

Even if Borsalino often drove him mad, at least he followed orders.

Sengoku let out a deep sigh.

Facing the cold, indifferent "face" of CP0, he forced a smile and was just about to speak...

"Buru buru... buru buru..."

The sudden ringing of the military Den Den Mushi cut off Sengoku mid-sentence.

He frowned, shot CP0 an apologetic glance, and picked up the call.

"This is Sengoku."

A loud, boisterous laugh burst through the line.

"Hahahahaha! Sengoku! How's it going on your end!?"

"You've taken care of Byrnni World, right? I'm all done here... You wouldn't believe it—my iron fists smashed that guy Chinjao's head in so hard it caved right in!"

"Man, that was one hell of a fight... Hahahaha!!"

The Den Den Mushi cheerfully mimicked a face with flared nostrils laughing hysterically.

Sengoku chuckled.

"Chinjao the Drill, leader of the Happs Navy, world-renowned for that iron head of his... And you actually dented it? He must be grinding his teeth in rage right now, Garp."

He gave a tired shake of his head.

"My mission was a bust. An emergency came up, and Byrnni World got away."

"An emergency? What kind of emergency..."

Garp scratched his head, then squinted suspiciously.

"Doesn't add up... Hey hey hey... Sengoku, don't tell me you just couldn't beat Byrnni World and made up some excuse?"

Sengoku scowled.

"Get lost. I'm busy. A Celestial Dragon died in the North Blue. I'm here on orders from the World Government to investigate."

The moment the words left his mouth, Sengoku instantly regretted it.

Sure enough, Garp's loud laughter exploded from the Den Den Mushi.

"Hahahahaha!! A Celestial Dragon died? Serves him right!"

"Shame I don't know who did it, or I'd shake their hand myself..."

"Hahahaha! Beautiful death!"

With every burst of Garp's laughter, Sengoku's face darkened further.

The killing intent radiating from the CP0 beside him grew stronger—thick enough to chill the air.

"Come on, Sengoku. It's just one Celestial Dragon. Who cares? They've got loads of them in the Holy Land."

"Just do a bit of fake investigating to make it look good. Trash like that deserves it anyway. Hahahaha..."

Watching Garp ramble on with growing enthusiasm, Sengoku nervously glanced at the motionless CP0 next to him.

Finally, he clenched his jaw and gave a "friendly" reminder:

"Garp, you can't talk like that. We're talking about a World Noble of the highest status."

"Please, Sengoku, spare me the act. Don't think I don't know how you really feel—"

Sengoku jolted, quickly clutching the Den Den Mushi and bellowing:

"Garp!! The World Government's CP0 rep is standing right next to me!!"

The deck fell instantly silent.

One second later—

"Ah! Everything I just said? Doesn't count. I take it all back!"

The Den Den Mushi mimicked Garp's face frantically denying it.

Then—

"Buru—"

The call cut off abruptly.

Sengoku: ...



He stared in stunned silence for a few seconds.

Then he blinked, cleared his throat, put the Den Den Mushi away, and turned to CP0, who remained dead silent.

His expression suddenly shifted to one of extreme "seriousness" and "gravity." In a solemn tone, he declared:

"Right. Let's begin the investigation."

Under CP0's hollow, emotionless gaze,

Sengoku raised a clenched fist, righteously declaring:

"At all costs!"

"Investigate! Investigate thoroughly! We will get to the bottom of this!"

(40 Chapters Ahead)

/ PinkSnake

## **Chapter 40 - 40: Kizaru's Suspicion**

The waves rolled and churned.

On the deck of the warship, Sengoku paced back and forth restlessly, hands clasped behind his back, his expression heavy with concern. Snowflakes drifted down from the gray sky, settling on his hair and uniform, but he paid them no mind.

Splash...

With the sound of waves crashing, heads began to surface from the sea—it was the diving unit returning.

"Reporting to Admiral Sengoku: the official ship has been completely destroyed. Most of the wreckage has been scattered by the currents. We've found no meaningful remnants."

"But what we can confirm is this—the ship was destroyed in a very short time. The ammunition and gunpowder stored in the main cabin ignited, causing a fire and explosion."

One of the divers, dripping wet, quickly climbed aboard, saluted, and gave his report.

So it really is like this?

Sengoku's heart sank.

From the traces left on the surface, he had already suspected as much—but people always hope for some margin of error.

Frowning, he turned toward the silent CP0 member nearby.

"What about the surveillance Den Den Mushi?"

"If I'm not mistaken, official World Government ships are required to carry surveillance Den Den Mushi to ensure the Celestial Dragons' safety."

CP0 paused for a moment without replying, then silently turned and walked toward the cabin.

Sengoku blinked, momentarily stunned, before quickly following behind.

Once they were inside and the cabin door was shut, making sure no one else was around, the CP0 member slowly pulled a single image-transmitting Den Den Mushi from within his robes and placed it on the table.

"There was surveillance equipment on board."

"Normally, anyone who boards the ship is captured immediately on the recording."

His voice was low, the eerie mask with its strange patterns staring blankly at Sengoku. The empty gaze behind it sent an inexplicable chill through Sengoku.

"This is the footage from that time."

Sengoku instinctively reached out to activate the Den Den Mushi, but the CP0 suddenly stepped forward, pressing down on his hand and saying coldly,

"This footage involves the privacy of the World Government and the Celestial Dragons. No matter what you see, it is not to be shared."

Sengoku looked at him and replied calmly,

"I understand."

Only then did the CP0 withdraw his gloved hand.

As the image Den Den Mushi began projecting, a faint white light filled the dim cabin.

