

One Piece 461

Chapter 461 - 461: Volume 3 – Chapter 104: A... Ship's Steering Wheel?

"Damn it..."

Shiki staggered to his feet from the wreckage of a pirate ship. The scene before him nearly made him black out again.

The sea was raging, filled with the wreckage and splinters of shattered ships. Pirate corpses littered the waves, countless and densely packed—it was like hell on earth.

The flying pirate fleet he had rebuilt... had been wiped out. Again!

He instinctively turned his head.

Amid the drifting debris, the Oro Jackson of the Roger Pirates floated in the center. The ship's masts had snapped in the storm, sails hanging in tatters. The hull was pocked with damage, and the bow had caved in with a massive dent, almost beyond recognition.

Even so, this legendary ship, crafted by master shipwright Tom from the Treasure Tree Adam, had withstood the storm's full force and somehow stayed afloat!

The Roger Pirates clung to the ship, each one looking like they'd barely survived.

"We almost died..."

Buggy lay soaked and limp, face pale as a sheet.

Rayleigh gripped him by the waistband with one hand, looking equally grim.

Everyone looked like drowned rats, gasping for air.

"Wahahahaha!!!"

At the bow, Roger collapsed onto the shattered deck, throwing his head back in a booming laugh.

"We made it!!"

"I actually survived that!!"

His laughter was wild and full of exhilaration, his expression blazing with a boldness that came from staring death in the face.

Seeing their captain like that, the others exchanged glances—then couldn't help but laugh too.

Yeah. They survived.

The Oro Jackson was wrecked, but they were still alive!

It was a small miracle amid disaster.

In contrast, the flying pirate fleet under Shiki's command had been utterly destroyed by the storm.

This storm... had completely rewritten the course of the battle!

But they didn't have long to breathe.

Suddenly, a thunderous roar swept in from the distant sea, shaking the air.

"Kill!!!"

"Take down the Roger Pirates!"

"Kill Shiki!!"

"For justice!!"

...

BOOM—

The roar of cannon fire exploded across the sky. Countless shells tore through the clouds like rain, crashing down with blinding bursts of flame.

"The Marines?!"

Rayleigh's pupils contracted.

Everyone's faces darkened. While blocking the incoming cannon fire, they all turned toward the direction of the attack.

One ship,

Two,

Three...

Ten heavily armed warships barreled through the storm like a torrent of steel, charging at them at full speed.

Their bloodlust was palpable, their momentum unstoppable!

Flames burst from the ship cannons, illuminating the ominous silhouettes of the figures standing aboard.

"It's the Marines!! We're screwed! We're really screwed! That's a Marine fleet—they're coming for us!!"

Buggy shrieked, voice cracking. His eyes bulged as he trembled in fear.

"How the hell did they know we were here?!"

Staring at the oncoming fleet, everyone's faces turned grim.

Seagull flags whipped in the wind, exuding a cold, iron-willed intensity.

"Sengoku!!"

Roger's eyes locked onto a familiar figure standing on the lead warship.

"And... those Marine brats!"

Rayleigh's face was deeply serious.

"C-Captain... and the guy who pulled your pants down!!"

Buggy's hand shook as he pointed toward a tall figure standing front and center on the flagship, his voice trembling in terror.

Roger: ...

"Stop bringing that up, you little punk!! It was just an accident!!"

Roger snarled back, teeth clenched.

Shanks gripped the broken mast, panting hard, his eyes locked in fear on that Marine.

He hadn't forgotten. Back in the first half of the Grand Line... it was that guy—he'd nearly killed him.

That was the closest Shanks had ever come to death in his life.

"We're in trouble... Even Sengoku showed up."

Rayleigh's brows furrowed deeply, but his hands never stopped moving. He kept slashing down the incoming cannonballs, one after another.

As the Marine fleet drew closer, the shelling intensified, becoming an unrelenting barrage that filled the sky.

The sea lit up with bursts of fire.

"No worries! Sengoku alone can't hold us back!"

Roger burst out laughing without a care.

"As long as that bastard Garp isn't here, we still have a shot at getting out!"

The moment he said that, the crew of the Roger Pirates was suddenly gripped by a bad feeling.

A second later—

"Bwahahahaha!! Roger!! So you really did pick the third route!!"

A booming laugh, deep as thunder, suddenly echoed from another direction.

The entire crew froze at the sound, then turned to glare sharply at Roger.

Roger: ...

The corner of his mouth twitched as he turned to look.

Out of nowhere, a uniquely shaped dog-headed warship broke through the waves, charging straight toward them.

Standing at the bow was a towering Marine, arms crossed and wearing a dog-head cap, his eyes blazing as he laughed wildly.

Vice Admiral... the "Hero" Garp!

Buggy clutched his head and screamed in panic.

"Garp's here too... There's no way we're getting out now!!"

Rayleigh and the others also looked grim, a chill crawling up their spines.

They were surrounded—again!

At that moment, Shiki suddenly let out a furious, venomous roar.

"Damn it!!! Damn Marines!!!"

He staggered to his feet, eyes fixed bitterly on the incoming Marine fleet.

Just as he was about to take a step forward, a wave of dizziness hit him.

An unbearable, piercing pain shot from the top of his head, cutting straight through to the bone.

Shiki froze, then instinctively raised a hand to his head. The moment he touched it, his entire body went stiff.

His fingers met cold, solid metal.

His pupils shrank sharply—like lightning had struck him.

Drip...

A line of warm blood ran down his forehead, past his eyes, nose, and cheeks, and finally fell to the deck below.

His vision turned crimson.

Shiki took a shaky step back, and for just a moment, a flash of fear crossed his face.

The pain from his skull was blinding.

His head... had nearly been pierced through!?

He stared blankly at the Meito in his hand.

The rain-slick blade reflected his pale, distorted face.

Something was embedded in his skull. Deeply.

Perfectly lodged there.

Surprisingly, there wasn't much bleeding.

It was...

A pitch-black ship's steering wheel.

Chapter 462 - 462: Volume 3 – Chapter 105: So You're Not the Only One With Backup?

Shiki stood frozen, as if struck by lightning, his face pale.

He staggered back, a wave of unfamiliar dread crashing over him, making his scalp crawl.

He had fought countless battles throughout his life, clashed with powerful foes, and suffered more wounds than he could count.

He'd been scorched by fire, had bones broken, been poisoned, and endured internal damage... but never had he experienced an injury as bizarre and horrifying as this.

The human head—vital, delicate, the nerve center of the entire body, influencing not just the body but personality, will, and emotion.

And now... a broken ship's steering wheel was deeply embedded in his skull!

For a moment, Shiki had no idea what to do.

What was even stranger was that, despite his head being nearly pierced through, the bleeding was surprisingly minimal.

Other than sharp stabs of pain and waves of dizziness, he didn't feel much else.

Instinctively, he reached up toward the steering wheel. But the moment his fingers brushed it, he recoiled like he'd been shocked.

No—he couldn't pull it out.

That steering wheel was bizarrely and "perfectly" lodged in his skull, held in place by some twisted balance. That strange equilibrium... was the only reason he was still alive.

If he pulled it out... Shiki didn't even want to imagine the consequences.

...

A thunderous explosion of cannon fire snapped him back to reality. Several shells detonated around the wreckage, sending water columns spraying into the air.

The cold sea spray jolted him fully awake.

He shuddered and cast a resentful glance at the chaos surrounding the Roger Pirates in the distance. Gritting his teeth so hard it was a wonder they didn't crack, he forced himself to move.

"We have to retreat..."

Without hesitation, Shiki made the call.

With a ship's steering wheel stuck in his head and his condition deteriorating fast, staying here meant certain death at the hands of the Marines.

Garp and Sengoku—legends from his own era—were both here, along with those three monstrous brats and ten heavily armed warships loaded with over ten thousand elite troops... This lineup wasn't just for Roger. It was meant for both of them!

But just as Shiki prepared to take to the sky—

Whoosh!!

Two blinding streaks of light—one black, one white—sliced through the air with impossible speed and crushing force.

Under the surge of a violent magnetic field, the two blades—wreathed in spiraling Armament Haki—sent shockwaves rippling through the air, tearing long grooves across the ocean's surface.

"Damn Marine brat!! You again!!!"

Shiki's pupils contracted. He roared in fury.

Gripping both swords, he covered them in pitch-black Haki and slashed out with all his might!

Clang!

A piercing clash rang out. A violent gust erupted, blowing Shiki's golden mane backward.

Enma let out a fierce hum as it was knocked away.

"I'm not letting you walk away from this!!"

Shiki roared and surged forward.

Holding his blades in a strange stance, his body low and hair wild, from afar he looked like a lion about to strike.

"Oni Shishi Nitoryu: Zanpa!!"

Swish!

He lunged. A flash of gold streaked through the air.

The twin Meito, Oto and Kogarashi, crossed mid-air, their blades crashing against the tip of Kariumi in a powerful, precise strike!

