

One Piece 511

Chapter 511 - 511: Volume 4 – Chapter 30: The List

Bonfires blazed, and the aroma of grilled meat and wine filled the air.

"Wahahaha! Newgate, long time no see, you're still as strong as ever!"

Roger, acting overly familiar, slung his arm around Whitebeard's shoulder, his face red from drinking, breathing hot air into the latter's ear.

"But what's with your receding hairline?"

With that, he brazenly lifted Whitebeard's captain's hat, his face full of exaggerated surprise.

The Whitebeard Pirates: ...

Whitebeard's eye twitched, a throbbing vein appearing on his forehead. He gritted his teeth and said,

"Long time no see, and you're still as deserving of a beating as ever, Roger."

He shot a sour glance at the loud, laughing man before him, then suddenly smirked and said,

"I heard your pants were taken off?"

The smile on Roger's face froze.

"That was an accident! It was an accident!"

He immediately jumped up, waving his arms and blushing furiously as he shouted in protest.

Whitebeard, having scored a point, laughed heartily.

"Really? But I heard that little Marine almost wiped you all out during the Battle of Edd War?"

Roger's pirate crew: ...

Seeing their frustrated faces, Whitebeard felt his mood lighten considerably and chuckled,

"But that little Marine really is a troublesome one..."

"I've suffered a loss at his hands too."

At the mention of a certain person, everyone from the two legendary pirate crews fell silent.

They had sailed the seas for many years, fighting countless strong enemies and clashing with the Marines more times than they could count.

But only in the hands of the so-called "King of the North Blue" had they all suffered such painful lessons.

"Forget it, let's not talk about that. Newgate, I want to discuss something with you."

Roger suddenly shook his head, his eyes darting about before he smiled sheepishly.

"No way!"

Whitebeard looked at him blankly.

Roger's smile stiffened, and he snapped,

"Hey, hey, hey, I haven't even said anything yet, and you're already refusing?"

Whitebeard gave him a look that said he knew exactly what Roger was thinking and sneered,

"Every time you open your mouth, it's never anything good."

"Don't say that..."

Roger said a little embarrassedly.

"It's just a small favor."

Whitebeard narrowed his eyes.

"Go ahead and say it."

Roger's eyes lit up. He suddenly pointed at Kozuki Oden, who was sitting nearby, munching on meat.

"I want to borrow Oden! Let him join my ship!"

As soon as the words left his mouth, Kozuki Oden looked up, confused, his one arm still holding a piece of roast meat suspended midair.

"Impossible!"

Whitebeard's face darkened instantly, and he said with absolute firmness,

"Roger, what are you thinking? Oden is my sworn brother!"

"I can agree to anything else, but not this. Never!"

Seeing Whitebeard's unyielding stance, Roger's expression changed.

He and Whitebeard were old rivals. He knew the man's character very well—once Whitebeard decided on something, no one could change his mind.

But for Roger to complete his final voyage around the world, he needed someone who could decipher the ancient text on the Poneglyphs.

Thinking of this, Roger gritted his teeth.

Under the stunned and shocked gazes of both pirate crews, he suddenly dropped to his knees with a heavy thud.

"Newgate, I'm begging you!"

"Just for one year—only one year! I promise Oden won't be in any danger!"

"I'm already terminally ill. With the time I have left, I want to reach the end of the world... and I can't do it without Oden!"

"Please, Newgate!"

At that moment, the world's strongest, most fearless, and most free pirate bowed his proud head deeply to his lifelong rival, all for the sake of a dream he had chased all his life.

Everyone was stunned!

...

New World, Pleasure District.

A hotel, top-floor suite.

A soft bed, with torn clothes scattered all over the floor.

A naked beauty lay sprawled across the bed, cheeks flushed, breath warm, and her slightly curly golden hair damp with a sheen of sweat.

Behind her, a pair of black bat wings, symbols of mystery and ancient lineage, quivered with her trembling body... and slowly folded away.

"Queen-sama, are you already at your limit? I thought Mythical Zoan types had much stronger endurance..."

Daren lounged on a leather sofa, casually draped in a loose bathrobe, legs crossed. He held a glass of chilled whiskey in one hand and bit a lit cigar with a faint smirk.

From his angle, he had a perfect view of the Queen of the Pleasure District's slender, porcelain waist, her two deep waist dimples especially alluring.

Stussy rolled her eyes in annoyance, pulling the quilt up with a hazy look in her eyes to cover her mature and sensual figure, and huffed,

"The strength of the vampire form isn't about brute force! Even an awakened Mythical Zoan might not be able to match your 'Indestructible Body'!"

Thinking back on the shameful positions she'd been forced into moments ago, Stussy felt her skin tingle like it had been electrocuted. She couldn't help but shoot a fierce glare at the damn Marine.

Daren laughed.

He had to admit, seeing the famed Queen of the Pleasure District in such a state gave him a strong sense of accomplishment.

It had already been three days since the operation to capture Bullet.

After resting for just a day to recover, Bullet had scavenged weapons and equipment from a warship to rebuild a small submarine, then quietly slipped away from the main fleet.

Daren hadn't tried to stop him. After all, the Shichibukai enjoyed considerable autonomy, and unless under special circumstances, the Marines rarely intervened in their actions.

After Bullet's departure, Daren handed command of the ten warships over to Borsalino and immediately made his way to the Pleasure District.

Well, officially, it was for intelligence gathering.

"Didn't you say you were here to gather intel?"

Stussy caught the smirk tugging at Daren's lips, gritting her teeth in frustration.

This bastard, knowing her secret identity as a double agent, used it to manipulate her relentlessly, tossing out lines like "You don't want your secret getting out, do you?" all day long.

Yet she had no way to fight back.

She couldn't beat him, couldn't hurt him.

The worst part was, Stussy could feel her body gradually becoming addicted to him, unable to resist at all!

"Gather intel? Oh, right, now I remember. I do need to gather intel."

Daren patted his head with a light chuckle.

Stussy: ...

"Find out where the people on this list are, their strength, battle records, backgrounds... I need every piece of information you can get."

Daren pulled a crumpled piece of paper from his uniform pocket and handed it to her.

Stussy took it, her expression growing serious as she examined it.

The deeper her understanding of Daren grew, the more clearly she realized what kind of man he was.

Every move he made was carefully calculated.

His true danger didn't lie in his strength alone—but in his ambition and meticulous planning.

If these names had caught his attention to the point that he was willing to mobilize her intelligence network, they had to be special.

However, as her eyes scanned the list, a flicker of confusion crossed her face.

Because... she didn't recognize a single one of them!

Dracule Mihawk.

Fisher Tiger.

Gecko Moria.

Boa Hancock.

"Who... are these people?"

Stussy narrowed her eyes and stared at Daren.

Chapter 512 - 512: Volume 4 – Chapter 31: I Am a Seasoned Marine Officer

Looking at this slightly unfamiliar list, a hint of doubt flashed through Stussy's mind.

She put on a sexy, openwork silk robe that slightly covered her snow-white skin, and quickly thought about the list in her hand.

The damn Vice Admiral in front of her was no simple character.

Apart from his unimaginable physique and attractiveness, what deeply captivated Stussy was his confidence and determination, which allowed him to control everything with his words and speech.

This unbreakable confidence, never questioning his decisions, and his calmness in planning before acting... added a certain fatal aura to this man.

Stussy had only seen this kind of confidence and spirit in the Five Elders, who represented the highest authority of the World Government.

But the unfathomable Five Elders naturally had the qualifications for this.

But where did Daren get his confidence from?

"That's none of your concern, Queen-sama."

Daren smoked his cigar with a half-smile and said,

"Our relationship isn't good enough for us to share secrets with each other, is it?"

Stussy: ...

This bastard!

She bit her red lips, stood up from the soft bed, her crystal clear toes lightly touching the ground, and walked gracefully towards Daren.

This woman seemed to know how to maximize her charm.

Her bare feet, toes painted with bright red nail polish, long, white legs, and the exquisite curves of her body visible through her sexy silk nightgown... This half-naked, half-covered posture was the most tantalizing.

Daren raised his eyebrows, amused.

"So, Vice Admiral Daren, can you tell me?"

Stussy walked over to Daren's side, like a mysterious and dangerous snake, and slid gently into his arms. She raised her hands to wrap around his neck, her red lips slightly parted, exhaling a fragrant scent, her manner seductive:

"I'm really curious..."

The Queen of the Pleasure District, renowned for her beauty, sat in his arms, coquettishly flirting, her legs dangling in the air, dazzling to behold.

This was a picture of happiness that Tokikake could never have imagined in his entire life.

