

One Piece 731

Chapter 731: Volume 4 – Chapter 250: Who Will Protect the Holy Land?

Buildings crumbled. Beasts roared. Blades lit up the sky.

Even a thunderous, rain-soaked night in Marineford couldn't drown out the burning blood of justice.

...

"Tsk, tsk, tsk... what a surprise. The one sent to stop me is just a clueless brat who doesn't even appear in the intel files.

You must be a new recruit from the Marine Academy, huh?"

A mid-level CPO officer stared mockingly at the tall figure standing stiffly in the rain. A sneer curled at the corner of his lips.

"A mere rookie dares stand in my way? Seems I've really been underestimated."

He scanned the pale-faced youth in front of him with critical eyes. The kid still wore a Marine training uniform. His appearance was fierce and strange—two horns sprouting from his head, black wings stretching from his back—like a demon from the depths of hell.

But with CPO's sharp perception, he'd already noticed the youth's trembling hands the moment he arrived.

This was a rookie.

A rookie among rookies.

"Do you even know who I am, brat?"

CPO's tone turned playful, his smile smug.

But before he could react—

The demonic-looking youth suddenly raised his hand, trembling.

"Hydra!"

Whoosh!!

A massive, over ten-meter-long purple venomous dragon exploded from his body, engulfing the CP0 officer in a blink with terrifying speed.

“This is... poison!?”

As the toxic purple mist flooded through him, the CP0 felt his strength drain away in an instant. He clawed at his throat, collapsing to his knees with a thud.

White smoke billowed from his body as his skin withered and rotted at a visible speed. Agonized screams burst from his lips.

Pure terror filled him as he realized the powerful physique he’d forged over decades of brutal training was being reduced to nothing—his cells torn apart like fragile paper by the venom’s wrath.

His bloodshot eyes locked onto Magellan, all arrogance and smugness wiped away.

“You... damn brat...”

“You’re a... Devil Fruit user...”

“And you started with... your strongest move...”

Magellan's hands still trembled. Clearly, he wasn't used to landing such a devastating, lethal blow.

He turned his face away, unable to watch, and muttered under his breath,

"I'm sorry. I don't have time to talk with you."

"Instructor Daren treated me well.

He was the only one who ever talked to me like a normal person, ate with me, never avoided me, never hated me for being a walking disaster."

"That's why—no matter who it is—I won't let anyone harm Instructor Daren's wife or child."

A faint glow appeared on Magellan's youthful face.

In his mind, Vice Admiral Rogers Daren's relaxed, smiling expression resurfaced, and the man's warm, encouraging voice echoed in his ears.

"Magellan, your power is strong—but that's not your fault."

“Use your power to protect others. Someday, with your Devil Fruit abilities, you’ll be able to defend the things you truly cherish.”

“I believe in you more than anyone else.”

“And maybe... one day, even I’ll need your help.”

That voice lingered, and a light sparked in Magellan’s eyes.

His hands were no longer trembling as badly.

He stepped over the collapsed CP0 agent—paralyzed and unable to rise—and walked toward his next target.

“Daren-sensei, I’ve made up my mind.

At least for tonight... I won’t hold back anymore!”

Magellan strode forward, head high, shoulders back.

Behind him, the massive purple Hydra roared skyward, its body nearly blotting out the heavens.

Everywhere he passed, corpses of CP agents lay scattered across the ground—frozen in shock and horror.

“Kill!!”

“Don’t let these bastards through!”

“This is Marine Headquarters!”

“This is Vice Admiral Rogers Daren’s family compound!”

“I’m going first! Cover me!”

“Damn it, let me go first! Do you know how much Vice Admiral Daren has tipped me over the years!?”

“Bullshit! Vice Admiral Daren even had someone look after my sick mother!”

“Enough crap—move!

As long as we can repay Vice Admiral Daren and protect his family, it’s worth dying here today!”

“At least my kid will never go hungry!”

“Charge!!”

The fighting intensified. More and more Marines gathered around the traditional courtyard, forming defensive lines.

They met the CP agents’ ferocious assaults head-on—resolute, unyielding, ready to die.

The CP agents stared, dumbfounded, at the frenzy before them.

They couldn’t believe what they were seeing.

Did these Marines not understand who they were dealing with?

The curfew from the World Government should’ve already gone into effect.

There shouldn't be a single Marine here offering backup!

Yet the scene before them shattered all expectations.

What the hell was going on with these cowards from Marine Headquarters?

Had they all gone mad?

Were they really throwing their lives away for a doomed traitor of a Vice Admiral?!

...

North Blue.

Philseque Island.

"Damn you, Daren!"

The four Five Elders roared furiously, their overwhelming Haki and thunderous voices shaking the clouds apart, sending shockwaves across the skies. In the distance, every Marine was stunned, their expressions frozen in disbelief.

They watched, dumbfounded, as the black-haired giant stood alone, holding back all four of the Five Elders.

It was so absurd, so surreal, it felt like a hallucination.

“You’re dead!”

“And so are your wife and children!”

“We are immortal!”

Transformed into towering monstrosities, the four Five Elders roared with voices dripping with hatred and bloodlust.

Daren stood firm—one foot stomping down on Gyūki, one hand clutching the Sandworm, and the other crashing a fist straight into Bakotsu’s skull. His eyes locked onto Houki’s gnashing fangs as he sneered,

“You might be immortal... but the rest of the Celestial Dragons aren’t.”

From far behind, a desperate roar echoed from Itsumade.

The Five Elders froze.

The blood-soaked corner of the Vice Admiral's mouth curled into a wild, defiant grin.

"Gentlemen... I have a question."

"If all five of you are here in the North Blue... then—"

Daren grinned savagely. His massive body surged with crackling black lightning until it engulfed him entirely.

Giant Devil Form!

"—who's left to protect the Holy Land?"

The moment those words dropped, the pupils of the Five Elders shrank into pinpoints.

It hit them all at once.

And for the first time in their long, ageless lives, an emotion surfaced that they had almost forgotten how to feel—

Fear.

A terrifying realization took hold, chilling them to their core like plunging into an icy abyss.

...

August, Year 1496 of the Sea Circle Calendar.

A sharp sea wind blew in from the endless blue, sweeping over the vast Red Line.

It passed the towering, ancient cityscape with its layered blue-tiled roofs and white stone walls, carrying winter's bite into the highest seat of power in the world.

In the Holy Land of Mary Geoise, tens of thousands of Celestial Dragons and hundreds of thousands of Holy Land soldiers lived in lazy comfort upon this seemingly peaceful land, indulging in their lives of decadence, just as they had for generations.

Far, far away—

A wide, bloodied red hand suddenly stretched out from beneath a cliff.

In the first light of dawn, it clamped firmly onto the jagged edge of the Red Line.

Not a hint of hesitation.

Not a single tremble.

Chapter 732: Volume 4 – Chapter 251 Like the Blazing Sun

The world was in turmoil, drifting in chaos.

And yet, atop this vast and seemingly endless red continent, all was calm and still.

The Red Line stretched across the sea, dividing the Grand Line into its front and back halves. Towering over a thousand meters above sea level, it held immense strategic value. Its cliff edges, worn smooth by the sea's erosion and the constant battering of damp ocean winds, were slick and treacherous—nearly impossible to climb.

This made the Red Line itself a natural stronghold, an impregnable fortress.

What's more, Marine Headquarters in Marineford wasn't far from here. Reinforcements could be dispatched at a moment's notice to safeguard the continent, turning the Holy Land Mary Geoise—perched atop the Red Line—into a truly prosperous, peaceful, and secure kingdom in the sky.

Coupled with the Celestial Dragons' extreme fear of death and blustering cowardice, the defenses within Mary Geoise were exceedingly tight. The Holy Land Guard alone boasted over 100,000 registered soldiers.

As a result, even Marine warships had to pass rigorous inspections by both the CP department and the Holy Land Guard before they were granted passage into the Red Line's inland sea.

Natural and man-made defenses combined to create an impenetrable barrier. For the past 800 years since the founding of the World Government, no one had ever succeeded in invading this sacred, blood-stained land.

But now...

A tall figure in a wide-hooded cloak stood silently at the edge of the Red Line's cliff, gazing into the distance at the grand and sacred "City of Gods." He stood there for a long time, silent.

