

## One Piece 341

Chapter 341 - 341: Volume 2 – Chapter 243: Are You Here to Die?

A savage, maniacal laugh echoed across the thunder-filled skies, like the whisper of a demon heralding the apocalypse. The sound sent a chill straight to the bone.

Wave after wave of overwhelming killing intent surged toward the military port, instantly draining the color from the Marines' faces. It was as if they'd been plunged into an icy abyss.

"Is that..."

"Damn it... how is this possible..."

"Shiki the Golden Lion!"

"The legendary great pirate, Shiki the Golden Lion!!"

"What's he doing here!?"

"Oh no..."

Marines and civilians across Marineford stared up in disbelief, eyes wide with shock, hearts seized by terror as chaos erupted like a tidal wave.

Shiki the Golden Lion—a pirate of legend—was brazenly invading Marine Headquarters?!

Was he out of his mind!?

"Quick! Alert Fleet Admiral Kong and Admiral Sengoku!"

A Marine cried out in a trembling voice, but the moment he spoke, he froze. His face went pale.

Kong and Sengoku... were both out at sea on missions.

"Jihahahaha!! Marines! You destroyed my grand fleet! Now I'm here to sink your whole damn headquarters!"

In the sky, Shiki roared with laughter, a lit cigar clamped between his teeth.

Then, with a sweeping gesture of his hand, an unimaginable sight unfolded before the stunned eyes of everyone in Marineford.

Far behind him, deep in the stormy sky, streaks of crimson light began to flicker across the black clouds.

Rumble...

A low, ominous rumble echoed from the heavens.

The red glow grew larger and brighter, like roaring flames, before finally bursting through the thick storm clouds with terrifying force.

As the Marines' eyes widened in horror, the rumble sharpened into an ear-splitting roar.

These weren't fireballs.

They were massive meteorites—each one dozens of meters wide!

Shiki, in his madness, had used his Devil Fruit ability to lift chunks of island into the sky and hurl them down as makeshift meteors!

The fragments plummeted under the pull of gravity, their undersides igniting from the friction of air, blazing with fire that cast a blood-red glow across the dark sky.

"This... this can't be real..."

"We can't possibly fight something like that..."

"This is power on the level of a god..."

"It's terrifying..."

"Are we all going to die here...?"

...

At that moment, across the entirety of Marineford, tens of thousands of Marines and civilians stood frozen in place. Weapons trembled in their hands. They looked like soulless statues, gripped by the despair of impending doom.

Their eyes reflected the fiery meteorites falling from the sky, a true vision of the end.

And with Fleet Admiral Kong, Admiral Sengoku, and Vice Admiral Garp all absent, there was no one left who could stop Shiki the Golden Lion!

But then...

It was as if a faint streak of blue lightning crackled through the air—suddenly, the Marines witnessed something impossible.

The muskets in their hands... the fortress cannons... the heavy artillery mounted on the strongholds... and the batteries aboard the dozens of warships in the harbor—all began to move on their own!

Barrels, muzzles, and turrets snapped into position, rotating upward in unison to target the falling meteorites!

For an instant, the world seemed to hold its breath—

BOOM!!

Explosions erupted across Marineford.

Thousands of heavy cannons roared to life all at once, spewing flames into the sky. The sheer force of the barrage made the very ground tremble beneath their feet.

A black storm of shells shot into the air like an enormous net, smashing directly into the swarm of flaming meteors!

One explosion after another lit up the sky, flashes of fire stretching from horizon to horizon, turning the clouds into a wall of flame.

Under the relentless onslaught of thousands of artillery blasts, dozens of falling meteorites were shattered into fragments midair. The pieces turned into a fiery rain that crashed down onto the land below.

Boom!

Crash!

Rumble...

Buildings were struck and collapsed in seconds, some catching fire immediately.

Marines and civilians scattered in panic through the streets, dodging falling debris as flames spread through the city.

But despite the destruction... somehow, mass casualties had been avoided.

"This is... Commodore Daren's ability!"

The Marines and civilians quickly realized what was happening and cried out in relief, grateful to still be alive.

"I really shouldn't have jinxed it... I can't believe they actually invaded Marineford..."

Daren stood firm, electric arcs crackling at his fingertips, one arm holding the pale and shaken Amatsuki Toki close.

Behind him, a meteor fragment crashed down, reducing the family quarters to ruins, now engulfed in flames and smoke.

A scorching wind howled from behind, and amid the flying embers and gunpowder smoke, his snow-white cloak billowed fiercely in the wind.

He lifted his gaze, eyes narrowing with a cold, furious gleam.

His stare locked with the defiant pirate legend in the sky, the air between them seeming to crackle with sparks.

Then, a cold, mocking smile curled at the corner of the Commodore's mouth.

"What's wrong, Shiki? Was wiping out your flying fleet not enough? Now you've come knocking just to die?"

At those words, Shiki's breath hitched. His bloodshot eyes burned with fury.

"You arrogant brat!"

He spread his arms wide, eyes gleaming with killing intent like a wild beast ready to strike.

"Sengoku's not here. No one can save you now! Daren, you little punk!!"

As his words rang out, the ground beneath them suddenly trembled violently, startling the nearby Marines.