Boom!!

A deafening blast erupted. Shockwaves screamed skyward, sending towering waves soaring.

Crack... crack...

A hairline fracture appeared at the tip of Kariumi, spreading fast until it webbed across the entire blade!

"You think you can kill me with that half-baked swordsmanship!?"

Shiki's bloodshot eyes blazed with killing intent. He locked onto the tall figure on the Marine flagship.

With a furious roar, he brought his crossed blades down!

CLANG!

Kariumi—a 50 Skillful Grade Blade—shattered into countless fragments!

Sparks exploded, lighting up Shiki's twisted, ferocious face.

But that wasn't the end.

After destroying Kariumi, Shiki's two Meito unleashed a storm of slashing energy.

Twin golden arcs of sword aura tore across the sea, screaming toward Daren on the flagship.

With Shiki's peerless dual-sword technique, a direct hit would slice the entire warship into pieces!

A suffocating pressure rolled in, lifting Daren's cloak.

But Daren only narrowed his eyes, unmoved by the incoming destruction, a trail of smoke escaping his lips as his arms remained crossed.

Because two figures had stepped forward—right in front of him.

Sengoku's braided beard whipped in the wind as his towering form glowed with radiant golden light.

Sakazuki's entire right arm had morphed into blazing magma, black smoke billowing around him.

Without a word, both men hurled their fists forward, in perfect unison, grim determination etched into their faces.

"Impact Wave!"

"Great Eruption!"

Brilliant golden light radiated from the Buddha, mingling with the searing red magma, blending into a breathtaking, overwhelming burst of color.

BOOM!!

BOOM!!

Explosive shockwaves surged into the sky, tearing through the incoming sword slashes.

Thick black smoke billowed upward, completely engulfing the warships' line of sight.

Watching this unfold, Shiki's lips curled into a twisted, mocking grin.

"Jihahahaha!! That's enough fun for today!"

He let out a wild, manic laugh and leapt into the air.

But just then...

The pitch-black sky above suddenly lit up with a blinding glow.

"Can't let you leave just yet, Shiki..."

A laid-back, smug voice echoed faintly from the sky.

Countless golden particles of light gathered in the sky, forming a tall, radiant figure.

Borsalino spread his arms with a half-smile, fingers delicately posed, his entire body bathed in shimmering brilliance.

"Yasakani no Magatama."

A storm of golden light bullets rained down like a hurricane, pouring toward Shiki in a relentless barrage.

"This damn yellow monkey!!"

Shiki cursed through gritted teeth, weaving through the air as he dodged Borsalino's sweeping lightstorm.

Rumble...

The glowing bullets slammed into the sea and the floating pirate wreckage, erupting into bursts of searing flame.

But Borsalino's interference was enough—the Marine fleet had already cut through the smoke and stormed into the battlefield!

"Don't bother trying to run, Shiki. This storm... was crafted just for you."

Daren smirked coldly.

A storm worth thirty billion Belly.

What!?

Amid the rolling smoke and roaring fire, Shiki's mind was rocked by the words.

His eyes instantly reddened with bloodshot fury. He snapped his head toward the arrogant Vice Admiral, glaring with disbelief.

"This... This is impossible!!"

There's no one in the entire sea who could manipulate weather like this!

Even if someone could, creating a sea storm of that magnitude? Unthinkable!

Daren exhaled slowly, smoke drifting from his lips as he sneered.

"You think you're the only one who can call for backup?"

...

Chapter 463 - 463: Volume 3 – Chapter 106: Leave Shiki to Me

"You think you're the only one who can call for backup?"

Daren's lips curled into a cold smirk.

Shiki, in his obsession with avenging Coin Island, had rallied Big Mom and Kaidou into a temporary alliance, storming Marineford in a mad assault.

Backup?

Shiki blinked, then realization struck.

He didn't quite understand the slang term "call for backup," but the mocking tone in Daren's voice made the meaning crystal clear—it meant bringing in outside reinforcements.

Gritting his teeth through the pain and dizziness from the steering wheel still lodged in his skull, Shiki forced his mind to function.

That sudden, massive storm—the one that completely flipped the tide of battle...

Control over the weather? No. It wasn't that.

With his vast experience and insight, Shiki was certain: no Devil Fruit user in the world had that kind of exaggerated ability.

That storm...

It was wind!

A glint of chilling clarity flashed in Shiki's eyes.

That brat who defected from the Marines not long ago...!

Garp's own son—Monkey D. Dragon!

If that was true...

It all clicked.

That storm was orchestrated by that damned Daren!

...

Before Shiki could fully piece it together, Daren had already taken action aboard the warship.

"Leave Shiki to me. You handle the Roger Pirates."

His voice was cold and resolute.

He bent his knees and dropped low—

Creak... groan...

A terrifying force rippled through the ship, and the massive warship groaned under the strain.

Right before Sengoku's and the others' wide eyes, the entire bow of the heavy vessel sank downward under Daren's pressure, plunging several meters deeper into the sea.

The ship tipped violently forward, with the stern rising high into the air!

Marines scattered across the deck, struggling to keep their footing as they stared in shock at the towering figure at the front.

He nearly flipped a warship just with the strength of his body!?

"You sure you can handle this alone, Daren?"

Sengoku braced himself, locking eyes with Daren and shouting urgently.

"Who knows?"

Daren's lips twisted into a wild grin. His eyes blazed with fierce ambition.

Gazing at the battlefield ahead—now a living hell—he felt the blood in his veins ignite.

The roaring sea, the scorching wind, the freezing rain, the thick stench of gunpowder hanging in the air,

...and that overwhelming presence of a legendary pirate—

Shiki the Golden Lion!

A flood of information, smells, and sounds surged into Daren's mind, seeping into his cells, into his very soul, making his entire body tremble.

But it wasn't fear.

It was excitement.

This was it—the great Battle of Edd War, a clash destined to be etched into the history of pirates!

A war worthy of the history books!

Except this time... it wasn't fate that decided it.

It was him.

The storm of destiny, the downfall of the Flying Pirates, the cursed steering wheel...

Daren never believed in fate.

Even if fate existed, he would carve it out himself.

And now—it was time to take on a true legend.

To clash with a monster like Shiki the Golden Lion!

His eyes flared with uncontrollable battle lust. He took a final drag of his cigar, his knees coiled like springs, then—

BOOM!!

With a thunderous stomp, the speeding warship jolted backward nearly ten meters from the recoil alone!

Launched like a cannonball, the Vice Admiral rocketed through the air—

Crossing hundreds of meters in the blink of an eye.

"Marine brat! You've got a death wish!!"

Shiki roared, eyes bloodshot with rage.

This reckless fool actually dared to launch a frontal assault on him!?

His twin blades slashed outward!

Dozens of golden sword arcs exploded forth, crisscrossing the sky and sea into a deadly lattice.

"Shishi: Senjindani!"

A strange red glow surged in the depths of Daren's pupils as his Observation Haki flared, perfectly predicting the paths of the incoming strikes.

Daren's figure weaved nimbly through the barrage, narrowly dodging Shiki's deadly blades.

"You think it's that easy!?"

A killing intent flashed in Shiki's eyes. He swung once more through the air.

Invisible force rippled outward, churning the calm sea once again.

A massive surge of seawater, lifted by Shiki's floating power, came crashing down. The torrent twisted and formed into a towering lion of water that blocked out the sky, descending toward Daren like a collapsing mountain.

Its jaws gaped wide, ready to swallow the Marine Vice Admiral whole.

"Shishi Odoshi: Chimaki!"

A colossal shadow loomed overhead as if the heavens themselves were falling.

The salty tang of seawater rushed in, making Daren's skin prickle.

Seawater—the ultimate weakness of any Devil Fruit user!

If he took a direct hit, he wouldn't die—but he'd be incapacitated instantly.

"Enma!"

Daren's eyes narrowed. He shouted with force.

A streak of black light pierced through the air, growing in size the moment it shot forth.

"More More: Twentyfold Oni Slash!"

Shhk!!

The water lion was violently pierced by the amplified Enma. For a split second, it froze midair as a gaping hole tore through its core.

Seawater rained down in sheets.

In that instant, before the watery beast could close again, Daren accelerated, darting through the opening like a bullet—

Straight toward Shiki!

"Wahahaha!! Daren, I'm coming for payback!!"

A loud voice boomed from the side.

Roger launched himself forward, his blade crackling with black and red lightning, swinging down with ferocious power!

A deadly sense of danger surged—but Daren didn't even flinch.

Because a towering figure in a dog-headed cap had already appeared behind him.

A massive fist, also wrapped in black lightning, slammed forward with explosive force!

BOOM!!

The meteor-like iron fist collided with the world-cutting blade.

A gale like hell's breath exploded outward. Lightning flashed wildly through the air, swallowing the sky and tearing through the clouds.

The black clouds were split apart, a massive rift forming between the two fighters.

"Garp!?"

Roger gasped in shock.

