

One Piece 411

Chapter 411 - 411: Volume 3 – Chapter 54: I Can't Remember Many Names

This damn man... Just like the rumors said—an unrepentant womanizer who never turns anyone down!

Stussy felt a surge of irritation.

She wasn't sure if she was angrier at her own reaction... or at this shameless Marine's sheer audacity.

But now that the game had begun, there was no way she was backing down.

Daren's smug, fearless attitude only stoked her competitive fire.

After all, as the Queen of Pleasure Street, there was no trick of seduction she didn't know.

Many of the top-tier geisha and courtesans under her had been trained by her personally. These enchanting women, who could make even the most hardened men empty their wallets and hearts, weren't just entertainers—they were also expert assassins and spies.

Because men, well... they loved to brag when a beautiful woman was in their arms and wine was in their veins.

With just a few well-placed words, a professionally trained courtesan could tease out even their most guarded secrets.

And when it came to the art of seduction, Stussy reigned supreme across the entire sea—an undisputed queen without a crown.

In this kind of game, whoever flinched first lost.

So her cherry-red lips curled into a sultry smile.

"Daren-san, you're quite the honest one... In that case, I won't hold back."

She rose from the sofa with lazy grace, each step toward him light and elegant.

Her deep red high heels clicked crisply on the floor, each note seemingly striking the heart.

Daren, no stranger to these kinds of moves, immediately recognized the sound.

Back in his previous life—before his journey across time—he knew that sound well. It usually meant one thing: temptation was close.

The closer those heels came, the more it felt like a blind box about to be opened. And usually, the moment the door to that private room swung open, he knew his paycheck was already gone.

But this was different.

Here was the most elite, most refined, and most versatile courtesan in the entire New World—coming to serve him.

Sure, it lacked the thrill of surprise, but who could really complain?

Lost in thought, he barely noticed Stussy had already reached the bedside.

She extended a pair of perfectly maintained pale hands. Her fingers, polished with crimson nail lacquer, gently traced the contours of Daren's firm chest.

"So this is the body even the legendary pirate—Big Mom Charlotte Linlin—longs to possess."

Stussy moved like a sinuous serpent, her slender waist swaying hypnotically as she leaned in close to Daren's ear.

Her lips brushed his earlobe, warm breath tinged with perfume, as she whispered with a teasing laugh,

"If Linlin knew about this, she'd be furious, wouldn't she?"

Soft whispers at his ear, a feather-light touch on his chest... but all the while, Daren was sneering inwardly.

Heh... you're playing with fire, woman.

He let his breathing quicken, his expression flickering with a flash of panic as he gritted his teeth.

"I've got no interest in that crazy hag!"

"Hehehe... But what about me, Daren-san? Interested?"

Stussy giggled as her fingers traced downward, brushing along the ridges of his defined abs.

Daren's body stiffened slightly.

"You..."

Noticing the subtle reaction, a glint of triumph sparkled in Stussy's eyes.

"My, Daren-san... your body is so honest."

Hey now, that's supposed to be my line.

Still... he had to admit, it was kind of satisfying.

He couldn't deny it—this woman's seduction game was sharp.

If he weren't such a seasoned veteran, he might've surrendered already.

With that in mind, Daren decided to play along, keeping a forced calm on his face as the dance continued.

Heh... didn't expect him to be this cute. In that case, let's keep teasing him a little more.

Stussy's eyes sparkled as her fingers continued their slow, deliberate motion. She smiled with feigned innocence.

"And I've heard that Daren-san has a stunning wife back at Marine Headquarters. Aren't you worried she might get upset if she found out about all this?"

No, you're overthinking it.

If Toki knew, not only would she not be angry—she'd probably grab your hand and ask to be best friends.

After all, if I can win you over, I might just gain access to the entire Pleasure District's resources, influence, and sprawling intelligence network.

Daren shifted slightly, feigning discomfort, and let out a cold chuckle.

"Sounds like you've done your homework."

Stussy laughed lightly, unfazed.

"Isn't that to be expected?"

"Daren-san, you're one of the most influential men on the seas. Power, prestige, a record of victories that shines like gold."

"Since your debut, you've taken down the world destroyer Byrnni World...

Cut off Kozuki Oden's arm—Whitebeard's sworn brother...

Foiled Shiki the Golden Lion's plans over and over without breaking a sweat...

Killed three of Big Mom Charlotte Linlin's biological children with your own hands...

Even Douglas Bullet, that monster of the Roger Pirates—the Demon Heir—was crippled because of you."

"And just yesterday, you shook the world with that stunning graduation speech... and followed it up with a 'strategic deterrent' attack on Totto Land."

"Right now, you're the hottest name across the seas. You've even surpassed the three pillars of the Marines—Sengoku, Garp, and Zephyr."

As she listed off his achievements, Stussy leaned in and gently kissed the edge of Daren's ear, leaving a faint red mark.

"Do you know what they're calling you these days?"

Her lips curled, and her eyes shimmered with teasing allure.

She drew out each word slowly, with deliberate rhythm:

"The new generation's Marine monster."

"The uncrowned king of the North Blue."

"Heir to the Marine's three great pillars."

"A strategic-level deterrent weapon."

"The ender of legends."

"And..."

Her fingers brushed along Daren's sharply defined cheek, soft and intimate like a lover's caress. She leaned in, eyes locking with his, her tone tender yet electrifying.

"...the future Flying Admiral."

Daren smiled, then without hesitation, wrapped an arm around her waist. His large hand slid downward with clear intent.

"So I've racked up that many titles already? All without realizing?"

"To be honest, hearing them all together is a little embarrassing. If I had to introduce myself with that mouthful, I'd probably laugh halfway through."

Imagine reeling off that long list only for someone to respond with, 'Sorry, I don't remember that many names.' Now that'd be awkward.

He chuckled, shaking his head.

"Nicknames definitely sound better coming from someone else."

Stussy let out a soft laugh, then just as his hand was about to cross the line, she gently pushed him back with a coy smile and an air of delicate innocence.

"For someone like you, Daren-san, it's only natural that I'd be a little curious... right?"

Hah... she's good at this back-and-forth game.

Daren's eye twitched slightly.

Seeing the slight frustration on his face, Stussy looked even more pleased with herself.

"And besides," she added with a sly smile, "didn't you already investigate me, Daren-san?"

"I'm guessing you knew exactly who I was the moment I walked through that door."

Chapter 412 - 412: Volume 3 – Chapter 55: Vampire?

"I've always had a sharp eye for men."

Stussy's soft hand brushed against Daren's cheek, her bright red nails tracing a barely-there sensation on his skin.

"The way you looked at me when we first met... that wasn't the gaze of someone meeting a stranger."

Daren gave a helpless smile.

"You really live up to your name as the Queen of the Pleasure District, the woman who understands love and desire better than anyone on the seas... I thought I'd done a good job keeping myself in check."

"Please forgive me... After all, you're the dream of countless men."

He paused, then playfully lifted her chin with a finger and smiled.

"So, does this mean the feeling's mutual?"

Stussy giggled.

"Seems like it, Daren-san."

Her fingers slowly trailed downward, her waist swaying slightly. From Daren's angle, he had a perfect view of her curves.

"But I really am curious..."

Her fingertip brushed lightly over the wound near Daren's ribs, her tone seemingly casual.

"With Vice Admiral Daren's current power and status, just what kind of brutal battle could leave you so gravely injured?"

"Dozens of fractures all over your body, massive blood loss, internal organ damage, large-scale muscle tears... That's not something just anyone could inflict."

"With injuries like that, anyone else would be dead."

Stussy gave him a sultry glance, then suddenly parted her cherry lips and gently bit his finger.

A warm, moist sensation wrapped around it. Soft pressure and a subtle suction played over his skin, and Daren felt as if every pore in his body opened up, clarity rushing through him.

Looking down, he saw Stussy's flawless, mature face tinged with a faint blush, her watery eyes staring back at him with a coy mix of resistance and invitation.

This woman... was a real enchantress!

Even someone as seasoned as Daren couldn't help but feel a bit overwhelmed at this moment.