As if it were alive, a massive wave of sand and rubble surged upward like a tide. In an instant, it formed into three enormous, ferocious stone lions.

From the left, right, and rear, the beasts roared as they lunged forward, mouths wide open, aiming to devour Daren in the center.

Their power was overwhelming, unstoppable. Hundreds of Marines nearby opened fire, but not a single shot managed to slow them down.

"Shishi Odoshi: Gosho Chimaki!"

Yet even as the attack sealed off every escape route, Daren's expression didn't waver. He simply lifted his eyes and smiled faintly.

"Is that so?"

Suddenly—

Three towering figures, clad in red, yellow, and blue, appeared at Daren's flanks and behind him.

"Great Eruption!"

"Light Speed Kick!"

"Pheasant Beak!"

Blazing torrents of molten magma—

Devastating beams of scorching light—

And an icy blue stormbird—

...all roared to life at once, colliding head-on with the three ferocious lions crashing toward them!

BOOM!!

A thunderous explosion erupted as Shiki's massive constructs, summoned through his Devil Fruit power, were obliterated in an instant by the combined assault.

Flashes of laser light danced wildly, magma firestorms scorched the battlefield, and shards of shimmering ice floated down like snow.

Daren turned his gaze toward Shiki, whose expression had frozen in disbelief, and said with a faint smirk,

"Looks like I let you down."

Chapter 342 - 342: Volume 2 – Chapter 244: Monsters Among Monsters

The city was in flames, thick black smoke billowing into the sky.

Cries for help and sobs echoed from every corner of Marine Headquarters. From the direction of the civilian district came the desperate weeping of the people. Marines had quickly formed into small squads, rushing to organize evacuation efforts.

"This is getting way out of hand..."

In the churning, bubbling magma, Sakazuki's form reemerged.

Molten lava dripped from his cheeks as he adjusted his military cap, eyes locked coldly on Shiki.

"Don't forget—this is Marine Headquarters."

Countless golden photons gathered in a flash, forming the silhouette of a tall man. Borsalino rubbed the stubble on his chin, remarking with mild amusement,

"The legendary Great Pirate... Scary stuff. I can't believe he actually invaded Marineford."

Bit by bit, ice crystals crept across the ground and spiraled upward into the shape of a human. Kuzan exhaled a breath of frosty air, then looked at Shiki, face flushed with excitement.

"Dahahaha! Finally, it's my turn!"

He turned to Daren, grinning wide.

"Daren, this is our moment to fight side by side!"

The three imposing figures stepped forward, taking position beside Daren, standing shoulder to shoulder in a line.



Their wide capes bearing the word "Justice" billowed in the wind. Just their presence alone gave off an unshakable sense of security.

The scene left everyone stunned.

"It's Rear Admiral Sakazuki!"

"Rear Admiral Borsalino!"

"And that's... Captain Kuzan!"

"All four of the Marine Headquarters' 'monsters'... They're all here!"

"We're saved! We're actually saved!"

The surrounding Marines, seeing the four towering figures, clenched their fists in exhilaration, unable to suppress their cheers.

"I thought you three were taking a nap."

Daren glanced at them, his tone deadpan.

Sakazuki stayed silent.

Borsalino shrugged with a lazy grin.

"I got here as fast as I could..."

Kuzan scratched his head sheepishly and laughed.

"I really was asleep just now."

Daren: "..."

"Jihahahaha! A bunch of snot-nosed Marines..."

Up in the sky, Shiki suddenly burst into arrogant laughter.

"You think the likes of you can stop me?"

Whoosh!!

A piercing whistle sliced through the air.

An icy white spear shot toward Shiki, cutting him off mid-sentence.

Kuzan had moved first, unable to hold back his eagerness to fight!

The freezing spear tore through the sky. Shiki's eyes narrowed as he swiftly drew his blade.

Clang!

The spear shattered on impact—but from the fragments, a chilling frost surged out, creeping toward his sword.

A layer of visible frost quickly coated the blade of the Meito Kogarashi, threatening to freeze Shiki's entire arm.

"Hmph!"

With a cold snort, Shiki unleashed a swirl of fierce Haki, blasting the ice away in an instant.

"Hahaha! With the four of us here, that's more than enough!"

Kuzan laughed loudly, pointing straight at Shiki, his eyes blazing with fighting spirit.

"There's no way you're taking Marineford down on your own!"

The moment those words left his mouth—

Sakazuki frowned.

Borsalino's face twisted into something between amusement and dread.

Daren felt a familiar chill run down his spine.

Hey now... don't go setting up a flag like that...

"Oh?"

Shiki's lips curled into a sly grin, a glint of mockery flashing in his eyes.

"Who said I came alone?"

The moment the words left his mouth, a vast, suffocating aura of dread suddenly swept in from another direction in the sky.

Sakazuki: "..."

Borsalino: (￣▽￣)

Kuzan: ???

Daren's mouth twitched.

I told you not to tempt fate!!

"Wororororo!! Daren, you brat—long time no see!!"

A thunderous, guttural laugh boomed across the sky like rolling thunder, filled with snarling hatred.

From the thick storm clouds, a black shadow slowly emerged—and then rapidly expanded at a terrifying, visible pace.

In the blink of an eye, it blotted out the sky.

"What the hell is that..."