Reflected in his eyes was a white cape billowing upward, the black kanji for "Justice" dancing like a dragon in the storm.

"Bwahahaha!! Roger, your fight's with me!!"

Garp roared with laughter, and before Roger could even react, drove a fist straight into his face.

BOOM!!

Roger's body shot like a cannonball into the side of the Oro Jackson, splintering a massive section of the deck.

A bloodied tooth clattered to the floor with a metallic ring.

"Damn you, Garp, you bastard!!"

Roger wiped the blood from his mouth and shouted, the gap in his front teeth making him lisp in rage.

...

Meanwhile, Daren lunged at Shiki like a starving wolf, fingers curled into a dragon claw, driving it straight toward the pirate's face!

"Shiki... gotta say, that steering wheel really suits you."

He grinned wickedly.

"After all, I made it just for you... your perfect little crown."

Chapter 464 - 464: Volume 3 – Chapter 107: Think You Can Run?

At those words, Shiki's eyes filled with a web of bloodshot veins, and the veins on his forehead bulged with rage.

An overwhelming fury surged from his chest, roaring like a tidal wave—uncontainable, feral.

"You're dead meat, Marine brat!!"

With a screech, the Meito Oto in his left hand lashed downward with violent force!

Clang!!

Steel met steel as the gleaming Meito crashed against Daren's obsidian dragon claw.

BOOM!!

The instant they collided, sparks erupted in a storm, flaring against the night sky and lighting up the Vice Admiral's wild, twisted grin.

But in that very moment, Shiki's expression shifted.

This power... something's off.

He'd fought Daren before—on Coin Island, in the Marineford assault. Back then, his overwhelming dominance had crushed the brat without effort.

But now?

Now, Daren's strength was on a completely different level.

It wasn't just stronger—it was monstrous.

As they clashed in raw force, Shiki felt like he was wrestling a top-tier warrior from the Giant Tribe!

What the hell had this Marine brat gone through!?

This growth... was insane!

How long had it been since their last battle?

Half a year?

And already this?

Just from this brief exchange—and with his veteran's eye sharpened by years sailing the Grand Line—Shiki could tell at a glance:

Daren had stepped into Admiral-class power.

He was no longer a contender.

He was one of the sea's true monsters now.

Something's not right...

But Daren gave him no time to think.

With his left hand, he formed another dragon claw and struck viciously—straight for Shiki's groin!

The black claws sliced through the air with a piercing shriek, radiating the power to tear through steel.

Shiki gritted his teeth, a sudden chill shooting through him.

This devious little punk!!

Clang!!

Kogarashi reversed and blocked downward just in time, absorbing the blow.

But his reaction was a fraction late.

Daren smirked.

A faint current of electricity flickered between his fingers...

Shiki's pupils shrank.

That aim—!

It wasn't for his groin.

It was the ship's steering wheel—lodged in his skull!

Invisible magnetic force rippled outward. The surrounding air crackled as arcs of electricity sparked to life.

Daren's grin widened.

He'd won.

All he had to do was use the power of the Jiki Jiki no Mi to rip that steering wheel out—and with a wound like that, even if Shiki didn't die instantly, he wouldn't last long.

From the texture and gleam of it, that steering wheel was definitely metal.

Arcs danced around them in the air.

But just as Daren moved in for the kill, the sight before him made him freeze.

A dense, liquid-like blackness surged over Shiki's skull, tightly enveloping the steering wheel.

That wasn't just any defense—

It was Haki.

Heavy, concentrated Armament Haki—layered like armor.

"Jihahahaha!! I'm no idiot like Roger!!"

Shiki let out a mad, triumphant laugh.

"Your Devil Fruit ability is weird, brat. But don't forget—powerful enough Haki can override any Devil Fruit effect!"

And in that instant of Daren's hesitation, Shiki struck.

His leg lashed out, wrapped in Haki—like the blade of a grandmaster swordsman.

Shiki wasn't just a dual-blade master—he was also a fearsome kicker, his technique honed to perfection.

The kick sliced through the air like a blade—

—and carved straight into Daren's chest!

Shhk!!

A deep gash ripped open across his torso. Daren froze in place, stunned, unable to believe what had just happened.

Scalding blood erupted from the wound like a geyser.

It splattered across Shiki's face—twisting his cruel, feral expression into something even more savage. Even more unhinged.

"Your strength may have improved quickly... but listen, Marine brat. Real power isn't just about piling on brute force!"

"It's about fusing every skill and ability into your core—and unleashing them at 120%!"

"You want to kill me? You're still decades too early!"

Shiki sneered, then slashed down with brutal force!

The golden blade dragged a line of blood through the air, transforming into a massive slash that sent the Vice Admiral crashing straight into the wreckage of a pirate ship below.

Shhk!!

The sword aura spread wide, tearing open a crack hundreds of meters deep across the sea, stretching over a kilometer—an awe-inspiring, devastating sight.

Daren's body smashed into the deck like a cannonball, another deep gash torn across his chest as blood spewed violently from his mouth.

"Daren!!!"

Far off, Sengoku—leading the fleet's encirclement of the Roger Pirates—caught sight of the blow. His face twisted in shock as he roared, eyes red with fury.

He moved to act—but before he could, a figure cloaked in black-and-red lightning surged forward.

"Looking around in a fight? That's a bad habit, Sengoku..."

The aura radiating from the newcomer hit Sengoku like a hammer—dense and overwhelming.

Golden light burst from Sengoku's body. He expanded into a towering golden Buddha over ten meters tall and struck out with a palm—without even glancing.

BOOM!!

A slash wrapped in Conqueror's Haki clashed against the Buddha's palm, erupting into a violent shockwave.

They split apart in an instant, both blasted back several meters across the deck.

"Dark King... Rayleigh!"

Sengoku's expression turned grave as he recognized the attacker.

But he couldn't worry about that now—his eyes remained locked on Daren.

...

"Jihahahahaha!!!"

"This is the end for you, Marine brat!!!"

Up above, Shiki wasn't letting up. One solid hit wasn't enough—he never gave his enemies a chance to recover.

With Oto and Kogarashi reversed in his hands, he leapt back briefly...

Then launched himself forward like a mad, flying lion, killing intent pouring off him.

He dove.

Like a meteor crashing from the heavens—

Faster.

Faster!

Faster still!

From a distance, Shiki seemed wrapped in a vortex of flame, twin blades pointed downward, plummeting at a speed beyond reason.

This was his killing blow.

"Die!!!"

In Shiki's feral eyes, the image of the bloodied Vice Admiral was reflected. He grinned viciously.

"Shishi: Ryūsei!!"

He brought both swords down.

...

Just then, a streak of black light shot upward toward him.

"Think that'll work?"

Without even glancing, Shiki swung a blade—knocking Enma clean out of the air.

But in that tiny opening, Daren clenched his jaw, lightning sparking between his fingers.

With a burst of movement, he shifted sideways by several meters—

Just in time to dodge the lethal strike.

BOOM!!

The floating wreckage of the pirate ship exploded apart, blasted into thousands of fragments that rained through the air, clouding all vision.

...

A second later, Shiki burst from the debris like a demon, his savage eyes locked on Daren's fleeing back.

A cold smirk curved across his lips.

"Running now? You think you can get away?"

He soared into the sky again, chasing the heavily wounded Daren at full speed.

"Borsalino!!!"

Sengoku shouted, his voice tight with urgency.

"I got it..."

A flash of gold shot skyward and instantly formed a humanoid figure.

Borsalino spread his arms, unleashing a volley of light bullets.

"Yasakani no Magatama!"

"Jihahaha!! Still haven't learned your lesson, little yellow monkey!!"

Shiki roared with laughter, slashing through the air.

The sea erupted beneath him as waves surged upward, forming a massive lion of water that slammed head-on into the rain of golden light bullets.

BOOM... BOOM...

Explosions ripped through the sea, fireballs bursting beneath the surface.

The intense heat vaporized seawater by the ton, cloaking everything in a thick mist.

...

Seconds later, countless photons gathered into a figure aboard the warship. Borsalino stared at the now-vanished Shiki and let out a helpless smile.

"He blocked everything. Can't catch up now..."

Sengoku froze, then clenched his teeth in frustration.

"Damn it!!"

Still, he didn't have time to dwell on it. All he could do now was trust Daren's words—that he could handle this.

"Surround them! Wipe out the Roger Pirates!!"

He shook his head, buried the unease in his chest, and shouted with steely resolve.

But even as he barked the order, a nagging doubt crept in.

Didn't that punk Daren have an "Indestructible Body"?

How'd he get so badly injured by Shiki?

And that amount of blood...

Something didn't add up.

Chapter 465 - 465: Volume 3 – Chapter 108: Roger Is Mine

"Surround them!"

"For justice!!"

"Kill!!!"

"Take down the Roger Pirates!"

...

The roars of the Marines shook the skies.

Aboard one of the warships...

"Are you really that confident, Sengoku?"

