

One Piece 471

Chapter 471 - 471: Volume 3 – Chapter 114: I Got Set Up

Almost the instant that voice rang out, the once-clear sky was suddenly shrouded in thick, heavy clouds.

Whoosh!!

A massive bolt of lightning tore through the sky like a colossal pillar of blue and white light, crashing down toward Shiki with overwhelming force!

The intense flash illuminated the world for a brief moment.

Shiki's pupils shrank.

A powerful sense of danger surged in his chest.

"What the hell is this!?"

He roared as his body floated upward, rapidly retreating in an attempt to evade the lightning strike from above.

But in the next moment, something unbelievable happened—

The bolt of lightning, originally falling straight down, suddenly veered sideways mid-air in response to his movement!

Its target was still Shiki!

"How is that possible!?"

Boom!!

The thunderclap struck hard, unleashing a massive explosion on the ground.

Flames surged through thick black smoke, spreading quickly across the jungle. Countless towering trees were set ablaze and began to collapse.

Suddenly, a sharp sword flash cut through the firelight.

A fierce gust from the slash blew out the surrounding flames.

"Damn it..."

Shiki staggered out of a scorched crater, his body wreathed in smoke, a line of blood trickling from the corner of his mouth.

His entire body was coated in a layer of jet-black Armament Haki—he had clearly taken that strike head-on.

"Lightning... can change direction?"

His eyes bloodshot, Shiki stared in disbelief at the Marine Vice Admiral standing before him.

Daren casually pointed to the ship's wheel floating above Shiki's head, lit a cigar, and smiled.

"That thing's the best lightning rod you could ask for."

Shiki froze.

A pale blue spark flashed through the air, quickly forming a figure beside Daren.

With two sideburns and a grim expression, he stared warily at Shiki.

It was Momonga!

"You're late."

Lightning surged from Momonga's fingertips as he spoke in a low voice.

Daren chuckled.

"Took a few extra laps to wear him down. Otherwise, your shot wouldn't have landed so cleanly."

Momonga frowned. Even with that direct hit, he didn't feel any relief—he stayed on high alert, eyes locked on Shiki.

"So this is the infamous Great Pirate Shiki? I'm surprised you've lasted this long..."

Though he hadn't awakened Observation Haki yet, he could still sense the terrifying pressure radiating from Shiki.

That overwhelming aura of death—it felt like being hunted by a feral beast. It made Momonga's skin crawl.

He and this monster weren't even in the same league!

That realization hit hard as he instinctively glanced at Daren.

The brutal injuries covering him made Momonga shiver.

He'd been following reports from the Edd War closely.

And it had already been a full day and night since that battle ended!

From the New World to the North Blue, Daren had chased this monster nonstop without a break... An insane pursuit like this was almost unheard of.

"A Logia-type mouse?"

Shiki now understood Momonga's power and sneered.

"The Goro Goro no Mi, said to be the strongest Logia... I didn't expect it to end up in your hands, Daren, you little brat."

A cruel grin spread across his face.

"So this is your backup plan?"

"If this is all you've got, I won't mind killing both of you right here!"

As his words fell, Shiki raised his hand and slashed!

His strike was brutal and lightning-fast, unleashing a Flying Slash worthy of a top-tier swordsman!

A magnificent golden slash burst through the air, silently ripping the earth apart as it roared toward Daren and Momonga.

With the insight of a pirate who had ruled the seas, Shiki instantly saw through it—this little brat with the moustache might've developed his Devil Fruit well, but without Haki, he was no real threat!

"Here it comes!"

Momonga barked as he raised his hand, releasing a bolt of lightning.

Lightning and sword light clashed in midair—but the stalemate only lasted a moment before the golden sword beam crushed the lightning and surged straight toward Daren!

A twisted, mocking grin curled at the corners of Shiki's mouth.

With that Marine brat's injuries, there's no way he can dodge this strike!

But in the next instant, Shiki's eyes flew wide open.

"What!?"

The Marine made no move to evade. Instead, he dropped his knees low, his scar-covered torso leaning forward, eyes burning with a crimson madness.

He took a deep drag from his cigar, the tip visibly shrinking.

With both hands coated in jet-black Armament Haki, he braced himself and charged straight into the incoming sword beam!

Boom!!

The towering golden slash, over ten meters high, swept forward with terrifying momentum. Daren's feet dug into the earth like iron stakes as he slid back, crashing through countless massive trees.

He was driven back thirty meters, carving a massive trench through the forest before the sword light finally faded away.

Dust and smoke filled the air. The Marine Vice Admiral stood firm in his stance, white smoke still rising from his body.

"This... this can't be happening!"

Shiki stared, eyes bulging, barely able to believe what he was seeing.

His gaze locked onto the Marine's palm.

Aside from a faint white streak—there wasn't a single wound!

Even though the strike hadn't been infused with Haki, it should've at least done some damage!

That same slash had been effective throughout the entire chase!

Even Momonga, who had already retreated to a safe distance, was stunned speechless.

A great swordsman's slash—blocked barehanded!?

"Seriously now..."

Amidst the swirling smoke, Daren's calm voice echoed overhead.

He exhaled a long stream of smoke.

It coiled through the air like a dragon, clouding the space before him.

"Looks like you still don't get it, Shiki..."

He slowly raised his head, a wild grin forming on his face.

"It's not you hunting me anymore—now I'm the one hunting you!"

Rip!!

He tore apart his already shredded military uniform.

"Seimei Kikan!"

His muscular body, crisscrossed with wounds, was laid bare before Shiki.

A shock unlike anything before surged through Shiki's eyes.

Something strange was happening to the Marine's body—those brutal wounds were closing up, the bleeding stopped, and every muscle seemed to swell with power, glinting with a cold, metallic sheen.

An overwhelming, almost demonic aura began rising from Daren's form.

It was as if that battered, broken body had been a lie—a "false image" held in check by Seimei Kikan!

This absurd, diamond-hard defense was his true physique!

Shiki froze in place.

This... can't be real...

Seeing the strange transformation play out in front of him, his eyes turned blood red, a tidal wave of realization crashing through his mind.

Indestructible Body!!

This was definitely an Indestructible Body!

There's no mistaking it!

Training the human body is the hardest path of all—especially when it comes to core physical attributes like strength, durability, speed, and explosive power. Humans have natural physiological limits!

Once those limits are reached, growth stops.

Unless someone has a special bloodline, unique genes... or a method!

Wait...

A method...

Indestructible Body...

Shiki suddenly remembered the ruined factory he'd seen during that arms deal with Kaidou in Wano.

"That Marine brat showed up, but I didn't let him walk away unscathed..."

Kaidou had said that with a cruel grin.

Back then, he hadn't thought much of it. But now, looking back, Kaidou's expression... something had seemed off.

Don't tell me...

Did Kaidou set me up!?

Realization dawned, and Shiki let out a furious, bloodcurdling roar, eyes nearly bursting from their sockets.

"Damn you, Kaidou!!!"

Chapter 472 - 472: Volume 3 – Chapter 115: Burial Ground

This Marine brat... he must've achieved his Indestructible Body during that rampage in Wano!

Shiki didn't know exactly what kind of training method Daren had used, but one thing was clear—he was sure of it.

And that could only mean one thing—Kaidou, that bastard, had deliberately kept Daren's true strength hidden from him!

A surge of fury erupted in Shiki's chest as he locked eyes with the Vice Admiral before him, a gnawing sense of dread creeping in.

No...

He couldn't afford to drag this out any longer.

This Marine brat had clearly mastered the "Indestructible Body," which meant all those injuries from earlier had just been a performance.

Worse yet, his own condition was awful.

He no longer had the strength to take this brat down quickly.

Shiki may not have specialized in training his body, but he wasn't clueless either. He'd seen enough to recognize what he was dealing with.

He and Kaidou had both served under the Rocks Pirates. Even in the years following the God Valley Incident, he'd crossed paths with Kaidou more than once. He knew just how monstrous and difficult the "Indestructible Body" was to deal with.

Once someone mastered it, their physical durability and defensive power would reach levels unimaginable to ordinary humans.

Only extremely powerful Armament Haki capable of "Internal Destruction" could pierce through that defense.

To truly threaten someone with an Indestructible Body, you needed either immense destructive power—or mastery of Conqueror's Haki infusion!