"I'm sorry, but this is a Marine secret."

Daren's face was stern, and he said without mercy,

"And unfortunately, I am a seasoned Marine officer."

Stussy: ...

She was so angry that her eyebrows were raised, and her full chest rose and fell rapidly.

You're seasoned?

You smoke, drink, are greedy, and lustful... What trials could you possibly withstand?

"But since you're so curious, I can tell you the reason."

Daren seemed to enjoy the woman's emotions changing so dramatically because of him.

Women are emotional creatures, even someone as powerful and high-ranking as Stussy is no exception.

If a man's words and actions could easily cause a woman's emotions to rise and fall, it meant that he was not far from conquering her.

For men, the most deadly reaction from a woman is not anger or resentment, but indifference.

"But before I tell you, why don't you help me check out these people's information first?"

Daren smiled, looking shameless and determined to get what he wanted.

Stussy rolled her eyes.

She stood up from Daren's embrace, picked up the Den Den Mushi on the bedside table, dialed an internal number, and read out the names on the list one by one to the person on the other end.

"In three minutes, bring me all the information collected on this list."

Stussy's attitude toward her subordinates was no longer gentle and seductive, but that of a strong woman—decisive and efficient, without the slightest hesitation.

Daren looked at her with admiration.

This woman was indeed worth cultivating.

Although she was able to control such a huge illegal business as the Pleasure District, she was more or less dependent on the support of the World Government, but that did not negate her outstanding personal abilities.

Time passed quickly, and in less than two minutes, there was a knock on the door of the private room.

Stussy walked over slowly, opened the door, and a young woman dressed in a formal skirt stood respectfully outside, handing Stussy a document with both hands.

Stussy took the document, closed the door again, hesitated for a moment, and added,

"Don't worry about your identity being revealed. These people are all subordinates I have trained, and they are loyal only to me."

Daren glanced at her in slight surprise and smiled,

"I didn't ask."

"I don't want the subordinates I worked so hard to train to disappear for no reason."

Stussy glared at him and said,

"I used the Devil Fruit's ability to alter their memories. Even if they are subjected to the most terrible torture, they will not reveal any information about me."

Daren suddenly understood and couldn't help but be a little amazed:

"Your Devil Fruit ability is quite comprehensive."

Stussy didn't respond, just walked across from Daren, crossed her legs, and flipped through the documents in her hand.

In the huge luxury box, the voice of the Queen of the Pleasure District gradually rang out.

"Dracule Mihawk, male, age 17, origin unknown, strength unknown, has sharp eyes like a hawk, skilled in swordsmanship, a loner, has appeared many times in the first half of the Grand Line."

"Fisher Tiger, male, fishman, approximately 25 years old, born in Ryugu Palace on Fish-Man Island, occupation: adventurer, strength unknown, last seen in the East Blue."

"Gecko Moria, male, 23 years old, suspected Paramecia-type Kage Kage no Mi user, born in the West Blue, new pirate, just entered the Grand Line, ambitious and powerful."

"Boa Hancock, female, age 3, unofficial crew member of the Kuja Pirates, native of Amazon Lily."

When she read the last name, Stussy suddenly raised her head and looked at Daren with a strange look, narrowing her eyes.

"What's that look on your face..." Daren's mouth twitched.

Stussy suddenly laughed coquettishly:

"The first three are indeed worth recruiting and training. Although they are all newcomers, their strength and background are indeed promising, but the last one... Boa Hancock, she's only 3 years old."

"I just didn't expect you to have such a hobby."

"Ahem, ahem..."

Daren almost choked on his cigar smoke.

"I'm not a freak!"

He rolled his eyes in annoyance.

"Didn't you want to know why I was looking for information on these people?"

"I can tell you now that they are my picks for the future Shichibukai."

Hearing this, the smile on Stussy's face froze.

Her beautiful eyes widened in disbelief, as if she had heard some terrifying news.

This guy... he actually wants to interfere with the selection of the Shichibukai!

Chapter 513 - 513: Volume 4 – Chapter 32: Kill Him

"Are you crazy!?"

"That's the Shichibukai you're talking about!"

Stussy blurted out without thinking, her face unable to hide the shock.

This guy was completely insane!

As a member of CP0, the World Government's highest intelligence agency, Stussy understood better than anyone the hidden purpose behind the creation of the Shichibukai system.

Recruiting pirates as Shichibukai and granting them the legal right to plunder was, on the surface, a way to curb the ever-growing pirate threat.

By positioning the Shichibukai as a buffer between pirates and Marines, it created a state of mutual confrontation and balance, thereby strengthening the World Government's control over the seas.

After all, the development of Marine strength had already started showing signs of slipping beyond the World Government's grasp.

Especially with the rise of the "Golden Generation"—Sakazuki, Borsalino, Daren, and Kuzan—this younger generation of Marine monsters had entered the very core of Marine authority, controlling numerous key positions.

Combined with Daren's existence—a "human natural disaster" and unparalleled long-range deterrent weapon—the Marines' military might had reached an all-time high.

Thus, the deeper purpose of the Shichibukai system was to balance the ever-expanding influence of the Marines!

But now, Daren actually wanted to interfere with the selection of the Shichibukai!

This was no different than trying to snatch food from the mouth of the World Government!

"So you're worried about me?"

Daren smiled playfully and said,

"I thought you'd be thrilled to see me get myself killed."

Stussy gritted her teeth and said,

"I'm just worried that if the World Government targets you, you'll end up spilling all my secrets!"

Daren chuckled and said,

"Only two members of the Shichibukai have been confirmed so far, meaning there are still five spots open."

"I'm just concerned because I want to help our esteemed government by suggesting some suitable candidates."

He spread his hands innocently.

"I'm absolutely loyal to the government."

A cold smile tugged at the corner of Stussy's lips.

She didn't believe a word Daren said.

Trusting that this ambitious, defiant man was loyal to the World Government?

She'd sooner believe the Pleasure District was a place of virtue!

Besides, even if Mihawk, Fisher Tiger, and Gecko Moria seemed like decent candidates, Boa Hancock... she was only three years old!

Three years old! What qualifications did she have to become a Shichibukai!?

Stussy shot him a look that practically screamed, "You must be joking."

"So what exactly are you plotting?"

"The government has a strict selection process for the Shichibukai. You can't possibly interfere."

"Besides, Crocodile, the 'Desert King,' and Douglas Bullet, the 'Demon Heir,' have already been confirmed. They're not people you can control."

"That's not necessarily true... Who do you think ripped off their hands?"

Daren looked at Stussy with a strange smile.

Stussy: ...

Hearing the confidence in Daren's voice, a wave of shock surged in her heart.

The two confirmed Shichibukai... were both already influenced by Daren!?

Somehow, seeing Daren's smug, proud expression only made her more furious.

She bit her lip and snapped,

"So what if that's true!?"

"Apart from those two, the government already has a full list of candidates for the remaining five spots!"

"Oh?"

Daren's interest was finally piqued.

"Who's on the list?"

"None of the people you picked are on it."

Stussy smiled proudly.

She grabbed a sealed document from the desk by the wall, opened it, and handed it to Daren.

"See for yourself."

Daren opened the list and glanced through it casually.

"Dylan Fair, from North Blue, nicknamed Blood Axe, bounty: 140 million Belly."

"Battier Reinhardt, from West Blue, currently in the New World, Logia-type Numa Numa no Mi user, bounty: 120 million Belly."

"..."

Each name on the list belonged to a "great pirate" with a bounty over 100 million, all with fearsome reputations.

But to Daren, they looked like nothing more than extras destined to die off-screen...

"Well?"

Seeing Daren remain silent, Stussy thought he was frustrated that his plan was falling apart and teased with a coquettish laugh,

"What a pity. Looks like your plan is about to fail, Vice Admiral."

Daren glanced at her, then suddenly grinned.

"Not necessarily."

Under Stussy's surprised gaze, he pulled out a Den Den Mushi and dialed a number.

Two seconds later, the call connected, and a low voice came from the other end.

"Daren?"

"Yeah, it's me. I heard there's a guy called 'Blood Axe' causing a stir in North Blue?" Daren said coolly.

There was a brief pause before Momonga responded,

"That's right. He hasn't broken any rules, so I let him be."

"Kill him."

Daren exhaled a puff of smoke as he spoke.

"No problem."

Without a second thought, Momonga hung up. In the next instant, his figure disappeared from the Base Commander's office in a flash of lightning.

He and Daren had fought side by side for years, developing a level of trust and understanding that went beyond words. No matter how strange the order, Momonga would carry it out without hesitation.