Seawater dripped from his black-gray hood, soaking into the red soil at his feet, forming spreading dark spots.

His webbed, bloodstained hands trembled violently, thick and rough.

“So that’s the Celestial Dragons’ Holy Land... Mary Geoise.”

His scarred hand trembled as he pulled back his hood, revealing a coarse face with thick lips.

His skin was crimson like blood. His shoulders and back were broad, with fins extending from his spine. His arms and legs bulged with gnarled, knotted muscle.

This was Fisher Tiger, known as the “Blood Dragon,” one of the newly appointed Shichibukai.

“Can I really make it inside, Daren-san?”

His thick lips parted slightly as he muttered the question, eyes shadowed by doubt and fear.

Far away, the towering city loomed solemn and forbidding. The massive walls, seemingly unshakable, stood like a monolith on the blood-red earth.

The weight of those walls, the flickering silhouettes of guards atop them, the name of Mary Geoise itself—each pressed down on Fisher Tiger’s chest like a stone, stirring something he couldn’t put into words.

Even though he had rehearsed this moment countless times in his dreams, even though he had envisioned it a thousand ways in his mind, it wasn't until he saw the Holy Land of the Celestial Dragons with his own eyes that the crushing despair truly hit.

His body was scarred from scaling the cliff face, while the Holy Land Guard remained numerous and heavily armed.

He felt so small beneath those towering, majestic walls.

The disparity was staggering.

Slowly, the world grew quiet.

Night had fallen. The last of the crimson clouds faded from the horizon, and the sun sank below the sea.

The temperature dropped. Cold sea winds swept across the Red Line, stinging Fisher Tiger's skin.

All was still.

Lights flickered to life along the walls of the Holy City. Laughter and rowdy voices echoed faintly in the distance, mixed with off-key humming of vulgar tunes.

Thanks to his sharp eyesight, Fisher Tiger could make out soldiers setting up stoves on the wall, casually enjoying hot pot and grilled meat.

Some of the guards on duty were even slacking off in the shadows, smoking lazily, the red glow of their cigarettes flashing dimly in the dark.

“It’s... real.”

His trembling hands began to steady.

He could hardly believe it.

Daren-san had been right.

Despite their fearsome appearance, the Holy Land Guard was shockingly lax and undisciplined.

If that was true...

Fisher Tiger suddenly crouched down and, using the last rays of dusk, began sketching quickly across the weathered ground.

In just a few seconds, a simple but clear map emerged before him.

He racked his memory, recalling the information Daren had shared during their brief call, and swiftly marked several key locations on the crude map of Mary Geoise.

The Land of the Gods—the Celestial Dragons' residential quarter.

Armories No. 1 through 4.

And several major slave auction houses...

"Maybe I really can do this."

He stared at the markings on the map, eyes once again filled with resolve.

The icy wind swept past, erasing the traces he'd left on the ground.

As night finally fell and darkness swallowed the world, the blood-colored sea bream fishman rose to his feet and let out a long breath.

In the next instant, he fully unleashed his Observation Haki.

A flood of chaotic sounds poured into his ears—soldiers laughing, nobles sneering, officials clinking glasses—but all of it was soon drowned out by something far stronger, almost maddening.

A massive wail.

He heard countless cries of anguish—the same soul-crushing cries he once held in his heart. They came from slaves just like him, bodies marked with the bloody brand of the “Hoof of the Soaring Dragon.”

“Wait for me.”

Faces contorted in blood-stained grins flashed through his mind, only to blur and fade in an instant.

“This time, I’ll be the one to lead you out—alive.”

Fisher Tiger’s eyes suddenly turned red.

He clenched his fists, then...

He ran!

Fast—yet utterly silent.

With blood-red sand swirling around him and the darkness as his cover, the sea bream fishman seemed to melt into the shadows.

Faster and faster.

Until ten minutes later—

Boom!!

A deafening explosion erupted from the northeast corner of Mary Geoise. The blast tore through the silence, flames surging skyward like a violent storm of rage, engulfing everything in blazing crimson.

It shattered the illusion of peace, and tore apart the so-called holiness of the city...

...and its eternal quiet.

On the walls, in barracks, across all the garrisons—countless Holy Land guards who were dozing off, drinking, feasting, or raising a ruckus were jolted awake. Panic seized them as they turned toward the blast.

There—where the explosion had erupted—

The ground was ablaze, the city swallowed in fire.

And atop a blue-tiled, white-walled building stood a crimson figure, holding a Celestial Dragon by the neck. With a sudden clench of his rough hand, he crushed the noble's skull like fruit.

“In the name of Rogers Daren, I liberate all the slaves of the Holy Land!!”

Blood rained down as the crimson figure roared to the sky.

The tattoo on his back looked as if it were bleeding, glowing red-hot with fury.

Behind him, the flames roared. The night sky hung heavy and grim.

All around him were slaves in tattered rags, the sharp clatter of falling shackles ringing out one after another.

In the depth of night, the slaves raised the weapons they'd seized and shouted with all their might, unleashing wild cheers toward the lone figure.

And in that moment,

Fisher Tiger, bathed in blood and surrounded by flame, seemed to shine with a light all his own—

Like the blazing sun.

Chapter 733: Volume 4 – Chapter 252: Unshaken for 800 Years

It was too easy.

Watching the flames roar into the sky, Fisher Tiger snapped the neck of a soldier rushing at him with a blade, his eyes slightly dazed—as if caught in a dream.

Far too easy.

He never expected the infiltration of Mary Geoise to go this smoothly.

The so-called Holy Land Guard stationed on the city walls might as well not have existed. It was as if the place had no defenses at all—he climbed over the wall without breaking a sweat.

And after that, everything fell into place, just as planned.

Following the intel and map of Mary Geoise provided by Daren, Fisher Tiger located an armory in less than three minutes.

He set it ablaze, triggering a massive explosion that plunged the entire Holy Land into chaos.

Panic swept through the city. People scattered in all directions like headless flies. No one noticed him, the foreign “invader.”

The nobles and officials scrambling to flee only made things worse, blocking the Holy Land Guard’s path and delaying their response.

And so, Fisher Tiger successfully freed 300 gladiator slaves from one of the slave markets.

When the shackles hit the ground, and they came face to face with the incoming Holy Land troops, all the rage the slaves had bottled up ignited at once.

But what shocked Fisher Tiger even more... was the actual combat ability of the Holy Land Guard.

Shiny blades, polished rifles, elite armor, top-tier tactical boots—everything about them screamed powerful, elite force.

And their enemies?

Just a group of wounded, unarmed slaves.

Yet when the fighting began, the outcome defied all logic.

The supposedly formidable Holy Land Guard crumbled like frightened rats under the assault of frenzied gladiator slaves.

Their sloppy formations fell apart at first contact. They dropped their gear and ran.

The slaves, now armed with reclaimed weapons, saw their strength surge. Like a snowball gathering speed, they launched a relentless pursuit, following Fisher Tiger to liberate even more of their own.

Their numbers grew rapidly, expanding by the minute.

Fire and chaos devoured everything.

From a distance, it looked like half of Mary Geoise was ablaze.

“Damn it! You filthy pests! Stay back!!”

A Celestial Dragon shrieked in terror, face pale, stumbling backward as the fishman strode toward him.

“Do you even know who I am!?”

“I am a god of this sea!”

“If you kill me, no one will be able to save you!”

The only answer he received was the cold gaze of the sea bream fishman—and the furious, hate-filled stares of the slaves surrounding him.

“They don’t need anyone to save them.”

Fisher Tiger spoke calmly.

“From today on, there will be no more chains on them. No more orders to obey.”

“They are free people now.”

With those words, Fisher Tiger turned and headed off toward another slave holding site.

Behind him...

As the Celestial Dragon’s screams echoed in the night, over a dozen ragged slaves closed in. With fists and feet, they beat him down, until there was nothing left but blood and pulp.

...

North Blue.

Philseque Island.

The Vice Admiral's chilling remark left the Five Elders momentarily stunned, their expressions darkening in unison.

“What are you talking about!?”

Gyūki Saturn's eyes were bloodshot as he snarled, voice twisted with fury, glaring at Daren.

Daren replied with a faint, unreadable smile.

“What I mean is, all five of you have gathered here. If something were to happen to Mary Geoise... who would be left to protect that so-called holy land?”