She was just too good at this.

She always knew how to precisely and skillfully stir a man's desires—only to retreat the instant things reached a peak, leaving him craving more.

"Daren-san..."

Stussy parted her red lips and released his finger.

A thin thread of moisture stretched between her lips and his fingertip like silk.

Noticing the brief flicker of disappointment in Daren's eyes, she smiled slightly, her dimples deepening. Her voice dropped into a soft murmur, as if she were truly moved.

"So... who were you fighting?"

"You invaded Totto Land's Yakigashi Island just a day ago. Was it Big Mom, Charlotte Linlin?"

"If it was Linlin, sure, she has the strength... but with how much she desires you, I doubt she would've left you this close to death. She wouldn't be able to bring herself to do it."

"But if it wasn't her, then who could it have been?"

"Whitebeard? Shiki? Or Roger?"

She leaned closer, resting her face against Daren's shoulder as her nails traced idle circles on his chest. A confident, knowing smile tugged at her lips as she whispered softly, with just a hint of pleading.

"I'm dying to know. Will you tell me?"

As she spoke, a barely noticeable glint flashed in her eyes.

Just as she said—Rogers Daren was no ordinary Vice Admiral of Marine Headquarters.

During the surprise assault on Yakigashi Island, he had formally demonstrated to the world the overwhelming "deterrent power" of a strategic weapon.

The global broadcast of Fukkura Town being obliterated in an instant had become a Damocles' sword, hanging ominously over countless pirate crews and dark powers across the seas.

Leaders of pirate crews, titans of the underworld... These once arrogant figures were now silenced, forced into cautious withdrawal.

No one dared provoke the Marines now—for all they knew, before they even woke up one morning, a towering black Cursed Sword might descend from the sky and wipe them out, body and soul.

Because of this, Rogers Daren's every word and action now carried weight far beyond his personal identity.

Wherever he went—his presence, his words, his moves...

Perhaps there was some kind of chilling political significance—or even a veiled threat—hidden behind it.

That was exactly why Stussy was so concerned about Daren's injuries.

A full day had passed since the blitz attack on Totto Land.

Although no word had leaked out to the sea, Stussy, through her resources within the World Government, had received intel that Marine Headquarters had entered a wartime state.

And that fact alone was very telling.

Based on what she knew about Daren, this likely wasn't some operation planned by the Marines.

It was an act of personal will.

If that was the case...

What was Daren's objective?

Who had he fought to end up in such a state?

After Byrnni World, Shiki, Whitebeard, Roger... who was the next poor soul he'd set his sights on?

If she could extract that information from Daren before anyone else, there might be room for maneuvering.

Stussy knew very well—information was power.

"You really want to know?"

Daren still seemed caught up in her seduction, that familiar smug expression slowly spreading across his face—the kind men wore when trying to impress a beautiful woman.

Stussy saw it and laughed to herself.

So this is the Marines' monster?

Men will be men. Even someone as terrifyingly exceptional as Daren-san wasn't immune.

"Yes, Daren-san..."

Stussy exhaled warm breath against his neck, her expression carrying just the right touch of reverence.

"I see..."

Daren puffed out his chest proudly and nodded.

"Well, I'm not telling you."

Stussy: ...

Daren's eyes suddenly turned sharp, his playful expression vanishing into something colder. His powerful arms snapped around Stussy's waist, locking her tightly in place.

"Stussy, I've been upfront with you. But you're still hiding your identity... Still trying to dig into my secrets. Don't you think that's a bit rude?"

Stussy's pupils contracted.

Part of her was shocked by the cold clarity in his gaze—the other part stunned by the sheer strength he still possessed.

Wasn't he supposed to be gravely injured?

In just a few minutes, he'd recovered this much strength?

That kind of recovery was absurd!

She tried to squirm free from his embrace, but she couldn't move an inch.

Still, there was no trace of panic in her eyes. Her smile remained charming.

"Hehehe, so you figured it out... Vice Admiral Daren."

"The Queen of the Pleasure District, the Underworld Empress of the New World—that's just my public cover... My real identity is with the World Government's top intelligence agency."

"When you think about it, we're kind of colleagues."

She rubbed her cheek against his neck, her tone playfully coy.

"I've done such a naughty thing... You won't punish me too harshly, will you?"

When she said "punish," she deliberately emphasized the word, her sultry voice filled with tantalizing insinuation.

"Oh, punishment is a must..."

Daren's hand slid lower, kneading her soft, full curves, sending ripples across her skin.

"But the identity I meant isn't that one."

A mocking smirk played on his lips.

"Stussy, the one you're truly loyal to... is Dr. Vegapunk, isn't it?"

The words dropped, and Stussy's pupils shrank to pinpricks.

Her heart pounded, her body tensed.

Her loyalty to Vegapunk—her infiltration of the World Government—that was her greatest secret!

No one should know!

Without hesitation, Stussy lashed out!

Her body morphed grotesquely in an instant. Her shoulder blades tore through her skin, and a pair of bat-like black wings sprouted from her back.

Her golden eyes turned a deep, blood-red. Beneath her seductive lips, sharp vampire fangs emerged.

Murderous intent surged behind those crimson eyes. In that instant, the alluring serpent had transformed into a deadly vampire!

She lunged forward, fangs aiming straight for Daren's throat!

Victory flashed in Stussy's eyes.

Daren was too injured—and at this close range, he wouldn't be able to defend himself!

This was it!

Once bitten, anyone would fall into deep sleep.

Then, the Marine would be hers to deal with.

She sank her fangs in—

The next second,

Her expression froze. Her whole body went rigid.

Sparks burst in all directions.

It felt like biting into a block of the hardest Seastone.

Crack!

Two razor-sharp vampire fangs snapped clean off, flying through the air.

Stussy: ???

Chapter 413 - 413: Volume 3 – Chapter 56: Indestructible

The air was deathly silent.

Clack...

Two broken fangs dropped onto the wooden floor of the hotel, their fall unusually crisp and clear in the stillness.

Daren and Stussy locked eyes.

Stussy: ...

Daren:

Stussy:

A look of disbelief slowly crept onto her stunned face.

Her vampire-form fangs... had snapped just like that!?

What in the world was this guy's body made of?

Even high-grade steel could be crushed with ease by her bite—let alone mere flesh and bone!

Yet now, her bite hadn't even pierced Daren's skin.

The resilience and defense of his physique... might surpass even Charlotte Linlin's famed "steel balloon" body!

This was... an "Indestructible Body"!

The realization made Stussy involuntarily gasp.

This... this couldn't be real...

"I really didn't see this coming. A vampire, huh..."

Daren looked at the frozen Stussy with an amused glint in his eyes. He touched the faint imprint of her bite on his neck and spoke with interest,

"Vegapunk's work, is it? Lineage Factor? Or an Artificial Devil Fruit?"

Stussy's heart skipped a beat.

He actually knew!

Artificial Devil Fruits were part of Dr. Vegapunk's research—still experimental, nowhere near ready for public deployment.

Even the higher-ups in the Marines or the CP divisions of the World Government had no idea about this project.

If not for her close relationship with Dr. Vegapunk—if she hadn't been created by the doctor himself as a "clone human"—she wouldn't have had access to this secret either.

But the truly terrifying part was how this man had casually exposed her biggest secret: her loyalty to Dr. Vegapunk, and her infiltration of the World Government's intelligence apparatus.

Who knew what else he might be aware of?

And judging by how calm and fearless he was... Wait!

Stussy suddenly realized something else.

She recalled the profile on Rogers Daren from her intelligence dossiers:

"Lecherous, indulgent, greedy, ruthless, cunning, insidious... While his actions often appear erratic and insane, deeper analysis suggests they may all be calculated with extreme precision."

In that case... could it be that his "accidental" fall into the Pleasure District from above due to severe injuries wasn't an accident at all?

Had he discovered her true identity beforehand, and deliberately staged the fall to lure her out—using the illusion of vulnerability to make her drop her guard, so he could leverage her biggest secret against her?

If that was the case, then did this man still have another trick up his sleeve?

What was his true goal?