But now, ever since that damn storm, there was a ship's steering wheel embedded in his head, constantly throbbing, pressing against nerves—it made it impossible for him to use his Conqueror's Haki...

Just as Shiki considered retreating, Daren moved first—without hesitation!

Boom!

The ground beneath him exploded into rubble as the Vice Admiral launched himself like a cannon shell, rocketing forward.

His speed surged to its peak in an instant.

Shiki's pupils shrank.

So fast!!

That's raw physical power—nothing artificial!

What the hell had this brat gone through!?

Strength rivaling a giant's, and now this godlike speed!?

In a blink, the Marine Vice Admiral was already at his side.

His fingers clenched together, forming a dragon claw—three black talons tore through the air, ripping open black shockwaves as they slashed toward Shiki's head!

"Ryusoken!"

Clang!!

Shiki swung both swords upward, blocking Daren's claws head-on.

The impact erupted into a shockwave that cracked the earth beneath them in all directions.

Sparks scattered wildly, casting a fierce glow across the Vice Admiral's defiant, grinning face.

"You chased me for a full day and night, cut me up good... and now you wanna run? You're dreaming, Shiki."

Shiki's eye twitched—but then he suddenly burst out laughing.

"Jihahahaha!!"

With a flick of his sword-wielding hand, his fingers twitched.

Suddenly, the ground burst upward—multiple stone pillars turned into massive spikes, stabbing toward Daren's face, throat, and chest!

Bang!!

The stone spikes shattered instantly, debris flying in all directions—but not a scratch touched Daren.

Shiki took the chance to retreat, trying to put distance between them.

But Daren moved even faster.

His dragon claw, cloaked in pitch-black Armament Haki, locked tightly onto Shiki's twin swords. Under the effect of the magnetic field, faint arcs of electricity crackled along the blades of the two Meito—"Oto" and "Kogarashi."

Shiki suddenly felt an overwhelming pulling force—he couldn't break free!

His expression froze. He looked up—and saw the Vice Admiral's savage grin.

"Momonga."

Daren flashed a smile.

Shiki's pupils shrank.

Don't tell me...

"50 Million Volts: Jamboule!"

A cold voice echoed down from the sky.

A blinding flash of lightning lit up the heavens.

Shiki looked up and saw the Marine brat with the Goro Goro no Mi bursting with crackling lightning. With a wave of his hand—

A colossal thunder dragon roared to life, as vivid as a creature out of legend. Its mouth, searing with lightning, opened wide as it plummeted from the sky!

"You maniac!!"

Shiki bellowed, eyes bulging.

That brat Daren... he really intended to take the full force of the thunder dragon's wrath alongside him, relying on that Indestructible Body!

The dragon crashed into the earth in a deafening roar.

For a moment, the world fell into eerie silence.

Then—

Boom!!

A cataclysmic explosion erupted where the lightning dragon struck. Waves of electricity burst in all directions, the ground rolled like ocean swells, and massive rocks and trees were uprooted and flung into the air.

The entire island trembled violently.

Thick black smoke billowed upward, darkening the sky.

...

The next instant—

Two figures, wreathed in smoke, shot out from the explosion's epicenter and crashed to the ground.

Daren casually patted out the lingering flames on his body. His face was dusted in ash, his eyes cold and focused.

"Damn it..."

Shiki staggered upright, staring in disbelief at the Marine Vice Admiral nearby.

"Why didn't the lightning affect you!?"

His body was charred, his golden mane-like hair scorched and curled, blood dripping from the corner of his mouth.

He couldn't believe what he was seeing.

Not even the Indestructible Body should've shrugged off that kind of lightning strike so easily!

Daren gave a small smile, but didn't say a word.

He darted forward again.

After all, Momonga's development of the Goro Goro no Mi had been under his direct guidance. Daren had even used lightning from that fruit to temper his own body. A blast like that? It was never going to work.

"Get out of my way!!"

Shiki roared, eyes bloodshot. He drew both blades, unleashing dozens of golden slashes.

Shishi: Senjindani!

Boom!!

The slashes tore into the ground, sending up clouds of dust.

Shiki didn't even look back. Activating his Devil Fruit ability, he levitated and shot into the sky.

He'd had enough.

He'd never been in a fight this miserable and suffocating in his life.

He had to constantly keep his Armament Haki active to protect the steering wheel lodged in his head.

After a day and night of relentless pursuit, his stamina was nearly drained.

And now he had to deal with Daren, a monster who just wouldn't die...

If this dragged on, he really might end up buried here.

This was the North Blue!

Who knew what other tricks this Marine brat still had up his sleeve!?

Swish!

A sharp streak of black light tore through the air.

"More More: Tenfold Slash!"

Enma!

Shiki's face shifted. He brought up both blades just in time to block the strike.

The black tip of Enma hovered inches away, still trembling from the force of impact.

"Your reactions are slowing down, Shiki..."

A mocking voice rang out behind him.

"If I'm right... your Observation Haki gave out a while ago, didn't it?"

Shiki's heart jolted violently.

Before he could react, a jet-black three-clawed hand sliced through the air, aiming for the back of his head.

"Damn it!!"

Shiki roared.

Years of battle-hardened instinct made him jerk his head aside just in time, dodging the strike and swinging his blade in return!

Clang!!

The dragon claw caught the blade, but the Haki-coated tip still pierced deep into Daren's abdomen.

Unfazed, Daren pressed down with one hand, expression flat. His body twisted mid-air, right leg spinning up high—

And came crashing down like a war axe onto Shiki's back!

Boom!!

Shiki coughed up blood and plummeted like a cannonball, smashing into the earth and carving out a crater nearly a hundred meters wide.

The ground quaked violently. Dust poured into the sky.

...

"I'm not letting you get away, Shiki."

Daren landed softly, frowning.

Blood flowed freely from his abdomen.

Even without Conqueror's Haki, Shiki's swordsmanship was terrifying. With Ryuo infused into the strike, it had broken through even the Indestructible Body.

"Heh..."

A raspy, devilish chuckle came from within the dust cloud.

"Jihahaha... Jihahahahaha!!"

The laughter grew sharper and more frenzied, descending into madness.

"If I want to leave, there's no one in this sea who can stop me!!

"Wasn't it the same at Marineford!?"

Clutching his blood-soaked twin blades, Shiki climbed out of the crater step by step.

Daren watched him silently, then let out a faint sigh.

"You're right. That's true."

There was resignation in his voice.

"If you truly wanted to run, I couldn't stop you."

But then his tone shifted.

"That's why I chose this place as your burial ground."

He turned toward another direction.

"Doffy, it's your turn."

"Yes, Godfather-sama."

A low, mocking laugh rang out from the shadows.

Shiki froze.

Then his expression changed drastically—like he'd just seen a nightmare unfold.

From that direction, countless white threads exploded into the sky!!

Chapter 473 - 473: Volume 3 – Chapter 116: Torikago

What... is that?

Shiki's eyes widened, a flicker of confusion flashing across his face.

Countless white threads twisted and coiled together, rising into the sky like a colossal fountain from the direction of the voice.

From a distance, it looked like a white volcanic eruption, spewing upward in a continuous surge.

As the threads reached their peak above the island, they suddenly scattered, cascading down like a sky full of shooting stars—thousands upon thousands of white lines blanketing the sky, falling rapidly in every direction.

He didn't know what those threads were, but in that instant, a bone-deep chill surged up from the soles of his feet, shooting along his spine and seizing his brain. His scalp tingled involuntarily.

He didn't know what was happening, but one thing was absolutely clear...

He couldn't stay on this island any longer.

He had to escape—before those white threads reached the ground!

The moment the thought formed, Shiki sprang into action!

But—

"Told you not to even think about running."

A sharp blast echoed behind him. Shiki's heart skipped, and he instantly turned, slashing his blade.

Clang!!

His Meito clashed with a descending dragon claw, sparks exploding on impact.

"Get out of my way! I'm not in the mood to play with you!!"

Shiki roared, blood vessels bulging in his eyes as both swords unleashed a barrage of wild, furious slashes!

Blades rained down like a storm, but Daren met them head-on, sneering coldly.

They clashed directly!

Steel bit into flesh. Claws tore through skin.

Shiki's Armament Haki-infused blades could breach the defense of Daren's "Indestructible Body."

But at the same time, his own body couldn't withstand Daren's crushing dragon claws!