"What... are you doing?"

Stussy finally realized what Daren intended and stared at him in disbelief.

Was he serious?

But she quickly sneered,

"According to intelligence, Blood Axe is extremely cautious. Even a Vice Admiral might not be able to take him down. Don't waste your time—"

"...Buru Buru, Buru Buru..."

The military Den Den Mushi rang again, cutting her off.

Her expression changed immediately, a sense of foreboding creeping up as she fixed her gaze on the Den Den Mushi in Daren's hand.

It couldn't be...

Daren caught her look and, smiling, answered the call.

"It's me."

Momonga's low voice came through again,

"He's dead."

Stussy's pupils shrank into pinpoints!

How much time had passed between the two calls?

Not even a minute!

This had to be a joke.

But deep down, she knew—the man before her had no reason to lie.

"This is troublesome."

Daren chuckled and chatted for a moment before ending the call.

He looked up at her with a smirk,

"What were you about to say?"

Stussy's face stiffened, her teeth grinding in frustration.

"So you killed one Blood Axe! Big deal! There are over a dozen names on that list! You can't possibly kill them all!"

"Who says I can't?"

Daren laughed without a care.

He slowly stood, walked over to Stussy, and gently patted her smooth cheek, smiling as he spoke,

"Listen carefully, my Queen. What I say will always come true."

"The ones I've chosen will all become members of the Shichibukai.

It's only a matter of time."

He lightly hooked Stussy's chin with a finger.

"But one thing's certain—The Shichibukai will all belong to me."

Stussy trembled at the provocative touch, gritting her teeth.

"I don't believe you!"

Daren smiled,

"If you don't believe me, let's make a bet."

Already provoked, Stussy snapped back,

"What do you want to bet?"

Daren chuckled,

"If you win, I'll grant you any wish you want."

"But if you lose..."

He slowly extended his index finger and gently brushed Stussy's red lips.

"If I lose, I'll grant you any wish you want too."

Stussy refused to back down,

"It's a deal!"

Daren smiled with satisfaction,

"Then you'd better be ready to call me master."

Chapter 514 - 514: Volume 4 – Chapter 33 Specially Appointed Instructor

Master...

Hearing this shameful title, Stussy's heart skipped a beat. Her long legs subconsciously closed together, and she clenched her teeth tightly.

What the hell was going on in this bastard's head!

Why did he, a Marine, know so much about these things of the Pleasure District!

Who was the real master of the Pleasure District!

She gritted her teeth in indignation and said,

"We'll see about that!"

"But before that, don't you dare touch me again!"

She secretly resolved in her heart that she would not let that arrogant bastard Daren get his way, otherwise she would never be able to hold her head up in front of him again.

"Fine."

Daren smiled indifferently.

With his current power and fighting ability, there might be things he couldn't do on this vast sea, but interfering with the Shichibukai was not one of them.

As for this so-called bet, aside from a momentary whim, Daren had other ideas in mind.

He wanted to completely control, no, conquer the Queen of the Pleasure District standing before him!

Although he now held Stussy's secret as a "double agent" and could force her to obey his orders, using threats to make others do things for him was not Daren's style, nor was it a safe method.

Only through strong declarations and facts could he prove his unparalleled power and make a woman like Stussy completely submit.

Interfering in the selection of the Shichibukai was a good opportunity.

Through this incident, he would completely bind Stussy to his chariot!

As for the specific plan... he already had a rough idea in mind.

Thinking of this, Daren's mouth curved into a slight smile. He stubbed out the cigar in his hand and looked at Stussy again:

"Now that we've finished with the small talk, let's get down to business."

"Business? What business?"

Stussy was taken aback.

But she quickly saw the malicious look in Daren's eyes.

"What are you trying to do?"

Daren smiled and wrapped his arms around Stussy's slender waist.

"What do you think?"

Wasn't that enough?

Stussy widened her beautiful eyes. This guy's physique was too terrifying!

However, as Daren's rough and powerful hands gently slid down her back, her body trembled and her fair skin broke out in goose bumps.

"Didn't you say that you wouldn't touch me until the bet was over?"

Anger and shame flashed in Stussy's eyes as she glared at Daren.

But she didn't move away.

It was as if she was expecting something.

"The bet can start later," Daren smiled.

...

An hour later.

Daren put on his military uniform with a refreshed look on his face, jumped out of the window, and quickly disappeared in the distance.

Another fifteen minutes passed.

Stussy, who was still weak, regained some strength, and her slightly scattered pupils became clear.

"Damn bastard, what kind of sick sense of humor is that, tearing my clothes to shreds..."

She looked at the silk nightgown torn to pieces by the bedside and clenched her fists in anger.

...

Half a month passed quickly.

In the blink of an eye, it was already 1495 in the Sea Circle Calendar.

Marineford, Marine Headquarters, Military Hospital.

"Congratulations, Vice Admiral Daren and Tok-sani. Judging from the current situation, the fetus is very healthy. No, it can even be described as unusually strong."

The female doctor looked at the examination report in her hand and smiled at Daren and Amatsuki Toki.

"It's no wonder he's Vice Admiral Daren's son. Just the strength of this baby's heartbeat is at least twice that of other babies of the same age."

Hearing this, Daren and Toki both breathed a sigh of relief, smiles appearing on their faces.

Even though Daren had experienced countless storms and life-and-death situations, he couldn't help but feel a little nervous at this moment.

This was his first child across two lifetimes, and with no experience, he naturally felt a bit uneasy.

"However, one thing to note is that because the fetus is developing very well, Toki-san needs to pay a little more attention to getting enough nutrition, not overworking herself, and taking care of her body."

The female doctor added.

"Thank you, doctor. We will keep that in mind."

Toki gently stroked her slightly rounded belly and smiled peacefully.

Perhaps because of the pregnancy hormones, her already stunning face glowed with a faint maternal radiance, making her even more beautiful.

"Thank you, doctor."

Daren also said sincerely, then took Toki back to their residence.

After communicating with Sengoku last time, Daren's residence had been granted the highest level of security, with experienced family doctors and nurses stationed in the annex to help care for Toki daily.

Even without using his Observation Haki, Daren could faintly sense the presence of numerous elite units stationed around the mansion, their defense airtight.

"Come, Toki, get some rest. I'll have the kitchen prepare lunch for you."

Daren carefully helped Toki sit comfortably on the sofa.

After settling Toki down, he turned and walked out into the mansion's courtyard, lit a cigar, and exhaled a long breath of smoke.

Toki's pregnancy was taking far more time and effort than he had imagined.

But whenever he thought of her radiant, happy smile, Daren felt that everything was worth it.

"Already starting to worry? There'll be plenty more to worry about in the future..."

A deep voice carrying a teasing tone suddenly rang out from outside the door.

Daren looked up and saw Zephyr striding in proudly, carrying a beautifully wrapped fruit basket.

"Zephyr-sensei? Why are you here?"

He asked in surprise.

Zephyr smiled, tossed the fruit basket into Daren's arms, and laughed heartily,

"You haven't come back to the training camp to visit me since you graduated. I had no choice but to come and visit you myself."

"But thinking about it, I can understand. As your teacher, I really couldn't help you much. I only ended up misleading you."

He sighed helplessly.

Daren: ...

That knot in his heart still hadn't been untied...

Daren gave an awkward smile. He hadn't been very proper about it, after all.

Since graduating, he hadn't once returned to the training camp. Zephyr's grumbling was understandable.

"I'm sorry, Zephyr-sensei... you know..."

Zephyr waved his hand, interrupting him with a laugh,

"I know you're busy. I understand."

"Since graduation, you haven't stopped for a moment. From Totto Land to Wano Country, from Kaidou to Shiki, and not long ago, you even launched a Buster Call to capture that Demon Heir..."

He took off his sunglasses and looked at Daren with burning eyes.

"It's my good fortune to have such an outstanding student."

He glanced toward the house and asked with concern,

"How's Toki's health?"

It was no secret that Amatsuki Toki lived in Marineford as Daren's partner.

In fact, Zephyr, Sengoku, and Tsuru often sent various nutritional supplements and greetings.

Toki's personality was excellent—generous and graceful—earning the affection of these old veterans.

Zephyr, now semi-retired and a pillar of the Marines, was particularly fond of her, treating her like his own daughter.

"Everything's fine. Toki and the baby are both healthy."

Zephyr nodded, patted Daren on the shoulder, and said,

"I know you're the restless type, always running around. When you're not here, I'll help take care of things. Don't worry."

"But actually, besides visiting you and Toki, I came for another reason."

