

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

## Chapter 6 - 6: N-Not the Face!

Dust swirled across the training ground.

Daren, Gion, and Tokikake stood facing off from a distance, the pressure around them steadily rising.

Yellow sand billowed through the air, and the large cloaks behind Gion and Tokikake flapped wildly in the cold sea breeze.

Marines from the 321st Branch had all rushed to the scene, surrounding the schoolyard so tightly that not even a drop of water could slip through. Their eyes were wide, eagerly waiting for what would happen next.

"Vice-Base Commander Momonga, do you think Base Commander Daren will lose?"

A young marine asked, glancing toward Momonga, who stood with his arms crossed.

Wearing his military cap, Momonga simply smiled and said nothing.

Losing? That word wasn't in that guy's dictionary.

More accurately, the real question was—just how badly were those two so-called "golden kids" from the Headquarters about to get wrecked?

...

"So, Captain Daren, who would you like to spar with first?"

Tokikake asked eagerly, flicking his not-so-full head of hair in an exaggerated, showy gesture.

He felt increasingly smug as he noticed many of the female Marines from Base 321 casting admiring glances in their direction.

After all, he had been trained by numerous masters back at Headquarters—Admiral Sengoku himself had praised his talent. Among his peers, there was no one who could match him... except Gion.

He could already picture it clearly: Daren knocked flat in one clean hit, and the female Marines looking at him with admiration and adoration.

The thought made Tokikake chuckle to himself like an idiot.

Daren looked at him and shook his head.

"No. Let's save time. Both of you come at me."

Tokikake and Gion both froze.

Then, a wave of anger surged in their hearts.

This guy... what an arrogant tone!

"Then don't blame me for being rude! I'll go easy on you!"

Tokikake growled through clenched teeth.

He was determined to show this bumpkin from the North Blue just how strong the Marines of Headquarters really were.

He bent his knees slightly, and the muscles all over his body visibly tensed.

Bang!

The ground beneath his feet burst open as a massive force launched Tokikake forward—his figure shot off like a cannonball, streaking toward Daren at an astonishing speed.

This wasn't "Soru" from the Navy's Rokushiki.

Tokikake and Gion hadn't yet entered the Officer Training Camp and hadn't learned the "superhuman" techniques of the Rokushiki.

This was pure speed and explosive power!

The Marines from the 321st watching nearby gasped in unison.

It felt like a blur had flashed before their eyes—and just like that, Lieutenant Commander Tokikake had vanished.

In less than a second, he crossed more than ten meters, arriving in front of Captain Daren.

Muscles surging, he drove a punch straight toward Daren's abdomen like a battering ram!

No tricks.

No feints.

Just raw power pushed to the limit!

Seeing Daren still standing there, motionless, as if unaware of the incoming blow, Tokikake burst into laughter.

Serves you right!

Showing off those muscles!

Hooking up with Lady Margery!

Acting all high and mighty like you care about the people!

Get wrecked!

Bang!!

His punch finally landed—right on Daren's solid, defined abs. It struck dead center, rippling with a blast of white compressed air.

But Tokikake's smug grin froze on his face.

Something was wrong...

It felt like he had punched solid steel.

Daren didn't budge. Not even a little.

Not far off, Gion, who had been ready to draw her sword at a moment's notice, was also stunned.

Tokikake looked up in shock—And met Daren's calm, slightly helpless young face.

"That... Lieutenant Commander Tokikake, I appreciate you holding back, but please take this sparring match seriously."

Daren smiled playfully.

Tokikake's mouth twitched.

"Tokikake, what are you doing?! Stop fooling around!!" Gion's face showed a flash of confusion, and he couldn't help but shout.

Tokikake: ...

He gritted his teeth, took a deep breath, and tensed the muscles in his arm before throwing another heavy punch at Daren!

Boom!!

A wave of air erupted again, and the violent gusts kicked up a swirl of dust.

Yet Daren, the Base Commander of the 321st Branch, remained completely motionless!

Tokikake was stunned again.

Is that...Tekkai!?

He hadn't learned the Rokushiki yet, but he knew what it looked like.

A technique that makes your body as tough as steel—this had to be Tekkai, one of the Rokushiki styles.

The principle behind Tekkai was to speed up blood flow and increase muscle activation.

But what was strange was that Daren didn't show the usual signs of tensing up like someone using Tekkai!