What did he want from her?

Countless tangled thoughts surged through Stussy's mind. Shock, panic, suspicion, and unease swirled together, making it impossible for her to regain her composure.

Of course, if Daren had known what she was thinking at that moment, he probably would've snorted and said,

You spies really do have the darkest minds—always assuming the worst.

"Looks like it really is an Artificial Devil Fruit. Vegapunk truly lives up to the name of a genius five hundred years ahead of his time..."

Daren muttered with some admiration.

That Einstein-looking guy—if given the chance, Daren genuinely wanted to meet him.

Whatever the politics, he was intrigued by Vegapunk's scientific achievements.

If he could bring Vegapunk's insane technology into the North Blue Fleet, there was no doubt he could forge the most powerful army in the world.

Unfortunately, Vegapunk was still tightly guarded by the government. Even in the Marines, only Borsalino, head of the Special Science Group, had access to him.

As of now, Daren didn't have that clearance.

Though the exact location of Egghead Island could be uncovered through various means—with his current influence, resources, and network, it wouldn't be difficult.

The issue was, if he trespassed on Egghead Island without proper authorization, he'd risk crossing the World Government's red line, and that could lead to serious conflict.

Not that Daren feared the World Government. With his strength now, they couldn't do a thing to him—Shiki had already proven that.

Still, challenging the government carried a steep cost. Once he broke ties, all his previous efforts and achievements in the Marines would go up in smoke.

Of course...

Daren smiled and pinched Stussy's delicate cheeks, his fingers pressing hard enough to leave marks.

"But you're really being naughty... I was having a perfectly nice conversation with you, and then you suddenly bite me? That's not very polite, is it?"

Seeing the Marine Vice Admiral looking at her like she was some kind of toy, a wave of panic surged in Stussy's heart.

She struggled desperately, but Daren's other hand held her firmly in place.

Though a CP0 agent of the World Government and far from weak, Stussy excelled more in assassination, ambushes, and maneuvering—not in brute-force close combat like this!

After surpassing 80 in strength and obtaining a "Giant's Strength," Daren possessed power on par with an adult Giant warrior by default... How could Stussy possibly withstand Daren's raw force?

Her greatest secret exposed, her body completely overpowered, and her once-proud vampire form rendered laughable...

The series of blows shattered Stussy's composure, and panic crept onto her face.

"So, tell me... how should I punish you?"

Daren spoke with a half-smile.

Stussy gritted her teeth, her blood-red eyes glaring fiercely at him.

"Who the hell are you!? Even with your rank, there's no way you could know so much!"

Daren simply shrugged.

"You're not more aware of my identity than I am, are you?"

"Just now, you listed all my titles like reciting a cherished collection."

"But..."

The Vice Admiral's tone suddenly shifted. He narrowed his eyes and smiled.

"Actually, you missed one."

"W-What...?"

As Daren's grip tightened, Stussy felt her breath grow short, as if she were suffocating.

She stared hard at the man before her, her black bat wings trembling violently, stirring up a fierce wind in the room.

The gusts whipped Daren's hair into disarray as he held Stussy's petite body aloft with one hand.

"You forgot my personal favorite title..."

Daren suddenly grinned.

"The biggest scoundrel in Navy history."

As the words fell, he swung his arm.

Shhhk!!

Stussy's pupils contracted sharply.

Her snow-white dress was instantly torn to shreds.

Her flawless, delicate body was exposed to the air—paired with those dangerous black wings, the freshly grown vampire fangs, and her uniquely blood-red eyes... she looked both mysterious and dangerously seductive.

Before she could react, Daren flung her onto the bed with a single motion.

"Well then... Queen of the Pleasure District, entertain me to your heart's content."

He leaned down over her.

In an instant, Stussy's mind went completely blank.

Her pupils lost focus.

At last, she experienced firsthand the power of the "Indestructible Body."

"Wait..."

Chapter 414 - 414: Volume 3 – Chapter 57 You Don't Want Your Secret Out Either

This...

Stussy's eyes widened, her red lips slightly parted. For a moment, her mind went blank.

A surge of panic and fear overwhelmed her, and the black bat wings on her back trembled uncontrollably, whipping up a violent gust that shredded the bedsheets.

"What... what are you trying to do!?"

She had finally lost her composure.

Those eerie blood-red eyes locked onto the man in front of her, who radiated an aura of bloodlust and raw aggression.

"What do you think?"

"Stussy, you're the Queen of the Pleasure District—this sea's uncrowned ruler of indulgence. You, of all people, should understand a man's heart best, shouldn't you?"

Daren gripped Stussy's delicate, pale wrists and forced them above her head with brute strength, a cold smirk on his face.

Her body trembled violently. Her cheeks flushed deep red, lips bitten open by her own sharp vampire fangs, letting blood drip down in a scene both eerie and alluring.

"Damn it!!"

She clenched her teeth hard, unleashing every ounce of strength and willpower she had. Even her Armament Haki flared to life in a desperate attempt to resist Daren's force.

The air roared through the room, shaking the floorboards and walls until cracks formed.

"Let me go!!"

Daren frowned.

If she kept resisting this fiercely, things would get troublesome.

So, without hesitation, he played his final card. A sly grin crept across his lips.

"Queen Stussy... you don't want the World Government finding out about your loyalty to Vegapunk, do you?"

It hit her like a bolt of lightning. Her face turned ghostly pale.

She froze, staring at Daren in horror.

That she served Dr. Vegapunk... was her greatest, most closely guarded secret.

If the World Government ever found out—she couldn't even begin to imagine the kind of nightmare that awaited her.

As a member of CP0, Stussy knew all too well how terrifying the interrogations and torture methods used within the CP organizations truly were.

No chance of living, no chance of dying.

And worse, if the secret got out, it wouldn't just be her who suffered—Dr. Vegapunk would be dragged down with her.

Her own life didn't matter. But no matter what, she couldn't let Vegapunk be harmed because of her mistake.

Stussy's expression shifted rapidly. Her vampire fangs dug into her lip as she bit down hard. Soon, she stopped resisting.

She glared at Daren, her voice filled with fury.

"You really are a despicable piece of trash!"

Daren just laughed it off.

"Even trash has principles."

"Besides, you were the one who seduced me first."

"And..."

As if sensing something, he flashed a sinister grin.

"You're saying no with your mouth, but your body's being awfully honest..."

At those words, shame and anger flickered in Stussy's eyes.

She said nothing, turning her head to the side in silence—a silent admission.

The black bat wings behind her, along with her vampire fangs, slowly began to retract as she prepared to return to her human form.

"No. Stay like that."

Daren suddenly said.

Stussy paused, stunned.

He gave a half-smile.

"I want the vampire."

Her eyes widened, cheeks burning red.

But before she could react, a low growl like that of a wild beast echoed in her ear.

In the next moment—

Her mind went completely blank.

...

How Strong Is Daren's Indestructible Body?

Apart from Kaidou himself, Stussy was the second person to face such overwhelming power head-on.

After an unknown amount of time, everything gradually settled down.

The room was a complete mess.

The floor was cracked.

The bed had collapsed.

At the start, it was Daren lying on the bed while Stussy sat on the sofa with her legs elegantly crossed.

Now, the roles had reversed.

In the room,

Daren sat on one side, and Stussy lay on the other.

Daren, legs crossed, sat comfortably on a leather sofa. He casually picked up a luxurious gold-embossed cigar from the nearby coffee table, bit it between his teeth, and lit it with satisfaction.

He took a deep drag, letting the rich, aromatic smoke roll down his throat, then inhaled it all into his lungs through his windpipe. His eyes squinted in contentment.

His entire body felt relaxed!

Of course, cigars weren't meant to be inhaled—doing so could seriously harm the respiratory system.

But thanks to the training from that fat guy in suspenders, Daren had already been exposed to all kinds of deadly viruses. He could practically be called immune to all poisons.

Combined with the incredible resilience and self-healing of his "Indestructible Body," any side effects were negligible.

Otherwise, he'd be too weak.

While puffing his cigar, Daren looked over at Stussy again.