Daren said seriously,

"Zephyr-sensei, please speak."

Facing Zephyr, a stubborn but respectable old man, he couldn't bring himself to act like a scoundrel and became unusually serious.

Zephyr smiled,

"No need to be so serious. It's not a big deal."

"You should know—the Officer Training Camp has been expanding. More and more young talents want to train at Headquarters, but I have limited energy and can't manage them all."

"Besides, your situation gave me some inspiration..."

As if remembering Daren's particularly special "training experience," Zephyr's mouth twitched, and he shook his head with a sigh before continuing,

"I've decided to try introducing new teaching methods in the next session of the training camp."

He paused for a moment and stared expectantly at Daren,

"Daren, I hope you'll serve as a Specially Appointed Instructor for the Officer Training Camp!"

Chapter 515 - 515: Volume 4 – Chapter 34: The List of Students

Zephyr's eyes shone brightly as he spoke in a deep voice.

Ever since Daren and his class—the "Golden Generation"—graduated from the Officer Training Camp, a wave of Marine fever had swept across the world.

In particular, Daren's inspiring speech at the graduation ceremony, along with his series of brilliant achievements that shook the world, had instantly made him an idol worshiped by countless Marines.

There were even cases of imitation within headquarters.

Marines and officers alike were almost always smoking, slicking their hair back into pompadours, and were more eager than ever to head out to sea and hunt pirates.

As a result, Zephyr's training camp was flooded with applicants, and its status rose rapidly.

Given the situation, Zephyr had already discussed with Sengoku and decided to modestly expand the new Officer Training Camp, increasing enrollment and actively introducing external instructors to help share the heavy burden on him as the chief instructor.

At the same time, bringing in instructors with different teaching styles could promote mutual learning, broaden new methods of instruction, and better adapt to the arrival of a new era.

This was a major reform for the training camp, and Zephyr himself had pinned countless hopes on this plan.

However, the success of this plan hinged on one thing—Daren agreeing to become the first external instructor.

...

Upon hearing Zephyr's proposal, Daren couldn't help but be a little surprised.

A special instructor?

Me?

He didn't know how to react for a moment.

As a student, he had plenty of experience being taught.

But as a teacher, he was completely unfamiliar with instructing others.

More importantly, being an instructor would consume a lot of time and energy, and Daren, who was accustomed to a lazy and free lifestyle, found it difficult to accept such a change.

He thought for a moment, then said slowly,

"Zephyr-sensei, I don't think I'm qualified for such an important role... And please don't worry about hesitating because of me. Your teaching ability is definitely second to none on this sea."

Daren wasn't lying.

"Misleading students" was just a running joke—nothing to be taken seriously.

At the very least, Zephyr was definitely not someone who would lead his students astray.

The semi-retired old man standing before him had single-handedly trained monsters like Sakazuki, Borsalino, and Kuzan, not to mention the entire Golden Generation of the Marines. His teaching ability was beyond question.

In fact, Daren knew this better than anyone.

If it weren't for the solid foundation Zephyr had helped him lay at the training camp, he would never have achieved what he had today.

It was because of this that Daren held deep gratitude and respect toward Zephyr.

"Don't worry, kid. This external instructor role won't take up too much of your time."

Zephyr waved his hand dismissively.

With his experience and insight, how could he not have seen through Daren's internal struggle?

"The external instructor doesn't need to work at the academy full-time. You only need to come to the training camp twice a month to give a lecture—sharing your personal insights and training experiences. It won't affect your normal life or duties at all."

"As for the content of the lectures, I won't interfere or meddle in any way. You're free to teach however you see fit."

"As for the quality of the teaching, I have full confidence in you."

Zephyr pulled out a cigar, lit it, took a long drag, and continued,

"Gion and Tokikake both told me that while you were in North Blue, you gave them some guidance in their training, and the results were pretty impressive."

He winked playfully at Daren.

Daren: ...

Alright, so you came fully prepared.

"And Daren, being an external instructor is also a good thing for you."

Seeing Daren's hesitation, Zephyr decided to throw in the final incentive.

"Even though they are only external students, those who receive your instruction will, in a sense, have the bond of master and disciple with you..."

"In the future, when they graduate and move into various positions across the military, becoming the backbone of the Navy, they'll be a huge source of support for you—especially when you compete with Sakazuki and the others for the position of Admiral or even Fleet Admiral."

Zephyr wasn't ignorant of politics or power struggles. He just usually couldn't be bothered to deal with them.

But since Daren clearly had a fondness for power, he could only start from there.

"And think about it—one day, those geniuses and monsters who will make waves across the seas will all be your students... How great an honor that would be!"

At this point, he straightened up proudly, clearly quite pleased with himself.

"Just look at me. Even Sakazuki, Borsalino, Kuzan—those unruly brats—have to respectfully call me 'sensei' when they see me, don't they?"

Yes, they shouted enthusiastically... when one gave the order, another pulled the trigger, and a third buried the body.

Daren couldn't help but silently complain in his heart.

Still, he had to admit that what Zephyr proposed was very tempting.

Enhancing his reputation and status, developing a group of loyal students, and increasing his influence within the Marine system in the future...

All it would cost was a little bit of his free time.

There was no reason not to accept such a good offer.

"Since Zephyr-sensei thinks so highly of me, I can't let you down."

Daren smiled and agreed readily.

"I will do my best as an instructor, learn from you, and contribute my humble strength to the great cause of justice!"

Zephyr rolled his eyes.

He knew this brat's nature. If there was no benefit, Daren wouldn't lift a finger.

"Enough, enough. The tricks you used to fool Sengoku won't work on me."

He said irritably.

Daren put on a sincere face and said,

"I'm telling the truth, Zephyr-sensei."

"Everyone says Vice Admiral Garp is the 'hero' of the Marines, but in my opinion, you—who devoted your life to justice behind the scenes and nurtured so many outstanding students—are the true hero!"

"You brat..."

Zephyr kept waving his hand dismissively, but he couldn't hide the smile tugging at the corners of his mouth.

It had to be said—Daren's words had truly struck a chord.

"Alright then, it's settled."

Zephyr paused, stubbed out his cigar, then pulled a document from his coat and handed it to Daren.

"This is the tentative list for the next training camp. Take a look, but keep it confidential for now."

"Also, if you have any promising candidates in mind, you can add them directly to the list. That's one of the privileges you have as an external instructor."

"I think your subordinate—the current North Blue Admiral Momonga—is a good choice. If you think he's suitable, you can add him too."

Daren didn't answer immediately.

He simply flipped open the list—and his eyes lit up.

Because on that list, he saw several familiar names!

T Bone!

Shuza!

Vergo!

Doll!

And...

Magellan!

...

Chapter 516 - 516: Volume 4 – Chapter 35: The List of Those Doomed to Die

When Daren saw the list, he was undeniably a little surprised.

He knew that in the original timeline, most of the Navy's talented individuals had already graduated from the Officer Training Camp.

The first and second classes of the Marine Headquarters' Officer Training Camp were the ones with the highest caliber of students.

They included the "monsters" from the original story—the three Admirals of the Navy, Monkey D. Dragon who later founded the Revolutionary Army, and several elite generals of the "Golden Generation."

He had originally thought that after becoming a special instructor, the quality of the training camp's students would be pretty average, but he hadn't expected there would still be quite a few "slip-ups" left!

Seeing several familiar names on the list, Daren suddenly felt that agreeing to Zephyr's offer to become a special instructor had been the right decision!

T Bone!

Nicknamed the "Ship Cutter," he first appeared on the eve of the Enies Lobby incident in the original story.

He had been tasked with escorting Nico Robin and briefly fought Zoro. Although defeated, he displayed the heart of an unyielding warrior!

Filled with a strong sense of justice and genuine care for his subordinates, two years after the end of the Summit War, his strength surged and he was promoted to Vice Admiral, entrusted with overseeing the security of the Reverie.

Unfortunately, he was later killed by civilians hoping to claim the bounty placed by Buggy's Cross Guild.

Shuzo!

In the original story, he was portrayed as a radical and tough Marine, a favored protégé of Zephyr, the former Admiral of the Headquarters.

Even after Zephyr left the Marines, Shuzo remained loyally by his side, helping him establish the Neo Marines and becoming his right-hand man.

He was highly skilled in Armament Haki and Rokushiki, making him a formidable force.

Vergo!

There was no need for much introduction.

Daren was very familiar with him—he was the mole that his useless godson had planted within the Marines.

Vergo had infiltrated the Marines for twenty years, rising to the rank of Vice Admiral, and eventually taking command of the G5 Branch in the New World as its Base Commander.