Slash!!

Oto carved into Daren's side, tearing open a deep wound.

A dragon claw raked across Shiki's cheek, blood spraying from the fresh gashes.

Their eyes were both dyed red with fury.

"Momonga!!"

Daren let out a thunderous shout.

"30 Million Volts: Kairai!!"

High above, Momonga had already locked into position. Veins bulged across his forehead as he gritted his teeth, arms wide—pushing the power of his Devil Fruit to its limit.

Dozens of blue lightning bolts burst from his body, surging downward in a blinding storm aimed at the battlefield below.

With Daren's physical resistance to electricity, Momonga didn't need to hold back. There was no need to aim—just bombard!

Boom! Boom! Boom!!

Thunderbolts exploded across the ground, lighting up massive fireballs and kicking up clouds of smoke and ash.

...

The next instant—

Shiki's charred, flame-wreathed form burst out of the chaos like a crazed demon, streaking toward the island's edge at breakneck speed.

The descending threads in the distance had already fallen past halfway—less than ten meters from touching down!

Shiki's bloodshot eyes bulged from his sockets as he raced forward, blood pouring from his mouth.

He could make it!

With his speed—he could definitely make it!

A gleam of hope flared in his eyes, pulling a twisted grin onto his lips.

As long as he got off this island, found a place to heal... he could come back and slaughter them all!

That Marine brat's Indestructible Body was a pain to deal with—sure.

But that was only because Shiki was in such terrible shape right now.

He could do this...

He just needed to get out of here...

His gaze burned with a feral red glow.

Ten meters!

Five!

Three!!

So close!!

His grin deepened.

He was going to escape!

One meter!!

"Jihahaha—!"

He burst out laughing without thinking.

But just then—

A violent gust exploded behind him, and from the swirling dust, a pitch-black, three-fingered dragon claw lunged forward...

And clamped tightly around Shiki's right ankle!

"What!?"

Shiki's grin vanished in an instant. His bloodshot eyes bulged, his face twisted with bitter disbelief.

His right foot was yanked back by a forceful grip, halting him mid-sprint.

And all he could do was watch—helplessly—as the mass of descending white threads, just inches away, reached the island's edge...

Silently.

"No!!"

Shiki let out a piercing scream, eyes nearly bursting from their sockets. He clenched his teeth so hard it felt like they'd shatter, then swung both swords furiously behind him!

Slash!!

A vicious cross-shaped gash split open across Daren's chest, blood spraying outward.

The force of the strike forced Daren to release his grip on Shiki's foot.

With that damn Marine brat momentarily repelled, Shiki spun around, twin blades raised, and slashed down hard at the white threads that now encased the island.

But what happened next defied belief.

Clang!!

The strike—infused with Armament Haki, strong enough to cut through even an Indestructible Body—landed on the threads...

And did nothing.

Not even a ripple. Just a few sparks flew.

Shiki's eyes widened in horror. He couldn't believe what he was seeing.

He looked up along the line of threads, a creeping chill racing down his spine.

The entire island was sealed off.

Not a single gap remained.

A massive, suffocating birdcage had formed around them, clamping shut like a trap from which there was no escape.

The world fell eerily silent.

Drip... drip...

The sound of blood hitting the ground echoed with chilling clarity.

"See that, Shiki?"

Daren straightened up unsteadily, blood streaming down from the wound across his chest.

His face was pale, but his eyes gleamed with savage satisfaction as he sneered,

"This birdcage... is the grave I made for you."

...

"Fufufufufu... he almost made it out."

A cold, mocking laugh drifted down from the sky.

Doflamingo, dressed in his trademark pink feather coat, descended effortlessly from above, hands manipulating invisible threads as he landed beside Daren.

"Godfather Daren-sama... so this is the legendary pirate, Shiki the Golden Lion?"

With a slow flick of his tongue, Doflamingo licked his parched lips, a sinister grin spreading across his face.

His whole body trembled with anticipation.

This was Shiki the Golden Lion.

One of the few pirates who stood at the peak of the seas.

A legend.

That "World Destroyer" Byrnni World wasn't even qualified to polish Shiki's boots.

If not for Daren's meticulous setup, there was no way he'd have a shot at facing a monster like this—probably not even in the next ten years.

Let alone the chance to bury him with his own Torikago.

"Don't get too close, Doffy."

Daren chuckled softly, eyes narrowing.

"A cornered lion... is the most dangerous of all."

Chapter 474 - 474: Volume 3 – Chapter 117: He's My Godson

"Damn brat..."

Shiki's bloodshot eyes locked on Daren and Doflamingo, hands tightening around his twin swords. Veins bulged on the backs of his hands, knuckles whitening with rage.

Now he finally understood everything.

From the moment the rumor spread through the underworld that "Roger had clues to ancient weapons," everything had been a setup—Daren's trap, laid out from the very start.

He'd used a vague and unverifiable piece of intel to distract him, baiting him into targeting Roger.

Then, while he and Roger were locked in battle in the New World, that little Marine defector Dragon stirred up an unprecedented sea storm, completely wiping out Shiki's invincible fleet.

Piece by piece, Daren had chipped away at him—taunting, provoking, driving him to lose control, blinding his Observation Haki.

He faked being badly injured and dragged Shiki in circles across the New World, burning through his stamina.

Then, when the time was right, he lured him to this island in the North Blue—the final stage of the plan—and used that blond brat's Devil Fruit power to seal the entire island, cutting off his last route of escape.

"What a meticulous plan..."

Shiki took a deep breath.

His charred golden hair hung messily over half his face, casting a grim, shadowed look that made him seem even more monstrous.

"So you finally figured it out..."

Daren wiped the blood from his mouth and spoke calmly.

"Shiki the Golden Lion—legendary pirate. The one pirate this ocean's most terrified of, and the one the Marines find the hardest to deal with. No contest."

"If it were anyone else, I wouldn't need to go this far."

"But you... you're just too dangerous."

"If I bring too much force, you run."

"If I bring too little, you kill."

"Unless you want to die, no one can stop you for good."

Torikago.

This was the killing blow.

After intensive training with Daren, Doflamingo had already mastered this move.

In the original timeline, Doflamingo used it to massacre an entire island. But Daren saw a different value in it—not mass killing, but entrapment.

Once caught inside its range, even someone at Admiral level couldn't escape.

The threads used in Torikago seemed bound by a strange rule. They couldn't be cut, couldn't be destroyed.

Even in the original story, not even the combined efforts of Zoro, Fujitora, and countless Marines and pirates using Armament Haki could break through. All they could do was slow its contraction.

For a cunning, slippery monster like Shiki, there was no more perfect counter.

Shiki glanced up at him and let out a chilling laugh.

"Jihahahaha... So, Daren brat, you really think you can kill me?"

He threw a casual glance at the birdcage overhead, then suddenly, his eyes flared with savage light.

"I'm Shiki the Golden Lion!!"

With a roar, he struck.

His twin blades carved through the air, sending two massive golden sword waves hurtling toward Daren.

But Daren didn't flinch. His arms flared with Armament Haki as he charged forward to meet them!

Boom!!

A massive explosion tore through the air, flames and shockwaves rolling out like a storm.

...

In the very next moment—

Shiki shot from the dust cloud like a golden blur, his new target...

Doflamingo!

"Jihahahaha!! This damn birdcage might look unbreakable, but kill the blond brat who made it—and it all goes away!!"

Shiki, true to his legend, spotted Torikago's only weakness in an instant:

The Devil Fruit user.

The airborne lion dove low, skimming the ground, and in the blink of an eye appeared before Doflamingo. His grin twisted into a snarl as his blade came crashing down!

"Die, brat!! This level of battle isn't for someone like you!!"

Doflamingo's face went pale.

In that instant, a wave of death washed over him. The moment the Meito rose, it was like the world itself froze.

That killing intent—cold and suffocating—froze the very air around him.

Only now did Doflamingo truly realize what kind of monster Daren had been fighting all along!

"No!!"

He roared, eyes bloodshot, and curled his fingers like talons, raising his hands with all his might.

Countless threads intertwined midair, rapidly forming a massive white spiderweb, stretching out in front of him...

"Kumo no Sugaki!"

Clang!!

Shiki's blade came crashing down!

The Meito, crackling with fierce Armament Haki, slammed into the web of threads—sparks exploded on contact.