Multiple surveillance feeds from different angles appeared before Sengoku's eyes.

The first image to appear—

A harbor shaped like a white crescent moon. It looked unusually quiet due to the clearance operations—once bustling, now desolate.

The sky was overcast and gray, snow falling heavily, casting a sorrowful atmosphere over the scene.

In one of the feeds, Sengoku saw several CP1 agents in black suits hauling heavy crates into the main cabin.

Then, Saint Xildes appeared—wearing his signature glass dome—swaggering arrogantly onto the official ship under CP1 escort.

The sails snapped in the wind as the ship pulled away from the harbor.

From different surveillance angles...

Sengoku saw a little girl, eyes swollen from crying, her hands and feet shackled. CP agents dragged her roughly into a separate cabin, where she curled up helplessly in a dark corner, trembling in despair.

He saw CP1 agents on the deck, smoking and joking without a care.

He saw mountains of gold and silver stacked in the main cabin.

He saw a Celestial Dragon whipping a woman to the sound of saxophone music, dancing ecstatically in a frenzy.

In just a few short moments...

He witnessed both paradise and hell on earth—Decadence and brutality,

Splendor and hopelessness, separated by nothing but a single wall.

Such jarring contrasts played out before his eyes, all at once.

What he didn't realize was that his fists had clenched tightly at some point.

Suddenly, the footage froze—then dissolved into static.

Sengoku stared in stunned silence.

"What about the rest of the surveillance footage?"

Snapping back to his senses, Sengoku took a deep breath to suppress the discomfort in his chest and asked stiffly.

A raspy, cold voice echoed from beneath the CP0's eerie mask.

"That was all of it."

"The surveillance Den Den Mushi on the official ship only transmitted for an instant before the signal was completely cut off. The footage vanished with it."

Sengoku's heart skipped a beat. He blurted out,

"You're saying... the entire ship was sunk, and everyone aboard killed in under a second?"

Even as he said it, he found it hard to believe.

Given how thoroughly official World Government ships were equipped with surveillance Den Den Mushi, it should've been impossible for anyone to infiltrate unnoticed.

Even if someone dared to attack a Celestial Dragon, they would've had to deal with the CP agents onboard.

CP1, though primarily tasked with intelligence gathering and analysis, were elite operatives trained through the Government's specialized programs. Each of them had combat strength comparable to a Marine Headquarters Officer at the very least.

With them present, even in an ambush, the surveillance should have at least captured the attacker's appearance or silhouette.

Yet the footage cut off in an instant.

From Sengoku's perspective, there was only one possible explanation.

The attacker destroyed the entire ship in a split second—before anyone could react—and from a distance outside the surveillance Den Den Mushi's range.

The CP0 member stayed silent.

But silence was answer enough.

Sengoku's expression turned grim and intense.

"Someone capable of that much power..."

He folded his arms, brows furrowed deeply in thought.

To obliterate a ship instantly from afar...

There weren't many on the seas who could do that—but the number wasn't zero.

By Marine standards, even a Vice Admiral couldn't pull it off so easily.

In a flash, name after name echoed in Sengoku's mind. Each one a terrifying figure known across the world, their faces flashing through his memory.

Suddenly, the CP0 spoke again.

"According to the CP department's analysis of the remaining wreckage... the attack wasn't carried out with swordsmanship."

So they've ruled out a great swordsman?

Sengoku blinked, but then shook his head.

"That doesn't mean much. Long-range slashes could cause that level of destruction, but someone that powerful would typically have multiple methods of attack."

"Whitebeard and Shiki the Golden Lion are prime examples."

As if something had just occurred to him, he pulled out a military Den Den Mushi and dialed Headquarters.

Within three seconds, the line connected.

Sengoku's face was stern as he spoke.

"Hey, Tsuru, it's Sengoku."

"Yes... I'm investigating the attack on the Celestial Dragon. Can you check for me—have there been any signs of Whitebeard, Roger, or Shiki in the past three days?"

"What? None of them have appeared in the North Blue recently?"

Sengoku fell silent for a moment.

"Alright, I understand. Thanks, Tsuru."

He put the Den Den Mushi away and began pacing inside the dim cabin, muttering to himself.

"So it's not one of those guys...?"

"Then based on the scene... the nature of the attack... and the fact that a Celestial Dragon was the target... the most likely attacker would be..."

Sengoku's serious expression suddenly twitched into something a little more odd.

"Byrnni World?"

A long-range attack that could destroy an official ship in an instant.

Brutal and violent, unafraid to strike at the World Government or Celestial Dragons.

And the location just happened to be North Blue...

If the timing of the incident hadn't coincided with his pursuit of Byrnni World, Sengoku would've already pegged the "World Destroyer" as the culprit.

Was the trail cold again?

Sengoku rubbed his temples.

Just then—

Knock knock knock...

The sound of knocking broke the silence.

Sengoku paused. Using Observation Haki, he sensed it was Borsalino at the door.

After a brief hesitation, he turned off the image Den Den Mushi and called out,

"Come in."

Borsalino opened the door and stepped inside.

"Admiral Sengoku, I think I've figured out who attacked the Celestial Dragon's ship..."

He strolled leisurely into the cabin.

CP0 raised an eyebrow.

Sengoku's eyes lit up.

"What do you think?"

With a wide grin, Borsalino puffed out his chest and said solemnly,

"Sea Kings."

He stood tall and proud, looking smug.

Sengoku: ...

CP0: ...

A second later, the sound of Sengoku exploding in rage echoed through the ship, shaking the entire warship.

"You damn bastard, get the hell out!!"

(40 Chapters Ahead)

/ PinkSnake