Doll!

The name was a little unfamiliar.

Daren couldn't recall much about her, only that she was a Vice Admiral of the Marine Headquarters and the Base Commander of the G-14 Branch.

As for the final name... that was an unexpected delight.

Magellan!

The future "iron wall" of Impel Down, the Warden of the deep-sea prison, known as "the strongest man in the prison," and the man who once "Single-handedly wiped out three Yonkōs!"

His Paramecia-type Doku Doku no Mi ability was near invincible, producing potent toxins that could paralyze nerves, induce pain or hallucinations, and even kill.

His poison was strong enough to melt stone with a single touch.

Those who were poisoned needed Magellan's antidote to survive.

In any other environment, it might be different, but within the confined space of Impel Down, Magellan's Devil Fruit power made him a true admiral-level fighter!

And unlike others, Daren understood Magellan's personality well.

He was the stubborn type who would immediately resort to seppuku if things went wrong.

With that kind of character, Magellan would undoubtedly treat him with the utmost respect and sincerely address him as "sensei."

Without exaggeration, while this list couldn't quite match the first and second classes, it still represented a gathering of shining stars.

"Well, Daren... did you find any students you like?"

Zephyr chuckled as he watched Daren seriously considering the list.

That was the joy of being a teacher—

When you discovered a promising student, you couldn't help but look forward to seeing just how far they could go and how brightly they could shine under your guidance.

In Zephyr's eyes, the sense of accomplishment from training a brilliant student even surpassed defeating a notorious pirate.

"I can't tell yet, but I'll do my best, Zephyr-sensei."

Daren snapped back to reality, pulled his gaze from the list, and replied with a smile.

Zephyr smiled and patted him on the shoulder.

"Don't put too much pressure on yourself."

"Alright, the entrance ceremony for the new recruits is in ten days. Show up then and give a brief introduction to the freshmen. It'll help you get a feel for them too."

As he spoke, he seemed to remember something, his expression turning a little strange as he added:

"And don't go overboard this time."

He couldn't help but twitch the corner of his mouth at the memory of this brat's outrageous declaration during the last graduation ceremony.

...

Zephyr left after giving a few brief instructions.

The new training camp was about to begin, and various matters at the military academy were piling up, waiting for him to return and deal with them.

Daren sat quietly in the courtyard and finished a cigar. Just as he was about to go back inside to check on Toki, a slow voice suddenly rang out behind him.

"You're really taking it easy, Vice Admiral Daren."

Daren smiled, turned around, and looked at Borsalino, who was leaning against the wall with his hands in his pockets. He smiled slightly.

"I'm on legal leave right now, Vice Admiral Borsalino."

After the Buster Call incident involving Douglas Bullet, Sengoku had given Daren a month's vacation, partly to compensate for the pressure of frequent missions over the past two or three months, and partly to give Daren enough time to spend with Amatsuki Toki.

Borsalino said helplessly,

"I really envy you... But I'm sorry, your vacation is over."

"Oh? What's going on this time?"

Daren asked with interest.

Borsalino sighed.

"It's about the candidates for the Shichibukai... The list of candidates for the Shichibukai has been leaked, which isn't a big deal in itself."

"But for some reason, over the past half month, the candidates on the list have been killed one after another, and we can't even find out who did it."

"Of the original dozen or so candidates, only two or three lucky ones are still alive..."

"So... now the government is furious and has ordered us at Marine Headquarters to thoroughly investigate this matter and find the killer as soon as possible. Admiral Sengoku is busy dealing with this matter..."

"Sakazuki has already been dispatched, but the government is pressing hard, so the military needs to send more forces to thoroughly investigate this matter."

"Admiral Sengoku asked me to come and tell you to go to the Fleet Admiral's office. I guess you're going to be assigned a mission."

At this point, Borsalino glanced at Daren with a half-smile.

"But Daren... you don't happen to know who did this, do you?"

Daren's eyes flickered slightly, and he raised his hands in surrender with a look of surprise on his face.

"How could that be possible?"

"I haven't left headquarters in the past half month, so how could I know about this?"

Borsalino met Daren's gaze.

"That's true."

He nodded, and then the two men looked at each other and laughed at the same time.

Chapter 517 - 517: Volume 4 – Chapter 36: Hunting

New World, somewhere in the ocean.

Thick thunderclouds loomed over the island, a sea of pitch-black clouds pressing down like an enormous hood.

Lightning flashed and thunder roared, crackling through the clouds like rampaging dragons.

A white Torikago covered the entire island.

The once lush jungle had turned into a sea of fire, with charred craters riddling the forest and the ground. Flames raged, sending thick black smoke billowing into the air.

Among the collapsed trees and scorched earth, terrifying, crisscrossed gashes could faintly be seen.

"Damn it... who the hell are you..."

Felkas stood there, his body charred and covered in blood, looking as if his skin and muscles had been peeled off piece by piece, leaving him a grotesque, bloody figure.

"The Marines... pirates... working together..."

His face was twisted with disbelief.

He had relied on his powerful martial arts to cut a bloody path from the South Blue into the New World, his bounty soaring past one hundred million Belly.

Under his command were over a thousand men, enough to be considered a real force even in the New World.

But just as he was preparing to make a name for himself, he had run into those two monsters.

Everything had ended in an instant.

A despair unlike any he had ever known filled his eyes.

In his pupils, he could see the blood and scattered corpses littering the ground, the shattered remnants of the pirate ship split in half on the shore.

The pirate crew he had painstakingly built had been wiped out in less than three minutes by those two monstrous figures.

Blood gushed from his mouth and nose as Felkas, his eyes bloodshot, stared at the figure descending slowly from the sky.

A pink feathered coat, short golden hair, a mocking smirk tugging at the corner of his mouth...

Doflamingo.

Fingers bent and twitching, he manipulated invisible threads, stepping slowly toward the doomed man.

The threads binding Felkas tightened sharply, slicing through his skin like razor blades, leaving grid-like wounds across his body.

Felkas trembled in agony and roared hoarsely,

"Why!? We've never even met before!!"

No matter how he tried, he couldn't understand.

He had never crossed paths with this blond man—so why had he come straight for him and slaughtered his entire crew?

"Fufufufufu, why?"

Doflamingo's lips curled into a twisted, mocking grin, his eyes full of scorn and amusement as he looked down at Felkas.

"What a stupid question... Do pirates need a reason to kill each other? There is only one throne of supremacy, and only the last one standing gets to sit on it."

"Of course, if you insist on having a reason..."

I can only say—you were on a death list."

A death list?

Felkas froze, confusion and helplessness flashing across his bloodstained face.

What list... He hadn't done anything!

But before he could react, the blond youth snapped his fingers.

Shh!!

A strand of thread wrapped in Armament Haki shot out like a sniper's bullet, piercing straight through his heart.

A spray of blood burst from his chest.

His body convulsed violently as the life drained from his eyes.

Felkas, known as the Blood Shadow Swordsman, bounty of 117 million Belly... dead!

With his death, a streak of blue lightning shot down from the clouds above, slipping through the gaps in the Torikago and condensing swiftly on the scorched ground into a deep and imposing figure.

...

"How many people are left on the list?"

Doflamingo didn't even glance at the corpses. He turned his head, looking coldly at Momonga, whose body was crackling with lightning.

With a flick of his fingers, the white Torikago covering the entire island slowly retracted like a receding tide, eventually vanishing without a trace.

"There were seventeen names. Four are still alive."

Momonga pulled out a piece of paper, glanced at it, and said calmly.

He swept his eyes over the blood-soaked battlefield, frowning slightly.

Pirate corpses lay scattered everywhere. Blood dyed the ground red, and even the air was thick with the stench of death.

"You're too ruthless, Doflamingo."

Since leaving the North Blue, this man's bloodlust had grown stronger and stronger, as if the restraints on a wild beast had been torn away, completely unleashing his ferocity.

Taking pleasure in killing, even savoring the torment of his enemies—it was not a good sign.

Doflamingo shrugged indifferently and sneered.

"If you can't stand it, you can leave the rest to me."

Momonga shook his head and said coolly,

"No. To be safe, I have to act alongside you. The ones left on the list all have bounties over a hundred million Belly. Their strength is no joke. One careless mistake could be fatal."

"If word ever got out that we're hunting the Shichibukai candidates, the consequences would be unimaginable."

Doflamingo snorted.

"How could that possibly happen?"

"Once Torikago is activated, everyone inside becomes my prey. No one escapes."

Momonga glanced at him, then said quietly,

"There are always exceptions... like me. Torikago has no effect on me."