The pupils of the Five Elders contracted.

A creeping dread—unthinkable and yet undeniable—began to stir in each of their minds, swelling into a tide of panic that quickly took over.

“Impossible!”

Topman Warcury snapped coldly.

“Mary Geoise sits atop a natural fortress! Its defenses are unmatched! For 800 years, not once has it ever faltered. An invasion is out of the question!”

But even before his words had fully settled—

“Buru buru... buru buru...”

A Den Den Mushi began to ring urgently. The sound pierced the air like a death knell.

Warcury's eyelid twitched.

Under the heavy breathing and tense gazes of the other Elders, he snatched up the receiver.

“Speak!”

Saturn's voice cut through the air like a blade.

“L-Lord! Something terrible has happened!!”

The voice on the other end trembled with panic. Behind it, muffled rumbles echoed—flames crackling, buildings collapsing.

“Mary Geoise... someone has invaded Mary Geoise!”

Silence fell.

The other Four Elders all turned toward Warcury.

“...” Warcury gritted his teeth.

“Where’s the Holy Land Guard!? Mobilize them immediately and crush the intruder! We have over 100,000 troops stationed there—well-armed and strictly disciplined. They’ll—”

“The Guard is already retreating!”

The voice on the line was shaking uncontrollably.

Warcury: “...”

“Then call the Marines! Order them to deploy forces and suppress the attack!”

“All elite units from the Marines have been deployed to the North Blue to escort the World Noble Hunting Tournament. It’s too late... Everything’s too late...”

Warcury froze.

His fangs bared, fury seething just below the surface.

“Then what about Marine Headquarters? Even if the elites are gone, there must still be other units stationed in Marineford!”

The officer's voice trembled even more.

“L-Lord, at Marineford... there’s only one person left capable of responding.”

“Who!?”

“Former Admiral of Marine Headquarters... ‘Black Arm’ Zephyr.”

The veins on the Five Elders’ foreheads bulged in unison.

“Anyone else!? Someone who can hold them off!”

“We’ve lost contact with Marineford!”

“Why!?” The Elders roared, eyes blazing red.

“Marine Headquarters has declared martial law... They’re refusing all outside orders.”

“Damn it!! Who gave that order!?”

“It—it was you... Your orders...”

The man’s voice nearly broke into a sob.

The Five Elders froze.

Under Daren’s quietly entertained gaze, their faces turned a furious shade of pale.

“So... who exactly is the intruder? If possible, dispatch the Shichibukai to the Holy Land at once—have them deal with it!”

“B-but... the intruder is one of the Shichibukai...”

The Five Elders: “...”

A piercing scream suddenly rang out through the Den Den Mushi—

Then silence.

A deep, grim voice replaced it.

“Greetings, esteemed Five Elders. I am the intruder... Fisher Tiger of the Shichibukai.”

“...Acting on the orders of Rogers Daren, I’ve come to liberate all the slaves in the Holy Land.”

Chapter 734: Volume 4 – Chapter 253: God’s Knights Strike!

Cold snow drifted down from the bleak, overcast sky above Philseque Island, fluttering like white catkins onto the frozen, rigid faces of the Five Elders.

The world had gone eerily still.

Not a sound could be heard—not even a bird’s cry.

Facing the smirking gaze of the Marine brat before them, the Five Elders’ expressions were grim. Even in their monstrous transformed states, terrifying in both size and presence, they couldn’t hide the fury and panic in their eyes.

He really dared to do it.

He actually dared!

How could he?

He had sent the Shichibukai “Blood Dragon” Fisher Tiger to infiltrate Mary Geoise—the sacred land of the Celestial Dragons—to set fires, wreak havoc, and free those lowly slaves!?

Not in their worst nightmares had the Five Elders ever imagined someone would truly have the audacity to invade the Holy Land.

It was the greatest humiliation the World Government had suffered in centuries.

Under normal circumstances, someone like Fisher Tiger would've been easy to eliminate. They could have sent anyone and wiped him out with ease.

But this time was different.

All the “reliable” combat power of Marine Headquarters had already been drawn to the North Blue, and even the five of them—the highest authorities of the World Government—were here on this frozen, remote island.

And to make matters worse, this damn brat of a Marine had orchestrated it all alone, dragging every last bit of their strength to the North Blue...

Just realizing that made the Five Elders break out in a cold sweat.

But what troubled them most was that even if the five of them combined their full strength, they still couldn't take down Daren in a short amount of time.

This guy was too strange.

He hadn't yet reached the absolute peak of this sea. He was still far from the level of Rocks—the “King of the World” who could shake islands with just his presence.

And yet, he was somehow more troublesome than Rocks ever was.

An almost indestructible body, strength beyond even that of the giants, speed and reflexes that defied logic... Whether it was hand-to-hand combat, Haki, or his Devil Fruit ability, the man had no weaknesses.

The existence of this bastard felt like it had been designed purely to torment them.

Just then, another burst of “buru buru” calls rang out from the Den Den Mushi on each of the Five Elders.

They paused, joints cracking as they rapidly shifted into their towering five- to six-meter human-beast hybrid forms, pulling out the Den Den Mushi and accepting the calls.

As the devices lit up, projections slowly began to take shape.

What appeared was a scene straight out of hell.

A sea of red filled the vision. Roaring flames lit up the gloom, swallowing the sky. Most of the city had been consumed by fire.

Through the smoke and blaze, they could just make out hordes of enraged, frenzied slaves rampaging through the streets, tearing through the Holy Land Guard like they were made of straw. The soldiers scattered, broken and routed.

The Five Elders frowned deeply, their hearts sinking fast.

Had it really gotten this bad?

According to the reports, at least a third of Mary Geoise's commercial district had already fallen.

Fortunately, the "Land of the Gods"—where the Celestial Dragons resided—was still heavily guarded and had not suffered significant damage... yet.

Warcury took a deep breath, shot a glance at the Vice Admiral beside him—also back in human form and gasping for air—and coldly spoke into the military Den Den Mushi:

"Fisher Tiger, stop now... there's still a chance for us to show mercy."

"Or do you really think you can lead those foolish slaves out of the Holy Land?"

On the other end, Fisher Tiger replied calmly,

"Lords, I don't believe what I'm doing is evil—so I don't need anyone's forgiveness."

“On the contrary, it is people like you—tyrants who enslave lives and strip away freedom—who should be begging for forgiveness. Power, in and of itself, is the greatest evil.”

“As for whether I can get my people out of this damned city, that’s none of your concern.”

“Light and fire will guide our way.”

Fisher Tiger’s firm and unyielding voice left the Five Elders momentarily speechless.

None of them had expected that the long-oppressed fishmen would give rise to someone like Fisher Tiger.

Suddenly, Saturn let out a cold snort, his tone laced with menace.

“If you stop now, we’ll make it painless for you. We won’t pursue the others, either... But if you continue—do you really think Fish-Man Island can withstand the wrath of the World Government?”

Fisher Tiger answered, voice cold as ice,

“There’s no need for threats. I chose this path. I have no regrets.”

“As for Fish-Man Island’s safety, I have full confidence in Daren-san.”

“I didn’t come to bathe the Holy Land in blood—only to rescue those who suffer in chains. That’s all.”

With that, he cut the line before the Five Elders could speak another word.

“Damn it!!”

Saturn roared through gritted teeth, whipping around to glare at the Vice Admiral, who was clearly exhausted. His bloodshot eyes burned with fury.

“Daren, you little brat! Is this your declaration of war against the World Government!?”

Daren steadied his breathing, wiped the blood from his mouth and face, and sneered.

“With your wisdom and brilliance, surely I don’t need to spell it out.”

“When you cornered me like this, did you really think I wouldn’t fight back?”

The Five Elders froze.

Of course they had considered the possibility that Daren might retaliate—and they were confident they had taken every precaution.

They'd locked down the island with elite Marines. They'd used Daren's wife as leverage. They'd even personally descended on the North Blue.

Measures like those were enough to crush anyone who dared resist.

But what they hadn't expected was that—beyond his terrifying strength—Daren had quietly made his own preparations behind the scenes.

“...What a joke.”

Just then, a cold and arrogant laugh rang out.

Warcury shook his head dismissively, his voice brimming with absolute confidence.