Rayleigh, sword in hand, squinted toward the direction where Daren and Shiki had vanished. He frowned, then turned to Sengoku and said calmly,

"That brat's strong, sure. But if he's going one-on-one with Shiki... he won't survive."

"If I'm not mistaken, he's your most valuable strategic deterrent in the entire Navy, isn't he?"

Sengoku narrowed his eyes, replying coldly,

"Dark King Rayleigh, that's none of your concern."

His gaze flicked toward the Oro Jackson, now completely surrounded by warships.

"We've waited a long time for this—an opportunity to wipe out Roger's crew in one fell swoop... I won't let myself get distracted now."

With eyes as sharp as his, Sengoku instantly saw through Rayleigh's real intention.

Rayleigh had brought it up to rattle him. And if Sengoku actually diverted some of his top forces to support Daren, that would only ease the pressure here.

Giving the Roger Pirates a better chance to break through the encirclement.

"Save your breath."

"...What a shame."

Rayleigh sighed, a heavy seriousness settling in his gaze.

He swept a quick glance at the Oro Jackson.

The pirate ship was entirely boxed in. Marines had boarded, and fierce close-quarters combat had erupted across both their vessel and the Navy warships.

His crew was struggling, pushed to their limit.

They'd just come out of a brutal sea storm—not only exhausted, but worn down physically and mentally.

Worst of all, the Oro Jackson had suffered heavy damage. Though the shipwrights were scrambling to repair it, there was no way it could sail anytime soon.

This was it. All they could do now was fight.

With that realization, a wave of intense Haki erupted from Rayleigh's body!

Zzzz!

Red arcs of lightning crackled across his form, the sheer pressure warping the air around him, making the world itself tremble.

An overwhelming surge of Conqueror's Haki!

Sengoku's eyes narrowed, unease flashing in his heart.

The rumors said Rayleigh, "Dark King" and Roger's right hand, possessed strength rivaling the Pirate King himself...

And now, it seemed those weren't just stories.

"So, Sengoku... that intel—was it your Marines who leaked it?"

Rayleigh stood with his sword in one hand, eyes gleaming behind his rimless glasses. His aura rose, hair whipping upward, eyes radiating a crushing pressure.

"No comment."

Gold light burst from Sengoku once more as he transformed into the towering golden Buddha, assuming a battle stance.

Rayleigh exhaled deeply, his tone chilled.

"Throwing us to the front just to bait Shiki... A clever move. Almost too clever."

"I'm starting to think this entire war was planned by your Navy from the start."

"To quietly let the two strongest pirate crews in the sea destroy each other... Sengoku, your cunning truly befits the title of the Marines' Resourceful General."

Sengoku's eyes narrowed further.

The two locked eyes for a brief, intense moment.

Then—both launched forward from their positions, clashing head-on!

...

"Inugami Guren!!"

Boom!

A roaring fist of magma surged forth, morphing into a blazing giant hound that bloomed like a crimson lotus!

The scarlet glare engulfed the entire field of view, forcing nearby Marines to retreat in alarm.

"Moon Fang: Twin Hunt!"

A pair of giant axes wreathed in Haki stirred a violent gale. A cross-shaped slash erupted forth, cleaving the charging magma beast cleanly in two!

Molten rock splattered everywhere, hissing as it struck the deck, releasing columns of black smoke.

Dark red magma trickled down the twin blades. Gaban, his black ponytail fluttering and shades glinting, watched the young Marine stepping out of the smoke with a heavy expression.

"Magma, huh? The Marines really have churned out some remarkable youngsters lately..."

"That last attack—if it hit, it would've pierced straight through my heart."

Sakazuki strode forward expressionlessly, half his body already transformed into surging magma.

"Scopper Gaban, number three of the Roger Pirates..."

He spoke coldly.

"This is where your crew meets its end."

Gaban smiled faintly as he knocked his twin axes together, their clang echoing with tension.

"That's not a given."

...

"Protect the Oro Jackson!!!"

"Damn it, he's too fast!"

"He's a Logia!"

...

Aboard the Oro Jackson, Borsalino's body flickered, sometimes bursting into a scatter of photons, sometimes reforming in human shape—completely surrounded by Roger Pirates like Spencer, Blumarine, and Mugren.

Clang!

Ama no Murakumo clashed with a harpoon aimed at his back by Sunbell, sparks flashing across Borsalino's reflective shades.

He glanced at the panting fishman before him, scratched his head lazily, and muttered,

"A Fishman warrior, huh... The Roger Pirates really are monsters. Every crewmember is terrifyingly strong."

"Shut up!"

"In your dreams!"

"You bastard!!"

The fighters flushed with rage, shouting as they charged at him again in a wild flurry of attacks.

...

"Bwahahahaha! Roger!! Come on, let's have a proper fight!!"

"Damn you, Garp! You knocked out my front tooth!!"

Above the floating debris of a shattered pirate ship, two figures cloaked in black and red lightning clashed like meteors crashing into the earth!

Iron fists and longswords split the sky.

Their strikes clashed in midair!

A compressed orb of black and red energy twisted violently between them, bursting into shockwaves that tore through the heavens.

The world itself seemed to lose its color.

Waves dozens of meters tall erupted across the sea, clouds shattered, and shockwaves radiated for kilometers.

Just as they locked horns midair—

"Dahaha! Vice Admiral Garp, I'm here to help!!"

A bold, energetic voice rang out.

A tall, lean figure leapt from the dog-headed warship, wielding a spear of ice as he dove toward Roger!

Roger raised a brow, just about to act—

But Garp beat him to it.

"Kuzan, get outta here!! Don't get in the way!!"

"Roger is mine!!"

With a roar, he launched a punch!

"Eh?"

Kuzan froze.

Before he could react, Garp's fist filled his vision—

Kuzan: ???

Boom!

Like a cannonball, he was blasted into the sea by Garp's punch.

With a whoosh, the surrounding waters—within a radius of nearly two kilometers—froze solid in an instant, turning the entire ocean surface pure white.

Shards of frost whirled and spread, encasing all the warships and the Oro Jackson in ice.

"The sea froze over!"

"Rear Admiral Kuzan is insane!"

"He just gave us the battlefield!"

"Charge!!"

Stunned for a moment, the Marines aboard the ships quickly regained their senses. They drew their weapons, leaped onto the frozen sea, and charged toward the Roger Pirates across the ice!

Chapter 466 - 466: Volume 3 – Chapter 109: The Excuses of Losers

Kuzan grimaced as he crawled out of the hole in the ice, dazed by the scene unfolding before him.

Squads of Marines stormed past, charging toward the Oro Jackson with murderous intensity. Although they had previously surrounded Roger's ship, the cramped warships in the open sea had caused confusion and logistical chaos.

Marines in the front ranks were clambering up ropes in a desperate attempt to board the pirate ship, turning the battle into a brutal melee. But those in the back could do nothing but stand in line, helplessly watching the carnage unfold.

Now, things had changed.

The sea had frozen into solid ice—they finally had firm ground to fight on!

The Oro Jackson's hull was trapped in the frozen sea as well... There was no escape, even if they had wings!

"Rear Admiral Kuzan is amazing!"

"He really deserves to be considered on par with Vice Admiral Daren!"

"He actually figured out how to break the deadlock!"

"..."

As they charged past, the Marines gave Kuzan a thumbs-up, admiration written across their faces.

Kuzan blinked in surprise, then scratched his head and laughed sheepishly.

"Dahahaha, it's nothing!"

...

The freezing wind whipped across their faces, stinging the skin like blades.

Daren streaked across the sky like a red aurora, slicing through the air at high speed. The dark clouds receded behind him, and the sounds of battle from the distant battlefield slowly faded, then disappeared altogether.

"Jihahahaha! Marine brat, got the guts to run now?!"

"Weren't you full of swagger just a moment ago?!"

Shiki's savage, menacing laughter echoed behind him as he closed the distance.

"You built up this 'unprecedented storm' for me, and now you're fleeing like some mangy mutt—what a joke! Jihahaha!"

As he spoke, Shiki drew both blades and unleashed dozens of golden slashes that howled through the air toward the fleeing Vice Admiral.

Daren's pale face twisted slightly. A strange red light flickered deep in his eyes as the magnetic field surrounding him surged violently.

The air cracked with a sonic boom. His speed skyrocketed, and he barely escaped Shiki's barrage.

Shhh! Shhh! Shhh!!

The sea within a thousand meters was torn into a horrifying web of gashes as massive columns of seawater erupted skyward.

In the next instant—

Daren burst out of the watery veil in disarray and kept flying, fleeing at full speed.

But the corner of his lips curled into a mocking grin. He laughed fearlessly.

"So what?"

"In the end, you still lost, Shiki!"

"Your so-called 'invincible flying fleet'—I wiped it out. Twice."

"Your ridiculous dream of ruling the world? I shattered it!"

He glanced back, his expression openly taunting.

"Your whole life is a failure!"