The infamous Queen of the Pleasure District now lay there like a puddle of melted wax. Her body was curled up, cheeks flushed, covered in sweat, lips parting with visible bursts of heat.

The black bat wings on her back had folded in and trembled slightly. Her toes, painted with vivid red nail polish, curled as her arched feet flexed gently.

The sight filled Daren with a deep, indescribable sense of accomplishment and conquest.

Stussy was no ordinary woman.

Queen of the Pleasure District.

Member of the World Government's top intelligence agency.

Underworld Emperor...

With all those identities, she exuded a natural nobility and mystery.

Put simply... she was thrilling.

And with her considerable strength and the physical enhancements from her Mythical Zoan-type abilities, Daren had the perfect chance to push his newly awakened powers to the limit—

Aside from his "Indestructible Body," he had begun testing:

—"Giant's Strength"

—"Soru's Godspeed"

"I really owe Kaidou-sensei for this. Gotta remember to bring a gift next time I visit."

Daren muttered with a pleased smile.

If not for Kaidou-sensei's teachings, trying to dominate this woman with just "Tekkai" wouldn't have been nearly enough.

"You bastard..."

At that moment, Stussy finally began to recover from the tremors that had wracked her body. She slowly raised her head, glaring at Daren with fury in her eyes.

Daren raised both hands innocently.

"Didn't you enjoy it too?"

Stussy clenched her teeth in shame and rage.

"I—I did not!"

A flicker of confusion flashed in Daren's eyes.

That didn't seem like something the Queen of the Pleasure District would say.

Wasn't she supposed to be an experienced courtesan?

He shot her a casual glance—

And instantly choked on his cigar, breaking into a violent coughing fit.

He hadn't noticed it during the earlier intensity.

But now, he clearly saw it—

A bright red stain on the sheets.

Daren froze.

Staring in disbelief.

The Queen of this sea's red-light district... was a virgin!?

This... could you even believe it?

How was that possible!?

Chapter 415 - 415: Volume 3 – Chapter 58: Where's Daren? What's He Up To?

Fleet Admiral's Office.

The air was heavy, almost frozen with tension. Every high-ranking officer of the headquarters was present, each one wearing a deeply grim expression.

"So where the hell did Daren go? Still no news, Sengoku!?"

Kong finally lost his temper, slamming his palm hard onto the desk. Cracks spread across the surface instantly.

The loud crash startled Sengoku, who had been pacing anxiously. He flinched and stammered,

"Fleet Admiral Kong, for now... still no news."

"Damn it!"

Kong cursed, pressing his fingers to his temples, brows tightly furrowed.

It had already been more than 24 hours since Daren had reported via military Den Den Mushi that he was in Wano Country.

And yet, after all this time, there was still no word from him.

What the hell was he doing in Wano?

Had he run into Kaidou?

The more they thought about it, the more uneasy they felt.

"What are you all so worried about? That kid Daren is a sly one—he's not the type to go down that easily."

Garp, lounging on the sofa like nothing was wrong, finally spoke. As he did, he popped a senbei into his mouth, munching noisily.

Grinning, he added,

"And it's not like this is the first time Kaidou's caught him."

A tic mark popped up on the foreheads of both Kong and Sengoku at the same time.

The nearby Vice Admirals looked even more exasperated.

"Garp, you bastard!!"

Furious, Sengoku marched over and snatched the senbei out of Garp's hands, stuffing them into his own mouth as Garp howled.

"Damn it, Sengoku! I barely ate any!"

"That was my senbei!"

"You can't eat them all anyway!"

"So what!?"

"..."

The two of them ended up grappling, wrestling like a pair of bickering delinquents, faces red with frustration.

"Enough!!"

Kong erupted, slamming his fist down and reducing the unfortunate desk to splinters.

"You two bastards! Do you even know where you are!?"

A surge of overwhelming Conqueror's Haki exploded from Kong, transforming into a raging storm that swept across the room.

Black and red lightning crackled through the turbulent air.

The Vice Admirals nearby staggered under the pressure, arms raised and teeth clenched, struggling to withstand the impact of Kong's fury.

Seeing the old man go off, Garp and Sengoku finally stopped their scuffle and stood there sheepishly, like two kids caught doing something stupid...

"Hmph!"

Kong shot the two of them a sharp glare before finally withdrawing his aura.

He sank back into his seat, exhaling a long, weary breath. The fatigue weighed heavily on him.

To avoid sparking political unrest, Marine Headquarters had avoided any overt signs of large-scale mobilization. But in reality, five warships packed with elite soldiers were already docked in Marineford's military harbor—ready to depart at a moment's notice.

Moreover, Sakazuki and Borsalino had already set out. They were likely already in the New World, standing by for further orders from headquarters.

The Marines had just fought a major battle and should be recovering. A long-range expedition to the New World and a full-scale confrontation with the Beasts Pirates was far from ideal right now.

But if Daren really was left behind in Wano, Kong would do whatever it took to bring him back.

After the blitz operation on Totto Land, Daren was no longer just an exceptional Marine commander—he had become a vital strategic deterrent.

"We can't wait any longer..."

The longer Kong thought about it, the more uneasy he felt. After a few seconds of silence, his fists clenched tight, and a flicker of decisiveness flashed in his eyes.

Just then, one of Sengoku's personal guards burst into the office, gasping for breath, his face lit with excitement.

"Report, Admiral Sengoku! Latest news from the New World! Someone has located Vice Admiral Daren!"

"He... escaped from Wano alive!"

The sudden announcement instantly lit up the room.

"Excellent!"

Sengoku clenched his fists, a joyful smile spreading across his face.

Daren was simply too important.

The prestige from that one blitz operation alone had secured over a billion Belly in military "aid" for the Marines.

And that was aside from his own weight as a strategic deterrent.

It wasn't an exaggeration—at least not in Sengoku's mind—to say that Daren's importance and strategic value in the Marines had already surpassed Sakazuki and Borsalino...

Maybe even... himself, a Marine Admiral?

The moment the thought surfaced, Sengoku quickly shook his head.

Impossible. He was the next Fleet Admiral, after all!

Still, his smile became stiff and forced.

While Sengoku stood there in a daze, Garp seized the opportunity. In a flash, he snatched the senbei from Sengoku's hand, tucked it away like a prized treasure, and burst into hearty laughter.

"Wahahaha!! I told you—there's no way that sneaky brat Daren would get caught by Kaidou!"

Kong let out a long sigh of relief at the good news. The enormous weight hanging over his heart finally eased.

There was no doubt how important Daren was to the Marines.

But what gave him an even bigger headache was how universally disliked Daren had become.

He'd offended just about every major pirate across the seas.

Still alive... Good.

Good.

A smile finally crept onto Kong's face.

Seeing that the old man was no longer angry, Sengoku relaxed as well and asked his guard with a smile,

"So, where's that brat Daren now?"

"Um..."

To Sengoku's surprise, the guard suddenly looked hesitant.

He glanced nervously at the other officers in the room and stammered,

"Admiral Sengoku... I'm afraid there's a problem with Vice Admiral Daren's whereabouts..."

Sengoku frowned.

What was there to be hesitant about?

If Daren was alive and well, that was already the best news possible.

Whatever came after that was secondary.

Besides, with so many high-ranking officers and Fleet Admiral Kong here... his own guard being the first to report Daren's status was the perfect chance to show off his leadership and initiative.

"Just speak plainly! Everyone here is a core officer of headquarters—what's there to hide?"

Sengoku barked, pretending to be annoyed.

Several black lines appeared on the guard's forehead. After a brief pause, he couldn't help but confirm one more time,

"Admiral Sengoku, are you sure?"

"Of course!"

Sengoku puffed out his chest proudly, basking in the attention of his colleagues.

The guard looked at him with pity, drew a deep breath, and said gloomily,

"Um... Vice Admiral Daren is currently in the Pleasure District."

The smile froze on Sengoku's face. He looked like he'd been struck by lightning, standing there in stunned silence.

Kong: ...

Staff Officer Tsuru: ...

The generals: ...

"Wahahaha!! He really is the biggest scoundrel in the Marines!!"