“Daren, did you really think Fisher Tiger alone would be enough to throw us into disarray?”

“I told you... You know nothing of the World Government’s eight centuries of power.”

As he spoke, the image on the Den Den Mushi—still linked to the situation in Mary Geoise—shifted.

Several figures began to appear, their presence deep and foreboding.

They were tall, composed, and dressed in noble World Government uniforms: light-colored dress suits with thick, upright collars, topped with dark, ankle-length hooded coats. On their arms gleamed pale medals embossed with the World Government’s cross-shaped emblem of authority.

Among them, Daren immediately recognized a familiar red-haired figure.

Saint Figarland Garling.

“This farce will be over in just a few minutes...”

Warcury’s face twisted into a confident smile.

“...judged by the God’s Knights.”

Chapter 735: Volume 4 – Chapter 254: I Want Blood!

“So... they’ve finally made their move?”

Daren’s bloodshot eyes suddenly lit up as he stared hard at the Den Den Mushi screen, locking onto the shadowy figures now coming into view.

The God's Knights—one of the most mysterious and formidable forces within the World Government—were composed of Celestial Dragons themselves. Their role was to uphold the dignity and power of the royal family, to protect the Celestial Dragons, and maintain their dominion.

Even as a transmigrator, Daren knew little about this elite force.

How many of them were there? Just how powerful were they? Did each member possess the same monstrous strength as Saint Figarland Garling?

To truly go to war with the World Government, gathering detailed intel was essential.

Back in Mary Geoise, Saint Figarland Garling’s overwhelming Conqueror’s Haki had already exceeded every expectation Daren had.

And if every member of the God's Knights was as powerful as him... things would become very, very difficult.

The feed from the military Den Den Mushi shifted again.

Figures dressed in elegant noble suits emerged from the black smoke and swept across the burning streets with terrifying speed.

Under the flickering night sky, with fire dancing around them, the God's Knights moved like graceful specters in a burning underworld—smiling as they harvested lives.

Their swordsmanship was intricate, refined—like butterflies weaving through flowers, like light and shadow flickering past. Many of the slaves didn't even notice they'd been struck until a thin red line appeared on their necks. A few seconds later, they collapsed without a sound.

Daren had never seen swordplay like this before.

He wasn't skilled in swordsmanship himself. The few "sword techniques" he had learned were really just Devil Fruit-powered hurls—brute force dressed up as blade arts.

Shiki, once the strongest dual-wielding swordsman of his era, had sneered at those moves, calling them "half-baked tricks"—the kind that only a sword-obsessed fool like Mihawk would take seriously.

But just because Daren didn't wield a sword didn't mean he lacked understanding.

He had crossed blades with the best: Kozuki Oden, Shiki, Roger, Rayleigh, Big Mom... Titans of swordsmanship. Those battles had sharpened Daren's insight and perspective far beyond the average fighter's.

And now, he found himself surprised.

The God's Knights' sword style was clearly distinct from the Eastern, samurai-based schools. It bore the unmistakable flair of Western fencing—favoring stabs and thrusts over slashes and swings.

This made their attacks far more piercing and deadly.

The silver lining? Judging from what he saw on the screen, most of the God's Knights hadn't reached the level of an Admiral—or were just barely brushing its edge.

“Take a good look, Daren...”

Warcury's wounds were slowly mending under a cloak of black flame and smoke. His gaze was condescending as he looked down on the battered, breathless Vice Admiral.

“They've already surrounded Fisher Tiger. This farce will be over soon.”

“A frog in a well will always be a frog. Do you really think a fishman raised in the stench of a sewer could ever comprehend the might of gods above the clouds?”

With those words, Warcury's body swelled once more. In the blink of an eye, he transformed into a monstrous wild boar—Houki—so massive he seemed to blot out the sky. His tusks gleamed as he charged at Daren!

“Die! You should be proud, Daren! Few have ever caused us this much trouble!”

He'd already seen it.

The Marine Vice Admiral before him was at the end of his rope. Even if those other two launched another attack, there was no way he'd recover the strength he'd lost!

Houki roared. The ground quaked beneath him, splitting apart as he thundered forward.

“Storm Fury, Dragon Roar!”

A hoarse roar suddenly tore through the air.

A dark green hurricane surged into existence, rapidly expanding and twisting into a lifelike storm dragon. In an instant, it coiled around Houki's massive frame, jaws snapping straight at his neck.

The two colossal beasts collided violently, grappling across the ground and sending debris flying in all directions.

“I thought you were dead.”

Daren glanced toward Dragon as he emerged from the whirlwind and gave a faint smile.

Dragon’s face was covered in bruises, his body streaked with claw marks that still oozed blood.

“This bunch of old bastards... their powers make no sense at all!”

He wasn't in the mood for jokes. His gaze was grim, locked tightly onto Saint Marcus Mars—who had taken the form of Itsumade. A flicker of dread passed through his eyes as he grit his teeth.

That brief clash had been enough. He finally understood why even someone as powerful as Daren had been pushed to this state.

Immortality.

Even his strongest attacks, including his signature Ryusoken capable of crushing all tyranny in its path, had failed to leave a scratch on that old man.

Instead, under the unrelenting assault, his own injuries had only worsened—until he was left gravely wounded.

“Daren, do you have a plan?”

With Kuma and Ivankov standing tensely behind him, Dragon didn’t even bother to wipe the blood from his lips. He asked heavily,

“If there’s no way to actually kill them, we might have to retreat.”

The five monstrous shadows loomed nearby, restless and menacing. A cold sweat trickled down Dragon’s back.

Their raw strength was formidable—but not invincible. What truly pushed them toward despair was the enemy's relentless regenerative power.

Facing Dragon’s wary gaze, the Five Elders remained calm, their expressions mocking and cold.

Like gods surveying the final, futile struggle of insects, they looked down on the battlefield with detached cruelty.

They wanted to savor the last flicker of hope dying in their enemies’ eyes.

The world fell silent.

The situation grew increasingly dire.

On the Den Den Mushi projection screen, slaves were being slaughtered one after another, their voiceless screams echoing across the battlefield.

Fisher Tiger had already been targeted by two of the God's Knights. Deep, bone-baring wounds now marked both his chest and back.

Dragon stared hard at Daren, hoping—begging—for an answer.

“I never planned on killing them.”

The Vice Admiral finally spoke, his voice raspy.

He exhaled a heavy breath.

“They really do seem unkillable. At least for now, I haven’t found a single opening.”

The Five Elders all broke into laughter.

But before they could respond—

“But you’ve all forgotten one thing.”

They froze.

“What?”

A sudden weight pressed down on their hearts.

Daren’s lips curled into a defiant, unsettling smile that sent a chill through them.

“Tiger-san is merciful and compassionate. He doesn’t want to bathe the Holy Land in blood. All he wants is to save the suffering slaves... but me? I’m not like him.”

“As everyone knows, I, Rogers Daren, am a man who never lets a grudge go.”

“You burned my home—I’ll burn yours.”

“What I want is blood repaid in blood.”

Daren slowly pulled out a bloodstained military Den Den Mushi, connected the line, and grinned savagely at the Five Elders as he spoke into the device.

“What I want... is for Mary Geoise, the Celestial Dragons’ Holy Land, to drown in blood!”

Chapter 736: Volume 4 – Chapter 255: Blow it up!

“I want this Holy Land... drenched in blood!”

The moment those words fell, the Five Elders’ eyes twitched violently. As they stared at the military Den Den Mushi clutched tightly in the Vice Admiral’s hand, that same bone-deep unease and fear surged up once again.

They still didn’t know what kind of trump cards this cunning little Navy rat, Daren, might be hiding—but they couldn’t afford to take the gamble this time.

Because the stakes weren’t their so-called immortal bodies...

It was their fellow Celestial Dragons living in Mary Geoise!

"Are you looking to die?!"

"Stop!"

"Impudent!"

"How insolent!!"

"..."

Almost simultaneously, without needing to exchange glances, the Five Elders moved in unison!

Five murderous auras erupted at once—dense and suffocating, so intense they felt tangible.

Gyūki, Houki, Itsumade, and the Sandworm let out deafening roars.

Dragon grit his teeth, cast a quick glance back at Daren, then braced himself and charged in first.

The hurricane howled.