Doflamingo's face froze for a moment, but he couldn't argue back.

If it had been anyone else, Doflamingo would've already killed him without a second thought.

But this man was different.

His Goro Goro no Mi ability was terrifyingly powerful. After becoming an elemental lightning form, he possessed both the speed and destructive power of lightning. Torikago couldn't restrain him at all.

Doflamingo even faintly sensed that, even after entering the New World and mastering Haki, he still might not be this man's match.

And most importantly—if he had mastered Haki, then what about Momonga?

Doflamingo didn't dare to gamble on it.

Watching Doflamingo's shifting expression, Momonga said calmly,

"You don't need to be so wary of me. After all, clearing out the Shichibukai candidate list benefits you too."

"I don't deny you've become much stronger. With Torikago's special properties, most of the targets aren't a real threat. But being cautious never hurts."

"Daren once said he learned this after surviving in the North Blue—women and children can afford to be careless, but men cannot. Doflamingo, I'm helping you."

"Besides, these are Daren's orders."

At that final sentence, Doflamingo fell silent.

He had to admit it—his Torikago combined with Momonga's Goro Goro no Mi had proven terrifyingly effective in their previous hunting missions.

For half a month, they had flown across the seas, following the names on the list, hunting down the so-called "Shichibukai candidates."

This was already their twelfth target.

Every time they struck, the operation never lasted more than five minutes.

No matter how many enemies or pirate ships there were, the outcome was always the same.

The Torikago descended, lightning rained down, the target was eliminated... Their coordination was becoming sharper with each hunt.

Even though they knew the Marines and World Government were frantically investigating, no one had managed to trace a single clue back to them.

Signals were jammed, scenes were burned, bodies were shredded... Even the CP agents couldn't find anything.

After a few seconds of silence, Doflamingo turned and walked toward the coast.

"Let's go. Four left. No time to waste."

Momonga narrowed his eyes as he watched Doflamingo's retreating back.

Under the sleeve of his military uniform, a faint streak of deep black quietly faded away.

Chapter 518 - 518: Volume 4 – Chapter 37: Sengoku Takes the Blame

"Why did this happen!? What is going on!? I need an explanation, Sengoku!"

When Daren and Borsalino strolled up to the Admiral's office, they could already hear a cold, furious voice shouting from across the hallway.

"...Seventeen candidates for the Shichibukai, and now only five remain! The elders are extremely dissatisfied!"

Daren frowned.

There were only a handful of big shots at Marine Headquarters, but this voice was unfamiliar to him.

He also noticed that the two Marine guards stationed outside the Admiral's office were standing stiffly, trembling slightly, pretending they hadn't heard a thing from inside.

"What's going on?"

Daren shot Borsalino a questioning glance.

Borsalino shrugged helplessly and muttered under his breath,

"The candidate list for the Shichibukai is top secret. Besides top-level government officials and senior CP agents, only Fleet Admiral Kong and Admiral Sengoku are authorized to know about it..."

"Now that the Shichibukai candidates have been slaughtered one after another by an unknown force, the government believes whoever is behind it is targeting the system itself—and they're beginning to suspect that the list was leaked."

He pointed lazily toward the office door and grinned.

"See? CP wasted no time showing up."

Daren raised an eyebrow, his interest piqued.

"So CP suspects that the one behind hunting down the Shichibukai candidates might be linked to Admiral Sengoku?"

Borsalino gave a half-smile.

"Who knows? But Marine Headquarters has always been against the creation of the Shichibukai system."

"And since Sengoku is one of only two people in the Marines who knows the list, it's only natural for CP to be suspicious."

"Poor Admiral Sengoku... taking the fall for the real culprits."

As he said this, he casually glanced at Daren.

Daren pretended not to notice the playful look and walked straight up to the office door.

The two Marines outside stiffened the moment they saw Daren and Borsalino, hastily snapping to attention and saluting.

Daren waved them off and pushed open the door.

The moment he stepped inside, he saw Sengoku, face flushed with rage, slamming his palm onto the desk and roaring,

"So you're suspecting me!?"

"I've served in the Marines for decades, rising from a mere Seaman Recruit to an Admiral! How many pirates have I defeated, how many missions have I carried out for the government... and now you dare suspect me!?"

He was panting heavily, clearly furious.

Just then, Sengoku noticed Daren and Borsalino stepping into the office one after the other.

"Admiral Sengoku, you called for me?"

Daren saluted crisply, his gaze casually drifting over to the two cold figures standing nearby.

Both were clad in loose white silk robes, exuding an eerie chill. Their faces were hidden behind masks branded with strange patterns, making it impossible to see their true identities.

The World Government's most elite intelligence agency... CP0.

The one on the left was slightly taller, wearing a black mandala-patterned mask. Judging by the voice, he was the one who had just been questioning Sengoku.

The other wore a fox mask. Wisps of slightly curly golden hair spilled from under it, and the elegant lines of a woman's body were faintly visible beneath the flowing white silk robe. She wore a pair of red high-heeled shoes.

This CP0 agent was a woman.

The moment she saw Daren, she seemed to freeze slightly.

Daren narrowed his eyes, the corner of his lips curving into a faint, knowing smirk.

What a coincidence... an old acquaintance...

"Ah, Daren, you're here."

When Sengoku saw Daren and Borsalino walk into the office, he took a deep breath, forcefully suppressing the anger in his heart, and spoke in a stiff tone.

"These are CP members sent by the government. Their primary task is to investigate the incident involving the hunting of the Shichibukai candidates. Borsalino should have already informed you about the situation, right?"

Daren nodded and smiled slightly.

"I'm fully aware of the situation, Admiral Sengoku."

"However..."

He turned his gaze to the two CPO members, his eyes narrowing dangerously.

"It seems you two aren't very satisfied with the answers from our Marine side?"

Sensing Daren's look, the female CPO member instinctively took half a step back, as if feeling something ominous.

The other, however, remained unmoved, sneering coldly.

"You must be Vice Admiral Daren, the famed 'King of the North Blue,' the one who just took down the Great Pirate, Shiki the Golden Lion, right?"

"But what's with this blatant killing intent?"

"I am a member of the World Government's highest intelligence agency, here under the orders of the Five Elders—"

Before he could finish, the expression beneath his mask changed drastically.

"You dare!"

A sharp streak of black light suddenly shot through the window, carrying a terrifying force capable of cutting through anything, reaching him in an instant.

"Don't be reckless, Daren!!"

Sengoku's face changed dramatically, shouting out in alarm.

Clang!!

Boom!!

A deafening blast, sharp enough to tear at the eardrums, exploded through the room, followed by a violent, dragon-like gale that shredded the office into chaos, scattering papers everywhere.

As if struck by a cannon, the CP0 member was knocked back several meters, the shockwave cracking the office walls with loud groans.

A bead of cold sweat slowly dripped from the CP0 member's chin.

His hands, coated in Armament Haki, were clutching a sinister, cursed black blade.

The overwhelming impact from the sword burst into a shower of sparks between his palms, the hilt trembling violently.

The sudden outburst left everyone else in the room stunned, faces paling.

Only Borsalino remained relaxed, leisurely sitting on the sofa with his legs crossed, as if watching a show.

"You're insane!! You dare attack me!?"

After a moment of dumbfounded silence, the CP0 member finally snapped back to reality, an angry, trembling shout bursting from under his mask.

He couldn't believe it.

This Marine punk had actually dared to attack him—right in front of so many people!

What terrified him even more was the realization that, had his reaction been a split second slower, he would have been dead on the spot!

Staring at the cursed blade before him, emanating a chilling aura, the CP0 member swallowed hard.

The cursed sword, Enma!

A peerless cursed blade that had consumed the Moa Moa no Mi, now wielded by this Marine, possessing the terrifying destructive power to obliterate a small island in a single strike!

"As expected of a high-ranking agent meticulously trained by the World Government... You actually managed to block Enma's 'ten times speed' shot."

Daren tilted his neck slightly, a faint smile on his lips.

"CP0-sama, do you know just how fast Enma's maximum shot speed can reach?"

"It's fifty times."

Daren let out a soft sigh.

"Which means... what you just blocked was only one-fifth of its full speed."

As his words fell, a bone-chilling coldness shot down the CP0 member's spine, his pores standing on end.

His face twisted into a ghastly expression.

Chapter 519 - 519: Volume 4 – Chapter 38: What Does This Have to Do With You, CP0?

He wasn't an idiot.

If he were, he would never have made it into CP0.

Every member of the World Government's intelligence agency was trained from a young age and selected through an extremely rigorous process. Whether in intelligence analysis or combat ability, they were among the very best this sea had to offer.