Garp slapped the sofa and laughed until tears streamed down his face.

Kuzan's eyes lit up.

"Fight hard, play hard! Daren really is a man of true spirit!"

"This is... way too cool!"

Chapter 416 - 416: Volume 3 – Chapter 59: Who Would Believe It?

Kuzan was still visibly excited, as if he'd stumbled upon some incredible secret. His eyes sparkled as he muttered to himself,

"So this is the secret to Daren's strength!

The Pleasure District! Why didn't I think of that? What could be better for recovering from exhaustion and revitalizing the spirit than a good fight followed by drinks and watching pretty girls dance?

I've got to write this down!"

Just as Kuzan reached for the notebook beside him, ready to record this newly acquired "knowledge" for future reference, Staff Officer Tsuru appeared in front of him with a cold, expressionless face.

"Vice Admiral Tsuru?"

Without a word, Tsuru snatched the notebook out of his hands with a scowl.

"Kuzan, this isn't some kind of secret training method."

That bastard Daren is just a hopeless pervert!

"It's not?"

Kuzan scratched his head, puzzled, then looked over at his teacher, Garp.

Garp burst out laughing.

"Actually, if you really wanted to, it's fine to unwind every now and then—"

Before he could finish, Tsuru shot him a glare sharp enough to kill.

A chill ran down Garp's spine. He quickly straightened up and corrected himself:

"—Absolutely not allowed!"

He puffed out his chest, putting on a righteous air, and said firmly,

"Kuzan, remember this well. That kind of thing only wears down our resolve and corrupts our spirit!"

Kuzan scratched his head again, still confused.

"But Vice Admiral Garp, that's exactly what Daren does..."

Garp's mouth twitched.

The others, upon hearing that, looked like they had just swallowed something awful.

"Ahem, Kuzan... let me put it this way."

Under Tsuru's death glare, Garp's brain shifted into overdrive. He straightened up, face serious, and said in a low voice,

"If Daren hadn't indulged in that kind of stuff so much, he'd already have reached Admiral-level combat strength."

"I see..."

Kuzan nodded in sudden realization.

...

While that little side scene played out, Sengoku was still frozen in place. The corners of his mouth twitched as if he'd lost his soul, completely oblivious to everything happening around him.

The Marine Headquarters had scrambled to prepare for battle, worried sick about Daren's safety. Sengoku himself had been running in circles trying to coordinate everything...

And yet that bastard had quietly slipped off to the Pleasure District for fun?

Sengoku's expression kept shifting. His fists clenched and unclenched. His eyes were practically shooting flames, and it looked like he was grinding his teeth to dust.

The other Marine generals, seeing his increasingly twisted expression, quickly tried to calm him down.

"Ahem... it's really not that bad. He's young, full of energy. Understandable, right?"

"Yeah, yeah... Vice Admiral Daren's been in constant combat. He just pulled off a surprise attack on Totto Land. Letting off some steam is normal."

"After fighting for so long, can't he enjoy himself a little?"

"Exactly, it's understandable, totally understandable..."

"..."

Everyone chimed in, trying to smooth things over. Sengoku's expression gradually eased.

He forced out a smile, gritting his teeth.

"Since Vice Admiral Daren is safe, let's stand down the military alert."

He turned toward Kong.

Kong let out a long sigh and gave a nod.

"Dismissed."

Everyone straightened and raised their hands in salute.

What no one noticed was—

At the very back of the group of generals, Gion, wearing her Commodore's cape, stood silently. Her head lowered, she was quietly wiping down her golden Meito, her eyes narrowing with a dangerous gleam.

...

New World, Pleasure District.

Luxurious private room.

The banquet table in the hall was piled high with a colorful spread of delicacies, rich in aroma and flavor.

Daren and Stussy sat facing each other at opposite ends of the long table, both now properly dressed.

Steak from the East Blue, red wine from the South Blue, oysters from Fish-Man Island, assorted seafood sashimi... every ingredient was high-end, clearly worth a fortune at just a glance.

Exquisite silver cutlery, fine white porcelain dishes, premium wine... It should've been an indulgent meal, but Daren couldn't enjoy a bite. His heart was in turmoil.

Who the hell would believe this?!

The famed Queen of the Pleasure District, Stussy... was actually a virgin?!

Daren wracked his brain, but no matter how he thought about it, it didn't add up.

It was awkward. He couldn't bring himself to meet the eyes of the elegant, poised blonde beauty across the table.

None of this made any sense!

Who the hell teaches a virgin to seduce men like that?!

That sultry charm, that teasing tone, the way she set the mood with just the right amount of lewd banter... If he hadn't seen that splash of red with his own eyes, he wouldn't have believed it for a second.

It couldn't have been some scratch or trick of the light—Daren could tell the difference.

For a while, neither of them spoke.

Daren sat uneasily, the feast before him completely unappetizing.

How should he even begin to process this?

If Stussy were an experienced courtesan, Daren wouldn't have felt any pressure at all.

You're the Queen of the Pleasure District—it'd be natural for you to serve someone like me, right?

Besides, she made the first move—hell, she went straight to third base.

But a virgin?

Now that was pressure.

"What's wrong, Daren-san? Having second thoughts already?"

Stussy suddenly put down her knife and fork, then elegantly picked up a handkerchief to dab the corner of her mouth. She looked at the Vice Admiral with a teasing, half-smiling gaze.

"Well, this really is a surprise... Didn't you say you were the Navy's biggest scoundrel, Daren-san?"

"Ahem..."

Daren shifted uncomfortably and forced a smile.

"You... how could that possibly be..."

"Be what?"

Stussy tilted her head innocently, her eyes shimmering like ripples on water.

Daren's eyelid twitched.

".. your first time."

"Fufufu... What else would it be?"

Stussy let out a soft, sultry laugh and shot Daren a sidelong glance, her tone carrying a faint hint of resentment.

"Daren-san, you really didn't show me the slightest bit of mercy..."

She picked up a glass of milk, set it before her, then slowly sipped through a straw. Her red lips moved with such deliberate rhythm it made Daren's mouth go dry and his thoughts scatter.

Daren: ...

She's doing this on purpose!

With technique like that, who the hell would've guessed she was a virgin?!

Daren screamed internally in frustration.

Even the seasoned noblewomen and queens of the North Blue weren't this skilled!

"Fufufu..."

Stussy seemed to relish Daren's awkwardness, covering her mouth as she laughed. Her eyes gleamed with a victorious glint.

Thinking back to how rough that bastard had been earlier made her grit her teeth.

But what infuriated her even more...

Even after half an hour, that wild, animalistic madness and overwhelming intensity still clung to her body and skin like an electric current... impossible to shake.

Stussy had never experienced anything like it in her life.

Chapter 417 - 417: Volume 3 – Chapter 60: This Is the Last Time

The feeling clung to her like an addiction, refusing to fade.

As Stussy lingered in the moment, a soft haze rose in her eyes.

What Daren didn't know was that all her knowledge and skill in seduction and romance weren't learned through personal experience.

Stussy was a product of Vegapunk's genetic cloning technology—a clone of Buckingham Stussy, a former member of the Rocks Pirates. She was the first successful subject of MADS's cloning experiments.

To ensure she could infiltrate the World Government and take control of the Pleasure District in the New World, Vegapunk had edited her genes, embedding both physical traits and theoretical knowledge into her design.

With scientific capabilities five centuries ahead of the world, such feats were hardly difficult for Vegapunk.

So, while Stussy was well-versed in theory, she had never actually put any of it into practice—until now.

"Ahem... so, why?"

Daren finally couldn't hold back his curiosity. Trying to keep a straight face, he asked,

"Your technique and experience... they're way too good for a first time."

"And you're the Queen of the Pleasure District. Doesn't that just seem impossible?"

Stussy shot him a glare.

"With my ability, once I bite someone in my vampire form, I can put them into a deep sleep," she said.

"During that sleep, I can weave and control their dreams."

Now that Daren had leverage over her, Stussy didn't bother to hide the truth.

Dream control... wet dreams?!

Daren's face darkened with realization.