"No way..."

"That size... that shape..."

"...Damn it!"

Marines stared at the sky, dumbstruck with horror.

Crackling bolts of lightning streaked across the clouds, arcs of purple electricity dancing wildly amid the roaring winds.

Within that chaos of storm and light, a massive shadow loomed—and from the sea of clouds, a colossal head emerged, the size of a mountain.

Savage fangs. Razor-sharp horns. Long, flowing whiskers. Blood-red, slit-pupiled eyes...

"It's a dragon!!"

"A giant dragon!!"

"The strongest creature in land, sea, and sky—Kaidou of the Beasts!!"

"Kaidou is here too?!"

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

Gasps and shouts rippled through the ranks of Marines as a massive, green-scaled dragon cloaked in wind and lightning slithered from the clouds. Each shimmering scale glinted coldly under the flash of lightning.

In that instant, a crushing pressure—the dragon's might—descended with terrifying force.

Hurricane winds surged through the base, knocking thousands of Marines off their feet. The weaker ones simply collapsed on the spot, eyes rolling back as they fainted.

Kuzan's eye twitched.

"You just had to say something..." Daren sighed.

Sakazuki and Borsalino both turned to stare at Kuzan with increasingly strange looks.

Flushed with embarrassment, Kuzan snapped back stiffly,

"He's not here for me! He's here for you, Daren!"

Daren: "..."

The colossal dragon Kaidou exchanged a glance with Shiki, then growled,

"Shiki. Leave that brat Daren to me."

"I've still got a score to settle with him for destroying my base."

Shiki grinned wide.

"Not a chance. These kids look like prime Marine talent... I wanna kill them all."

Kaidou roared, "That's not what we agreed on!"

Shiki chuckled dismissively.

"If you've got what it takes to take his head from me—try."

"Are you kidding me?!"

Kuzan suddenly exploded with rage.

"You think so little of the Marines?! There are four of us, and you guys only—mmph!"

Daren hurriedly slapped a hand over his mouth.

But it was too late.

"Ma ma ma ma..."

A hoarse, cackling laugh echoed from the opposite side of the sky.

Rip!!

Bolts of purple lightning tore through the clouds, crisscrossing and flaring violently.

As the storm clouds were blasted apart, a curvaceous silhouette descended from above, standing atop a swirling black thundercloud. She carried a colossal blade over her shoulder as she swooped down toward them.

"Kaidou, Shiki—you can handle the others. But Daren..."

With flowing pink hair, crimson lips, and long, curvy legs clad in red fishnet stockings, she looked down at Daren, licking her lips with a smile full of lust and malice.

"He's mine."

For a moment, Marine Headquarters went dead silent.

Then—complete chaos.

"It's Big Mom!!!"

"One of the legendary pirates!"

"Big Mom, Charlotte Linlin!!"

"All three of the New World's Great Pirates are here!!"

"..."

Daren's mouth twitched uncontrollably.

Borsalino grinned with amusement.

Sakazuki turned, deadpan, to glare at Kuzan, who immediately felt a chill crawl up his spine.

Kuzan: "..."

Chapter 343 - 343: Volume 2 – Chapter 245: I Will Protect Him

"I..." Kuzan's face flushed red as he opened his mouth to speak.

"Shut up."

Sakazuki and Daren cut him off coldly, in unison.

Kuzan looked genuinely aggrieved and pointed indignantly at Daren.

"What does this have to do with me?! Didn't you hear them? They're all here for you!"

Daren: "..."



He had no comeback for that.

But before he could say anything, Kuzan suddenly froze, realization dawning as he trembled slightly.

"All three of the legendary Great Pirates... and they're all after Daren..."

Daren's eye twitched.

Sure enough, Kuzan's eyes lit up like stars. He stared at Daren, his face full of awe and excitement.

"You really are my 'lifelong rival'... This is seriously cool!"

With that thought, an intense fighting spirit surged in Kuzan's chest, burning like wildfire.

"In that case... I've got to step up too."

He muttered under his breath, then suddenly raised his arm and pointed at the three monstrous figures looming in the sky. His voice rang out loud and bold:

"Come at us, Great Pirates!"

"Today, the four of us—Marine Headquarters' 'monsters'—are standing here! The noble justice we carry burns like fire... and evil like you will never prevail!"

Daren groaned and covered his forehead with a hand.

Please... can you not make things worse?

"Jihahahaha! You clueless Marine brats!"

Kuzan's taunt hit the mark. Shiki burst into a twisted laugh, rage dancing in his eyes.

He floated higher into the sky, gripping both blades tightly as he prepared to strike.

But Kaidou moved faster.

No—he was even more eager.

"Wororororo! Then try and block this, if you can!!"

The massive dragon soaring above let out a roar like rumbling thunder. Its mountain-sized head rose, jaws stretching wide in a feral snarl.

With a deep inhale—

Air visibly rushed into its belly, swirling like a vortex.

A terrifying, destructive energy built rapidly in its mouth. Amidst the howling winds and flashing lightning, a blood-red glow began to gather, radiating a murderous intensity.

This is...

Daren's pupils shrank.

That move!

"Daren!! Today, I'm going to kill you!!!"