He understood perfectly what this Vice Admiral meant.

—"It's not that I can't kill you. I just can't be bothered to."

It was a blatant threat.

If this Marine truly wanted to kill him, and unleashed Enma's full power, there was absolutely no way he could withstand such a terrifying strike.

Thinking about it made his scalp tingle.

This man was a complete lunatic.

"So, can I interpret your attack as a threat to the World Government and the Five Elders, Vice Admiral Daren?"

The CP0 agent gritted his teeth, his voice hoarse and tense.

He knew he couldn't afford to back down. After all, he represented the authority of the World Government.

Besides, he was betting that Daren wouldn't dare kill him here, in front of everyone.

Unless he wanted to throw away his career as a Marine.

"Threat? No, no, CP0-sama, you're thinking too much."

A cold smile played at Daren's lips.

"Everyone knows that I, Rogers Daren, am absolutely loyal to the World Government and the Five Elders. I've completed every mission flawlessly, no matter how difficult."

"So, what threat are you talking about?"

As he spoke, two streaks of piercing light whistled from the distant sky, halting neatly at Daren's sides.

The moment these two swords appeared inside the office, an overwhelming surge of presence swept through the air.

The sword tips, exuding a chilling gleam, pointed steadily at the CP0 agent. The pressure was so suffocating that it felt like the air itself had frozen solid.

The moment Sengoku saw the blades, his pupils contracted sharply.

Borsalino's grin grew even wider.

The CP0 agent instinctively took a step back, the blood draining from his face as he cried out,

"Golden Lion's swords!"

He recognized them instantly.

These two famous blades—"Oto" and "Kogarashi"—had once belonged to the legendary pirate, Shiki the Golden Lion!

Both were legendary Meito, famed across the seas for having been soaked in the blood of countless powerful foes.

Now, being simultaneously locked onto by three deadly blades, the CP0 agent felt every drop of blood in his body freeze. His face turned ghostly pale.

"But I'll remind you of one thing, CP0-sama... You do not speak for the Five Elders."

Click.

Daren casually took out a lighter and lit a cigar.

"Goodbye, sir."

A faint crackle of static spread through the air.

In an instant, a violent magnetic field enveloped the three swords, making them tremble wildly, like bloodthirsty beasts about to pounce.

The CP0 agent's face finally changed as he shouted,

"Wait—"

"Enough! Daren!"

Sengoku suddenly roared, fixing Daren with a stern glare.

"Are you trying to disobey my orders?"

Daren frowned, then sighed helplessly.

"I wouldn't dare."

He flicked his finger, and the three Meito swords flew back, circling slowly around his body.

"My apologies. It was my negligence. I made a fool of myself."

Sengoku turned to the CP0 agent and said calmly.

The CP0 agent let out a long, shaky breath, relief flooding through him. His voice softened noticeably.

He looked gratefully at Sengoku.

"No, it was my tone that was too harsh, Admiral Sengoku."

Glancing nervously at the Vice Admiral still leisurely smoking his cigar, he said carefully,

"The Five Elders hold no suspicion toward you. It's just that the Shichibukai selection is a matter of great importance, and the government is under immense pressure."

Sengoku nodded thoughtfully.

"I understand."

"In that case, I will dispatch enough forces to fully investigate the matter and deliver a report to the government as soon as possible."

He paused, then looked toward Daren.

"Vice Admiral Daren himself will be in charge of the investigation."

The CP0 agent nodded immediately.

"That would be ideal. I won't trouble you further, Admiral Sengoku."

Without wasting another second, he turned and practically fled from the office.

The female CP0 agent threw a subtle glance at Daren before following suit, leaving quickly.

Only after their footsteps faded did Sengoku finally exhale heavily, a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth as he looked at Daren.

"You're a clever one, kid."

Daren shrugged.

"I had no choice. That guy was getting way too arrogant."

"CP0 might have a terrifying reputation, but he forgot one thing: this is Marine Headquarters.

Besides, no matter what, I couldn't let him insult you like that, Admiral Sengoku."

Sengoku's mood immediately lifted.

The moment Daren made his move, he had already guessed the boy's intention.

After all, he knew Daren well. He was never the impulsive type.

Daren would break CP0's arrogance with action, and Sengoku would step in to smooth things over.

One played the bad cop, the other the good cop. Together, they easily suppressed CP0's challenge.

"What a reassuring kid, Daren..."

The more Sengoku looked at him, the more satisfied he felt.

But then his eyes shifted toward Borsalino, still lounging on the sofa with his legs crossed, and a sharp pain struck Sengoku's heart.

His face darkened.

When would that bastard ever make his life this easy, just once?

...

"So, Daren, what do you think about this?"

Sengoku sat back down, rubbing his temples.

Daren pretended to ponder for a moment before slowly speaking.

"In my humble opinion, there's no need to be overly nervous about this matter. The selection of the Shichibukai follows the law of the jungle, where the strong prey on the weak. Although those who were killed were on the government's list, the fact that they were eliminated so easily proves they might never have been qualified to become Shichibukai in the first place."

"Of course, there may be deeper government interests involved behind the scenes, but it's not my place to comment."

"Still, since the government has now ordered a full investigation, we in the military can't afford to be perfunctory either."

Listening to Daren's analysis, Sengoku nodded approvingly.

"Yes, you're right."

He tapped his fingers lightly on the desk.

"The key question now is—who exactly is targeting the Shichibukai?"

After thinking for a while without reaching any conclusion, he shook his head and turned to Daren.

"Then I'll leave this matter to you, Daren."

"No problem, Admiral Sengoku."

Daren nodded with a smile and turned to leave the office.

...

"Brr brr..."

The military Den Den Mushi suddenly rang.

Sengoku frowned and answered the call.

"This is Sengoku."

A frightened voice immediately came through.

"Reporting, Admiral Sengoku! Another person on the list has been hunted down!"

"...It's the 'Blood Shadow Swordsman' Felkas!"

Sengoku's face darkened instantly.

...

Marineford, Oval Military Port.

The CP0 agent hurried toward the World Government's official ship docked at the port.

This Marine Headquarters was far too dangerous—he didn't want to stay even a moment longer.

But just as he boarded the ship, the Den Den Mushi tucked inside his clothing rang.

He hesitated briefly before choosing to answer.

The news that came through made his pupils shrink into pinpoints.

"What? Another one is dead!?"

He couldn't believe his ears.

In less than half an hour, yet another candidate from the list had been killed!

It was simply inconceivable.

Behind him, the female CP0, having overheard the report, clearly froze as well, stopping in her tracks.

"Damn it!!"

The male CP0 cursed and hurriedly rushed onto the ship.

"Wait, something feels off. I need to go back and investigate."

At that moment, his companion's voice called from behind.

The CP0 agent codenamed "Lone Wolf" paused, looking suspicious, but eventually nodded.

"Can you manage alone?"

"No problem."

The CP0 wearing a fox mask answered hoarsely, then her figure silently vanished from the spot.

She passed unseen through the heavily patrolled military district of Marineford, relying on her exceptional stealth skills to avoid all eyes. Before long, she arrived at an abandoned warehouse.

At that moment, a miniature metal ball, which had been discreetly guiding her ever since the port, floated out from her palm—then suddenly dropped from midair as if it had lost its signal.

She stared at the abandoned, empty warehouse ahead, her expression shifting.

After taking a deep breath, she pushed open the door.

Inside, the warehouse was vast and pitch-black, so dark that she couldn't even see her own fingers.

The air was thick with the smell of dust.

Her pupils suddenly contracted.

Before she could react, the heavy iron door behind her slammed shut with a loud bang!

Immediately after, she felt a pair of strong hands reach out from the darkness, wrapping tightly around her waist.

Clang, clang...

The crisp sound of metal chains clashing echoed in the air, and the cold touch of steel pressed sharply against her skin.

Her expression shifted dramatically.

She felt her strength suddenly drain from her body, leaving her limbs weak and powerless.

"Seastone!"

"Damn it! Daren, what are you trying to do!?"

Stussy finally couldn't hold back, exposing her real voice, her face filled with panic as she questioned him.

"Shh..."

Daren's figure gradually emerged from the darkness, making a quieting gesture, his lips curled into a faint, mocking smile.

"If I'm not mistaken, it was under your guidance that CP began suspecting the Marines, wasn't it?"

Stussy gritted her teeth, glaring fiercely at Daren, but she didn't deny it.

This man was terrifying.

Without making a single sound, the people on the list had been wiped out one after another, each death clean and without a trace.

Even now, the government couldn't find the slightest clue.