"I'm telling you, Lieutenant Commander Tokikake, you don't have to hold back. I really want to see what you're capable of," Daren said again, his voice slow and calm.

"Tokikake, what the hell are you doing!? I told you to go all out!" Gion snapped angrily.

Tokikake's expression turned almost tearful, muttering inwardly, I'm not holding back.

He clenched his teeth and furiously unleashed punch after punch at Daren.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

His fists rained down like a storm, multiplying into countless afterimages as they slammed into the Navy Captain.

Blows strong enough to smash through stone walls landed on Daren's chest, stomach, legs—even his head. But none of them made him budge an inch.

They had absolutely no effect!

The Navy Captain stood there like a rock in a storm, completely unmoved.

It's not working...

How is that even possible...

Tokikake stared blankly at Daren's calm expression, the faint smile hidden in his eyes sending a chill down his spine.

Could it be...

Then, Daren suddenly grinned at him.

"Had enough? If you're done, it's my turn now."

Tokikake froze. A piercing chill surged from the soles of his feet, racing up his spine into his skull.

A rough, giant hand lunged at him at lightning speed, growing larger in his vision...

It was so fast—he had no chance to dodge!

Tokikake's face changed drastically. That creeping suspicion in his heart instantly solidified into certainty as Daren made his move.

This guy... is way stronger than me!

"Not the face, please!!"

Tokikake let out a strange cry, but the next moment, the large hand smacked straight onto his face.

Under Gion's stunned gaze...

Under the dumbfounded stares of the 321st Branch Marines...

Under Momonga's helpless look...

And under Tokikake's own high-pitched, pig-like wail...

Daren, gripping Tokikake's face with one hand, grinned wickedly and took a step forward—

Then...

Slammed Tokikake's head straight into the ground!

Boom!!

The earth trembled violently within a 20-meter radius. A massive crater exploded into view, cracks spiderwebbing out in all directions.

Tokikake's head was buried in the pit, his legs—still in clogs—sticking up into the air, twitching occasionally.

Dust billowed like a rising dragon.

At that moment, everyone watching winced and grimaced.

Just looking at it... was enough to make your face hurt.

## **Chapter 7 - 7: The North Blue Breeds Monsters**

"Damn it!!"

Gion's face changed drastically at the sight. She finally realized—Daren wasn't just strong. He was *toying* with them.

Tokikake specialized in close-quarters combat and had immense physical strength. Yet his attacks hadn't done a thing to Daren!

Looking at Daren's bare upper body—those muscles covered in jagged scars—a thought suddenly struck Gion.

—His physical defense...might have reached an inhuman level!

Even under normal circumstances, his toughness could rival *Tekkai*!

As the thought flashed through her mind, Gion didn't hesitate. She launched forward like a pink blur.

Fierce battle spirit flared in her eyes, and the golden blade in her hand gleamed with piercing light.

Things had escalated to the point where retreat was no longer an option.

She and Tokikake were here representing the Marine Headquarters, and with so many Marines watching, they had to save face no matter what!

"Watch yourself, Captain Daren!"

The moment her voice rang out, Gion was already in front of him.

Her golden sword tore through the air, unleashing a sharp, explosive whistle.

"Battō: Peach Smoke!"

A single slash!

*Shhlick!!*

The golden blade came crashing down, and blood sprayed in all directions.

A gruesome gash opened across Daren's chest, blood gushing out like a fountain.

But Gion's pupils shrank in shock.

He didn't dodge!?

She stared at the Marine Captain in disbelief, momentarily stunned.

The blade of her sword was stuck deep in the muscle of Daren's chest—but couldn't go any further!

Then she saw it.

A smile.

Cruel, pleased, and with a hint of madness, it slowly curled across Daren's lips into an unrestrained grin.

"To feel the breath of all things...the realm of cutting steel, huh?"

Daren licked the salty blood from the corner of his mouth, his gaze toward Gion filled with appreciation.

"You really are Headquarters' genius. Just one step away from becoming a true swordswoman."

As soon as he finished speaking, a violent gust slammed into Gion, tearing at her cheeks with raw force.

The air exploded with a deafening blast.

So fast!!

Her face paled, and she instinctively raised her blade to block.

*Clang!!*

A black military boot crashed down onto the blade with tremendous force.

Gion felt an overwhelming power slam into her—as if a speeding Sea Train had hit her head-on—and she was launched like a cannonball.

Waves of pressure rippled through the air.

Boom!

Boom!