The dark green wind dragon roared to life once more, and in that explosive burst of power, it managed to lock down Houki, Itsumade, and the Sandworm all at once!

The spider-like Gyūki seized the moment, darting forward. Its sharp legs raised high, it stabbed toward the Vice Admiral—already exhausted and barely standing.

“Hell Wink!”

Ivankov activated his ability. His eyes, rimmed in purple-black shadow, blinked hard, unleashing a violent shockwave.

The blast tore through Gyūki’s massive form—but it only staggered him slightly. It wasn’t enough to slow the assault.

Then, the spider’s swollen abdomen suddenly bulged even more—purple-black venom burst forth like a jet.

“Kuma!”

Ivankov’s face went pale as he let out a sharp scream.

Whoosh!

Just as the words left his mouth, a towering, bear-like figure appeared silently in front of him. With a quiet motion, the figure raised a hand and swatted at the incoming poison.

A bizarre scene followed.

Bang!

The venom, though liquid, bounced off the meaty palm as if it were solid, completely deflected.

It landed far away, where it hissed and bubbled into the ground, eating out a massive, gaping pit.

“Hm?”

In his half-human, half-beast form, Saint Saturn raised an eyebrow. He squinted at the dull-faced young man before him, studied him briefly, then spoke coldly,

“So it’s you. I remember now... the little brat from the Buccaneer tribe.”

“I didn’t expect you to still be alive after all these years. I thought you died back in God Valley.”

“Looks like I underestimated you.”

Kuma stared calmly at the Five Elders—the very ones who had once filled him with terror and despair during the God Valley battle—and said in a deep voice,

“Old man, I won’t let you hurt Daren-san.”

He raised both hands.

The air between his palms visibly compressed, glowing brighter and brighter.

Saint Saturn’s pupils narrowed slightly.

“So I have to take care of you first... your hands are far too troublesome.”

Before he could finish speaking, the compressed air between Kuma’s hands had already reached its peak.

He lifted his arms and pushed forward gently.

“Ursus Shock!”

BOOM!!

A massive explosion erupted, unleashing a shockwave of destruction that devoured everything in its path.

And just as the explosion ripped through the battlefield...

The cry of warhorses pierced the air.

Like phantoms wrapped in black flame, skeletal steeds galloped with thunderous force—yet moved as swiftly as illusions, flashing through the blinding light of the air blast.

An eerie black blade streaked through the void, trailing a brilliant blue glow—as if a frozen hell had descended upon the world.

Ice crystals drifted down.

One clean slash!

Shhhk!!

Daren, still gripping the Den Den Mushi, suddenly jolted. His eyes went blank for an instant.

A spray of crimson erupted from his chest, blooming like a flower in full, terrible bloom.

“Daren, a monster like you should never have existed in this world.”

In his centaur form, Ethanbaron V. Nusjuro—known as “Bakotsu”—gripped the infamous cursed blade with one hand, his voice cold and sharp.

Black flames swirled around him, reflecting eerily in his glasses. His samurai robes whipped wildly in the blaze, and the skeletal warhorse beneath him shrieked sharply... like a death knight risen from the depths of hell.

“That blade... is it the original Kitetsu?”

Daren staggered back two steps before falling to one knee with a heavy thud. His pale lips bled as he glanced at the cursed sword in Ethanbaron V. Nusjuro's gaunt hand.

"A strike that chills the soul... I've never seen swordsmanship like this."

He looked down—his chest bore a deep, bone-revealing wound, yet the bleeding had stopped. The gash was now sealed under a thick frost, its bitter cold spreading inward—straight toward his heart.

"The brush of death... the chill in my soul..."

Clutching his chest, the Vice Admiral looked up. In Ethanbaron V. Nusjuro's stunned gaze, Daren's lips curled into a grin that bordered on madness.

"You're making this more and more fun!"

He picked up the Den Den Mushi and issued the command:

"Do it..."

Taking a deep breath—whether from pain or rage—he roared, eyes bloodshot and mouth twisted into a savage grin:

“Blow it up!!”

In that instant—

The Five Elders froze.

As if sensing something, they turned in horror to the Den Den Mushi projecting the live feed from Mary Geoise.

The sight that met them nearly made their eyes burst from their sockets.

“This... can’t be...”

...

At the same time.

Red Line.

Mary Geoise.

BOOM!!

A battered, bloodied figure flew through the air before crashing into a building, the force of impact instantly reducing it to rubble.

Fisher Tiger struggled from the wreckage, staggering to his feet.

Blood dripped freely from his body. He pressed a rough palm to the gash in his abdomen—so deep it nearly split his organs—and was consumed by an overwhelming wave of weakness.

In the distance, the cries of slaves being massacred cut into his heart like blades.

The “Hoof of the Soaring Dragon” branded on his chest throbbed with a burning pain, as if ready to ignite or explode at any moment.

“Is that all you’ve got, Fisher Tiger? What a disappointment. I thought you might at least make things interesting.”

The Celestial Dragon with crescent-shaped crimson hair strolled forward, lazily twirling his Western sword.

“Some Shichibukai you are. With that level of strength, I don’t see a reason for your kind to exist.”

With Figarland Garling’s sneer, the God's Knights flanking him chuckled mockingly.

“How utterly boring... In the end, only Daren can hold my interest.”

Figarland Garling sighed and shook his head.

He raised his sword, ready to deliver the final blow to Fisher Tiger.

But then—

Rip!

A bolt of blue lightning tore through the dark sky.

Figarland Garling’s face darkened as he abruptly changed his strike mid-air, swinging his sword.

BOOM!!

A piercing sword slash collided with the dazzling lightning, unleashing a wave of purgatory-like force.

“Mind if I join the fun?”

A deep voice echoed from above Mary Geoise.

The sudden interruption left Figarland Garling, the God's Knights, and the Holy Land guards fighting the slaves momentarily stunned.

They all looked up—somehow, a figure had appeared in the sky above Mary Geoise.

A wide white cape. A crisp black suit. A stern mustache...

It was a young Marine officer with an aura of calm and deadly focus.

Electricity crackled from his raised hand, surging with power.

In the other hand, he held a Den Den Mushi.

“Tch... just you?” Figarland Garling sneered.

His figure vanished in a blink.

In the next instant, he reappeared midair, racing toward Momonga at terrifying speed.

“Of course not.”

Momonga shook his head, unleashing dozens of jagged lightning bolts with one hand.

Figarland Garling slashed through them with ease, laughing as he closed the distance.

“The strongest Logia... is that all?”

He suddenly accelerated again, appearing directly above Momonga and raising his sword high.

“Get down!”

“You don’t deserve to stand above—”

He didn’t finish.

From the Den Den Mushi in Momonga’s hand, Daren’s voice rang out.

“Blow it up!”

Figarland Garling froze.

BOOM!!

A massive golden beam shot down from the clouds, engulfing Figarland Garling and slamming him into the ground below.

The explosion erupted in a sea of roaring, fiery red flames!

Chapter 737: Volume 4 – Chapter 256: North Blue Fleet, Attack!

“Saint Figarland Garling!”

“What is that!?”

“A laser cannon!?”

“Isn’t that Borsalino’s ability? Something’s off!”

“Wait—something’s hiding behind the clouds!”

“...”

Ten members of God's Knights darted closer, drawn by the thunderous explosion. Their gazes locked on the young Marine wreathed in crackling blue lightning, expressions tense and wary.

“Damn it... what the hell kind of attack was that...”

Saint Figarland Garling climbed out of the burning crater, scorched and disheveled. His expression turned darker by the second.

His once-pristine, crescent-shaped hairstyle now hung in scorched clumps, the elegance gone, leaving him looking almost comical.

“You bastard... who are you?”

He lifted his head, bloodshot eyes fixed on Momonga, rage simmering in his voice.

The fires across the land were gradually being subdued under the efforts of the Holy Land's guards. The inferno Fisher Tiger had unleashed was finally being contained. CP agents and Holy Land troops flooded in from every direction, weapons ready, all aiming warily at the strange Marine floating above them.

Momonga looked down on the ruins below, meeting countless eyes filled with hatred, fear, and rage.

The so-called supreme God's Knights.

The arrogant CP agents.

The self-important Holy Land guards...

All those who had never spared a glance at the North Blue Navy now watched him with sharpened hostility, poised to strike.