But then, something unbelievable happened.

Shiki's slash was only slightly slowed by the Spider's Nest. After a brief delay, it tore through the web, dragging the threads with it as it continued its deadly arc!

"No..."

A wave of despair washed over the young Doflamingo.

Is this where I die?

Instinctively, he shut his eyes.

Clang!!

A sharp, jarring sound rang out.

The searing pain he was bracing for—never came.

Doflamingo opened his eyes, and what he saw left him frozen.

Reflected in his sunglasses was the wild silhouette of a tall, black-haired man, who had somehow appeared at his side.

That pitch-black, cold, three-fingered dragon claw gripped Shiki's descending sword like an iron vise, sparks flying wildly.

The Meito's razor tip—was mere centimeters from his heart.

"When grown-ups fight, they shouldn't drag kids into it, Shiki."

The black-haired man grinned with a feral edge.

Blood poured from his palm, dripping onto the ground.

Daren looked up, baring his teeth in a grim smile.

"He's my godson."

And with that, before Doflamingo could even react, Daren kicked him away without a second glance.

Doflamingo's body shot backward like a cannonball, hurtling hundreds of meters before slamming into a massive boulder at the edge of the Torikago.

A thin line of blood trickled from the corner of his mouth. He stared blankly at the tall figure locked in a savage clash with Shiki, the expression behind his sunglasses becoming deeply conflicted.

"That's not a fight we can get involved in."

Momonga's figure emerged beside him, coalescing from bolts of lightning, his voice low and steady.

He extended a hand to Doflamingo.

Doflamingo hesitated for a moment... then took it and pulled himself back up.

"Does he... does Godfather still have any cards left to play?"

Momonga simply smiled.

Then raised his hand and pointed to the sky.

"You tell me."

Doflamingo froze—then, as if realizing something, his expression shifted slightly.

Chapter 475 - 475: Volume 3 – Chapter 118: Fire at Me

Smoke and dust swirled as the ground trembled violently.

Above the deserted island, the sky darkened further, thick with the heavy scent of blood.

"You damn Marine brat!! I'll kill you!!"

"You talk too much, Shiki!"

Boom!!

Two figures collided like meteors slamming into the earth. The clash of Armament Haki exploded into a violent shockwave, spreading outward from the center of their impact.

The ground roared and churned like a stormy sea, flinging up dirt and debris in all directions.

"You think trapping me here means you can kill me!?"

Shiki's bloodshot eyes blazed as he slashed down with a roar.

Daren's eyes glowed crimson. His Observation Haki clearly foresaw Shiki's attack—but he didn't dodge.

Slash!

The Meito blade tore into flesh, splattering a thick cloud of blood.

Expressionless, Daren staggered back a step. His right boot stomped the ground hard, kicking up mud, and with that recoil, he launched a clawed strike toward Shiki's heart.

Clang!!

The heavy blow was intercepted as Shiki crossed his blades, another blast of wind and force erupting between them.

Yet Daren's dragon claw scraped down the sword's edge, sparks flying as it raked Shiki's abdomen—ripping away a bloody chunk of flesh.

Shiki grunted through clenched teeth.

The two sprang apart, landing several meters away.

No pause. No hesitation.

They charged at each other again, snarling like wild animals!

Boom!!

...

Far away.

Momonga and Doflamingo stood frozen, eyes locked on the brutal clash between the two monsters. The sheer savagery of it rocked them to their core.

Every move targeted a vital spot.

Every blow left deep, bloody wounds.

Defense was all but abandoned. This was a brutal slugfest—trading injuries for injuries in the rawest, most merciless way.

This was real combat.

Like two wild beasts locked in a death match, using the Torikago as a giant jungle coliseum for their final brawl.

Watching that savage, blood-soaked battle unfold, Doflamingo nervously swallowed.

He'd lived through hell growing up—blood, insults, contempt, murder.

But never had he witnessed something like this... something so primal.

It was as if instinct alone drove their every move. Even when badly wounded, they still clawed to tear flesh from one another.

He might act mature, but Doflamingo was still just a fourteen or fifteen-year-old kid. He'd never seen anything like this before.

"Snap out of it. I need to prep something."

Momonga's brows were furrowed tightly, his voice low and grim.

His expression said it all—Daren was not winning.

And that... was terrifying.

With his Observation Haki nullified, stamina nearly gone, Conqueror's Haki unusable, a ship's steering wheel stuck in his head, and a mind clouded by delirium...

Even in this condition, Shiki could still fight him evenly.

In fact, Shiki might even have the upper hand.

Even if Daren wasn't at his peak, it was still nearly unthinkable.

If it weren't for his "Indestructible Body," if he were just a normal man, he'd have been torn apart by that rabid lion long ago.

"Don't get caught in what's coming."

With those words, Momonga's body turned into a flash of blue lightning and shot skyward, slipping through the gaps in the Torikago and disappearing into the clouds above.

Don't get caught in it?

Doflamingo blinked.

He looked up toward the dark, churning sky...

And suddenly saw something that made his eyes widen behind his sunglasses.

...

"Jihahaha!! You see that, Daren, you little brat!!"

"Sure, your strength's shot up fast—you've made it into the top-tier ranks... but killing me, Shiki the Golden Lion? You're still way too green!!"

Shiki roared with bloodshot eyes, laughter echoing as he swung the two famed Meito blades, Oto and Kogarashi, whipping up a terrifying storm. His slashes rained down like a hurricane, engulfing the Marine Vice Admiral in a relentless assault.

Blood sprayed from Daren's body, scattered by the wind into a faint crimson mist.

Clang!

Slash!

Suddenly—

Shiki's assault halted.

Both blades had just carved into Daren's chest, but were now gripped tight in his hands.

"Huh?"

Shiki's pupils narrowed.

Before him, Daren raised his head, breathing heavily. His mouth dripped with blood, yet he smiled.

"This kind of thing..."

His eyes blazed with fire.

"Of course I knew!"

"That's why... I prepared a little surprise for you!"

Surprise?

What surprise?

Shiki blinked, confused.

Rrrrrumble...

A deep roar began to rise from the distant sky.

Shiki instinctively looked up—and the sight hit him like a lightning strike.

The rumble grew louder. Overwhelming. Thunderous.

Massive shadows began emerging from the sea of clouds above.

First came a towering ship's bow, slowly piercing through the cloud layer.

A sleek steel warship emerged, its design reminiscent of a Marine vessel—but its hull gleamed with a cold, metallic luster, built from some unknown alloy.

At its center rose a massive smokestack crackling with blue lightning.

The deck and sides bristled with heavy cannons of all types, giving the ship the look of a compact floating fortress.

One ship.

Two.

Three...

One after another, warships burst from the clouds.

Fifteen flying battleships in total stretched across the sky, forming a fearsome fleet that loomed high above the island, casting long shadows over the land below.

Snow-white seagull flags snapped in the wind above each ship, drenched in the iron and blood of battle.

As Shiki stared in utter shock and Doflamingo watched in disbelief...

Wave after wave of elite Marines emerged on the decks, led by the Admiral of North Blue—Momonga—his gaze sharp and icy as it locked onto the island below.

Then—

Shff!

Nearly 20,000 elite North Blue Marines raised their hands in salute with grim, murderous resolve.

"All personnel of the North Blue Fleet... salute Vice Admiral Daren!"

Shiki's pupils shrank to pinpoints.

That's... a flying fleet!?

This brat Daren... he secretly built an airborne fleet!?

How the hell is that possible!?

"Familiar sight? You were the one who gave me the idea... Shiki." Daren grinned.

"You bastard!!"

Shiki roared, trying to wrench his blades free—but Daren's arms swelled with the raw strength of a giant, locking the swords in place.

Then, for some reason, a chill colder than death crept through Shiki's chest.

"The North Blue Fleet, all units..."

Blood trailed from the corner of Daren's mouth.

He stared Shiki down, gaze blazing.

Then, with a twisted smile, he said:

"Fire on me."

Chapter 476 - 476: Volume 3 – Chapter 119: Buster Call from the North Blue!

"Fire on me."

Daren's command made Shiki's eyes widen in shock, his bloodshot eyeballs nearly bulging out of their sockets.

The order was delivered with chilling calm—no hesitation whatsoever.