Boom!

Her body smashed through several heavy stone targets before finally crashing to the ground in a roll.

Shattered debris rained down all around her.

Blood ran from the corner of her mouth. Her hand trembled violently as she gripped her sword. The skin between her thumb and index finger split open, blood flowing as a burning pain flared.

She stared at Daren in disbelief, heart pounding like a tidal wave.

This man... not only was his defense monstrous—his strength was nearly that of a full-grown giant!

"Ahhhhh!! Damn it!! Daren, you bastard! You actually hit me in the face!!"

A furious roar suddenly echoed through the field.

"I make a living with this face!"

Tokikake, his face swollen like a pig's head, struggled to pull himself out of the crater. He was panting heavily, his eyes now bloodshot with rage.

His aura changed in an instant, like a ferocious beast awakening from deep slumber.

"To think you pushed me to use this kind of strength... You should feel honored."

Hunched over, Tokikake staggered as he rose to his feet.

Suddenly, his military uniform puffed up, and the withered muscles beneath began to bulge and swell like volcanic rock. His expression turned savage.

*Crackle... pop...*

As power erupted from his body, the ground beneath him cracked under the crushing pressure of the energy he unleashed.

The terrifying sight made the watching Marines' expressions shift.

"What insane physical strength!"

"He had this kind of power hidden inside him?!"

"Is this the genius of Headquarters!?"

They stared in shock as Lieutenant Commander Tokikake from Headquarters charged at Daren with thunderous momentum.

His speed surged—faster, fiercer—nearly double what it had been before!

Like a meteor, he hurtled toward Base Commander Daren...

Then—

*BOOM!!*

...he was sent flying back even faster than he'd charged.

A stream of scarlet blood spewed from his mouth. His uniform was torn to shreds by the sheer force.

He rolled across the ground over a dozen times before collapsing in a heap, curled up like a boiled shrimp.

Tokikake opened his mouth wide, gasping like a fish out of water. His eyes, bloodshot from pain, bulged grotesquely from their sockets.

"Urgh!!"

A puddle of sour-smelling bile burst from his mouth, instantly fouling the air with its stench.

Silence.

The entire training ground fell into a deathly quiet.

Under the stunned gazes of everyone present, the newly appointed Admiral of the North Blue began walking slowly toward Gion and Tokikake.

His towering figure cast a long shadow under the blazing sun, engulfing the two of them.

Looking down at the two "inspectors" Headquarters had sent to watch over him, Daren wore a warm, sunny smile.

"You two really are top-notch talents from Headquarters..."

He gave them a wink.

"——I'll be counting on you from now on."

"Damn it!! Daren, you bastard! How the hell are you this strong?!"

Still panting, Tokikake lifted his head. His bloodshot eyes locked fiercely onto Daren.

Hearing that, Daren suddenly smiled, as if recalling something amusing.

"Compared to the real monsters out there, I'm honestly not that strong..."

He chuckled, then glanced down at the gash across his chest.

Hmm. The bleeding had stopped—almost scabbed over.

"Well, that sparring match was pretty fun."

He turned and began walking toward the far side of the training field.

"Warm-up's over. Time for actual training."

Tokikake and Gion: ???

They were completely dumbfounded.

That exchange just now... was just a warm-up to you!?

You got *cut*! You were bleeding!

Oh. It's almost scabbed over. Guess that makes it fine.

The two of them exchanged a glance, their shock written all over their faces.

...

*RUMBLE!*

Just as Tokikake and Gion were still reeling, a deep, trembling rumble suddenly echoed from beneath their feet.

Dust and gravel jumped on the ground around them.

Sensing something, they looked up—

And their minds went blank at the sight.

A hundred meters away—

The man who had just overpowered both of them with sheer brute force was now gripping a massive black iron chain.

The rusted black chain stretched about ten meters long, extending all the way to an abandoned warship at the far edge of the training ground.

With his muscles swelling like jagged volcanic stone,

Daren gripped the huge chain with both hands, and was dragging the six-meter-tall medium-sized warship—forward!

Step by step.

Each time he stepped, his boots left shallow craters in the ground.

And with every stride, the massive warship scraped across the ground, carving out a deep trench and shaking the earth with its weight.

From where Gion and Tokikake stood, they could only stare.

That seemingly small Marine Captain, dragging a hulking warship under the blazing sun, created a sight so overwhelming it burned itself into their minds.