"Back in God Valley, your captain Rocks lost to Garp and Roger!"

"You couldn't beat Whitebeard, and you're nowhere near Roger's level!"

"All you can do now is pathetically chase after giant flying ships, or ancient weapons!"

"A piece of trash like you—how dare you think you're Roger's equal!?"

"Roger has no need for ancient weapons. That's the difference between you and him."

"You'll never surpass Roger! Your whole existence is a joke—just a backdrop for him. All you can do is watch as he walks further and further ahead!"

Daren's words stabbed into Shiki like a blade, piercing his soul and igniting a pain he'd never known.

A volcano of fury erupted from his chest, his bloodshot eyes burning with uncontained rage.

"You brat who doesn't know his place!!"

He roared at the top of his lungs.

"Roger is nothing but a foolish idiot! How dare you compare me to him?!"

"He has power, but no will to rule the world... He's not even a real pirate!"

Shiki exploded in fury, his blood-red eyes bulging as if Daren's words had struck his deepest nerve.

To him, Roger has always been a lifelong rival—but even so, he would never allow anyone to say he was beneath Roger.

In his eyes, Roger's wild, carefree life—his aimless adventures and lack of ambition—have nothing to do with what it means to be a true pirate.

"These are just the excuses of a loser!!"

Daren burst into a fierce, mocking laugh.

"In the end, you're nothing more than a failure, Shiki!!"

"If I'm not mistaken, you don't even dare to use your Conqueror's Haki right now, do you?"

"Because there's a ship's steering wheel stuck in your head!"

"You're scared that if you let your Haki erupt at full force, something irreversible might happen!"

Shiki's expression froze. He clenched his teeth, his face contorting with rage and malice.

Seeing his reaction, Daren laughed even louder.

"So what does that make you? Just a loser!"

"You've lost your Conqueror's Haki. What right do you have to rule the world!?"

"Damn you!!"

Shiki roared furiously, the muscles on his face twisting as he erupted.

"I don't need Conqueror's Haki to cut down a little brat like you!!"

"Then bring it on!! Hahahaha!!"

Daren's hands transformed into pitch-black dragon claws. He slashed at the air, then without a backward glance, surged forward once more.

Swish! Swish!!

Two arcs of black claw energy shot out, streaking toward Shiki.

Shiki sliced them apart with his blades and charged forward again.

"Daren, you little punk! Think you're clever?"

"Think you've got it all figured out?"

"Did you ever expect that today would be the day you die by my blade?!"

"Once I kill you, no one will be left to stand in my way on these seas!"

"The clue to the ancient weapons is with Roger!"

"I'll get it out of him, sooner or later!!"

A frenzy of destruction and obsession clouded Shiki's mind.

I haven't lost yet.

All I have to do is kill this Marine brat.

Then find the ancient weapons... and the whole world will kneel at my feet!

But just then, the Vice Admiral's voice rang out again—calm, yet tinged with amusement.

"And who do you think leaked those ancient weapon clues in the first place?"

The words hit Shiki like a thunderbolt.

A single thought exploded in his mind like lightning cracking across a dry plain.

No way...

His pupils shrank, his expression changed drastically.

In a flash, countless questions flooded his mind.

This entire storm had been orchestrated by that brat Daren—but how had he known a clash between him and the Roger Pirates would happen?

The battle took place in the Edd War Sea...

Roger held the clue to the ancient weapons...

That information had come from the underworld...

The Marine ambush...

Ambush...

Wait a minute...

Shiki suddenly looked up, eyes twisted with hate as he locked onto the back of the Marine Vice Admiral. He looked like he wanted to tear him apart.

It was all this brat's scheme...

He'd destroyed everything.

"I'LL KILL YOU!!!"

A second later,

Shiki's frenzied roar, filled with pure killing intent, tore through the sky.

Chapter 467 - 467: Volume 3 – Chapter 110: Run, Run!

Somewhere in the New World.

The sun blazed down, and the sea was crystal clear.

A pirate ship bearing a skull flag sailed smoothly across the deep blue waters, the deck alive with raucous laughter.

"Hahahahaha! Captain!! We hit the jackpot! I can't believe that treasure map was real!"

The deck was stacked with chests overflowing with gold and silver, gleaming brilliantly in the sunlight.

Dozens of pirates surrounded the treasure, their faces flushed with excitement as they tossed handfuls of glittering coins into the air like lunatics, completely swept up in the moment.

"Hahahaha, well done, boys."

The captain, a burly man with a thick beard, sat proudly at the bow, arms outstretched as he roared with laughter.

"This is just the beginning."

"As long as you stick with me—money, women, fame, power—it's all within reach!"

"Hahahahaha!!"

Just as the pirates were reveling in their windfall, the helmsman suddenly called out in confusion.

"Huh? What's that?"

"Something's coming from the sky... wait, is that... a person?!"

Everyone's first reaction was disbelief.

How could someone be flying... humans can't fly, right!?

Their eyes widened as they stared into the distance.

A blood-red figure suddenly shot out from the clouds and plummeted toward the sea at an incredible speed.

"What the hell is that!?"

"Looks like... a Marine?"

"Wait!! He's coming straight at us!"

"Damn it!! Ready the cannons!!"

Panic erupted. The pirates scrambled to man the ship's cannons, frantically trying to lock onto the incoming figure.

"It's no use!"

"He's way too fast!!"

"He's coming!!"

"..."

Before they could react, Daren, soaked in blood, shot past just above the waves, stirring up a violent gust as he went.

The pirates stood frozen, their nerves on edge—then let out a collective sigh of relief.

The sheer aura that man carried was like a demon god. There was no way they could take him on.

Fortunately, he hadn't even spared them a glance.

But then—

"Daren, you brat!! You're not getting away!!!"

Whoosh!

Whoosh!!

Several golden sword beams suddenly burst through the cloud layer, slashing down like divine retribution, ripping the sea apart!

The pirates were stunned.

They stood there blankly as golden light reflected in their eyes, the sword energy streaking toward them at breakneck speed.

"It's over..."

That was the last thought that crossed their minds.

BOOM!!

The pirate ship was sliced into pieces, then exploded in a massive blast!

Flames and black smoke billowed into the sky.

A second later...

Shiki, wild-eyed and snarling like a beast, burst through the smoke, bloodshot eyes locked on the distant figure of the fleeing Marine Vice Admiral. His roar was filled with murderous rage.

"I'll never let you get away!!"

He surged forward again!

A crimson and a golden figure—two streaks of blinding light—raced through the sky at speeds no human eye could follow.

Chasing and fleeing.

Minutes later, as they passed over a desolate island...

"Shishi: Senjindani!!"

Dozens of crescent-shaped slashes tore through the air, engulfing Daren entirely.

Caught off guard, Daren couldn't dodge in time. One of the distant strikes landed, slicing into his back and drawing a deep grunt as blood burst out in a spray.

The remaining sword waves streaked into the distance, cleaving through several massive peaks. The mountain tops, cleanly severed, began to tilt and crumble!

RUMBLE...

The whole island trembled beneath the collapse, a deafening roar shaking the earth and scattering flocks of startled birds into the sky.

Seeing the damn Marine brat wounded again, Shiki erupted into manic laughter.

"Jihahahaha!! Let's see how long you can keep running!"

A twisted thrill surged in Shiki's chest, like a cat toying with a trapped mouse.

He had to admit—this Marine brat's will to live was impressive. But that was all it was.

Shiki could see it clearly now: Daren's speed was dropping. His face had turned ghostly pale, his uniform soaked in blood, and he was gasping for breath... He was clearly running on fumes, barely hanging on!

Which meant one thing—it was only a matter of time before he was finished.

And if that was the case, Shiki might as well enjoy himself a bit.

A cruel smile curled across his lips.

His pupils were laced with blood, radiating a chilling, murderous intent. Throbbing pain pulsed through his skull, but he didn't care in the slightest. Rational thought was slipping away, consumed by a volcanic craving for destruction.

At that moment, only one thought remained in Shiki's mind—

To torture that Marine brat to death... slowly, cruelly.

"Jihahahahaha!! Run! Run!!"

"Let's see how far you think you can get!! How long you can last!!"

"Jihahahahaha!!"

...

Edd War Sea

"Rayleigh-san! The ship's repaired!"

On the Oro Jackson, Buggy's severed head was flailing in panic after being sliced off by a Marine, his screams echoing across the deck.

"Hm?"

Rayleigh, mid-duel with Sengoku, narrowed his eyes. His presence suddenly spiked.

Black and red lightning snaked up his longsword. Gripping the hilt with both hands, he swung it with a thunderous slash toward Sengoku.

"Great Buddha: Punch!"

Transformed into a golden Buddha, Sengoku unleashed his own burst of Conqueror's Haki and threw a powerful punch with a growl.

Boom!!

Blade and fist clashed in midair—never touching, but the sheer force between them stirred a raging storm.

For one tense second, the air crackled... then a sphere of black and red energy detonated.