Good thing he had trained his body to the level of an Indestructible Body.

Otherwise, if he'd been pulled into a dream like that... he'd be totally screwed!

Still, he hadn't expected it to be so straightforward.

So... it really was her first time.

He... seriously lucked out.

"Well then... Daren-san, you got what you wanted," Stussy said, glancing over at him. She bit her red lip lightly.

"So please, keep this a secret."

Huh? Why does this whole setup feel so familiar...?

Even Daren found it all a bit absurd.

He was just about to agree when he paused—then smiled with obvious mischief.

"That depends on how you behave from now on, Queen of the Pleasure District."

Stussy froze.

This shameless bastard!

He was seriously planning to blackmail her with this?!

Daren chuckled, grabbed a fork, and casually stabbed a piece of steak, popping it into his mouth with clear satisfaction.

Watching the alluring woman across from him squirm in frustration felt damn good.

Stussy was no ordinary woman.

She was an Underworld Emperor, Queen of the Pleasure District.

A top agent of CP0—the World Government's highest intelligence division.

And a subordinate of the genius scientist, Vegapunk.

If used properly, she'd be a massive asset.

Her status in the Pleasure District could help him plant informants throughout the New World, gather intel, and coordinate with Doffy in the future—potentially allowing them to gain complete control over the underworld of the seas.

Her CP0 identity would be just as valuable. It could give him an inside view of the World Government. And if he ever turned against them, she'd be a hidden trump card he could play.

As for her connection to Vegapunk—Daren wasn't letting that slip by either.

If the opportunity arose, he might just be able to use Stussy to make contact with Vegapunk himself.

"What else do you want?! I've already done everything you asked!"

Stussy glared at Daren.

Daren slowly savored the premium steak and smiled.

"There's too much I want... I couldn't list it all even if I tried."

"But one thing's for sure..."

He set down his utensils, picked up a napkin, wiped his mouth, then stood up and walked toward her step by step.

"Right now... I want you."

Stussy's eyes flickered with panic as Daren approached.

Hadn't they just finished not long ago?

The memories of what had just happened surged back into her mind. Her heartbeat quickened wildly.

Daren placed a hand gently on her cheek.

Stussy made a weak, symbolic struggle, but his voice was already murmuring playfully by her ear—

"Didn't you enjoy it too?"

Her whole body trembled. She bit her lip tightly.

"That was a bit too rough earlier. This time... use all those moves of yours, alright?"

Daren grinned.

"Don't worry—I promise... this is the last time."

...

An hour later.

Feeling completely relaxed, Daren walked out the front doors of the luxurious hotel, a bright smile on his face. He casually tossed a thick wad of cash to the doorman, earning a look of unrestrained admiration from the young man.

...

Inside the hotel's shower room, Stussy stood beneath the steaming stream of water, her legs still trembling slightly.

"Damn bastard, making me pose like that..."

Her cheeks were flushed and burning. She couldn't tell whether it was from the heat of the water—or something else entirely.

She cupped her hands to scoop water and rinse her mouth, her gaze filled with silent frustration.

Despite her wealth of theoretical knowledge, this had been her first time actually applying it.

Putting it into practice personally... was more disorienting than she had expected.

"Well, it's fine. This was the last time anyway."

She consoled herself with that thought, and her mood gradually began to ease.

But as she stood there, something unspoken crossed her mind. Slowly, her eyes grew misty again.

The subtle allure between her brows... was undeniable.

...

After leaving the hotel lobby, Daren began strolling leisurely through the lively, bustling island.

Casinos, hotels, bubble baths, izakayas, kabuki theaters, slave auctions, fighting arenas... every type of illicit business imaginable could be found here.

The streets were lined with countless shops, and every dozen meters or so, another pleasure house would appear—young women in all sorts of costumes enthusiastically calling out for customers.

Slender beauties in slit cheongsams, fiery bikini-clad girls, cute and flirtatious bunny girls... whatever your tastes, this island had it all.

"It really lives up to its reputation as a world-famous money pit..."

Daren clicked his tongue in admiration. He had to admit—Stussy's business acumen and managerial talent were impressive.

To build an underground empire of this scale in the chaotic waters of the New World was no small feat.

Especially in the gray market—where behind every dazzling facade, blood often flowed unseen.

Massive profits meant brutal competition.

Staring out across the sprawling industry before him, Daren began calculating just how much advantage he could squeeze out of the support Stussy could provide.

...

"Mr. Jill, you're finally here! We've missed you so much...!"

A chorus of flirtatious voices rang out from the street corner ahead.

Daren couldn't help but chuckle.

"Mr. Jill"... Who the hell would pick a dumb name like that?

Curious, he turned toward the sound—only for the sight before him to leave him completely stunned.

He stood there, frozen, as the breeze rustled around him.

"Tokikake!?"

Chapter 418 - 418: Volume 3 – Chapter 61: There's No Need to Pay

How the hell did Tokikake end up here?

This was the New World, and he had just been promoted to Commodore. Logically, he should've been buried in transition paperwork and military affairs. How could he possibly show up here?

What's that?

This is the Pleasure District?

...Oh. Never mind then.

Daren stared at the sleazy figure in the distance, face twitching, and instinctively raised a hand to cover his forehead.

Today, Tokikake seemed to be deliberately low-profile. He wasn't wearing his uniform but had dressed in simple casual clothes—an eye-catching, brightly colored shirt on top and a pair of loose shorts on the bottom, his hairy calves fully exposed.

Hands in pockets, toothpick in his mouth, flip-flops on his feet... he strolled confidently into the bubble bath center like he owned the place.

Several bunny girls posted at the entrance to welcome guests lit up the moment they saw him. Their eyes sparkled like gold coins as they eagerly rushed forward, wrapped themselves around Tokikake's arms, and pulled him inside.

"Mr. Jill, where have you been? We've missed you so much..."

"We sisters talk about you all the time..."

"Mr. Jill, you've gotten even more handsome since we last saw you!"

Their praises were bright, flirtatious, and suspiciously sincere—proof of their top-tier professional charm.

"Hahahaha! Did you really miss me?"

Surrounded by beautiful women showering him with affection, Tokikake looked as if he were floating. He swayed with every step, completely drunk on the moment.

"Of course... You're one of our VIPs."

"A dashing man like you? We never see anyone else like that around here..."

"Mr. Jill, are you planning to have all of us serve you together again?"

The girls pressed in closer, their soft bodies leaning against him without a hint of reservation, their tone dripping with sultry pressure.

"Of course! Hehehe..."

With a sleazy grin and flushed face, Tokikake puffed up proudly, planting his hands on his hips.

"I just got promoted! Time to celebrate in style!"

He threw his arms around the girls and swaggered into the club with them like a conquering hero.

...

Watching the whole scene unfold from afar, Daren's mouth twitched slightly.

This guy Tokikake... Was he always this much of a player?

From the looks of it, he seemed to be a regular here, too.

Daren shook his head, speechless, but didn't bother getting involved.

It wasn't exactly rare for Marines to hit up entertainment districts during their downtime.

In the original storyline, that bastard Tokikake often ran off to gamble in Gran Tesoro. As long as he didn't cross the line, headquarters usually turned a blind eye.

Being a Marine was exhausting work. After a lifetime of fighting, wasn't it fair to enjoy a little fun?

"But I guess it's about time I report in on what happened in Wano..."

Daren rubbed the rough stubble on his chin and began scanning for a way to contact Marine HQ.

His military-issue Den Den Mushi had been tragically reduced to goo under Kaidou's educational beatdown.

Back at the hotel, while pulling his pants on, Stussy had offered to use her channels to get in touch with headquarters—but Daren had declined.

Better to keep his "true deal" with Stussy under wraps for now.

Looking around, he quickly spotted a small newspaper office across the street.

After tossing out a generous wad of cash, the manager eagerly presented him with one of their dedicated Den Den Mushi units.

"Brrrr... Brrrr..."

After dialing in, Daren lit a cigarette and stood casually by the roadside, waiting for the call to connect.

Soon—

"Brrr!"

The Den Den Mushi connected.

"Hello?"

