

Northwest 22

Chapter 22

Ed looked curiously at the rough-closed door of the captains cabin.

In an instant, the atmosphere cooled down and one of the sailors shook his head.

Huh, look at that temper.

Still, its better than the Admirals.

Dont mind him. Hes always been ill-tempered.

If you need to treat the Captain later, dont miss out on spitting in his wound or making some mistakes.

I second that.

Me too.

Get back to work.

..!

At the last voice, the requests for the doctor stopped. The sailors looked at Cesar as they were caught red-handed before they scattered in all directions. Ed was left alone in mere seconds and turned to greet Cesar cheerfully. Instead of reciprocating the greeting, Cesar was about to walk past him.

The Captain seems angry. Is it because you let me onboard?

Did I unintentionally get involved in a love fight? Im sorry! The Captain must trust you a lot?

Cesar Ignored Ed and walked away. But Ed didnt stop.

Are you here to keep an eye on me?

Well, I didnt expect an answer anyway.

Ed leisurely leaned against the railing, watching the upper deck busily preparing for departure. He returned a greeting from someone climbing the mast and received a piece of fruit thrown by a sailor passing by.

I seem to be very welcome here.

Ed sat down on his spot and took off the long-shaped instrument he was wearing on his back and placed it on his thigh. The instrument was similar to a guitar, with a sound hole in the body and four strings leading from the bridge to the head. The main differences were the curves and its small size. Overall, the instrument gave off an exotic impression.

After Ed tuned the instrument by adjusting the tuners, he carefully swept the strings down with his fingers. The theme of the Black Whale began on the lively deck. It was a chant that didnt fit any notes, but it created a beat anyway. Ed started to play the strings to that odd melody.

The warm wind embraced the delicate performance. His gaze that flowed along the direction of the wind stopped in front of the Captains room.

Amiaengs Black Whale, Lil Schweiz.

The square sail of the mainmast fluttered and rose. The white cloth swept through the air as solemnly as a curtain of the sky. Ed offered a short prayer to Orsay, the god of the sea, wishing for a safe journey.

Im glad I have a role in this interesting play.

He briefly looked up at the sunlight passing through the huge veil. The sky above his head soon became covered in several ivory lights.

Its a good one, its going to be a lot of fun.

Gulf of Gardel.

The main mast of the Grignard had his sails stripped away, making it comparable to a bare winter tree. The normally majestic sails looked bleak. In the lonely watchtower, constructed just like a big birds nest, solemn eyes stared out at sea. Sitting motionless, a gentle wind passed by his ears.

Wind.

Out of habit, the man glanced up at the sky. The clouds looked like brushstrokes made by a depressed painter.

What am I even doing here?

He mumbled and lowered his gaze back to the horizon.

Oh?

The watchman raised his drooped body and picked up the telescope that was rolling back and forth on the floor. He straightened his back and extended the barlow, placing the eyepiece directly in front of his eye. He adjusted the angle to the east-southeast and squinted in the air, just above the horizon. The small scratch looked like someone had stamped it with their fingernail. Experienced eyes were soon convinced about its identity. Surprised, the watchman bent his upper body over the railing of the tower and shouted towards the deck.

Commodore! Commodore!

So noisy! Why are you suddenly looking for the Commodore?

Compared to the dry voice, the decks response was drowsy. The impatient watchtower shouted again.

Call the Commodore, you idiots!

What? Why?!

Pigeon! Its the Admirals pigeon coming from the Southeast!

The lower deck, which seemed to be fast asleep only moments ago, awoke as if itd been splashed with water. The big Grignard shook at the sound of busy footsteps.

Pigeon, the pigeons here!

Wheres the Commodore!?

Sir Victor? No, hes on the Visha right now! Bring the horn!

The communication officer was only wearing the bottom half of his uniform when he ran out and checked the sky. Out of habit, he rummaged his waist, looking for the telescope. After finding out he wasnt carrying one, he folded his hand in front of his face and tried to take a look with the naked eye. The pigeon was already close.

The officer stared at the flapping wings and narrowed his eyes.

Oh! Red wings!

Honk!

The horn was blown to notify the Commodore aboard the Visha.

Victor Sagastar. Commonly known as Commodore Sagastar, Edgars right-hand man. When the Mondovi fleet is called on a military outing, hes also assigned the important duty to temporarily become the vice-admiral and oversee the fleet in Edgars absence. However, he hated Edgars outings and so he hated the name vice-Admiral, because it was a symbol for Edgars disappearances.

As a result, a strange tale was spreading through the Mondovi fleet about the Commodore. The story revolves around a poor lieutenant, who accidentally called him vice-admiral. Its said that he only returned that day after he hung from the anchor and went swimming with the fishes.

Sagastar stared at the pigeon with an upset expression.

Its finally here.

This time, he only sent one letter.

Actually, it makes me more anxious when hes quiet. He always knows how to hit me in the back, just when I let my guard down.

Unlike his grumbling voice, the hands that removed the letter tied to the birds leg were delicate. In the midst of it all, Sagastar never stopped complaining to the captain standing to him.

It was strange when he agreed to go to Amiaeng, he always said he hated that place. So, ever since our departure Ive had the feeling he could run away at any moment. Not to mention how vague he was every time I was summoned to the Admirals office. I felt like I was in charge of a 10-year-old

And what do you know? He disappeared as soon as we reached the Gulf of Gardel. The great man only left a letter, saying that hed send pigeons and we should keep training Well, it could be worse. Have I ever told you? When he disappeared a few years ago, we found a Mooreian native rowing a small boat. At that time, I wondered why he was carrying an entire tree trunk on it, turned out the Admiral wrote the code on the bark of the tree Argh!

Sagastar glared at the pigeon that pecked the back of his hand.

Does he understand that his owner is being cursed at? This vicious thing. Obviously, he must have picked up some of the Admirals extraordinary demeanour. You cant kill me, you stupid bird.

How does he always choose such troublesome things? In terms of maturity, hes doing worse than my five-year-old son. Really.

Cant I hurry up and be transferred already?! Im done babysitting the Admiral!

The captain snorted.

Do you think his majesty will allow it? You're the only one in the entire Empire who can handle the Admiral.

What?!

All the officers know what the Admiral is like. Who would want to take your place? Getting killed in the North is probably better than working under the Admiral.

Damn it

The cursing Sagastar finally took the letter out.

This time the ferocious pigeon rushed in and aimed for his finger. After biting the hand, he proudly raises his beak, like his master, and flies to the nest by the window of the office. One of Eds habits, the annoying chin gesture, seemed to overlap.

Every time I see it, it just boils my blood.

Without being able to express his anger, Sagastar stared at the fluttering wings.

Commodore. Calm down. Let's begin.

Sheesh

Sagastar opened the letter he'd been clutching melancholy.

[1, 2, 9]

After that, the numbers were merged into rows of six or seven. He deciphered the familiar first row at ease.

The first bookcase, second compartment, ninth book.

The captain turned around to examine the bookshelves and spoke as he counted the order of the books.

I've always wondered, Commodore, do you always use this kind of encryption? So, does the Admiral know the order of these books and their contents? How many words are there?

Sagastar was moved by the memory of the first day he received the code.

It was a long time ago, back when I was still a lieutenant. The fleet, exhausted from waiting for Edgar, was on the verge of going crazy. That time the Admiral had disappeared without a word. I opened the letter with high expectations and stayed up for various nights to decrypt it. Not only me, but the entire crew.

Who cares?