The North Blue Fleet, dormant for years, comprised of fifteen heavily armed warships, all bristling with weaponry. Hundreds of heavy cannons... all adjusted in unison, aiming squarely at the two figures on the ground.

Momonga, who had already raised his arm in an attack gesture, narrowed his eyes and swung it down fiercely!

Boom!!

Boom!!

Boom!!

Hundreds of heavy cannons roared, spewing blazing fire!

Countless traditional black cannonballs, small missiles trailing fiery tails, electromagnetic metal shells...

In that instant, they transformed into a storm of fire, pouring down through the gaps in the Torikago, an overwhelming downpour aimed at Daren and Shiki.

The sky itself was nearly blotted out.

Behind his sunglasses, Doflamingo's pupils shrank into pinpoints. He instinctively retreated, leaping all the way to the edge of the Torikago.

As if terrified of being caught in the relentless bombardment, he frantically tugged and twisted his threads, weaving a massive cocoon of white threads to enclose himself completely.

"White Thread: Giant Cocoon!!"

Just as the cocoon finished enclosing his body, the barrage arrived—engulfing everything, drowning the cocoon in fire.

But the most terrifying part was still to come.

These fifteen flying warships of the North Blue Fleet weren't just loaded with Germa 66's advanced tech like small tracking missiles and magnetic-propulsion cannons. They were also equipped with light laser cannons—experimental weapons recently developed by the Marine Science Division, not even officially deployed yet.

As the air filled with the trails of countless shells and missiles, golden beams of laser light surged out from the main cannons of the warships.

Rumble...

Rumble...

Amid deafening explosions, waves of fire swept across the barren island.

Flames soared into the sky. The land collapsed layer by layer. Small mountains were flattened.

Countless trees were incinerated in the blasts.

Everything visible had become a literal hell on earth.

This was... the full firepower of the North Blue Fleet!

A carpet-bombing assault!!

Onboard the warships, the North Blue Marines stared in stunned silence as the island trembled and was swallowed by flames. Their expressions were filled with disbelief.

Though they were part of the North Blue Fleet, this was the first time they'd witnessed the overwhelming firepower of the secret fleet Vice Admiral Daren had kept hidden all these years!

It wasn't an exaggeration—though they'd never personally seen the Marine Headquarters' legendary "Buster Call," the sheer battlefield dominance on display here... had already surpassed it!

After all, every ship in the North Blue Fleet carried firepower exceeding that of a standard Buster Call warship!

"Report, Admiral Momonga! The laser cannon's energy is depleted!"

A messenger rushed over, panting heavily.

"Don't hesitate—keep firing!"

Momonga looked down coldly at the island in chaos, his fist clenched tightly.

"And..."

He paused, a flash of steely resolve in his eyes, then grit his teeth.

"Use that!"

The Marines recoiled in shock.

"But Vice Admiral Daren..."

Momonga cut him off, his tone icy.

"This is part of Daren's plan!"

"Yes, Admiral Momonga!"

The Marines saluted in unison, immediately turning to execute the order.

Two seconds later...

On the side of the North Blue Fleet's flagship, two panels in the hull opened, revealing twin rapid-fire machine guns that extended outward.

Rat-a-tat-tat!!

Both guns opened fire simultaneously.

But instead of standard lead bullets, they spat out polished black mineral pellets!

Hearing the thunderous roar of the machine guns, cold sweat gathered in Momonga's palms.

At this point, all he could do was trust that Daren's "Indestructible Body" was truly as unbreakable as claimed!

His sharp command snapped the Marines back to focus, and the cannon fire resumed with even greater ferocity.

From their high vantage point, they could see fire erupting everywhere across the island trapped within the Torikago. The ground was visibly exploding—collapsing, layer by layer...

One minute, three minutes, five minutes...

For a full five minutes, the North Blue Fleet bombarded the island relentlessly. Only then did the military strike—surpassing even the power of a Buster Call—gradually come to a halt.

On the heavily armed warships, hundreds of heavy cannons were glowing dark red, their barrels coated in thick white smoke. The heat radiating from them had reached an utterly terrifying level.

"Did it work?"

Momonga narrowed his eyes, staring hard at the island cloaked in flames and smoke, searching for any sign of Daren and Shiki.

The other Marines held their breath, not daring to make a sound. Cold sweat beaded on their foreheads.

At the island's edge, the charred white cocoon slowly unraveled, turning back into silk threads that fluttered to the ground.

Doflamingo stood up from within, his face slightly pale. He stared into the distance, his expression wavering between shock and uncertainty.

The intensity of the cannon fire just now had been horrifying.

Even though he was far from the center of the bombardment, the waves of flame and flying shrapnel... had made his heart pound inside the giant cocoon.

At the center of the island, thick smoke churned violently.

Winds stirred the haze.

Flames flickered endlessly.

Bit by bit, the scorched and blackened terrain came into view.

What had once been elevated ground was now completely flattened. The land had been blasted down by several meters, forming a charred crater nearly a kilometer wide.

A towering figure—inhuman in build—emerged first.

He stood shirtless, his body crisscrossed with scars, now covered in char and soot from the bombardment. Some of the more brutal wounds had shrapnel still embedded in them.

It was Daren.

The Vice Admiral stood motionless amid the scorched earth. Several seconds passed—then he moved.

"Hoo..."

Daren let out a long breath of smoke like a dragon and stepped forward lightly.

A bold, unrestrained smile curled at the corner of his mouth. He spread his arms wide and clenched both fists tightly.

Crackle...

Countless fragments of shrapnel, broken stones, and metal particles fell from his body, revealing hard, steel-like muscle beneath.

Fierce beyond belief!

"Vice Admiral Daren..."

"He's too strong!"

"Vice Admiral Daren withstood the bombardment almost unscathed!"

"Incredible!"

The soldiers of the North Blue Fleet were momentarily stunned—then burst out into cheers of disbelief and excitement.

Then... what about Shiki?

They quickly regained their focus, their eyes scanning the smoke.

Soon, they locked onto a faint, indistinct figure.

"I never expected... that I... would be pushed to this extent by you..."

A hoarse voice slowly echoed from within the flames and smoke.

Sinister, guttural, and filled with the deepest hatred, rage, and resentment imaginable—

The tone made every listener's scalp go numb.

Hearing that voice, Momonga, Doflamingo, and all the Marines turned pale, eyes widening as they stared in horror at the figure shrouded in smoke.

Under such overwhelming firepower... that guy was still alive!?

...

Chapter 477 - 477: Volume 3 – Chapter 120: The Last Lion's Roar

Black smoke billowed, and embers danced in the air.

Through the wavering flames and smoke, a charred silhouette loomed—its presence chilling to the bone.

Daren narrowed his eyes.

There was no way the North Blue Fleet's five-minute saturation bombardment had done nothing. At the very least, it couldn't have been completely ineffective.

Even if Shiki had covered his entire body with Armament Haki, with the little strength he had left, there was no way he could've maintained such a draining defense for five whole minutes.

Once that Haki barrier dropped, his body—just flesh and blood—would never withstand the Navy's bombardment.

A human body has limits.

Even someone as strong as Garp once got scratched by "Axe-Hand" Morgan while asleep. It was just a surface wound, but it proved the point.

The same applied to Whitebeard during the Summit War. Without Haki to defend himself, even pistols, cannon fire, or a simple slash could injure him.

Even Daren himself—if he hadn't managed to forge a body on par with Kaidou's "Indestructible Body"—might not have survived the North Blue Fleet's onslaught, a bombardment surpassing even a Buster Call in power.

A hot wind swept through, slowly dispersing the thick, gunpowder-scented smoke.

Shiki's figure came back into view.

The Marines from the North Blue Fleet gasped in horror at the sight and instinctively raised their weapons, aiming at the charred figure.

But Daren suddenly lifted his hand, signaling them to hold their fire.

Shiki's appearance had changed drastically.

His once-floor-length golden hair was scorched and blackened. The upper half of his body was shredded by the bombardment, tattered rags clinging to him like torn strips, exposing a gaunt and bloodied frame.

His skin, flesh, and muscle were riddled with decay—charred, melted, and mangled. Thick black blood, mixed with liquefied flesh, slid down in clumps like dark red sludge.

He was riddled with bullet holes, scorched marks, and rotting wounds... even half of his left face had been blown off, leaving only an exposed eyeball bulging outward, bloodshot and grotesque.