Kaidou bellowed, his icy killing intent pouring out in waves. The gathered flame in his mouth surged to its peak, then blasted forward in an explosive jet.

"Bolo Breath!!"

A roaring pillar of fire surged down from the heavens like a crimson river of destruction. The sheer heat warped the air around it.

The dark red blaze lit up the stormy sky, painting everything in shades of blood.

The overwhelming torrent of flame reflected in the eyes of Daren and the others, growing larger by the second. The scorching wave of heat slammed into them like a wall, searing their skin and leaving their throats parched.

"Dahahahaha! It's fire! You underestimate us too much!"

Kuzan laughed indifferently.

"Daren, you agree, right?"

"We are Marines who fight for justice, how can we retreat?"

His body began to emit extreme cold, instantly cooling the scorching air around him.

"Whoever retreats is a low-ranking Marine!"

Kuzan proudly threw down a sentence and took a step forward.

But just then, he seemed to sense something wrong.

Just as the flames were about to spread—

Daren wrapped his arm around Amatsuki Toki's waist with one hand and quickly flew backward.

Borsalino grinned, his figure suddenly scattered into countless photons, turning into a streak of golden light and leaping into the sky.

Sakazuki glanced at Kuzan expressionlessly, then disappeared from the spot with a whoosh using Soru.

Only Kuzan was left standing there, facing the fiery pillars shooting toward him, frozen in place.

...

The smile on Kuzan's face suddenly froze.

He was ice, and although he could suppress flames to a certain extent, flames could also hurt him.

With such a large area of fiery breath, he alone would not be enough!

Just then—

Clack!

A steady and powerful footstep suddenly echoed behind him.

Before Kuzan could react, a broad and burly figure had already appeared in front of him.

His wild purple hair whipped in the heatwave, and the thick white cloak on his back—emblazoned with the black kanji for "Justice"—flapped like a raging dragon.

Kuzan's eyes widened.

That figure stepped forward, standing firm in the face of the devastating flames pouring down from above.

Jet-black Armament Haki flowed across his muscular arms like a living liquid.

He clenched his fist.

Then hurled a thunderous punch straight upward—

"Black Arm: Meteor!"

BOOM!!

The erupting shockwave shot into the sky like a meteor launched in reverse, like the Milky Way crashing upward, colliding head-on with Kaidou's Bolo Breath.

A massive explosion tore through the air, and within a hundred meters, the ground was heaved like waves beneath a storm.

Flames consumed entire buildings, ripping them from their foundations.

Marines clung to nearby structures with all their strength, staring in awe at the figure who shattered the dragon's attack with one blow.

A powerful sense of reassurance washed over them.

As long as that towering back was there—

Victory felt possible.

The wind howled. Flaming debris fell across the base, burning and scattering.

The man spread one arm wide, extinguished the lingering flames and embers before him, then turned to Kuzan with a grin.

"Kuzan, how many times have I told you—think before you act?"

"Zephyr-sensei..."

Kuzan stared in a daze at Zephyr, eyes sparkling with admiration.

"That was so cool!"

Zephyr: "..."

Figures.

Like talking to a wall.

He sighed and shook his head, muttering in irritation.

"Took a bit longer than expected to gather our forces."

...

At that moment, figures arrived swiftly from all directions.

Clad in uniform, armed with sabers, their faces set with grim determination, they fell in behind Zephyr.

"Vice Admiral Davos, Marine Headquarters, reporting to Zephyr-san!"

"Rear Admiral Novi, Marine Headquarters, reporting to Zephyr-san!"

"Commodore Snyder, Marine Headquarters... reporting to Zephyr-san!"

...

More and more Marine officers arrived from nearby fortresses.

Their gazes locked onto Zephyr's back, brimming with reverence and resolve.

Each one gripped their blade tightly.

"Davos, Novi, Snyder..."

Zephyr scanned each familiar face, one by one. A bold smile curled his lips.

"It's been a long time since you last fought alongside me, hasn't it?"

Dozens of officers straightened in unison, their eyes burning with determination as they shouted aloud:

"Five years!"

"Yes... five years..."

Zephyr murmured softly, a trace of emotion flickering in his eyes.

These were the subordinates who had once fought beside him.

"I never thought an old man like me, long retired, would return to the battlefield."

"Really... with Kong and Sengoku gone, there's no one left to protect Marineford but me."

He clenched his fists, then raised his head toward the sky.

The three Yonkō glared down, their expressions dark.

And Zephyr grinned fiercely.

"Today, let me lead you... into battle once again!"

Chapter 344 - 344: Volume 2 – Chapter 246: I Refused Vehemently

"Zephyr-sensei."

Daren descended from the sky behind them, his figure drifting down gracefully.

He had already sent Toki to safety. Under the escort of other Marines, she and the civilians were being led to shelter. After all, Toki lacked any combat ability—if she stayed, he'd have to split his attention to protect her. With a major battle looming, Daren couldn't afford any distractions.

At that moment, Sakazuki and Borsalino also reappeared at the scene.



"Hey, hey, hey! You three seriously have no sense of decency!"

Kuzan shouted in frustration upon seeing them.

No one responded.

Zephyr gave a slight nod to the three and narrowed his eyes at the trio of Great Pirates floating in the sky. Behind his sunglasses, a grave look flickered in his eyes.