Gion and Tokikake gawked, mouths open, utterly speechless.

"You two just arrived in the North Blue. There's a lot you don't know."

At that moment, Momonga walked up beside them.

He looked toward the distant figure of the Marine Captain dragging the warship, his gaze filled with undisguised reverence.

"Before Rear Admiral Sakazuki was reassigned to Headquarters, Captain Daren served as his aide."

"The countless scars on Captain Daren's body... most of them came from sparring with Rear Admiral Sakazuki."

Gion and Tokikake gasped sharply in unison.

Those horrifying scars... came from sparring!?

That... that wasn't sparring...

That was a savage, beast-like clash!

A man who could survive matches against Sakazuki—*that* monster...

Recalling their earlier "sparring," both Gion and Tokikake felt their faces flush with shame.

They'd gone all out, but in Daren's eyes, it must have looked like child's play...

"Another monster..."

Tokikake swallowed hard and muttered dryly.

The saying "The North Blue breeds monsters" had already spread throughout Marine Headquarters, Marineford, in the past year or two.

From the most chaotic of the four seas had emerged two terrifying prodigies with wildly different personalities—

Sakazuki and Borsalino.

They'd graduated from the officer training camp in less than half a year, their monstrous talent and unstoppable rise earning them the title of "monsters" from Admiral Zephyr himself.

But now—

It wouldn't be long before another "monster" rose from these turbulent waters.

His name—was Rogers Daren.

## **Chapter 8 - 8: The Road to Becoming a Monster**

Momonga couldn't help but smile at Tokikake's words.

"Monster? Maybe..."

"I joined the 321st Branch at the same time as Captain Daren. I remember it clearly—his first day of training was five years ago..."

A rare flicker of nostalgia passed through Momonga's usually cold and resolute gaze.

"Back then, he was frail. Just running ten laps around the training ground would completely drain him. He needed half an hour to catch his breath and stand up again."

"Among all the recruits that year, he was the weakest physically."

"But he never gave up."

"He trained every single day, constantly pushing himself to his physical limits."

"It started with dragging a cannon barrel, then a small one-man boat... It took him three full years before he could barely drag an abandoned warship a single meter."

"Compared to someone like Rear Admiral Sakazuki, who's a monster by birth, Captain Daren is a monster on a whole different level."

Hearing this, both Gion and Tokikake fell silent.

...

Clang...

Daren let the heavy iron chain fall to the ground. Standing under the scorching sun, he panted heavily, his throat and lungs burning like they were being torn apart by a bellows.

Every muscle in his body felt like it was on fire, radiating searing pain.

But this kind of pain was already second nature to him.

He looked back at the deep groove etched into the ground by the warship he'd dragged, and roughly estimated the distance.

One hundred and one meters...

Yeah, he'd finally broken his own record.

He checked his physical stats again.

Physique: 58.106 (+0.03)

Strength: 53.837 (+0.06)

Speed: 57.539

Fruit: 71.345

A 0.03 increase in physique and 0.06 in strength.

"Attribute growth is slowing down. Guess it's time to switch to a bigger warship."

Daren muttered as he stared at his "data panel."

This was the best way he'd found to use his "perception" talent—analyzing the feedback from each stat to judge whether his current training methods were still effective.

The human body is highly adaptive. The same load, same pressure, the same routines—these might yield results at first, but as the body adjusts, the effect dwindles, eventually stalling.

That's the science behind it.

Before crossing into this world, Daren had learned that professional athletes also constantly revise their training plans to maintain progress.

"Progressive overload"—a fundamental principle in exercise science.

It means gradually increasing the training load within the body's tolerable range to achieve better performance.

And with his precise perception, Daren could monitor the effectiveness of every exercise through data feedback.

So even if others saw his training as hellish torture, a monster's regimen, he embraced it willingly.

Because the feedback was instant.

Each push-up, each weighted squat—he could see his stats rise in real time.

Just like leveling up in a game.

Of course, this world wasn't a game—it was all too real.

And he understood better than anyone how dangerous the world of pirates truly was.

That's why he trained harder than anyone.

Only then could he stand shoulder to shoulder with the real monsters of the sea.

With his gifted talent and inhuman effort, he firmly believed that one day, he'd be able to do what Whitebeard could—possess overwhelming strength and stop a speeding warship with his bare hands.

"Well then, time to start physical training."

As his breathing steadied, Daren looked up and waved to Momonga.