A violent shockwave burst outward, lifting sheets of ice like ocean waves and shattering the surface in every direction.

Using the recoil, Rayleigh leapt nimbly backward, landing solidly on the Oro Jackson's deck.

In a flash, he bolted toward Borsalino and swung his blade sideways.

"Dark King Rayleigh... You're such a hassle."

Borsalino muttered as his body scattered into golden photons, evading the attack before reforming on Sengoku's warship.

"Roger! Time to go!"

After forcing Borsalino back, Rayleigh looked toward Roger, who was still locked in a fierce battle with Garp.

"But I haven't had my fill yet!"

Roger shouted in frustration.

"If you don't get back here, we're all going to die!!"

Veins popped on Rayleigh's forehead as he growled in exasperation.

"Damn it!"

Roger cursed, gripping the Meito in his hands as his aura surged violently.

His Conqueror's Haki exploded—far surpassing that of Rayleigh and Sengoku—howling from his body like a beast. His blood-red captain's cloak whipped wildly in the wind.

A burning fighting spirit lit up the eyes of this legendary pirate.

"Come on, Garp!!"

"One blow... let's settle this!"

He stomped down on the ice, cracking it beneath his feet, and raised his sword.

Black and red lightning radiated out in a massive burst around his blade.

His stance shifted into a powerful draw—an unmistakable killing pose!

Sensing the overwhelming force radiating from Roger, Garp's face grew darker than ever.

"Kamusari!!"

Roger roared.

Garp's pupils shrank!

That technique!

That eerie, unavoidable sword art!

He'd tasted defeat from it once before. Gritting his teeth, he sprang backward.

But in the very next moment—

His eyes went wide in shock at what he saw.

Swish!

Roger's blade came down!

But the black and red arc didn't fly at Garp...

It veered toward Sengoku's warship instead!

"Wahahaha! Fooled you, Garp!!"

Roger stuck out his tongue and retreated playfully back to the Oro Jackson.

"You bastard!! That was dirty!!"

Garp's face turned red with fury as he stomped in rage.

The incoming blade screamed through the air, exuding a terrifying pressure.

Sengoku's expression twisted. With the warship beneath him, there was no room to dodge—he could only grit his teeth and face it head-on.

"Borsalino!!"

"Got it..."

Golden light burst upward.

BOOM!!

The black and red blade clashed with the glowing warship in a hellish explosion.

The frozen sea beneath them, pushed to its limits by the sheer intensity of the battle, finally gave way—shattering and revealing the surging ocean beneath.

Chaos erupted among the Marines. One after another, they plunged into the sea.

Warships were caught between the collapsing ice, thrown into disarray.

"Wahahahaha! Farewell, Marines. I'm not dying here."

Roger raised his sword, laughing boldly through the downpour.

"My voyage is far from over!!!"

As his voice rang out...

A massive black cannon emerged from the stern of the Oro Jackson.

Brilliant white energy gathered at its core.

BOOM!!

A thunderous blast erupted!

The air cannon tore across the sea, pulverizing ice and whipping up a monstrous tidal wave.

In Garp's wide, furious eyes...

In Sakazuki's cold, stormy gaze...

In the helpless stares of countless Marines...

The battered Oro Jackson suddenly soared into the sky, trailing a geyser of water.

Like a seabird breaking through the storm, it flew—free and unstoppable—toward the horizon.

Chapter 468 - 468: Volume 3 – Chapter 111: If Too Many Show Up, He'll Just Run

Waves crashed and rolled across the sea, tossing the warships with each violent surge. Cries for help rang out across the chaotic waters.

"Quick, save them!!"

"Too many fell overboard!!"

"Don't let the waves sweep them away!"

...

The fierce wind finally blew away the lingering smoke, revealing the main warship once more.

The entire bow had been completely destroyed, exposing a mangled frame of splintered keel. It looked like it could sink at any moment.

On the deck, Sengoku and Borsalino stood in defensive stances, arms raised, palms forward. Smoke and debris whipped past them as the Marines behind staggered, trying to stay upright.

"Damn it!!"

Sengoku's eyes burned red with fury as he watched the battered pirate ship vanish beyond the horizon. Clenching his fists, he cursed in frustration.

They had finally caught a golden opportunity to surround the Roger Pirates—and just like that, it slipped through their fingers.

And now, it all made sense.

That final slash from Roger wasn't Kamusari at all. That so-called technique was just for show—meant to scare Garp into backing off.

The real purpose of that swing was to delay him and Borsalino, buying precious seconds for the Oro Jackson to escape.

"Damn that bastard Roger!! He played me!!"

Garp was jumping in rage, shouting curses as he hurried aboard his dog-headed warship.

"Raise the sails! We're going after them!"

Just as the ship was about to depart, Garp suddenly seemed to remember something. He turned toward Kuzan, who was still standing on a floating chunk of ice.

"Kuzan, you coming or not?"

Kuzan's face darkened as he hesitated.

"Vice Admiral Garp... you're not gonna hit me again, are you?"

Garp gritted his teeth.

"Come if you want, don't come if you don't!!"

"I'm coming!"

Perking up instantly, Kuzan flashed forward, landing neatly on the ship and casually strolling up beside Garp with a grin.

"Sengoku, I'll leave the cleanup to you. I'm going after that bastard Roger!"

Without even turning back, Garp barked the order and his ship roared to life, heading full speed toward the horizon.

A flicker of resignation crossed Sengoku's face. He opened his mouth, but said nothing.

He knew the truth—Roger's ship could launch itself several nautical miles with a single air cannon blast. Combined with its own insane speed, Garp would never catch up.

Still, if Garp wanted to try, there was no stopping him.

The most pressing issue now was rescuing the Marines who had fallen overboard and capturing any remaining Flying Pirates.

"Admiral Sengoku, I believe we must act immediately and pursue the Roger Pirates!"

At that moment, Sakazuki—his aura heavy with killing intent—strode aboard and spoke with a grim look.

Sengoku frowned and shook his head.

"Leave Roger to Garp. Our warships are badly damaged. With our speed compromised, chasing them now would be pointless."

As he spoke, a shadow passed through his eyes. In his heart, he no longer held much hope.

Again and again...

Time after time...

Since the battle at God Valley, the Marine Headquarters had launched countless large-scale hunts for the Roger Pirates.

And just Garp's personal missions alone had driven Roger and his crew to the brink on several occasions.

But somehow, always—always—when the Marines believed they had the upper hand, the Roger Pirates slipped away.

And now, it had happened again.

If not for the Marines—no, if not for Daren's intervention and the "creation" of that colossal sea storm—Roger's crew would've been utterly crushed by Shiki's Flying Fleet.

That battle should've been unwinnable.

No matter how strong Roger was, there was no way to turn that kind of hopeless situation around.

And yet...

Dragon's storm had annihilated Shiki's aerial fleet.

And Roger's crew?

Aside from some superficial damage to their ship, they were practically untouched.

That wasn't luck anymore.

Maybe—just maybe—some unseen force, some "destiny," was watching over Roger.

Because if you looked at it logically, based on facts and reality, there was no other way to explain this bizarre outcome.

Even the most elusive pirate should have fallen after this many attempts.

Could Roger really be stronger than Rocks?

Was the Roger Pirates' crew really more elite than Rocks's legendary lineup?

And yet, every time... nothing. No success.

It made no sense.

A cold chill ran down Sengoku's spine. He clenched his fists without realizing it.

Hearing Sengoku's reply, Sakazuki quickly caught on. His expression darkened further.

"What about Daren?"

Sengoku took a deep breath and said gravely,

"Daren and Shiki both possess powerful long-range flight capabilities. At the speed of a warship, we'd never reach them in time to provide support."

His tone was heavy with frustration as he glanced instinctively at Borsalino.

Borsalino raised both hands.

"As for long-distance flight, that's not really in my wheelhouse either..."

"But,"

A sly smile tugged at the corner of his lips.

"Maybe we don't need to worry too much about Vice Admiral Daren's safety."

Sakazuki narrowed his eyes, voice sharp and cold.

"Borsalino, what's that supposed to mean?"

Borsalino feigned surprise and took a couple of steps back, waving his hands.

"Whoa now, don't give me that look, Sakazuki. You're scaring me."

"I'm not implying anything. Just pointing out a fact."

He scratched at the stubble on his chin, first gesturing toward Sakazuki, then at himself.

"Back at Marineford, you, me, Kuzan, and Daren—we four couldn't even stop Shiki."

Sakazuki's arm began to glow with intense heat, wisps of black smoke curling from his skin.

"Borsalino, I'm not in the mood for your games."

"No one knows Shiki's strength better than I do. I was there at Marineford."

His eyes locked onto Borsalino, cold and full of barely contained rage.

The Navy had finally seized a once-in-a-lifetime chance—only to let the Roger Pirates slip away. He was furious.

"Precisely because I understand Shiki's power, I know Daren alone can't take him down."

"No, no... not exactly."