"Shiki, Kaidou, Charlotte Linlin..."

Shiki the Golden Lion was, in a way, an old rival. Zephyr had fought him many times before and knew just how terrifying his power could be. As for Big Mom Charlotte Linlin and Kaidou of the Beasts... their presence didn't feel as suffocating as Shiki's, but they were no less dangerous.

Just then, Zephyr's eyes suddenly widened, a stunned look crossing his face—as if he had just witnessed something unbelievable.

"Heavenly Fire!!"

Charlotte Linlin suddenly leapt from atop the thundercloud Zeus. In her hand, she gripped a blazing fireball with a sinister, human-like grin. With her fist wrapped in searing flames, she came crashing down—!

Her target...

Was the giant dragon hovering in the sky!

Boom!!

Kaidou, in his dragon form, took the full force of the blow. Under Big Mom's monstrous strength, the head of the massive blue dragon crashed down like a meteor, his eyes bulging from the impact.

His colossal form, which once blotted out the sky, plummeted into the ground of Marineford, rolling and crashing, flattening countless buildings and artillery, sending thick clouds of dust billowing into the air.

"Damn it!! Linlin, what the hell are you doing!?"

The dragon let out a furious roar, his eyes bloodshot.

Charlotte Linlin landed steadily, hefting her massive broadsword over her shoulder, and shouted back,

"Did you just try to kill Daren!? I told you—he's mine!!"

Kaidou's enormous body shrank rapidly, and he quickly returned to his human form.

Rubbing his head, he dragged his black kanabō out of the crater and charged at Big Mom, roaring,

"We both want to kill him—what difference does it make!? Let me finish him off!!"

Big Mom also charged forward, shouting,

"I won't let you lay a hand on him!!"

Their weapons simultaneously crackled with black and red lightning as they slammed them toward each other with explosive force!

Boom!!

The kanabō "Hassaikai" and the bicorné "Napoleon" clashed violently!

But they never made contact.

A turbulent burst of black and red lightning surged between them, forming in the air before their weapons even touched!

In an instant, a terrifying shockwave erupted from the clash of these two monstrous figures. Arcs of black and red lightning exploded in every direction, forcing nearby Marine officers to stagger back, shielding their faces with their arms, expressions filled with horror.

It was a clash of Conqueror's Haki!

The heavy black clouds overhead rumbled and tore apart, ripped open by the violent shockwave.

"What the hell are those two doing!?"

"Why are they suddenly fighting!?"

"Wait! Are they arguing over how to deal with Commodore Daren!?"

"..."

The Marines stood frozen, staring in disbelief at the sudden battle between Big Mom and Kaidou.

As the wind howled around them, confusion flickered across Zephyr's face as he instinctively glanced at Daren.

Kuzan also looked at Daren suspiciously.

The Marine Commodore stood there quietly, eyes lowered, as if none of this chaos had anything to do with him.

At that moment, several familiar figures came rushing in from behind...

"Daren!!"

"Zephyr-sensei!"

"We're joining the fight too!!"

...

Led by Tokikake and Gion, the training camp members arrived in a flash, swords in hand, using Geppo and Soru to swiftly move behind the group.

They struggled to withstand the Haki shockwaves from Big Mom and Kaidou, their faces full of awe and disbelief.

"So that's the power of the legendary pirates...?"

"It's terrifying..."

"They're so strong it's inhuman."

"Kaidou and Big Mom..."

They couldn't believe that such monsters actually existed on the seas. What shocked them even more was the realization that their top peer—Daren—had been fighting monsters like these before!?

"Damn it!! You crazy old hag!! Why'd you stop me from killing that bastard Daren!!"

Kaidou's furious roar snapped everyone out of their thoughts.

His face flushed red, long black hair whipping wildly, his feet dragged deep grooves in the ground as his body was pushed back.

"He destroyed my base!!"

"And this wasn't part of our plan! Didn't you want to kill him too?!"

Kaidou locked his bloodshot eyes on Big Mom.

"He killed two of your sons!!"

Suddenly, Charlotte Linlin let out a shrill, manic laugh.

"Who said I wanted to kill him?"

Kaidou froze. "Didn't you say, 'Leave Daren to me'?"

Charlotte Linlin giggled. "That's right!"

She turned her head, gaze locking onto Daren across a thousand meters.

Her crimson tongue licked her lips as her eyes gleamed with a fierce possessiveness. She laughed flirtatiously,

"What I meant was... I want to have him."

"Make him... the husband of Charlotte Linlin."

The world fell into a dead silence for a second.

Then—

"EH!!??"

A chorus of shocked cries erupted from the dozens of Marines present, joined by Kaidou, who looked like he'd been struck by lightning.

Kaidou's eyes bulged from their sockets.

And in that moment of stunned silence, the fragile balance between the two snapped completely.

Charlotte Linlin pounced, her fist wrapped in Armament Haki slamming hard into Kaidou's stomach.

Boom!

Kaidou's body was sent flying, smashing through more than a dozen buildings before crashing into the center of a military fortress.

Cracks spread like spiderwebs across the fortress walls, but Kaidou casually pulled himself out of the crater, dumbfounded.

He wasn't the only one.

Shiki, hovering in the sky, also looked completely stunned.