He could feel his body had hit its limit for the day. Forcing more strength training now wouldn't help—worse, it could cause hidden injuries, muscle tears, or overtax his potential.

"Captain Daren's calling me."

On the other side of the training ground, Momonga said this to Tokikake and Gion, then began walking over.

But he suddenly stopped, as if remembering something. Turning back with a smile, he added:

"Oh right—things are about to get really interesting. Don't blink."

Tokikake and Gion were momentarily stunned.

Momonga didn't explain further, just gave a mysterious smile.

Though he wasn't the type to enjoy messing with others, for some reason, watching these two Marine Headquarters elites—so-called "chosen ones"—look so wide-eyed and overwhelmed, filled him with an odd sense of amusement.

"Assemble!!"

Momonga barked coldly.

In less than twenty seconds, dozens of Marines swiftly gathered at the center of the training ground.

As if fully prepared in advance, they split into two neat formations.

Clang!!

With a sharp metallic ring, the front row of Marines drew their sabers in unison.

Shff!!

At the same moment, the Marines in the back row raised their muskets in sync.

All of them held their breath, eyes locked on one target...

Daren, standing alone at the center of the field.

"Wait, wait, wait... this has to be a joke..."

Tokikake's face twisted in disbelief, lips twitching uncontrollably as the realization hit him.

Gion gulped audibly and said with a dry voice,

"This kind of training... someone could actually die from it..."

Before they had time to recover from their shock, Momonga had already issued a stern command.

"Attack!!"

The moment his voice fell—

The front-row Marines charged at their Base Commander with fierce momentum, sabers gleaming.

The cold, razor-sharp blades slashed down mercilessly across Daren's entire body!

Head, face, neck, chest, back, arms, thighs, throat...

No part was spared.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!!

But it was like striking steel. Sparks burst from the impacts, and the blades chipped and shattered.

After just one round of slashes, their sabers were ruined. The front-row Marines quickly pulled back.

Immediately, the back-row Marines pulled the triggers of their muskets.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!!

A dense volley of bullets rained down on Daren, ricocheting and bouncing, pockmarking the ground with deep craters.

As soon as the volley ended, the rear Marines drew the sabers at their waists and charged forward.

Meanwhile, the front-row troops repositioned and began reloading the muskets.

And so the rotation continued...

Blades, gunfire, and even, now and then, Momonga himself dragged out a heavy cannon from the nearby armory, firing a round at Daren during the switching interval between teams.

Swords shattered, guns roared, cannon blasts erupted—thick smoke and flames rose over the training ground, stirring up clouds of dust and sand. From afar, it looked like a full-blown battlefield.

Tokikake and Gion stood at the edge of the field, utterly dumbfounded by the terrifying display of what looked like deliberate self-destruction.

They were frozen in place.

No Tekkai, no dodging, no blocking...

That madman—was enduring this brutal assault with nothing but the sheer toughness of his body!

"Is this... really something a human can do?"

Staring at the man who remained standing in the middle of the storm of bullets and blades, Tokikake and Gion muttered in a whisper.

## **Chapter 9 - 9: Germa Rising?**

That evening...

At the residence of the 321st Branch Base Commander.

After completing his training, Daren gave his body a quick rinse and stepped out of the steamy shower.

He paused for a moment, staring at his reflection in the mirror—his body was covered in scars, lean and powerful like a coiled predator ready to strike.

Stamina: 58.418

Strength: 53.890

Speed: 57.548

Fruit: 71.345

The last round of endurance training had left him with a number of fresh wounds, but most had already begun to scab over. He figured a good night's rest would be enough to heal them completely.

The latest readings from his perception confirmed it—his stamina had risen by 0.312, now reaching 58.418. One step closer to the key milestone of 60.

"Progress really is slowing down... looks like I'll need to bring over a few heavy cannons from the warships to the training grounds soon."

Daren frowned as he looked over the densely packed, jagged scars covering his body.

With his body's durability growing stronger, standard blades and gunfire barely left a mark anymore. Saber strikes and flintlock bullets could only raise faint red lines on his skin.

In today's training, most of the injuries he sustained had come from Momonga's cannon blasts.

If he wanted to keep pushing his resilience and impact resistance, Daren knew he had to increase the *intensity* of his training.

That was the beauty of his "perception" talent.

With real-time feedback from his stats, he could precisely manage the intensity—enough to push his limits without risking irreparable injury or death. He kept the training within a scientifically calculated threshold.