Borsalino's grin grew slightly wider.

"Sakazuki, do you really understand how strong Daren is now?"

Sakazuki paused.

Then a flicker of disbelief flashed in his eyes.

At that moment, Borsalino turned around and waved dismissively.

"The reason we couldn't stop Shiki at Marineford wasn't because the four of us couldn't beat him."

"It was because he could fly."

Sengoku's eyes lit up slightly, as if something finally clicked in his mind.

Borsalino stretched with a long yawn.

"When it comes to taking down someone like Shiki, throwing more people at him doesn't help."

He turned back, tapped his own head, and gave Sakazuki a playful, knowing smirk.

"Don't forget—Shiki's a sly and crafty bastard."

"When too many people show up... he runs."

Sengoku and Sakazuki stiffened in place as the weight of those words sank in.

Chapter 469 - 469: Volume 3 – Chapter 112: The Chase

New World, a remote island.

"Zanpa!"

A massive surge of golden sword energy burst skyward from the mountains, roaring toward the distant horizon with unstoppable force. The thick sea of clouds was torn apart, sliced clean through into a vast, gaping trench that seemed to have no end.

A towering peak, over a hundred meters high, was cleaved clean in two. The cut was smooth—almost unnaturally so.

The mountain groaned with a deafening rumble. Countless boulders tumbled like a raging flood, crashing down the slopes in an avalanche of stone, shaking the earth and triggering a minor quake.

Dust and debris filled the sky.

A bloodied, battered figure shot out from the shattered mountain ridge, tumbling and bouncing across the rocky slopes before finally regaining control and launching back into the air.

It was Daren!

"Jihahahaha!! How much longer can you hold out, you little Marine brat?!"

Swords of golden light screeched as they tore through stone and earth. Shiki's crazed form tore after him, locking onto the Vice Admiral like a predator on the hunt.

"You're close to the end, aren't you?"

"To hold out this long under my pursuit, Daren... you've earned a bit of pride in these seas!"

Shiki unleashed another wave of frenzied attacks, trying to cut off every path of escape, laughing wildly the whole time.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

Even as he spoke, he raised his hand and fired off another barrage—more than a dozen howling golden slashes.

Boom!

The mountains detonated again in a storm of dust and stone. The tremors shook the island to its core, terrifying the strange beasts that lurked in its wilds.

Two seconds later, Daren burst out of the chaos, barely flying straight. His face was deathly pale, eyes burning red as he surged upward.

A fresh, deep gash carved across his back—down to the bone.

Blood sprayed wildly into the air.

Seeing this, Shiki's grin twisted into something even more unhinged. His face, muscles tight with fury and bloodlust, twisted into a mask of madness. It was the look of a cat savoring the final moments of its prey.

This brat was almost done.

Even someone like him wouldn't be able to keep going with wounds like that.

The image of Daren—this punk who'd ruined all his ambitions—being hacked into pieces by his own hands made Shiki's entire body flush with manic excitement. His grip on his swords trembled with anticipation.

Go on, run... give it everything you've got... little Marine...

In the end, you'll realize—no one's coming to save you.

Waves of searing pain and numbness pulsed from the steering wheel embedded in his skull. His head felt like it might split in two, his eyes bulging from the pressure—but he didn't care.

As long as that brat didn't make it back to Marine Headquarters or Mary Geoise, there was nowhere in the world he could run where someone might save him.

With that thought, Shiki accelerated again.

Two blurs—one red, one gold—streaked across the sky, across seas, over islands, through ports and mountains, moving faster than the eye could track.

They tore across oceans.

They soared past one nation after another.

A breathtaking chase unfolded—one that left witnesses everywhere stunned beyond belief.

...

Half a day later...

Sengoku returned to Marineford at top speed, leading the elite fleet of Marine Headquarters.

Several massive prisoner transport vessels from Impel Down were already waiting at the oval military port, having received prior notification.

Although the devastating storm during the Edd War Sea Battle had obliterated Shiki's flying pirate fleet, a number of survivors had managed to escape the tempest by sheer luck.

In total, over 2,000 remnants of the Flying Pirates were captured and detained by the Marines.

After quickly handing them over to the relevant personnel from Impel Down, Sengoku—still exhausted from the campaign—immediately brought Sakazuki and Borsalino with him and headed straight to the Fleet Admiral's office.

The moment he pushed open the doors to the Supreme Military Council Chamber, a line of senior officers, already awaiting his arrival, rose from their seats and saluted in unison.

"Admiral Sengoku!"

Sengoku waved them down, his body still exuding the killing aura that clung to him after the fierce battle, and strode into the room.

"Fleet Admiral Kong!"

With a stern expression, he saluted the man seated at the head of the table.

"I regret to report that I failed to eliminate the Roger Pirates. I await your punishment."

Kong, cigar in hand, looked up and shook his head.

"No need for that, Sengoku."

"Shiki's flying fleet has been completely annihilated. From a strategic standpoint, this operation was a success."

"As for Roger's crew..."

He paused, then let out a sigh.

"You and I both know—they're not the kind of opponents that can be dealt with easily."

As the Marine's highest commander, Kong knew better than anyone how elusive and troublesome the Roger Pirates were.

Especially on the open sea, their uniquely crafted ship rendered even the most formidable Marine fleets with their firepower and armor helpless.

The Oro Jackson wasn't just any pirate ship.

It was a legendary vessel built with painstaking care by the shipwrights of Water 7. Its hull was constructed using the ultra-rare Treasure Tree Adam as its primary keel, making it remarkably lightweight yet stronger than even reinforced Navy warships.

That design gave it speed—speed that surpassed even Marine vessels equipped with propulsion systems.

And on top of that, it had short-range flight mechanisms built into it.

Every single crew member aboard was a well-known pirate of the New World, making them far harder to capture than any other crew in the seas.

They may not have the sheer manpower or influence of Whitebeard or Shiki, but when it came to speed and evasion?

They were unmatched.

"I've read the full report. You're not to blame, Sengoku."

Seeing the self-reproach on Sengoku's face, Kong offered a rare word of reassurance.

"Even if I had been in your place, the outcome would've likely been the same."

"Take a seat."

Sengoku clenched his jaw but complied, sitting down.

"What's the situation with Daren?" he asked, unable to hide the urgency in his voice.

"Tsuru, you handle this," Kong said, exhaling smoke, his brow furrowed.

Staff Officer Tsuru nodded solemnly.

"Daren is still fleeing. Shiki's right behind him... they've been locked in a drawn-out chase of absurd proportions."

As she spoke, she gestured to the sand table spread across the center of the conference room.

"This here is the Edd War sea area..."

She moved her finger across a series of red markers on the chart, finally stopping near the seas around Fish-Man Island, near the New World's entrance.

"This is the latest intel on Daren and Shiki's last known positions."

Sengoku's eyes locked onto the map—his pupils suddenly contracting.

The red markers drawn across the sea chart formed a massive arc, a near-complete parabola stretching from the Edd War waters all the way to the vicinity of Fish-Man Island.

They had almost circled half of the New World.

"What the hell is Daren doing? Did he lose his bearings?"

Chapter 470 - 470: Volume 3 – Chapter 113: Why Should I Run?

Sengoku stared at the simulated sand table displaying Daren's "escape route" and couldn't help but cry out in disbelief.

From the route alone, Daren looked completely lost, darting all over the New World!

There was no pattern. No logic at all.

Getting disoriented in the New World wasn't unusual. The sea, notorious as the "pirate graveyard," was treacherous—even Navy warships often went off course without strict adherence to established safe routes.

But Sengoku knew Daren. That brat would never make such a rookie mistake!

"What the hell is going on?"

He turned urgently to Staff Officer Tsuru.

Tsuru shook his head, eyes flashing with helplessness.

"I don't know either. Daren's route has no rhyme or reason. It's like he's just... running in circles."

Running in circles?

Sengoku froze.

Sakazuki frowned.

Borsalino gave a silent, knowing smile.

"The only thing we're certain of is that the two of them are moving insanely fast—crossing an island every few minutes."

Kong pressed his fingers to his temples, clearly agitated.

"Headquarters has no way to track them in real time... The routes on the simulation table are entirely based on reports from islanders or sailors along the way."

"Brrrr... Brrrr..."

The military Den Den Mushi on the table rang out sharply.

Tsuru answered it at once.

A tense, shaky voice came through.

"R-report! Latest intel—Vice Admiral Daren was sighted near the Niwo Islands... He's badly injured!!"

The expressions of the gathered Marine officers shifted instantly.

Sengoku's face turned grave, cold sweat breaking out in his palms.

Daren's seriously hurt!?

What's happening out there?

How long can he even last?

Just then, the Den Den Mushi rang again.

"Report! Vice Admiral Daren has arrived at Port Fols! Eyewitnesses say he's in terrible shape! Shiki's attack sliced the entire port in two!"

A collective gasp swept through the room.

Port Fols was a major transit hub in the New World. Even the Navy used it occasionally for resupplying branches across the region.