The Marines all turned in unison, eyes locked on the Commodore, whose mouth was twitching.

Under the weight of those bewildered stares, Daren's lip twitched slightly.

This is... social death...

Fighting the urge to curl his toes, he forced a straight face and spoke in a righteous tone as calmly as he could.

"Don't worry, everyone. I refused her—vehemently."

"..."

Zephyr clutched his chest like he'd just taken a direct hit.

Gion's expression turned to ice.

Borsalino wore an amused smirk.

Sakazuki's eyes darkened with shadow.

Kuzan looked up at him, full of admiration. "That was so cool."

Everyone else was completely dumbfounded.

Only Tokikake looked back and forth between the seductive, mature aura of Big Mom and the dazed Daren, then cried out in despair:

"Damn it!! Why do the good things never happen to me?!"

Chapter 345 - 345: Volume 2 – Chapter 247: The Name Black Arm

No one paid any attention to Tokikake, who was crouched on the ground, weeping like a lunatic.

The whole scene had fallen into dead silence.

Everyone stood frozen, eyes blank, as if they'd been struck by lightning—unable to believe what they had just heard.

They looked at the towering Great Pirate Big Mom, who stood there hungrily eyeing Daren with a massive broadsword on her back, then turned to the righteously stoic Marine Commodore beside her. Their mouths twitched uncontrollably.

The legendary Great Pirate... Big Mom Charlotte Linlin had actually set her sights on Commodore Rogers Daren!?

In that instant, countless thoughts surged through their minds in chaotic waves, colliding and tangling.

Their brains felt like they were going to overheat and explode.

Commodore Daren was a decorated war hero—skilled, resourceful, and monstrously talented. Ever since joining the Marines, whether during his early postings or after arriving at headquarters, he had displayed abilities far beyond the norm.

His brilliance had, in many ways, outshone even Rear Admirals Sakazuki and Borsalino—both considered "monsters" in their own right—as well as Captain Kuzan, his peer from the training camp.

That was common knowledge.

But what was also common knowledge was that Commodore Daren was, without question, the biggest scoundrel in Marine history!



He spent lavishly, with personal wealth far exceeding what his official income could explain.

And his appetite for women was notorious—even during his service in the North Blue, word of it had reached Marine Headquarters.

And Charlotte Linlin?

The Great Pirate who had taken over countless territories in the New World, establishing the massive domain of Totto Land—ruling through monstrous strength and a web of political marriages.

According to incomplete records, Charlotte Linlin had more than twenty-five legal husbands!

A notorious womanizer and a mature woman with more husbands than she could count...

Both possessed physiques like living tanks. If not for the fact they were enemies from opposing sides of the law, even the Marines had to admit—they kind of looked like a good match...

...Like hell they do!!

The Marines' expressions turned twisted with disbelief.

Zephyr's face darkened, his aged features drawn tight as he stared daggers at Daren. His fists clenched and unclenched over and over.

Then suddenly, Kaidou let out a thunderous roar:

"I don't give a damn! You crazy old hag! I just want to kill that damn Marine brat!!"

His eyes flared red, veins of blood surging around his irises.

The muscles in his legs exploded with power, stomping a crater into the ground as his body rocketed forward like a fired cannon shell—aimed straight at Daren.

Daren's pupils narrowed.

The surrounding Marines couldn't even register Kaidou's movement. All they felt was a tremendous gust of wind roaring past as a demonic figure appeared right in front of Daren in the blink of an eye.

Purple lightning surged from his massive kanabō. The spiked weapon, dragging Kaidou's enormous frame, came crashing down toward Daren!

"Raimei Hakke!!"

But at that exact moment—

A black military boot suddenly shot out!

With a sharp clang, it stomped down on Kaidou's kanabō with immense force!

Boom!!

The ground within a hundred-meter radius collapsed instantly, riddled with countless cracks.

Rubble flew, and the violent air blast sent the Justice cloak flaring behind him.

Everyone was stunned.

"Zephyr-sensei!!"

Zephyr had stomped down hard on Kaidou's kanabō. His fist, cloaked in pitch-black Armament Haki, rocketed toward Kaidou's gut like a meteor.

"That brat Daren might be a bastard—but he's still my student!!"

The punch tore through the air, blasting out rings of white shockwaves.

Kaidou's eyes shrank.

His body surged upward, growing a full meter in height. Sharp green dragon scales rippled across his body, and a thick dragon tail burst out from his lower spine.

Human-Beast Form—Dragon Man Transformation!

"You retired old fossil, stay out of this!!"

Kaidou roared, slashing down with his razor-sharp dragon claws.

Boom!!

Dragon claw and Black Arm clashed with explosive force, sending shockwaves roaring out.

Sparks lit up across Zephyr's sunglasses—reflected in them was a thick dragon tail swinging like a stone pillar!

But in the very next instant, that tail—cutting through the air like a whip—was caught in mid-swing by Zephyr's bare hand!

Kaidou froze. His vertical pupils narrowed into pinpoints.

His strength... was actually being overpowered!?

Impossible!

As he stared at Zephyr's arms, wrapped in black armored Haki like jagged gauntlets, an involuntary chill raced down Kaidou's spine.

"I've been off the seas too long... Seems I've been underestimated."