Like a demon risen from hell—gruesome and terrifying.

Shiki gasped for air, his mouth and nose exhaling heat. His entire body trembled involuntarily from the sheer extent of his injuries.

But the hand gripping his sword didn't waver.

"Heh..."

A mocking smile crept onto his lips.

His bomb-ravaged mouth curled, exposing bloody gums as he grinned.

"Heh... Hahaha... Jihahahaha!!!"

His low, raspy laughter swelled into a roar that echoed across the sky.

Soaked in blood, Shiki laughed like a madman.

"I actually got pushed this far!!!"

"You really are something, Daren... You even laced the fleet's bombardment with Seastone!"

"Weren't you afraid you'd get killed by your own attack?"

Daren, expressionless, drew a cigar from his coat, lit it, and took a deep drag.

"Even a lion must go all out to kill its prey. And in this cage, you're the only lion."

"You're too powerful, Shiki."

As he spoke, Daren raised his hand and suddenly dug his fingers into his chest, gouging out a Seastone bullet from his flesh.

Clink, clink...

The Seastone bullet hit the ground with a crisp ring.

Daren's face went pale, but the light in his eyes burned even brighter.

"I have to take this risk."

He reached out again and dug into another wound!

Clang, clang...

One by one, the blood-stained Seastone bullets were pulled out.

Because of his "Indestructible Body," the Seastone bullets didn't penetrate deep into Daren's body. They only managed to barely pierce the flesh that had already been cut by Shiki, lodging themselves in the muscle layers.

"If I can't kill you this time, I'm afraid I'll spend the rest of my life living in fear of you."

After pulling all the Seastone bullets from his body, Daren's breathing grew erratic. Bracing his hands against his knees, he panted lightly, his lips turning an unhealthy pale.

"I see..."

Shiki stared at Daren's nearly deranged act, stunned for a moment, then broke into laughter again.

As he laughed, his wounds were aggravated, and blood trickled from the corners of his mouth and body.

With injuries covering nearly every inch of him, severe blood loss, and the weakening effect of the embedded Seastone bullets, he felt a weakness like never before.

Pain and exhaustion filled every cell in his body.

His vision blurred, and strangely, the pain in his forehead seemed to have vanished.

"Jihahahaha!! I really underestimated you..."

But Shiki paid no mind to his injuries, his eyes locked onto the young Marine in front of him with burning intensity.

"You set up such a meticulous and sinister plan, even revealing a trump card you'd hidden for years... just to kill me."

"The rumors about you weren't wrong. Compared to a Marine, you're far more like a pirate."

The contempt in his eyes toward Daren remained unmasked.

"In that case, I'll let you see for yourself... what true pirate terror really looks like!"

Shiki took a deep breath and slowly raised his hand.

The movement made Daren's pupils contract.

Even from a distance, Doflamingo, Momonga, and countless Marines turned pale with shock.

Could it be...

"This thing really is in the way..."

Shiki muttered under his breath. His mangled hand gripped the ship's wheel embedded in his skull.

"I can't even feel the pain anymore... damn it."

His fierce eyes suddenly narrowed, and he grinned at Daren.

"You've always wanted to rip this thing out of my head, haven't you?"

"Well then, I'll give you what you want..."

Daren's pupils shrank into pinpoints.

Shiki's gaze turned steely, a flash of unprecedented resolve in his eyes.

Then, with one hand, he yanked the ship's wheel from his head—violently.

Hiss!!

The wheel dragged a thick, crimson streak through the air, carving a grim arc.

For a moment, the world went still.

Then—

BOOM!!!!

A monstrous aura erupted from Shiki like a collapsing mountain or a splitting sea!

Countless black and red lightning bolts surged around the blood-drenched lion, radiating in all directions.

The world in front of them thickened, blurred, solidified—as if all color had been sucked away.

A hellish wind blasted forth, and the suffocating pressure in the air was so overwhelming, the ground of the entire island began to split apart!

"Jihahahahaha!!! Come on, Daren, you little brat!!!"

With both hands gripping his swords, the Conqueror's Haki that had long been suppressed by the ship's wheel exploded out without restraint, and Shiki laughed madly and with abandon.

"Don't you dare die so easily!!"

This was the lion's... final roar!

Chapter 478 - 478: Volume 3 – Chapter 121: The Final Blow

The earth surged in massive waves, the sky trembled, and the clouds shattered under the impact.

Caught in the crushing shockwave, a dozen warships from the North Blue Fleet rocked violently in the air. Their engines roared at full throttle, barely holding formation as they resisted the overwhelming force.

Marines were thrown around the decks, faces pale with terror. They clung desperately to masts and other fixtures to avoid being swept away.

Many of the weaker ones collapsed where they stood, eyes rolling back as they fainted.

Momonga's expression was as grim as it could get. Under the weight of Shiki's terrifying aura, blue lightning began to crackle unconsciously around his body—signs of involuntary elementalization.

This was... one of the strongest Conqueror's Haki in the world today!

The presence of a lion that roared across the seas!

And yet, it wasn't over.

Under the horrified gazes of the Marines, Shiki's long-restrained Conqueror's Haki erupted with full force—his body bursting into countless jets of blood.

The Seastone bullets embedded deep in his flesh were violently expelled under the pressure of his unleashed will!

They tore through the air in the raging wind, slicing through streaks of blood and slamming into the ground, rocks, and fallen trees—each impact carving fresh craters into the landscape.

"Jihahahahaha!!! This is it!!"

Shiki's scorched, blood-matted golden hair flew wildly as he roared with laughter.

Fresh blood streamed down the ruined surface of his skin.

It leaked from his eyes, nostrils, ears, and mouth, his body slowly lifting into the air—like a fiend rising from hell.

And without a single motion from him, the island's terrain began to shudder.

Massive chunks of land split apart and rose.

Boulders and trees were torn from the earth, floating into the sky.

Everything—living or dead—was swept upward by a tsunami-like force, pulled into a chaotic vortex above.

They converged into a colossal lion that looked like it would tear through the Torikago itself!

"Daren! He's going all in!!"

Momonga's heart seized at the sight. An overwhelming sense of danger exploded in his chest as he roared without thinking.

"Get back!!"

Yes—no need for Observation Haki.

Just by sight alone, Momonga could tell... Shiki was on his last legs!

His flesh was disintegrating. His organs were failing rapidly. With his body already riddled with wounds—and that massive, gaping hole left by the ship's wheel—there was no need to engage him directly. As long as they retreated and avoided this final attack, victory would be theirs.

Shiki was finished!

A temporary retreat to avoid his last strike... That was the smart move.

But Daren's response made Momonga's blood freeze. His pupils dilated, streaked with red.

On the ground, the Vice Admiral stood unmoving.

He slowly raised his head.

Feeling the overwhelming pressure from the legendary Great Pirate towering atop his monstrous lion, Daren made a move that stunned everyone.

He lowered his stance, pushing his right hand forward and pulling his left hand back.

His ten fingers bent and clenched together—forming a fierce, three-fingered dragon claw!

Jet-black Armament Haki surged like flowing water, coiling tightly around the claw and staining it with darkness.

Like a dragon coiling in wait... ready to strike!

This was... an offensive stance!

Facing the overwhelming presence of the Great Pirate...

Facing the lion's final roar...

Daren made his choice.

...

At that moment, the personal "panel" data that had been steadily rising since the Edd War finally shifted again—

Armament Haki +0.91

Armament Haki: 70 [Internal Destruction]

Conqueror's Haki +2.11

Conqueror's Haki: 70

Daren burst into wild laughter, blood trickling from the corners of his mouth.

A surging aura transformed into a crimson vortex, swirling around him—struggling to hold up a fragile barrier against Shiki's hurricane of Haki.

"Come on!! Shiki!!"

His grin was fierce, his eyes defiant!

Shiki's body trembled.

A flicker of confusion crossed his eyes.

"You're not running, Daren?"

Daren grinned wide.

"You're one of the greatest pirates of this era. You deserve to fall by my hand..."

He stepped forward.

ROAR!!

A majestic, thunderous dragon cry seemed to echo across the heavens and earth.

The secret technique of Ryusoken...

Under the stunned eyes of Momonga and the other Marines—

The aura Daren released surged like flowing water.

Blackened Armament Haki flowed with it.

Crimson Conqueror's Haki flared wildly.