A stern voice came through—it was Admiral Sengoku.

Daren smiled.

"Admiral Sengoku, this is Daren."

He immediately held the Den Den Mushi far away from his ear.

Sure enough, after a moment of silence, the Den Den Mushi's expression morphed into a furious mimicry of Sengoku's face, flames practically shooting from its eyes.

"Daren, you little brat! So you still remember how to contact headquarters!?"

"Do you have any idea how much work and coordination I've done on this end to support your mission!?"

The Den Den Mushi glared furiously, spitting in every direction.

Daren scratched his ear nonchalantly and replied with a grin.

"Apologies, Admiral Sengoku. The situation in Wano Country was far more complicated than expected. I was also seriously injured—that's what caused the delay."

"Seriously injured!? And you still had time to visit the Pleasure District while recovering!?"

The sound of a table being slammed echoed through the line.

"This is how you 'recover' from an injury!?"

Daren: ...

...Uh, busted.

A flash of awkwardness crossed his face.

If nothing had happened, it wouldn't be a big deal—but the problem was, something definitely had happened.

And it had been with the Queen of the Pleasure District.

Still, with Daren's level of shamelessness, he instantly denied everything with a straight face.

"Ahem. Admiral Sengoku, I swear... I've been quietly recuperating this whole time. I absolutely have not had any financial or sexual entanglements with anyone in the Pleasure District."

Hearing that, Sengoku's anger cooled a bit. Suspicion lingered in his voice.

"You're telling the truth?"

Daren's face turned righteous.

"Please, Admiral. I'm a Marine, trained under strict discipline. You can trust me."

After all, if he didn't pay... it didn't count as a financial transaction.

That was perfectly logical.

Sengoku slowly let out a deep breath.

There was no reason for Daren to lie about something like this. It looked like he really had gone into hiding in the Pleasure District to recover.

And if he had actually fought Kaidou in Wano, then injuries were inevitable. Daren wasn't at the level to match Kaidou head-on yet.

Just then, Daren's voice came back on the line—sounding smug.

"And besides, Admiral Sengoku, you know with my charm... I don't need to pay!"

Bang!

Sengoku collapsed backward in exasperation.

He sat back up, his face filled with disbelief.

You're actually proud of that!?

Clutching his chest in frustration, Sengoku barked through the line.

"Report. Now!"

"How bad are your injuries? Do you need a warship to pick you up?"

"We've already sent Sakazuki and Borsalino's warships into the New World to prepare for a potential assault on Wano. They're on standby and can head for the Pleasure District at any time."

Sakazuki and Borsalino?

Daren's eyes flickered slightly.

Under normal circumstances, if the Marines were prepping for war against the Beasts Pirates, Sengoku himself would likely be leading the charge.

But now, with Sakazuki and Borsalino spearheading the operation, it was clear the power dynamics within the Marines were shifting.

The new generation of monstrous Marines was gradually taking over the frontlines, pushing the older generation into more strategic, behind-the-scenes roles.

Just like in the original timeline, Sengoku had begun to retreat to headquarters, overseeing planning, coordination, and broader strategy.

"No need, Admiral Sengoku. My body's fine now. I'll be ready to return in a few days."

Daren replied calmly.

Borsalino was alright. If he came around, they might even grab a drink and wander the Pleasure District together.

But Sakazuki?

Absolutely not.

Daren glanced at the crowds flooding the Pleasure District, where pirates threw money around like water, and couldn't help shaking his head.

If Sakazuki ever set foot in this place... with his personality, he'd probably level the entire island with a Ryusei Kazan.

Chapter 419 - 419: Volume 3 – Chapter 62: Gion Knows You're in the Pleasure District

Want a few days to rest?

Sengoku furrowed his brows, then recalled Daren's inhuman resilience and monstrous physique. He nodded.

"All right. I'll grant you a short leave."

"Thank you, Admiral Sengoku."

"Now then, what's the situation in Wano Country?"

The moment business was brought up, Sengoku's expression turned serious, his voice low and focused.

...

In the Pleasure District, Daren slowly exhaled a puff of smoke. His eyes narrowed slightly as he replied,

"Admiral Sengoku, as I reported earlier, Kaidou has led the Beasts Pirates into Wano Country and established large-scale military factory production lines across several regions."

"Based on what I've uncovered, the size of these factories is at least double that of the previous Beasts Pirates headquarters our forces destroyed."

Sengoku's pupils contracted slightly at the words. He drew in a sharp breath.

Their previous exchange hadn't gone into such detail, but now with confirmation, Sengoku was stunned.

Military production lines on that scale... Just what the hell was that madman Kaidou planning?

Was he trying to start a world war?

But soon, another thought crossed Sengoku's mind. He frowned in confusion.

"Daren, you said Kaidou led the Beasts Pirates into Wano and has now taken root there... but did the local samurai forces actually allow that?"

"There wasn't any conflict?"

Wano Country had always been an isolated and xenophobic nation. Its samurai clans held tremendous power and were not to be underestimated.

Even with Kaidou's strength, subduing those stubborn, old-fashioned warriors wouldn't be easy.

Daren replied, "That part's unclear. Maybe Kaidou formed an alliance with one of the native factions."

Of course, he already knew the truth—Kurozumi Orochi had joined forces with Kaidou, usurping the throne that rightfully belonged to Kozuki Oden.

Sengoku's expression darkened.

If Kaidou had fully seized control of Wano, then the situation was far more complicated.

Even a full-scale Marine deployment might struggle to breach a nation with such naturally defensible terrain.

And don't forget—aside from Kaidou himself, the Beasts Pirates' top officer, King, could fly.

The internal situation in Wano was unclear. If the Marines charged in and triggered a backlash from the samurai clans, things could spiral out of control fast.

This was no longer a simple anti-pirate operation.

Politically, it would be seen as the Marines launching an assault on an independent nation—something far more delicate.

Sengoku exhaled slowly, pinching the bridge of his nose as he processed everything.

"I see."

"Daren, you've done a great job this time."

The intel Daren brought back was vital. It gave the Marines a clearer picture of both the situation in Wano and the hidden power of the Beasts Pirates.

This kind of information would play a key role in shaping their strategic decisions moving forward.

Then, Daren added, his tone carrying a hint of regret,

"During the investigation, I ended up clashing with Kaidou head-on. I couldn't match his strength, so I was forced to retreat after destroying roughly one-third of the Beasts Pirates' production lines... sustained serious injuries in the process."

"Hmm..." Sengoku nodded thoughtfully.

"Kaidou is incredibly strong. Even I wouldn't say I'm confident in taking him down. The fact that you gathered this intelligence and still made it out alive is no small feat—wait!"

He suddenly snapped to attention, eyes going wide.

"You said... you destroyed at least one-third of their military factories!?"

Daren nodded.

"Yeah. Since I was already there, I figured I might as well do something useful."

"Since I was already there..."

Sengoku's mouth twitched uncontrollably.

If Kaidou ever heard that line, he'd probably be so pissed he'd fall out of the sky mid-dragon flight.

Faced with such a ridiculous answer, even Sengoku—normally known for his patience and tactical brilliance—was left completely speechless.

So all he could do was repeat himself:

"Well, you did a good job, Daren."

"Alright then, if there's nothing else, I'll go focus on recovering, Admiral Sengoku."

Daren said with a smile.

After all, he was in the Pleasure District, where even the air smelled like joy and indulgence.

Since Sengoku had already approved his leave, there was no way he'd waste the chance to enjoy himself.

"Mm."

Sengoku was just about to end the call, but something seemed to come to mind.

"Oh, right—Daren, one more thing..."

"The one running the Pleasure District... that woman named Stussy. Don't get involved with her. She's not just some ordinary woman. Stay away from her."

Sorry, Admiral Sengoku... but it's already way too late for that.

"Please rest assured, Admiral Sengoku. I'm a disciplined, well-trained Marine—I wouldn't fall for temptation so easily!"

Daren declared with all the righteousness he could muster.

Well... unless I can't help it.

Sengoku: ...

For some reason, despite Daren's confident tone, Sengoku felt an overwhelming sense of unease settle in his chest.