And yet, for the normally composed Momonga, a strange thrill surged beneath his skin—an unprecedented mix of dread and exhilaration that made his body tremble.

So this is Mary Geoise... and it's not so invincible after all.

"I am Momonga, Admiral of the North Blue."

His voice was calm and flat.

As he spoke, he slowly spread his arms wide.

Rip.

Rip.

Rip.

Brilliant arcs of lightning burst from his arms, snaking skyward and scattering across the dark heavens like a field of stars.

Thunder crackled. The source of this content is novel Fire.net

Blinding bolts bloomed and vanished in waves, blanketing the sky in an instant.

Countless streaks of lightning split the clouds and crashed down to earth, detonating one after another.

Cries of panic echoed from every corner of Mary Geoise. In the Land of the Gods, Celestial Dragons screamed and trembled, frozen in terror.

Their wide eyes stared upward, locked in place.

Above Mary Geoise, under the pulsing glow of lightning, the darkness was gradually driven back.

A massive silhouette began to emerge from the dense sea of clouds.

A streamlined bow designed for speed and shock. A hull plated in high-strength alloy. Sleek glider wings balanced perfectly for sustained flight...

It was a fortress—a floating warship of metal and might!

Weapons lined its hull in terrifying arrays, but none more menacing than the triple-barreled main cannons at the front. Their gaping, pitch-black muzzles looked like the jaws of monsters bred for war, ready to devour all in their path.

A wave of raw, iron-blooded pressure surged through the air with the warship's appearance.

"A... flying battleship!?"

Saint Figarland Garling's pupils shrank to pinpoints as he stared in disbelief.

The other God's Knights looked just as stunned, speechless, their eyes wide in pure shock.

Rogers Daren... had really built a flying battleship!?

And that was just the beginning.

As the first warship fully emerged from the clouds and revealed itself to the world...

A second followed.

Then a third...

Under the horrified gazes of countless Celestial Dragons, World Government officials, and Holy Land guards...

One after another, the floating warships broke through the cloud cover.

Like roaring, ironclad beasts, they surged forward—menacing, brutal, and relentless. Blue arcs of electricity crackled across their hulls as they methodically formed a fearsome attack formation in the sky.

Fifteen airborne steel fortresses, armed to the teeth, hovered in perfect matrix alignment—utterly still, yet radiating overwhelming force.

Each of their engines thundered with a deafening roar, shaking the heavens and earth. The sheer pressure of it was suffocating, a terror that couldn't be put into words.

“This... this can't be real...”

“A full fleet of airborne warships...”

“How did Rogers Daren get this kind of power!?”

“Even if he drained all of North Blue's wealth dry, this should be impossible!”

“And the weapons loaded onto those ships...”

“...”

God's Knights, CP agents, and the Holy Land's military stared, dumbfounded, as a chilling wave surged up from the soles of their feet. It raced through their legs, shot up their spines, and exploded in their skulls—leaving only tingling scalps and wide-eyed disbelief.

Fisher Tiger, covered in blood and barely conscious, slowly lifted his head. As he looked up at the magnificent fleet above, a wild, unrestrained grin spread across his bruised lips.

“Daren-san... I knew you would...”

The flickering light of the flames danced across his face. He clenched his fist and murmured in a daze,

“Let the tyrants of this world feel your wrath.”

Suddenly, a furious roar echoed across the battlefield.

“You think you can destroy the Holy Land with that pile of scrap!? Dream on!”

Saint Figarland Garling shot into the sky with fluid precision, lunging straight at Momonga.

His Western sword flared with radiant brilliance as he unleashed a sweeping strike.

Momonga's eyes flared red. Without hesitation, he drew his military saber and slashed back.

SZZZK!!

Thunder howled.

His blade carved a streak of lightning through the air—a fierce, azure thunder dragon that opened wide and crashed headlong into Garling's sword beam.

BOOM!!

The two attacks collided midair, erupting in a shockwave so powerful it hurled searing plasma in all directions.

Momonga shot upward, raising one arm high above him in a commanding tactical gesture.

And in that instant—

Behind him, the fifteen airborne warships, arrayed in flawless combat formation, came alive.

Fifty heavy laser cannons.

Two hundred light laser turrets.

Five hundred anti-aircraft howitzers and guided missile launchers.

And countless traditional cannons...

All at once, their barrels lit up with blinding brilliance.

The heavens flared to life, as if night had been torn open and replaced by day.

A crushing wave of annihilation rolled down from the skies. Every living soul within Mary Geoise felt their heartbeat stop.

Momonga stood with his arm raised high, his white cloak whipping in the violent wind.

As his cold voice rang out over Mary Geoise, his eyes ignited with fury. Waves of Conqueror's Haki burst from his body in torrents, rising higher and higher into the sky.

"Vice Admiral of the North Blue Fleet, Second-in-Command Momonga! By order of our Supreme Commander, Rogers Daren, I lead the full force of the North Blue Fleet to the headquarters of the World Government in Mary Geoise—"

"To deliver judgment!"

He gripped his saber tightly and faced the ancient, sacred city below.

And as Saint Figarland Garling and countless Celestial Dragons watched in disbelief, eyes wide with horror—

Momonga slashed through the air!

With blazing eyes and a furious roar, he shouted:

"All units—fire!"

In that instant, the world seemed to freeze.

Then—

BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM!!

Lasers. Rockets. Missiles. Artillery. Bullets. Thunderbolts...

A torrent of devastating firepower erupted from the fleet above, raining down like divine fury.

Mary Geoise was engulfed in fire and steel.

Purgatory had come.

Chapter 738: Volume 4 – Chapter 257: If Pangaea Castle Were Blown Up...

The earth burned, black smoke billowed into the sky.

The floating fleet, arranged in a grid across the heavens, roared like a stampede of iron war beasts—unleashing the fury of the North Blue upon this ancient and sacred city.

Blazing beams of golden laser crisscrossed downward. With scorching heat and terrifying penetration, each one could vaporize an entire building in an instant, leaving behind only fiery shockwaves.

Cruise missiles, trailing long red plumes, struck with pinpoint accuracy—obliterating military depots, outposts, and supply lines of the Holy Land Guard, severing major routes of movement.

An unrelenting storm of artillery followed, blanketing the area with indiscriminate bombardment. Explosions lit the city in a blaze, engulfing wave after wave of Holy Land soldiers in flame.

In an instant, Mary Geoise was dragged from night into blinding daylight by the bombardment.

Infernos soared skyward as the city was consumed in a sea of fire, building after building collapsing into ash.

And under the precise coordination of the North Blue command, that wave of carpet bombing now began to spread... toward the Land of the Gods.

Flashes of red fire bloomed across the earth. The explosions rang out like cannonfire in the ears—deafening.

“Aaaaaahhh!! Damn it!!”

“Where the hell did this flying fleet come from!?”

“Somebody help me!!”

“Use your bodies to block the blasts! If you don’t, I’ll have every last one of you executed!”

...

In the Land of the Gods—the Celestial Dragons’ residence—

The nobles, dressed in lavish robes and wearing their iconic bubble helmets, were pale with terror. Shrieking curses, they shoved their guards forward, forcing them to act as human shields against the hail of fire from above.

Most had just woken up, barely dressed and storming from their ornate chambers ready to throw tantrums—only to find the skies above filled with death.

“Quick! Attack!!”

“Shoot them down right now!”

“M-My Lord... they’re too far up!”

“They seem to know our equipment specs too well. Our rifles, our cannons—none of them have the range to reach that altitude!”

“How... how is this even possible...”

The Holy Land Guard and CP agents scrambled to retaliate, only to realize with growing despair that none of their weapons could even scratch the enemy fleet.

“Trash! Useless trash! You’re all a bunch of worthless garbage!”

One Celestial Dragon, snot dripping from his nose, flew into a rage, snatching a flintlock rifle from a guard. He raised it shakily, trying to fire into the sky—

BOOM!

A beam of golden laser thundered down, engulfing him completely.

A blazing explosion followed, and the searing heatwave wiped out over a dozen CP agents and guards in the surrounding area.

Other Celestial Dragons, watching their comrade evaporate on the spot, screamed in terror. Their bodies shook uncontrollably—some collapsing, others trembling as warm urine soaked their legs.

BOOM!

BOOM!

BOOM!