But what shocked them even more wasn't the destruction—it was the speed of Daren and Shiki.

Everyone instinctively looked toward the massive sand table.

Tsuru's adjutant had already marked the two latest locations in red.

"They're too fast... It's beyond comprehension..."

A Rear Admiral couldn't contain his awe.

Traveling from the Fish-Man Island region to those two points would take a Marine warship at least an hour. Yet those two had crossed that distance in under five minutes!

If they hadn't seen it for themselves, none of them would've believed it.

Realizing this, a deep sense of powerlessness settled over the room.

A long-range chase at that speed... was simply beyond anything they could intervene in.

"Damn it!!"

Sengoku slammed his fist onto the table, eyes bloodshot and chest heaving with frustration.

Sakazuki, face dark, spoke coldly.

"So we're just going to sit here and watch this all unfold?"

Silence.

No one could answer him.

Because it was the truth.

The warships couldn't keep up with Daren and Shiki's flight.

And with Daren's route being so erratic, there was no predicting his next move.

All they could do was wait—helplessly.

"What I don't understand is why Daren didn't retreat directly to headquarters," Kong suddenly said.

Everyone in the conference room trembled at the same time.

Yes, even if he lost his way in the New World, Vice Admiral Daren should have had the Eternal Pose pointing to Marineford.

As long as he returned toward Marine Headquarters, they wouldn't even need to wait for him to arrive—headquarters could dispatch reinforcements to meet him.

"Because he wants to kill Shiki," Sengoku said through gritted teeth.

Hearing his words, the Marine generals present all changed color, shocked beyond belief, their faces filled with disbelief.

Vice Admiral Daren... He wants to kill Shiki by himself?

How is that possible?

Even Admiral Sengoku and Vice Admiral Garp couldn't do that!

"I see..."

Kong frowned, his determined expression unchanged, his eyes lowered.

"He's afraid Shiki will escape, so he's not going to headquarters?"

He muttered softly.

The others also figured out the crux of the matter and gradually came to the same conclusion.

The conference room fell silent again.

Daren's approach might not be wrong, but could he really kill Shiki?

The Marine commanders were filled with doubt and uncertainty.

They all recognized Daren's strength and achievements.

But this was Shiki the Golden Lion.

The legendary Great Pirate.

A man on par with Roger and Whitebeard.

Even Admiral Sengoku and Vice Admiral Garp had led elite Marine fleets packed with top fighters, yet they couldn't defeat the Roger Pirates.

Could Vice Admiral Daren really take down Shiki on his own?

Just then...

"Brrruu..."

The slightly urgent call of the military Den Den Mushi rang out again, breaking the tense atmosphere.

Kong immediately answered the signal.

"Speak."

A tense voice followed:

"Report! Latest intelligence... Vice Admiral Daren has left the New World waters. He... he has entered the Calm Belt!"

The Calm Belt!?

Everyone subconsciously looked up at the sand table.

When they located the Calm Belt's position, their bodies tensed.

Sengoku stood up abruptly, eyes wide.

Sakazuki's expression shifted slightly.

Staff Officer Tsuru's pupils shrank.

Kong took a deep drag on his cigar.

No one noticed that his hand holding the cigar was trembling slightly.

They all knew where Daren was going.

Their eyes fell—unspoken, yet unanimous—on a certain location on the sand table.

...

Calm Belt.

This shocking, mad chase had lasted an entire day and night—and still showed no sign of ending.

"Jihahahaha!! It's useless no matter where you run, Daren, you little brat!!"

Shiki tore through the air in pursuit of the blood-soaked Vice Admiral, unleashing one vicious slash after another with his twin swords.

The steering wheel lodged in his forehead throbbed with pain, and the fluctuating magnetic field occasionally sparked faint arcs of electricity across its surface. It forced Shiki to constantly maintain Armament Haki, the drain on his stamina now unmistakable.

He could feel his strength rapidly fading from overusing Haki.

But he didn't care anymore.

Barely any reason remained in his twisted expression. His eyes flickered only with a savage, murderous gleam!

It wouldn't be long now!

This damn Marine brat was nearly at his limit!

With that amount of blood loss and those injuries, plus the grueling long-distance flight... Even Shiki himself was nearly exhausted—this brat's toll could only be worse!

The two figures streaked across the sea, one behind the other, skimming just above the water's surface.

Every so often, massive Sea Kings burst from the Calm Belt's waters, casting enormous shadows as they opened their gaping maws to strike at Shiki.

But under the ferocious strikes of the greatest dual swordsman, they were instantly reduced to nothing but shredded meat and sprays of blood.

"Jihahahahaha!!!"

Another piercing golden slash struck the Vice Admiral's back from afar, exploding into a cloud of blood and sending him stumbling, blood spilling from his lips.

Shiki's laughter grew more unhinged.

He occasionally wondered how this Marine brat was still standing after taking so many hits, but the thought vanished as quickly as it came.

What was there to question!?

The wounds were real. The blood was real. He was clearly trying to run!

Just a bit more... just a little more...

And he could finish this damn brat off with his own hands!!

He couldn't afford to miss this chance—no matter what!

Soon, the two of them crossed that endless expanse of calm sea.

A cold breeze blew across his face as the tranquil surface gradually gave way to swelling waves.

They had exited the Calm Belt.

"It's time!"

Shiki let out a sinister grin and raised his sword.

Swish!!

An invisible force surged outward. The ocean, caught in some strange pull, suddenly roared to life!

Waves exploded upward in a torrent—like stacked tsunamis, like monstrous giants with indistinct forms—crashing toward the blood-soaked Marine ahead with unstoppable force!

Shishi Odoshi: Chimaki!

Water rained down like collapsing walls of a fortress. The Vice Admiral gritted his teeth, seemingly drawing on every last shred of strength. His face went pale, and his speed suddenly spiked!

He barely managed to escape the oncoming tsunami!

But then—

"Jihahahaha!! You're dead!!"

A massive golden sword beam ripped straight through the towering wall of water, slamming into the unprepared Vice Admiral and sending him crashing down onto a barren island below.

Boom!!

A violent surge of earth exploded skyward, the ground torn apart—half the island shattered.

The shockwave rolled through the land, shaking mountains and earth, sending flocks of birds fleeing in all directions.

Shiki's eyes gleamed with deeper madness, shining blood-red as he dove straight down.

At the island's center...

Thick smoke and dust choked the air.

Amid the enormous slash carved into the earth, the Vice Admiral's figure slowly, unsteadily rose to his feet.

His body was a latticework of wounds, blood dripping from every angle—his appearance utterly brutal.

Seeing the damn Marine brat in such a pitiful state, Shiki grinned viciously, victory already in his grasp.

"Jihahahahaha..."

"Not running anymore, Marine brat...?"

He landed heavily on the ground, gripping both swords in his hands as a torrent of killing intent burst forth.

The sheer excitement and madness twisted his facial muscles into a terrifying grimace—like a demon's face.

The Vice Admiral stood there, head bowed, gasping for breath, as if he hadn't even heard Shiki's taunt.

The dust-laden wind stirred his blood-soaked hair, swaying gently in the breeze.

"Why'd you stop running? Come on, keep running... I'm not done playing yet..."

Shiki laughed maniacally.

His head throbbed with unbearable pain, veins bulging across his forehead like crawling centipedes.

But he didn't notice any of it.

Finally... he was finally about to finish this guy off!!

He trembled with excitement.

"Why should I run?"

The Vice Admiral suddenly spoke in a low, calm voice.

Shiki's laughter cut off abruptly.

He looked up, stunned, at the Marine brat.

Daren had stopped panting.

He raised his head, and a meaningful smile slowly crept across his bloodied face.

"Shiki, do you know where we are?"

Shiki froze.

A powerful sense of unease surged through his mind.

Because... he couldn't see even a hint of fear in the Marine brat's eyes!

He... was actually smiling!

The curve of his lips and the way he looked at him—it was like a hunter staring at a beast caught in a trap.

Why was he smiling!?

Where was this place!?

Shiki looked around in shock and confusion.

Dense jungle, barren island, open sea... Islands like this existed all over the world. There was no way to tell where they were.

And the route he'd taken?

He hadn't paid any attention.

Rage and bloodlust had long consumed his thoughts.

The only thing on his mind had been killing Daren.

After chasing him relentlessly for a full day and night, burning stamina to maintain constant Armament Haki, and enduring the searing pain from the steering wheel lodged in his head...

All he knew was—they had just crossed the Calm Belt.

Daren took a deep breath.

All the "panic" and "fear" from his escape were long gone, replaced now by... overwhelming ambition and pride.

He slowly spread his arms, as if to embrace the air and sea he knew so well. His eyes were wild, defiant.

"This is... the North Blue."

He laughed with reckless abandon, baring bloodstained teeth.

"My... North Blue!"

As his words fell, a low, cold voice suddenly echoed from the far distance.

"Heaven's Judgment!!"

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