He could only hope nothing would happen.

He knew Daren's personality all too well.

Aside from being a bit of a womanizer, a bit greedy, and maybe just a tad too ambitious... he was a decent soldier.

But those exact traits were enough to give Sengoku a constant headache.

"Anyway, just stay away from that woman!"

Sengoku gritted his teeth.

"Yeah, yeah."

Daren shrugged dismissively.

She's already shaped like me. Bit late for warnings now.

Hearing that overly casual tone, Sengoku paused for a moment, then added sharply—

"Gion already knows you're in the Pleasure District."

Daren: ???

His face instantly darkened. His eyelid twitched violently.

One second later, Daren's expression turned deathly serious.

"Admiral Sengoku, please... be sure to tell Gion that I'm only here in the Pleasure District because I had no other choice."

"I'm... collecting intelligence. While recovering. That's all."

Sengoku watched the face of the Den Den Mushi shift, and couldn't help the victorious grin spreading across his own.

You finally get what you deserve, brat...

"Well, that'll depend on your behavior, Daren."

He said cheerfully.

"You wouldn't want Gion to hear any strange rumors from me, would you?"

Daren: ...

Something's definitely wrong with you, Admiral Sengoku.

"I understand, Admiral. I'll do my best."

He ground the words out through clenched teeth.

...

After hanging up the Den Den Mushi, Daren rubbed his forehead in frustration.

He hadn't expected that old bastard Sengoku to stoop to this kind of tactic.

Now he was starting to understand how Stussy must've felt.

But just then, a startled voice called out from across the street—

"Da-Daren!?"

Daren lifted his head, looking in the direction of the sound.

Standing there was Tokikake, holding his pants up with one hand, a cigar in his mouth, wearing the smug look of a victorious general. He pointed at Daren in sheer disbelief.

Daren froze.

Then glanced at the clock hanging above the newspaper office.

His mouth twitched slightly.

It had only been five minutes since he saw Tokikake walk into that club...

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Daren's expression suddenly turned oddly complicated, and the look he gave Tokikake was filled with layered emotions—and a touch of pity.

Tokikake hadn't expected to run into Daren here of all places. His face tensed immediately.

"You, you... I, I..."

Under Daren's half-smiling gaze, Tokikake's face turned bright red as he stammered out a clumsy excuse.

"What's with that look? I'm just gathering intel!"

"Public service! It's all for public service, you know?!"

Of course I know. I'm the one who taught you that.

Daren set down the Den Den Mushi and pointed with a smile at the lavish, gold-adorned club behind Tokikake.

"Oh? Funny, I could've sworn I just saw you walk out of there."

Tokikake's expression shifted instantly. He strode over quickly, straightened up, and declared,

"That's right! That's exactly where I was collecting intel!"

With a solemn face and righteous tone, he continued,

"Thanks to my in-depth investigation, I've obtained valuable information on pirate activity. This intel will be crucial for future Marine operations against crime!"

"Mr. Jill! Mr. Jill!"

Just then, a young woman in a bunny girl outfit stepped out of the club, smiling as she called out to Tokikake.

"Here's the VIP card you just signed up for. From now on, you'll enjoy a 20% discount on all services."

She handed him the card with both hands, gave a polite bow, and displayed flawless manners.

Daren: ...

Tokikake: ...

"So the VIP card's already been topped up?" Daren asked with a playful grin, clearly enjoying the situation.

"Ahem, well... 20% off is a good deal..." Tokikake chuckled sheepishly, scratching his head.

"Are you a friend of Mr. Jill's?" the bunny girl asked sweetly.

The moment she saw Daren, her eyes lit up. She eagerly wrapped herself around his arm, her curvy figure pressing close as she purred,

"Want to come play? We've got all kinds of entertainment here..."

"No thanks," Daren said smoothly, extracting his arm with practiced ease. "I'm not interested in paying for things."

The girl looked him up and down, then suddenly smiled brightly.

"For a guest like you, payment isn't necessary."

Tokikake: ???

...

Inside the tavern.

Daren took the glass of whiskey from the bartender and took a relaxed sip before turning to Tokikake, who was glaring at him with obvious resentment.

"What'll you have? My treat."

Tokikake pouted, then angrily ordered the most expensive drink on the menu before grumbling,

"Seriously though, what are you doing here?!"

Daren casually lifted his shirt, revealing blood-stained bandages wrapped around his chest, and said with a grin,

"After the whole deal at Totto Land's Yakigashi Island, I swung by Wano Country. Ended up getting into a fight with Kaidou... got injured, so I picked an island to rest up. Didn't expect it to be Pleasure District."

"Ah, that makes sense. You fought Kaidou, no wonder..."

Tokikake nodded at first, but then froze, his eyes widening in disbelief. He jumped out of his seat like he'd been electrocuted.

"Wait—what!? You went one-on-one with Kaidou?!"

He stared at the Marine Vice Admiral in front of him as Daren calmly lit a cigar, his jaw practically hitting the floor.

Daren took a deep puff and smiled.

"No need to be so shocked. Stuff like this'll happen more often from now on."

One round of sparring was far from enough.

There was still plenty of value to wring out of Kaidou-sensei. He hadn't even learned Ryuo or Conqueror's Haki infusion yet.

More importantly, with his current strength, going to Wano wasn't nearly as dangerous anymore.

Hearing this, Tokikake clutched his head in exasperation.

"Damn it! You've gotten that strong already?"

Daren quipped, "If you stopped going to places like that so often, you could be too."

"No way."

Tokikake shook his head like a rattle, answering firmly,

"There are just too many poor girls in this vast sea! I, Tokikake, the genius of Headquarters, must use my love and warmth to care for them—do my part to help them live better lives!"

As he said this, a holy glow seemed to shine from his acne-ridden face. He clenched his fists, his eyes full of deep, solemn conviction.

"This... is my justice!!"

Daren: ...

"Tokikake, you do realize they probably make more than you, right?"

Tokikake's face froze.

"Impossible!"

Daren replied with a bit of irritation,

"This is the Pleasure District, not a slum."

The Pleasure District was the most luxurious red-light district in the world. With such high-end clientele, the staff here naturally earned a lot.

Tokikake's expression twitched, but he quickly straightened up and declared,

"That's fine! My mission is to spread the great love of justice!"

Then, as if suddenly remembering something, he chuckled slyly,

"You just wouldn't understand, Mr. 'No Good'. My skills... they're top-tier combat power!"

He gave Daren a knowing smirk only guys would recognize, boasting with full confidence.

"Five minutes to end the battle?" Daren said flatly, taking a sip of his drink.

Tokikake stiffened.

"How do you know!?"

He stared wide-eyed, his face turning beet red.

Daren let out a sigh.

"I saw you walk in with my own eyes."

"And before I could even finish a call, you were already walking out, pulling your pants back up."

Tokikake faltered instantly, his face flushed purple with embarrassment.

Seeing his pitiful state, Daren gave him a sympathetic pat on the shoulder and said,

"It's fine, man. Efficiency is key."

"If it's still not working out... I heard Yamakaji's got some medicine that works pretty well. Might be worth a shot."

Tokikake slumped like a wilted eggplant, face miserable.

"I already used it."

Daren: ...

Well. Very good. Exceptional, really.

Truly a gifted individual.

He opened his mouth but didn't know what to say.

"Oh, and Daren—don't tell Gion I was in the Pleasure District."

Tokikake quickly bounced back, rubbing his hands together with a sycophantic grin toward Daren.

Daren raised an eyebrow and gave him a look.

This guy really wasn't giving up. Persistent, to say the least.

Sensing the meaning behind Daren's stare, Tokikake said seriously,

"I came to the Pleasure District purely to care for the public."

"My relationship with those girls is strictly a clean, financial arrangement."

Daren: ...

Before he could respond, Tokikake was already off fantasizing again.

"Hehehe, I heard the Queen of the Pleasure District, Stussy... she's supposed to be an absolute beauty. I wonder what she tastes like... hehehe..."

Yeah, I know.

The taste of a vampire... not bad.

Very smooth.