But Stussy knew very well... the slaughter of those candidates was definitely tied to the man standing before her.

So she made her move.

Using her influence within CP, she began guiding the government's investigation toward the Marines, trying to disrupt Daren's plans and ultimately win their wager.

What she hadn't anticipated was that Daren would act so decisively, terrifying her CP companion into fleeing!

And the most infuriating part was that her actions had directly led to Daren himself being assigned to lead the investigation!

What kind of absurd situation was this!?

Was she supposed to investigate herself!?

"It seems I was right. You really are disobedient, my Queen."

Daren saw through Stussy's tricks at a glance.

Since this woman wanted to play games, he didn't mind indulging her.

After all, he had everything firmly under control. There was no chance she could turn the tables.

Besides, he had expected her to try something like this the moment their bet was made.

He would take this opportunity to let her experience what true despair meant.

—The overwhelming gap in strength, intelligence, and control.

"In that case, it looks like I'll have to punish you properly."

Daren sighed, as if helpless, but the grin at the corner of his mouth only grew more wicked as he walked step by step toward Stussy.

"W-What are you trying to do..."

Stussy tried to back away, but the Seastone shackles on her wrists completely suppressed her strength, leaving her body weak and powerless.

"Nothing much. I just want to see how long you can hold out under the effects of Seastone."

Daren smiled as he approached her, lifting her chin playfully, staring with interest at the fox mask covering her face.

Stussy trembled.

This guy...

She finally began to panic.

Under the suppression of Seastone, she couldn't transform into her powerful vampire form—her body now no different from that of an ordinary human...

And if she had to face this monster's "Indestructible Body" like this...

Just imagining it made Stussy's legs tremble uncontrollably.

"You... You said that until the bet was over... you wouldn't touch me!"

"That's right."

Daren nodded solemnly, speaking righteously.

"I'm a man of my word. I'm known for my honesty."

Hearing that, Stussy finally let out a breath of relief.

Although this man was cunning and ruthless, when it came to promises, he was reliable.

She had read up on Daren's time in North Blue... the "King of North Blue" always repaid his debts!

But Daren's next sentence sent her heart plunging into despair.

"—But the one who made the bet with me was Stussy, the Queen of the Pleasure District. What does that have to do with you, CP0?"

Chapter 520 - 520: Volume 4 – Chapter 39: Don't Take Off Your Mask

Hearing Daren's shameless words, Stussy felt her whole body go stiff, the pair of charming eyes beneath her mask widening in disbelief.

Was that even something a human would say!?

The Queen of the Pleasure District, Stussy, and CP0's senior agent, Fox—weren't they the same person!?

This two-faced bastard!

"You... you can't do this..."

Feeling the Vice Admiral's approach, the heat of his masculine scent washing over her, Stussy's cheeks under the mask flushed with a shameful redness.

"No..."

Her body grew weak as she tried to back away, but without Daren making a move, several metal strips suddenly shot out from the darkness of the abandoned warehouse, twisting like snakes around her wrists and ankles, forcefully pinning her to a table.

Stussy lay face-down across the table, unable to move, her breathing growing erratic.

"You damn bastard..."

She cursed lowly, but then suddenly sensed something, her body stiffening and her pupils dilating.

"Hehe, Miss Fox, your body's very honest..."

The Vice Admiral's devilish whisper reached her ears, a teasing mockery lacing his tone.

"I-It's not!"

Stussy gritted her teeth and snapped back fiercely.

Her heart pounded wildly, her flushed face burning under the mask.

She didn't know if it was an illusion, but under the suppression of the Seastone, her body felt more sensitive than ever, and she was growing weaker by the second.

Especially in this quiet, dim, unfamiliar environment, an unprecedented sense of thrill and tension filled her heart.

The abandoned warehouse, the cold iron restraints, the roughness of the man, the unfamiliar surroundings, the humiliation of being bound, the shameful position, and the mask that concealed her expressions...

Under Daren's teasing, it felt as if a fire had been lit within her, making her feel utterly strange.

"Oh? Is that so?"

Daren chuckled and said,

"Then how about we stop here?"

Stussy gritted her teeth hard, refusing to answer, her eyes brimming with moisture.

She simply shut her eyes tightly.

Silently, she told herself:

It's fine. Right now, I'm not Stussy. I'm just CPD agent Fox...

Yes, that way it doesn't count.

...

Time passed, second by second.

Marineford, Marine Headquarters, military port.

"Why hasn't Fox come back yet? This isn't right..."

The CP0 member codenamed "Lone Wolf" stood with his hands behind his back, his expression beneath the mask growing increasingly anxious as he paced back and forth on the World Government's official ship.

It had already been a full hour since Fox had gone to gather intelligence, yet there was still no sign of her return, filling him with unease.

"Could something have happened?"

Lone Wolf frowned, muttering to himself.

He had long been infatuated with Fox, which was why he had applied to his superiors to team up with her for this mission to Marine Headquarters—creating more opportunities to be by her side.

This was also why he had acted so arrogantly in Sengoku's office.

Although his superiors suspected the Marines, they had no intention of starting a conflict. According to orders, his mission was simply to pressure Admiral Sengoku into dispatching forces to investigate the murders of the Shichibukai candidates.

But Lone Wolf had gotten carried away.

With the woman he admired standing beside him, he had wanted to use CP0 and the government's authority to crush Sengoku's momentum, hoping to earn Fox's admiration.

Everything had been going smoothly.

Even Sengoku, the famed Admiral of Marine Headquarters and one of the World Government's strongest assets, had been left speechless under his questioning.

At that moment, he had felt like he was standing at the peak of his life.

But Lone Wolf never anticipated that just as he was basking in his triumph, that damn Marine would appear!

Disregarding reason, ignoring protocol, more arrogant and domineering than anyone—and he attacked without hesitation!

Every time he recalled the image of those three legendary Meito swords simultaneously locking onto him, cold sweat would break out on his back, and his scalp would tingle.

He would have died.

There was no doubt: if that madman had struck, he would already be dead.

Although his own strength was decent within CP0, compared to the First Sequence—the monsters known as the "strongest shield of the Celestial Dragons"—he still fell far short.

Against that Marine's full-force attack, there was no way he could have survived.

If Sengoku, that cautious old fox, hadn't intervened in time, his corpse would already be sinking into the depths of the sea.

"Should I go back and check?"

As time passed and Fox still hadn't appeared, Lone Wolf grew more and more restless, the thought gnawing at him.

But the image of that mad Marine immediately crushed the idea, sending a shiver through his entire body.

Just then...

A petite figure suddenly flashed in from the distance and quickly leapt onto the official ship.

"Fox, you're back!"

Lone Wolf rushed over in delight, but his face quickly changed as he asked with concern,

"Are you hurt?"

He immediately sensed something was wrong—Fox's aura was weak, her steps unsteady, her breathing disordered.

Fox hesitated for a moment, then said hoarsely,

"I ran into that Marine... and fought him."

"That bastard! How dare he!"

Lone Wolf's anger exploded, his face twisting with rage before he gritted his teeth and growled,

"I'll report this the moment we get back!!"

Fox glanced at him calmly and said,

"It's nothing. I'm just tired. I'll go rest in the cabin."

"Alright, alright. Get some rest. I'll have the chef prepare you some hot soup."

Lone Wolf quickly offered with a flattering smile.

Fox nodded and turned, disappearing into the ship's cabin.

Seeing the cabin door slam shut, the smile on Lone Wolf's face instantly disappeared, replaced by a twisted, furious expression as he roared:

"Rogers Daren... I won't let you get away with this!"

He took a deep breath, calming himself, and ordered his subordinates to prepare for departure.

Just as he was about to step away, he suddenly paused, his nose twitching under the mask.

"Huh... What's that smell?"

He frowned, looking toward the cabin.

"It must be the smell of blood... Looks like Fox really did get hurt. That Marine bastard!"

Lone Wolf clenched his fists tightly.

...

Inside the cabin.

The flickering oil lamp cast wavering shadows.

Stussy leaned heavily against the cabin door, her body slowly sliding down as if she could no longer support herself, collapsing limply to the floor.

Trembling, she lifted her hand and removed the mysterious fox mask, revealing a breathtakingly alluring face flushed with a misty hue. Her delicate red lips were slightly parted, her breaths turning into faint white mist in the air.

Her gaze was dazed and unfocused.

Grinding her teeth, she muttered bitterly:

"He even made me keep the mask on... That shameless, despicable bastard!!"

Beneath her, the floor of the cabin gradually darkened.

It seemed to be forming into a small puddle.

...