Explosions swept outward. As the North Blue fleet adjusted its targeting, the carpet bombing reached the heart of the Land of the Gods.

Under the merciless downpour of fire, the Celestial Dragons howled, shrieked, and many dropped to their knees, begging for their lives. The source of this content is [no\(v\)elFire.net](http://no(v)elFire.net)

...

High above it all—

Momonga watched silently, gazing down at the burning Land of the Gods. His cold eyes scanned the nobles scrambling, the ones sprawled on the ground, the ones turned to charred corpses. His grip on his saber trembled slightly.

A heavy, surging energy began to ripple from his body—expanding, contracting, condensing, and pulsing out again in waves.

If Daren were here, he would have sensed it immediately with his innate perception—

Momonga's aura was undergoing a profound change.

Something that defied description in words.

But if it had to be defined...

It would be this:

Conqueror's Haki +0.515!

Conqueror's Haki +0.461!

Conqueror's Haki +0.612!

...

His newly awakened Conqueror's Haki was surging at an unimaginable pace.

The rate and magnitude of its growth—enough to make anyone in this sea burn with envy.

"I can't believe it... it's real!"

Even Momonga, usually the picture of composure, couldn't stop the frenzied roar rising in his heart. His eyes were bloodshot now, completely betraying his outward calm.

Everything before him felt too surreal, too detached from reality.

If not for the deafening blasts and shrieks echoing through the air—if not for the cold steel of his saber in his grasp—he might've thought this was a dream.

I... am slaughtering Celestial Dragons?

I'm slaughtering the so-called gods of this world—the noblest, most exalted beings on the sea?

And that joke Daren once made—that killing a Celestial Dragon would awaken Conqueror’s Haki... turned out to be true?

Because it wasn’t just him. Momonga could clearly feel it: the moment he gave the order to fire, dozens of equally powerful auras had erupted across the North Blue fleet!

That meant—besides himself—at least dozens of soldiers and officers had awakened Conqueror’s Haki in that moment!

Dozens may seem small against a fleet of ten thousand—but when viewed in context, it was staggering.

Awakening Conqueror’s Haki was a one-in-a-million gift.

Typically, you'd need at least ten thousand—maybe even a hundred thousand—to find just one such “chosen one.” Yet in their fleet, dozens had awakened in a single burst.

That frequency. That concentration. It was unreal.

Momonga had no doubt—these young warriors who had awakened Conqueror’s Haki would become the backbone of the North Blue Fleet as it grew and evolved.

“This is insane...”

He slowly exhaled.

He had always known Daren was crazy. But not this crazy.

His eyes scanned the battlefield.

He saw members of God’s Knights darting through the Land of the Gods, using their immense strength to intercept the laser blasts and cannon fire midair.

They were clearly stretched thin, desperate even—but they had managed to blunt the offensive, at least for now.

“The Holy Land Guard, the CP agents, God’s Knights... everyone’s engaged.”

Momonga’s gaze flickered with a cool light. Daren’s orders echoed in his mind.

He took a long, deep breath. His sharp eyes slowly turned.

And locked onto a distant point.

The core of Mary Geoise.

Atop the Celestial Stairway stood a weathered, majestic, and ancient fortress.

Pangaea Castle.

“Then let’s see... what kind of final trump card you’re hiding in there.”

A flicker of anticipation lit in Momonga’s eyes.

Blue lightning began to crackle in his palm.

Unconsciously, he licked his dry lips. A thought flashed through his mind—mad, reckless, and so intense it sent a chill through his body.

If I razed Pangaea Castle to the ground... just how far would my Conqueror’s Haki surge?

The moment that thought took shape, even Momonga found himself trembling in shock.

Chapter 739: Volume 4 – Chapter 258: I Only Obey Rogers Daren's Orders

North Blue — Philseque Island.

“Flying warships?!”

“This is impossible!”

“You little bastard!”

“Damn it!!”

“The Holy Land is being bombed?!”

The Five Elders stared at the image projected by the Den Den Mushi, eyes bloodshot, veins bulging—barely able to believe what they were seeing.

The sky above Mary Geoise burned like a sea of flames. The Celestial Dragons' sacred city was under siege, and high above it hovered an invincible airborne fleet.

Lasers, artillery, fire, and brilliant light rained down in a wild, crisscrossing storm, cleansing everything in their path with relentless fury. Massive fireballs erupted across the surface of Mary Geoise, spreading outward in waves.

In all their centuries living in the Holy Land, the Five Elders had never witnessed a scene like this.

Ancient stone walls crumbled. Nobles—once revered as gods—scattered and fled in terror. Palatial buildings lay in ruins, and priceless treasures were reduced to ash and rubble.

The scale of destruction made their hearts bleed. Even their pupils trembled.

“This is a gift from the North Blue Fleet, in celebration of the grand success of your World Noble Hunting Festival!”

Daren laughed wildly, a feverish flush creeping across his pale, blood-streaked face.

“This is the great achievement... you forced me to deliver!”

As he spoke, his hands transformed into three-pronged dragon claws, intercepting Saint Nusjuro’s cursed blade again and again. Their clashes tore the air apart, sparks and gales exploding on every impact.

“You think threatening the Holy Land will make us back down, Daren!?”

Saint Warcury charged headfirst through the raging wind dragon, bellowing with fury. His overwhelming Conqueror's Haki erupted into a storm of black and crimson lightning, distorting the dragon's form until it blurred and cracked under the pressure.

"With just your fleet's firepower, you'll never destroy the Land of the Gods!"

"Who said I was trying to destroy the Land of the Gods?"

To their surprise, Daren didn't deny it. He simply burst into mocking laughter.

The Five Elders froze.

If he wasn't aiming to destroy the Celestial Dragons' sanctuary... then what was the point of this relentless bombardment?

Wait—

They watched the various military forces stationed across the Holy Land all being pulled toward the Land of the Gods.

And then, in terrifying unison, a chilling realization dawned on them.

No...

They stared at the Marine Vice Admiral before them in disbelief, a cold sweat breaking down their spines.

Daren grinned, his blood-slicked teeth flashing as he said:

"I'm just curious... can that esteemed figure of yours really step down from the Empty Throne?"

The Five Elders were shaken to their core. Updates are released by novelfire.net

...

Mary Geoise.

If I razed Pangaea Castle to the ground... just how far would my Conqueror's Haki rise?

"I must be insane to even think this!"

Momonga let out a bitter laugh as his heart thundered violently, blood surging through his veins like a wild tide.

He never imagined that someone like him—so disciplined, so by-the-book—could suddenly entertain such a reckless thought.

This was the kind of madness only Daren, that lunatic, would come up with!

“Could it be... that my awakening Conqueror’s Haki is affecting me in return?”

He frowned, but now wasn’t the time for reflection. Crackling arcs of searing blue lightning began to surge across his body, growing more volatile by the second.

He hadn’t led the North Blue fleet into the heart of the World Government just to butcher pig-like Celestial Dragons. That was never the sole objective.

Even as his mind reeled from the adrenaline high of awakening Conqueror’s Haki, Momonga forcibly steadied himself.

He hadn’t forgotten Daren’s orders—nor the true goal of their mission.

To probe the depths of the World Government.

That colossal regime had stood atop the world for 800 years. Beyond the ruthless CP agencies, the enigmatic and refined God's Knights, and the tens of thousands of Holy Land soldiers... what secrets still lay hidden within Pangaea Castle?

"We need to act fast... At this rate, with the scale of our laser deployment, the fleet's energy reserves won't last much longer."

With that decision made, Momonga inhaled deeply, his eyes hardening with grim resolve.

The Holy Land's defenses were terrifying. What looked like panic and disorder was really just a brief moment of vulnerability—caught off guard by the surprise air assault.

In truth, aside from the initial bombing run that wiped out large swaths of Celestial Dragons, Holy Land guards, and government officials, nearly all subsequent air-to-ground strikes had been intercepted by the swift CP agents and members of the God's Knights.

The chain of explosions tearing through Mary Geoise might have looked catastrophic, but the actual death toll was far from decisive.

If things continued like this, the defenders only needed to hold out a few more minutes—then the North Blue fleet would be drained dry.

Momonga clenched his fists. Deep within his pupils, a strange red gleam began to swirl. Thin bolts of lightning danced around him, and his Observation Haki, supercharged by the Goro Goro no Mi, expanded in an instant—blanketing the entire Holy Land.