Zephyr raised his gaze coldly and let out a sneer.

"Kaidou, you brat... Back when I ruled the seas, you were just some little lizard scrubbing toilets on Rocks' ship!"

The moment the words left his mouth, Kaidou felt a powerful force yank at his tail—and the next instant, the world spun wildly around him.

With a furious roar, Zephyr's hair bristled as he gritted his teeth and tightened his grip. Muscles bulged along his single arm as he seized Kaidou by the tail.

In one step, he hoisted Kaidou high into the air—then hurled him with crushing force straight toward Charlotte Linlin!

"I'm Black Arm Zephyr!!"

Caught completely off guard, Big Mom didn't have time to dodge—Kaidou slammed into her head-on.

The two massive figures flew backward like wrecking balls, crashing into the ruins of a military fortress and kicking up a sky-high plume of dust.

"Kaidou and Big Mom are mine... Daren, you're in charge of the battlefield!"

Without pausing for even a breath, Zephyr charged forward, raising his arm and bellowing:

"Hold the line at Marineford... for justice!!"

His deep, powerful voice rang with a stirring force, instantly igniting the blood of everyone on the battlefield.

All eyes were fixed in shock on the figure with cropped purple hair, their blood surging as if it might boil over.

The Marine veterans who had once followed Black Arm Zephyr across the seas were even more overwhelmed—faces flushed, eyes dazed, voices trembling as they murmured:

"That's Admiral Zephyr's back... It's been so long!"

Maybe to the younger generation, Zephyr was just a cranky old drill instructor.

But to the old guard—they remembered vividly...

That man, with those black-armored fists and his unstoppable charges, had led them to victory after glorious victory!

The name "Black Arm" wasn't some empty title passed down through stories.

It was a name carved out—blow by blow—in blood and battle!

"Kill!!!"

"Follow Zephyr-sensei!!"

"Advance!!"

"For justice!!"

In an instant, the Marines' roars shook the battlefield to its core.

Chapter 346 - 346: Volume 2 – Chapter 248: One Against Two?

Amid thunderous battle cries and the sound of charging feet, more Marines from Marine Headquarters arrived, swarming in from all directions. Forming dense defensive lines, they closed in rapidly.

"Open fire!!"

"Cannons, now!!"

...

The Marines launched their assault—musket fire blazed in volleys, while distant artillery roared as cannons bombarded the three Great Pirates without mercy.

"How naive."

Shiki grinned with disdain as he shot into the sky.

His eyes glowed with a sinister red light, and his movements were fluid and agile, weaving effortlessly through the hail of Marine firepower.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Bullets and cannon shells rained down on the ruins of the military fortress like a storm, detonating into plumes of smoke and waves of flame.

But in the very next moment, Kaidou and Big Mom walked out of the smoke completely unharmed.

Bullets and shells either ricocheted harmlessly off their bodies or exploded with minimal effect—barely enough to slow them down, let alone cause real damage.

"Man... that stings a little."

Kaidou groaned, rubbing his head as he crawled out of the rubble. His teeth bared in a grimace as he glanced toward Daren in the distance. Then, his gaze sharpened, settling on the vague figure looming through the smoke ahead—eyes cold and dark.

That guy's Armament Haki was brutally powerful. That punch earlier had actually left his arm burning with pain.

"You two better stay put. Don't even think about getting near him. I won't let you reach Daren..."

A cold, steel-like voice rang out.

Zephyr stepped through the swirling black smoke, his white cloak gently rippling behind him. His eyes were sharp, locked onto the two figures before him, cutting off their line of sight to Daren.

"...Whether it's his life—or his body."

Kaidou stared at the former Admiral blocking their path like an unbreakable wall. Then, he suddenly turned and grinned viciously at Big Mom.

"Hey, crazy hag... Looks like this old bastard wants to take us both on."

Big Mom let out a low, sultry laugh, licking her lips.

"Ma ma ma ma... Well, it can't be helped. It's been ages since we teamed up, Kaidou."

"I really do want to just take Daren away... but it looks like that won't be happening now."

"Still..."

She raised her head, fixing her gaze on the purple-haired Marine ahead of her, and sneered,

"You sure about this? You think a retired Admiral like you can really hold off the two of us?"

Zephyr looked at the pair standing shoulder to shoulder, and deep in his eyes, a flicker of unease passed.

Kaidou and Big Mom—these two monsters had bodies so tough, so resilient, that the Marines' firepower might as well be pebbles thrown into the ocean.

From that brief exchange earlier, Zephyr judged that even a Vice Admiral from headquarters would struggle to break through their defenses.

If these two beasts broke through into the Marine formations—or worse, reached the civilian area—it would be an unthinkable disaster. No one would be able to stop them. Marineford would be left in ruins, with countless casualties.

Zephyr couldn't allow that to happen.

More importantly, he knew he'd be at a major disadvantage if he had to face Shiki directly.

While Kaidou, Big Mom, and Shiki all had the ability to fly, Shiki's aerial mobility was far more agile and flexible than the other two, who were comparatively sluggish in the air.



In close combat, Zephyr had the confidence to pin Shiki down.

But knowing Shiki's cunning, he wasn't likely to give him that chance.