Compared to the beginning, his physical stats were progressing much more slowly, but the important part was—they were still progressing.

Even though Daren had already been promoted to Admiral of the North Blue, commanding all naval forces in the region...

Power and authority were one thing. But Daren understood better than anyone: in this sea, personal strength was the foundation for survival.

His current objective was to solidify control over the North Blue before heading off to the Officer Training Camp at Marine Headquarters. He wanted the entire North Blue Marine force to become his true "territory."

More power meant better access to resources for training.

And with those resources, he could further sharpen his own strength.

Until he mastered Haki, increasing strength, speed, and stamina remained the most reliable way to grow stronger.

Daren didn't consider himself a prodigy or a monster like Sakazuki. That was exactly why he trained harder than anyone.

From his analysis, the average strength of an adult Giant was around 60 points.

Once his stamina reached that threshold, even in a normal state, his body would match the durability of a Rokushiki Tekkai.

And now, that goal was within reach.

Yes—Daren was walking the path of a monster.

No weaknesses. Strength in all aspects. A level of power so overwhelming, it left others in despair.

With the help of his "perception" talent, he firmly believed he would one day attain the terrifying, inhuman endurance of someone like Kaido.

*Knock, knock...*

A knock came at the door.

Daren casually threw on a robe and went to open it.

"Base Commander Daren."

Standing outside was Momonga.

"The ice you requested has arrived."

Daren nodded with a smile.

"Thanks."

Momonga gestured to the two Marines behind him. Moments later, they carried several crates of ice into the residence.

*Clatter...*

The cold ice was dumped into the bathtub in one go. The two Marines gave Daren a look full of admiration before respectfully taking their leave.

"What's the situation with those two?"

Without hesitation, Daren pulled off his robe and stepped into the ice-filled bathtub, submerging himself completely in the freezing water as he asked casually.

Ice baths were part of his routine.

After intense training, they helped boost circulation, reduce inflammation, speed up recovery, and relieve soreness.

Momonga looked at the tub full of ice water and couldn't help getting goosebumps just from watching.

Hearing the question, a strange smile crept across his face.

"They're probably feeling challenged. They're training on the grounds right now."

Daren blinked in surprise, then chuckled.

"Seems the geniuses from Headquarters still have their pride."

But then again, their reaction was understandable.

There was definitely a hierarchy of disdain within the Navy.

The elite at the Headquarters looked down on the Grand Line branches, and the Grand Line branches looked down on the bases stationed in the Four Seas.

And it wasn't without reason—whether it was strength, discipline, or equipment, Headquarters Marines had a crushing advantage.

Meanwhile, the Four Seas bases—given their independence and distance from central command—were often poorly managed, with loose discipline.

Tokikake and Gion had grown up in Headquarters, born from prestigious backgrounds and showered with favor. Gifted beyond most, they would've never imagined that in a place like the North Blue, they'd be so easily and thoroughly overwhelmed by Daren.

No surprise it lit a fire under them.

"But Daren, are you sure their arrival won't cause any problems?"

When no one else was around, Momonga, as Daren's right hand, spoke to him plainly.

Daren narrowed his eyes slightly.

"My actions here aren't exactly hidden from Headquarters. This so-called 'inspection' is just a formality."

"The third Officer Training Camp is about to begin. Even though their spots are already set, they still need to go through the motions—polish their resumes, stack up a few merits."

"If the Headquarters truly wanted to come after me, it wouldn't be those two greenhorns. I'd be facing Vice Admiral Tsuru's 'baptism' by now."

Momonga fell silent for a moment.

"I just feel like your position is too risky. Sooner or later, The Headquarters might dig something up."

Daren shook his head with a faint smile.

"The North Blue's too small. The Headquarters barely bothers to look this way."

"And even if they *do* uncover something—so what?"

He paused, then changed the subject.

"I heard that Vinsmoke Judge has been stirring up trouble lately?"

Momonga nodded.

"Yeah. He's been flaunting his power, rapidly expanding his forces, leading military campaigns all over, and publicly declaring his intention to behead the kings of four nations—including the Kingdom of Yadis—to 'reclaim dominance over the North Blue.'"

Daren sneered.

"Sounds like he's gotten his hands on some advanced weaponry. Must be feeling untouchable."

Vinsmoke Judge had once collaborated with the man hailed as the "genius scientist 500 years ahead of his time"—Vegapunk.