And now, infused with his unwavering will, that power began to shift—

A colossal, crimson dragon's phantom took shape in the air, coiling around him, enveloping him completely.

"I'll send you off properly!"

Shiki froze—then threw his head back in laughter.

"Jihahahaha!!"

"Good!!"

He looked down at the Vice Admiral wrapped in the blood-red dragon's aura.

The hatred, anger, contempt—all gone from his eyes.

What remained was the respect shared between two warriors, clashing to the death.

Shiki laughed freely, blood spraying from his ruined body.

"Strength, potential, talent... cunning, vision, strategy... You've surpassed your generation—maybe even this entire era!"

"Daren, you brat, I acknowledge you!"

"If I die here today... I'll accept it!"

Shiki gripped both swords tightly, blood pouring down his legs as he stomped.

The towering lion beneath him shattered into pieces beneath his feet.

Black and red lightning coiled wildly around him.

The two world-renowned Meito—Oto and Kogarashi—crossed before him, then dove with explosive force!

His aura surged wildly.

His life force plummeted.

As the lion crashed down like a meteor, the raging storm of black and red lightning consumed his figure.

Even the air trembled, the scene before them distorted by pressure.

A meteor-strike finale!!

Black-red lightning lanced out like flares, burning away what little life remained.

And in that last burst of power, it formed—

A golden lion's phantom roared into being!

The twin blades infused with Conqueror's Haki—Were its deadliest fangs!

...

"What is this...?"

Daren suddenly looked up.

"The final blow!"

He stepped forward!

The blood-red dragon around him began to spark.

And under the lion's roar...

It raised its head with a snarl!!

Both struck at once!

...

In the breathless silence of a stunned world—

The flying lion dived, roaring like mad.

The soaring dragon howled skyward.

And in the air—

They collided with a deafening explosion!

Endless light and shadow erupted.

Reality twisted—splintered—collapsed...

And through that chaos...

They could almost see—

Two crazed silhouettes, lunging straight through each other!

"Lion Demon: Fangs!"

"Dragon's Breath!"

A moment of total stillness—

Then blinding light swallowed the world.

BOOM!!

An unparalleled shockwave ripped through the island.

Everything crumbled.

Shattered.

Tore apart.

And the storm surged outward—Blasting through the air for dozens of kilometers.

Chapter 479 - 479: Volume 3 – Chapter 122: The Defeat of the Lion

Marine Headquarters, Marineford.

Fleet Admiral's Office.

"Brrruu... Brrruu..."

The incessant ringing of the military Den Den Mushi made the already tense atmosphere in the office even heavier.

Sengoku paced back and forth with his hands clasped behind his back, his expression full of anxiety.

Everyone in the room wore grim faces, eyes fixed on the Den Den Mushi that refused to stop ringing.

"Click."

The call failed to connect. The Den Den Mushi went silent again.

"Damn it!!"

Sengoku ground his teeth and cursed.

Even with all his discipline, he couldn't hold back anymore.

This was already their twelfth attempt to contact Daren and Momonga, and every time the signal failed.

All they knew was that Daren had entered the North Blue with Shiki.

But then what?

What was Daren's plan after that?

Shiki wasn't someone you could just deal with easily.

That man had one of the most terrifying combat powers in all the seas, and who knew what kind of retaliation he'd unleash if cornered?

After careful deliberation, Marine HQ had concluded that Daren's value to the overall strategic future of the Marines far exceeded that of eliminating Shiki.

In short, if it came down to sacrificing Daren just to take out Shiki, Sengoku would rather let Shiki live.

The future of the Marines could not afford to lose Daren.

With no way to get through to the North Blue, the anxiety in the room only deepened.

What troubled Sengoku most was that, no matter how hard he thought about it, he couldn't figure out what gave Daren the confidence to face Shiki head-on.

"Try again, Sengoku."

At that moment, Kong, who had been silently smoking a cigar, finally spoke in a hoarse voice.

His bloodshot eyes and deeply lined face showed just how exhausted he was.

As Fleet Admiral, he had to remain stationed at Marine HQ.

But the truth was, from the eve of the Edd War, Kong had been buried in military preparations, working nonstop for days and nights without rest.

"Yes, Fleet Admiral Kong."

Sengoku nodded and tried calling again—this time, dialing the Den Den Mushi for North Blue Admiral Momonga.

"Brr... brr..."

The call rang out once more, but by now, no one held much hope.

If it were going to connect, it would've connected long ago.

And yet, right then—

"Brr!"

The call connected.

"This is Momonga."

A low voice came through, clearly trembling.

Whoosh!

Every Marine officer in the room shot to their feet, eyes locked on the Den Den Mushi.

Sengoku leapt forward, snatching it up with urgency, his bloodshot eyes wide.

"Momonga!! What's happening with Daren!?"

"Listen—no matter what it takes, even if it costs lives, bring Daren back alive!"

"We can't let Daren die at the hands of Shiki—"

"Daren won, Admiral Sengoku."

Momonga cut him off.

W-what?

Daren... won?

Sengoku froze, like he'd been struck by lightning.

Gasps echoed around the room. The other officers looked stunned, expressions full of disbelief.

Sakazuki exhaled a long breath, slumped back into his chair, and pulled out a cigar.

"I told you not to worry too much... Our Vice Admiral Daren is the one they call the 'Legend Slayer'..."

Next to him, Borsalino smiled like he'd known it all along.

"How did Daren win?"

Sengoku didn't even realize his voice was shaking.

Daren actually won?

That kid really took down Shiki?

Impossible...

If he hadn't heard it directly from Momonga, he wouldn't have believed it.

"See for yourself, Admiral Sengoku..."

Momonga's voice came through, and the Den Den Mushi in front of them slowly began to glow with a faint white light.

A projection... gradually took form before their eyes.

Everyone's gaze froze in place.

Their mouths hung open.

Eyes widened.

...

North Blue.

The white Torikago had long since disappeared.

Momonga stood on the pit-covered ground, holding a military Den Den Mushi in his hand.

He had already ordered the North Blue fleet to return, and it had vanished into the distance.

He stared blankly at the charred crater in the distance, unable to calm himself for a long time.

The thick smoke gradually dispersed.

The heavy, dark clouds also began to recede, and the rays of the setting sun pierced through the sea of clouds like red swords, casting their light onto the scarred, desolate island.

The setting sun glowed like blood. The entire world was steeped in a majestic, tragic beauty.

Two blood-covered figures stood on the barren land, and in the distance, the mountains had been flattened by some overwhelming force.

The light of dusk bathed their battered bodies in crimson.

The two stood face to face, motionless, like statues made of blood.

Drip, drip...

The sound of blood hitting the ground shattered the silence of the world.

A steady stream of blood dripped from the tips of the two Meito swords—"Oto" and "Kogarashi"—and pooled at Daren's feet.

Shiki's twin blades had pierced straight through his abdomen and out his back.

"So, you look down on me?"

Shiki struggled to lift his bloody, disfigured face, his expression twisted with fury beneath the dried blood.

"With your Observation Haki, you could have easily dodged my sword!"

"Yes," Daren replied hoarsely, thick blood seeping from the corner of his mouth.

Shiki's final attack had seemed overwhelming, his Armament Haki and Conqueror's Haki unleashed to their absolute limits.

But his injuries were too severe. Without his Observation Haki, he could no longer sense Daren's presence.

Which meant that strike... could have been avoided.

"Then why didn't you dodge?"

"I simply believe that the strongest dual swordsman of our time, the legendary Great Pirate's final performance, shouldn't be left unanswered. Don't you think?"

Shiki was stunned.

He stared deeply at the Vice Admiral before him—then suddenly burst out laughing.

"Jihahahaha!! You've got guts!!"

He laughed wildly, freely, with abandon!

"This is your resolve!! Jihahahaha!!"

He laughed until he coughed up blood, until tears spilled from his eyes.

"This is good... To die at your hands... is worth it..."

Daren pressed his lips together but said nothing. He didn't have the strength to speak anymore.

Shiki slowly lifted his head. His fading gaze turned toward the distant setting sun. And in that moment... it was as if a thousand memories returned.

Countless images flashed through his mind—fighting. War. Ambition. Blood... Setting sail. Killing. Rocks. Whitebeard. Linlin. Kaidou... The defeat at God Valley. Garp's figure... Freedom. Sailing the seas. Charging across the world. His invincible fleet... Dominating the seas. Ruling the world...