Then, his body suddenly shuddered.

His heart jolted as if struck by a hammer. His pupils shrank to pinpricks.

“What... is that?”

Momonga’s eyes widened as he stared toward the deepest part of Pangaea Castle.

There, in a tranquil garden filled with birdsong and flowers, a lone figure sat upon an ancient, sacred throne—slender, tall, crowned, and watching him from afar with a gaze that was cold and utterly disdainful.

Those eyes... They were disturbingly unnatural. Their pattern, majestic and unknowable, exuded a noble aura so overwhelming that it sparked involuntary reverence.

It felt like those ringed eyes could pierce every veil, read every secret—like nothing in the world could hide from them.

A raw, primal fear gripped Momonga's soul.

He wanted to flee.

Don't look. Don't defy. Don't resist.

Kneel. Obey.

That was the will of the being on the Empty Throne.

"Damn it..."

Momonga gritted his teeth hard. His eyes turned blood-red, and a torrent of thunder exploded from his body, flooding the sky in an instant.

"Don't underestimate me!"

BOOM!

Conqueror's Haki erupted from his chest like a tidal wave, taking form as shockwaves that tore through the sky and shattered the suffocating grip of that dreadful gaze.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

Bolts of lightning laced the fire-stained night sky. Momonga's body surged with electricity. Blue arcs danced in his eyes. Lightning branched like glowing tree limbs across the heavens.

The entire sky lit up—thousands of bolts shimmered as if they had a will of their own, pulsating and roaring.

With a groan, Momonga raised his sword, blood and sparks spilling from his nose and mouth.

He locked eyes on the depths of Pangaea Castle and growled through gritted teeth:

"I don't care who you are... I will never kneel."

Behind him, in the air, twisted lightning dragons began to form—gathering in the trails of light, coiling and roaring.

He raised his arm.

From the sky, nine thunder dragons howled in unison, crashing down toward Pangaea Castle in a blinding storm.

His gaze was proud, unshaken.

“...I obey no one but Rogers Daren.”

Chapter 740: Volume 4 – Chapter 259: The Ghost Wandering the Sea

A thunderous roar echoed as the lightning dragons surged forward, their sheer scale dazzling like a brilliant galaxy, sweeping across the night sky above Mary Geoise.

Ultra-high voltage tore through the atmosphere, unleashing blinding sparks and shockwaves, the thunderclaps deafening.

Such a breathtaking and overwhelming display instantly drew everyone's attention.

“This kind of attack...”

“No, look at that direction...”

“He’s aiming at Pangaea Castle!”

“Damn it! We’ve been tricked!!”

“...”

Saint Figarland Garling and the other members of the God's Knights paled, a chill running down their spines. Check latest chapters at novelfire.net

They had been desperately fending off the North Blue fleet’s assault, focused on protecting the Celestial Dragons in the Land of the Gods. No one expected that Momonga’s real target wasn’t the Celestial Dragons—but the heart of the Holy Land itself: Pangaea Castle!

At this moment, they were scattered across the Land of the Gods. Even if they wanted to intervene, it was far too late.

All they could do was watch as nine enormous lightning dragons, each stretching tens of meters long, opened their gaping maws and howled as they barreled toward the ancient, weathered castle!

“Jamboule, Ninefold Strike!”

Momonga roared, his eyes blazing with battle spirit.

But in that instant—

He suddenly felt his heart jolt.

A suffocating aura of death—vast, deep, and terrifying—erupted from the deepest depths of Pangaea Castle, like an invisible hand of death closing tightly around his chest.

In a flash, Momonga staggered as if drained, the color draining from his face, his pupils shrinking to pinpoints.

Death...

He could feel death itself creeping in.

A look of utter disbelief flooded his eyes.

That presence—just the release of its killing intent—was enough to make him feel the threat of death from this distance?

His heart clenched tighter, as though it might explode at any moment. A flicker of despair crossed his eyes as his body began to blur unconsciously, showing signs of elementalization.

Suddenly—

Bang!

A massive figure burst through the wall of Pangaea Castle's main hall, leaping into the air.

“Momonga, you little brat... if you want to destroy Pangaea Castle, you'll have to step over my dead body first!”

A booming voice thundered.

A bronze-skinned figure cloaked in a billowing Fleet Admiral's cape roared in fury, his muscular, knotted arms crackling with black and red lightning.

Fleet Admiral Kong of the Marine Headquarters—“Steel Bone” Kong!

His fists slammed out like thunder, roaring like war drums.

Boom!!

Within seconds, the nine lightning dragons were shattered into a storm of electric plasma, raining down onto the land below, igniting the grass and forest in an instant.

His sure-kill strike had been intercepted by Kong, but Momonga wasn't the least bit discouraged.

To his surprise, the instant Fleet Admiral Kong intervened, the oppressive sense of death that had enveloped him vanished without a trace.

Gasping heavily, Momonga stared deeply at the figure standing in front of Pangaea Castle—an immovable wall of defense.

Their eyes met.

“You really are the Fleet Admiral.”

Momonga smiled wryly and raised his hand in a military gesture.

“Fleet, hear my order—full retreat!”

As his voice fell, the floating fleet—arrayed in attack formation high above—let out a deep engine roar, swiftly adjusting their course under the coordinated command of the North Blue Marines.

Despite the retreat, the entire fleet maintained perfect formation—disciplined, orderly, and precise.

Seeing this, Kong frowned, though a heavy sigh escaped his heart.

The military discipline, combat strength, and terrifying firepower of the North Blue fleet far exceeded his understanding of what a “military force” on this sea should be.

That damn brat Daren... to have built such a formidable fleet in silence, taking advantage of the chaos and autonomy of the North Blue... his talent defied belief.

Not just in all Kong’s decades of service—but perhaps across the entire history of the Marines and the World Government—there had never been a military genius to rival Rogers Daren!

And now, someone with such strength, genius, command ability, management, and strategy—top-tier in every aspect—had been forced to the opposite side of the government and the Marines by the arrogance and pride of the World Government’s highest authorities.

As he looked over Mary Geoise—now engulfed in flames, transformed into a living hell—Kong’s gaze darkened.

Was the decision of the Five Elders and the government... truly the right one?

This aerial assault by the North Blue fleet was just an appetizer.

This elusive, ghostlike air unit would haunt the skies of the seas like a massive, silent phantom—one that would never fade.

With Daren as the commander, and Momonga—a vice commander whose talent and strength were already showing the potential of an Admiral—as his deputy, the North Blue Fleet would undoubtedly become the most dangerous and fearsome enemy the World Government had ever faced.

As he thought of the Navy potentially clashing with such a force in the future, Kong felt his scalp go numb.

A lump rose in his throat, and a chill crept down his back.

“How do we fight?”

Kong suddenly let out a bitter laugh, pulling a cigar from his coat and lighting it as he bit down on the end.

In the sky above, the floating fleet ascended swiftly, one ship after another disappearing into the clouds.

Under a barrage of laser fire and cannon blasts, Fisher Tiger led the slaves in a charge into the inner sea, seizing ships and swiftly sailing into the river.

World Government ships and warships tried to pursue, but were sunk one after another by the airborne fleet. No one could stop their escape.

“Kong! Why aren’t you mobilizing the army to stop their retreat!”

At that moment, Saint Figarland Garling appeared before Kong. His hair was disheveled, and he looked battered, but his gaze was sharp as he questioned him sternly.

Kong rolled his eyes and exhaled a ring of smoke.

“If I leave, who’s going to guard Pangaea Castle?”

“Besides, Figarland Garling-sama, I’m about to be promoted to Commander-in-Chief of the World Government. I no longer take orders from the God’s Knights.”

The red-haired Celestial Dragon froze at those words.

He stared as the floating fleet vanished into the sea of clouds, then glanced at the ruined Holy Land before him. Suddenly, with a burst of fury, he slashed his sword.

Shhh!!

A fierce blade of energy ripped through the ground, cleaving straight through several collapsed buildings with clean, smooth cuts.

“Damn Daren! This isn’t over!!”

After venting his rage, Saint Figarland Garling stood there gasping, his eyes bloodshot.

Kong shook his head and sighed with a knowing look.

“I’m afraid that’s exactly what that brat Daren is thinking too...”