In the original storyline, after Vegapunk was taken by the World Government, Judge fled back to the North Blue with a portion of his technology.

Once back in the Germa Kingdom, he used that tech to revive Germa 66 and later led the infamous "Beheading of the Four Nations" incident—slaughtering the monarchs of the North Blue's four kingdoms and immortalizing the event in a massive mural.

"Send someone with a message—let him know that Germa 66 doesn't get to run wild in the North Blue. The Headquarters may be just going through the motions with this review, but I won't allow Judge to plunge the region into chaos under my watch."

He tapped the edge of the bathtub with a finger.

"The ruler of the North Blue... isn't Germa 66."

Momonga nodded, but hesitated, clearly holding something back.

"Something else?"

Daren gave him a sidelong glance.

After a moment of thought, Momonga spoke slowly.

"A new group has emerged in the North Blue—powerful, and exceptionally brutal."

"They've already crushed several well-known mafia families, like the Gallon Family, and taken over their operations."

"I sent people to look into their background. Something doesn't add up."

He took a deep breath, his expression darkening.

"The leader of this group... is a kid. Not even ten years old."

"His name is..."

Momonga exhaled slowly.

"...Donquixote Doflamingo."

## **Chapter 10 - 10: The Graceful Jiki Jiki no Mi**

"Donquixote Doflamingo?"

At the mention of the name, Daren froze for a moment, then a strange expression crept across his face.

As a transmigrator, he was anything but unfamiliar with that name—in fact, it rang like thunder in his ears.

A future member of the Seven Warlords of the Sea, the infamous "Doffy"!

The biggest underworld broker, controlling over half of the world's illegal trade routes—"JOKER"!

Publicly, the king of Dressrosa; secretly, an ally of Kaido of the Beasts and a key player in shaking the world's power balance!

However...

At this point in time, the Shichibukai system hadn't even been established yet. Kaido of the Beasts hadn't become one of the Four Emperors dominating the New World.

And Doflamingo... was nothing more than a cocky brat who had just arrived in the North Blue with a few followers, trying to build his power.

"Yes, this brat's background..."

Momonga spoke vaguely, with a trace of apprehension in his tone.

Daren chuckled and bluntly laid it out:

"He's just a Celestial Dragon who got stripped of his privileges. Now he's running around the North Blue like a stray dog, biting at everything in sight."

Momonga gave Daren a look. After working with him for so many years, he knew Daren was a reckless man who thrived on chaos.

But even so, his blatant contempt for the World Nobles, the Celestial Dragons, still left Momonga feeling a bit helpless.

"You're awfully calm about this," he sighed.

"Even though Doflamingo has lost the right to live in Mary Geoise, the fact remains—he still has Celestial Dragon blood running through his veins..."

"Now that he's flying the flag of the Donquixote Pirates, it's clear he intends to expand his influence here in the North Blue. He might even take root in the region. That could undo everything we've spent the last few years building."

He looked visibly troubled.

"Daren, should we report this to Marine Headquarters?"

Technically, Doflamingo had raised a pirate flag, and as Marines stationed in the North Blue, they were duty-bound to suppress him.

But his identity as a Celestial Dragon made things far more complicated.

Daren fell silent for a moment.

Doflamingo was definitely a problem.

In the original timeline, this lunatic had even dared to rob the Heavenly Tribute. Backed by his Celestial Dragon heritage, he forced the World Government to compromise and grant him the title of Shichibukai.

The Marines were wary of him too. They didn't dare act rashly because of his background.

Sure, Vice Admiral Tsuru had attempted to take him down multiple times and caused him a lot of trouble—later, Doflamingo would even flee at the sight of her warship.

But that just goes to show—Doflamingo was still out there, free.

With Tsuru's strength as a veteran Marine, even if she wasn't quite on the level of Garp or Sengoku, she could've easily crushed and captured a not-yet-fully-grown Doflamingo.

And yet, she let him "slip away" time and time again.

Simply put, it all came down to one thing: his Celestial Dragon lineage.

"No, that brat—leave him to me. You don't need to worry about it for now."

"As for the headquarters, I imagine that old man Sengoku won't be able to sit still for long."

Momonga nodded and turned to leave the estate.

...

Daren lay still in the freezing, bone-chilling water, lost in thought.

At some point, he raised his hand.

A faint arc of electricity flickered between his fingers, and in the next moment, an invisible, eerie magnetic field suddenly spread out around him.