His life's gains and losses, triumphs and failures played out like a slideshow, until everything froze on a single figure.

Roger...

"Roger... In the end, I'm still not your equal..."

My journey ends here. Your voyage still goes on.

He slowly closed his eyes, as if savoring the final dusk of his life, and a faint, serene smile crept across his lips.

"Marine brat... promise me one thing. Let's call it... a loser's request."

Shiki's voice broke the silence.

"Say it. I might not be able to do it," Daren said coolly.

Shiki lowered his head, staring at the twin swords still run through Daren's body. He exhaled slowly, trembling... then released his grip. It was full of reluctance.

"Your half-baked swordsmanship is lousy, but you do have the will to wield these blades. Promise me... let them taste the blood of even more powerful foes."

Daren replied without hesitation.

"No problem. Their names will echo with me across this world."

Shiki smiled in satisfaction. He laughed freely.

Daren spoke calmly.

"Then... what are your last words?"

"Last words?"

Shiki scoffed.

"I'm Shiki! I've lived with no regrets—what need have I for last words!?"

He spread his arms wide, blood pouring out beneath him, yet he raised his head and roared with laughter. His long, tattered golden hair whipped madly in the wind. His life was ending, but he stood tall, his presence still overwhelming, still wild. Like a lion atop a mountain, roaring one final time.

"Kill me, Marine brat!! Then... reach the height of your ambition!!"

With that final act, Sengoku and the others on the other end of the Den Den Mushi finally saw clearly... The Great Pirate most feared by the Marines—a hand was buried deep in his chest.

It was Daren's hand.

"As you wish."

The Vice Admiral's voice was calm.

Shhhk!!! The sound of a heart shattering tore through the silence. A brilliant spray of blood burst from Shiki's back and soared into the sky. The proud lion's body trembled—then slowly collapsed.

In the scarred, desolate ruins, only one man remained standing. The scene froze.

...

On this day, the legendary Great Pirate, the "Flying Pirate" Shiki the Golden Lion... was annihilated!

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"It's true... We killed Shiki..."

Marine Headquarters, Fleet Admiral's office.

Sengoku and the other Marine generals stared at the frozen image in shock, their hearts in turmoil.

The conference room fell silent, so quiet you could hear a pin drop.

One second, two seconds, three seconds—

"Yes!"

"Great!"

"We won!"

"From the Battle of Edd War to now... our Marines have finally killed that bastard Shiki the Golden Lion!"

"Vice Admiral Daren is really amazing!"

"..."

The Marine generals were so excited their faces turned red, and some even couldn't help but cheer.

At the same time, the huge weight that had been hanging over their hearts was finally lifted.

It was the fear brought by the Flying Pirate, Shiki.

Everyone knew that if the Marines couldn't take care of Shiki this time, they would likely be facing his insane revenge.

With Shiki's vindictive nature, he would never let the Marines off easy.

He didn't even need a fleet of flying pirate ships.

Just by floating a small island and dropping it on major Marine bases—or sending an occasional "gift" to Marineford—he could plunge the Marines into chaos.

But now, Shiki had finally been taken down by Vice Admiral Daren.

The terrifying shadow that had loomed over their heads vanished without a trace.

Everyone instinctively breathed a sigh of relief. Then came the champagne and celebration.

In the light-hearted and festive atmosphere, Sengoku slumped into his seat as if all the strength had drained from his body, still reeling from it all.

He exchanged glances with Kong, and both men shared a deeply emotional smile.

"We won..."

...

Thus, the epic Battle of Edd War came to an end with the fall of the legendary Great Pirate, Shiki the Golden Lion, in the North Blue.

In less than a day, with the backing of Marine Headquarters and various underground powers, news of the battle spread to every corner of the world.

The largest war since the Battle of God Valley!

Participants: Roger Pirates, Flying Pirates, Marine Headquarters.

Two legendary pirate crews and the world's largest military force—their every move already enough to stir hearts across the seas.

Let alone a cataclysmic clash in the New World's Edd War seas!

Shiki's ambition to wipe out the Roger Pirates...

Clues pointing to an ancient weapon said to have the power to destroy the world...

Roger Pirates pushed to the brink...

A sudden, massive sea storm...

Roger Pirates turning the tide...

Flying Pirates wiped out completely...

The overwhelming combat power of the Marines...

And finally, the legendary Great Pirate and pirate lord Shiki falling in the North Blue...

Every fragment and whisper of this reached the seas like a chain of explosive bombs, flipping the world upside down and leaving countless leaders stunned beyond words.

What followed next—

The eyes of the entire world turned to that young Marine.

Rogers Daren.

The Marine who rose like the sun, stacking up glorious victories time after time. He instantly became the idol of countless Marines—and the nightmare of countless pirates.

From that day on, the once chaotic North Blue became a "forbidden zone" for pirates.

And the Vice Admiral who had masterminded the Battle of Edd War—with the title of "Uncrowned King of the North Blue"...

Rogers Daren officially stepped into the realm of legends.

...

The New World.

A remote sea area. A desolate island.

The battered Oro Jackson drifted near the coastline, looking utterly forlorn.

The members of the Roger Pirates sat slumped on the shore, a bonfire flickering before them as they listlessly gnawed at grilled meat.

"Damn Garp... That bastard chased me for three days and three nights!!"

Roger tore off a chunk of meat with his teeth, stuffing it into the gap between his teeth as he grumbled,

"Do I owe him something!?"

Rayleigh leaned against a rock, looking just as worn-out, his face smeared with dust.

He took a swig from a flask, voice hoarse as he said,

"Cut the crap, Roger. Eat up and recover your strength. We've got less than an hour to rest—any longer and Garp will catch up again."

"I got it, stop nagging me already, Rayleigh!"

Roger snapped, stuffing another large bite of meat into his mouth.

Right then—

"Captain Roger!!!"

A panicked voice rang out from afar.

Everyone turned to look. Buggy was sprinting toward them, his legs spinning like wheels.

He looked like he'd seen a ghost—tears and snot streaming down his face.

His hands, detached from his body, floated in midair, tightly gripping a newspaper.

"Something big just happened..."

Buggy rushed up, gasping for breath, eyes bloodshot and his entire body shaking. His voice trembled,

"Shiki... Shiki's dead!!"

"He was killed by that Marine—the one who pulled down your pants!!"

At that, the crew's expressions changed dramatically.

"No way!"

"That's impossible!!"

"Shiki's dead!?"

They all rushed to snatch the freshly printed newspaper from Buggy's floating hands.

Even Roger forgot about his meat, not even bothering to argue about the "pants" comment.

All eyes turned to the paper. As they scanned it, their expressions froze, pupils narrowing into pinpricks.

The front page screamed a bold, eye-grabbing headline—

"Battle of Edd War! An Unprecedented Tempest!—The Legendary Pirate Shiki the Golden Lion Falls in the North Blue!!"

Below the headline was a detailed report analyzing the events of the Battle of Edd War, along with various accounts and commentary.

At the end of the article, a photo accompanied the report.

It showed a devastated landscape—mountains and forests flattened as if crushed by an overwhelming force, scorched earth and flames stretching far and wide.

Under the dying light of dusk, a towering, blood-soaked figure stood in the heart of the ruin.

Two long swords had pierced clean through his abdomen, the blades jutting out from his back.

Yet he still stood tall.

The world around him mourned in silence.

At his feet lay Shiki, collapsed with a defiant smile still lingering on his lips.

"This was a clash of trapped beasts. No one knows exactly what happened, but one thing is certain...

After a battle that shook the heavens and the seas, the legendary pirate, the 'Flying Pirate' Shiki the Golden Lion—pirate overlord with a bounty of 4.45 billion Belly—fell at the hands of Marine Vice Admiral Rogers Daren, with a wild grin on his face as he died."

"A new era is dawning. With Rogers Daren at the helm, the Marine 'Golden Generation' rises like a constellation of monsters.

This may well be the age of the Marines."

"The Marines, embodying 'justice,' are about to enter their golden age—

But what future lies ahead for the pirates, the embodiment of 'evil'?"

"But I don't care about that. I only care about one thing..."

"Was the lion's final roar worthy of his legend?"

"Sadly, only that Marine knows the answer."

—World Economic News Agency, President Morgans

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