Then, an unbelievable scene unfolded—

A coin floated out of the pocket of the military trousers hanging nearby and hovered steadily above Daren's palm, as if guided by some strange, unseen force.

Anyone witnessing this would've been shocked.

With a simple flick of his fingers, the metal coin spun and danced gracefully around his palm like a nimble butterfly.

Paramecia-type: Jiki Jiki no Mi!

In the original storyline, this was the Devil Fruit ability of Supernova Eustass Kid, a member of the "Worst Generation"!

It generates magnetic fields, magnetizes metal, and allows the user to manipulate magnetism and electrically control all metal objects like iron.

This was a trophy Daren claimed during a mafia purge. Once he confirmed it was the Jiki Jiki no Mi that belonged to Eustass Kid, he ate it without hesitation.

The Jiki Jiki no Mi was a fruit with immense developmental potential and virtually limitless power—but Kid, that idiot, turned it into a joke.

He could've become a suave, commanding figure like Magneto, but instead he played around with metal junk like Lego and Gundams.

A god-tier fruit, completely wasted.

At least in Daren's eyes, if developed properly, the Jiki Jiki no Mi's power was easily on par with any top-tier Logia.

Naturally, this had become Daren's greatest trump card.

With that in mind, he slowly closed his eyes.

He lay in the frigid water, the invisible magnetic field spreading in all directions. The metal coin floated and twirled around him, occasionally sparking with faint purple arcs of electricity.

Under the effects of the bio-magnetic field, the wounds on his body were rapidly healing. His muscles rhythmically pulsed and contracted across his entire body.

This was a new ability he had recently developed from the Jiki Jiki no Mi.

By immersing the body in a high-intensity bio-magnetic field, it could accelerate recovery and steadily enhance physical attributes.

Of course, even with his powerful physique, he could only endure about three hours of this field. The longer it lasted, the more intense the pressure and pain.

If it exceeded his body's limit, his internal organs would suffer irreversible damage.

Time ticked by...

Within the magnetic field's effect,

Daren could feel his physical stats rising every ten minutes.

Physique+0.01

Strength +0.01

Speed +0.01

...

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The next day.

Daren put on a crisp new military uniform and draped a wide cloak over his shoulders. Just as he stepped into the base commander's office, he saw Tokikake slouched on the couch, sporting deep dark circles under his eyes and yawning endlessly.

Clearly, he'd been up all night training and was completely drained.

Daren chuckled to himself—seems he really got under the guy's skin.

"Good morning, Lieutenant Commander Tokikake."

"Morning..." Tokikake mumbled sleepily. Then, as if the voice finally registered, he jolted upright from the couch with a shiver.

"Not the face!!"

He threw up a defensive pose, arms crossed tightly in front of his face.

Trying to protect his money-maker, huh... Daren couldn't help but laugh and shook his head.

"Relax. I know you rely on your looks."

Tokikake gave him a wary look before slowly lowering his arms.

Feeling a little embarrassed, he stiffened his neck and gave a cold snort.

"Glad you know your place."

He paused, then added, "About yesterday's spar—you know I wasn't going all out."

"I mean, you're the top dog in the North Blue. If I beat you down in front of all your subordinates, it wouldn't look too good."

Daren smiled "knowingly."

"Of course. Lieutenant Commander Tokikake is a genius of the headquarters. How could I possibly be your match?"

He pulled out a box of cigars and handed one to Tokikake.

"Damn right!" Tokikake beamed, clearly pleased with the compliment. One hand on his hip, he proudly accepted the cigar with the other.

"But hey, Daren, where'd you get this cigar? This is high-quality stuff. Even HQ doesn't see much of it..."

As he spoke, Tokikake lit the cigar and took a satisfied puff.

Daren sat down next to him, crossed one leg over the other, and lit one for himself as well.

"I've got plenty. If you like it, Lieutenant Commander, I'll have someone send a box over."

"A... a box?"

Tokikake's hand trembled, his eyes popping like he'd been burned.

He wasn't some clueless bumpkin.

These were luxury cigars made exclusively for nobles, grown in the tobacco plantations of the Ballywood Islands in the West Blue. Each one cost over 50,000 Berries.

A box held 10. A full carton, 20 boxes.

That meant one carton was worth over 10 million Berries!

And as a Lieutenant Commander, his annual salary wasn't even 2 million!

Where the hell did Daren get that kind of money?!