If that's the case... it made more sense for Zephyr to hold Kaidou and Big Mom here, and leave Shiki to Daren and the others.

After all, both Daren and Borsalino had high-speed flight capabilities. With Sakazuki's firepower and Kuzan's control, they should be able to hold Shiki back.

"Kaidou of the Beasts, Big Mom Charlotte Linlin... If I remember correctly, you're both remnants of the Rocks Pirates, aren't you?"

Zephyr murmured softly.

Kaidou and Big Mom paused briefly, then both scoffed with mocking grins.

"That's right—but the Marine who fought in the Battle of God Valley... wasn't you."

Zephyr pulled a cigar from his uniform pocket, bit down on it, and lit it.

"Yeah... I wasn't there back then."

He lowered his gaze, staring at his rough, calloused hands with their faded lines, then took a deep drag.

After a brief silence, a smile slowly spread across his face.

"I was never a hero."

"But at the very least..."

He took a deep breath and raised his head high. His presence surged with intensity, rising steadily under the stunned gazes of Big Mom and Kaidou as he let out a bold, booming laugh.

"Today, even if it costs me my life, I'll stop you right here!"

As the thought flashed through his mind, the moment Zephyr made his decision, his eyes burned with unwavering resolve.

A dense, jet-black sheen quickly coated both his arms. As he rolled his wrists and neck, sharp cracks rang out like popping beans.

"As for fighting two at once... how would I know it's impossible if I don't try?"

With those words, Zephyr's boots sank deep into the earth.

In the next instant, he slammed his weight down—

The ground within a hundred meters caved in violently, spiderwebbed with cracks as dirt and stone shot up like a geyser.

Boom!!

Zephyr launched forward like a feral tiger loosed from its cage, the cigar clenched between his teeth curling at the edge of a wild grin. He charged straight at Kaidou and Big Mom!

"They're coming!!"

Kaidou gripped his kanabō tightly, a flicker of tension in his eyes.

Right now, the man before them—the former Marine Admiral—had no hint of age or decline. There was only unshakable confidence, charging forward like an unstoppable force!

"Ma ma ma ma!! Then let's get started!!"

Big Mom burst into laughter. With a wave of her hand, she slapped away an incoming cannonball, sending flames bursting beside her.

"Soul Liberation!!"

She stretched her arms wide.

Countless pale souls poured out of her body, wailing as they swirled through the air, stirring a bone-chilling wind.

"I grant you souls... Awaken, my servants!!"

Big Mom's laughter turned into a deafening shriek, her voice shaking the air with shockwaves so intense they blurred the atmosphere around her.

The flood of ghostly souls rushed into the battlefield—

Into the ground, the stones, the ruins of buildings, the shattered cannons...

And then, an eerie sight unfolded.

Those lifeless objects, infused with souls by Big Mom, sprang to life. They twisted into grotesque monstrosities, stomping across the battlefield in a thunderous charge—hundreds, thousands of them—rushing toward the distant Marine lines!

"Bring me my husband!!"

Big Mom cackled sharply, grabbing the massive broadsword formed by Napoleon the Bicombe in one hand, and, along with Kaidou, charged forward with a roar.

The next second—

The three forces clashed like comets crashing into the earth!

Boom!!

The entire island seemed to tremble under the impact.

Chapter 347 - 347: Volume 2 – Chapter 249: Cruel War

Boom...

One by one, buildings and gun emplacements, infused with shrieking souls, began to awaken—transforming into towering monstrosities several meters, even tens of meters tall. Wailing as they came to life, they charged straight at the Marine defensive lines.

A building extended massive arms of stone, fists clenched tight, sweeping a dozen Marines into the air with a single horizontal strike. Debris scattered in all directions.

A military fortress, utilizing the cannons installed within its structure, morphed one of its arms into a giant barrel and fired directly at the densest area of the Marine forces. The resulting explosion flung countless soldiers into the air, casualties unknown.

From a distance, the charge of these soul-infused monsters looked like a massive tide of war—crushing everything in its path, kicking up towering clouds of dust and debris.

Grotesque, human-like grins twisted across their faces. Like unstoppable war machines, they razed buildings, trampled the earth, and smashed through Marine defenses. Caught off guard, the Marines were forced into retreat as their lines crumbled under the assault.

"Damn it... What are these things!?"

"They were just lifeless structures! How the hell are they moving!?"

"Big Mom gave them souls!!"

"Big Mom Charlotte Linlin ate the Soru Soru no Mi! She can extract souls and infuse them into objects—turning them into loyal servants that fight for her!"

"Bullets aren't doing a thing! Damn it!!"

...

The Marines opened fire with their rifles, but the bullet storm bounced harmlessly off the creatures' rock-and-metal bodies, leaving little more than scratches on their surfaces.

Boom!!

A cannonball suddenly whistled through the air, slamming into the head of a soul monster and exploding in a burst of smoke and flame. Its head shattered into pieces.

The towering monster staggered, then collapsed to the ground with a thunderous crash!

"Use artillery! Aim for their heads!"

A Rear Admiral shouted as he hoisted a heavy cannon onto his shoulder.

A vicious scar crossed his face, and his hardened, unshakable gaze spoke of a wealth of battlefield experience. Clearly, this was one of Zephyr's former subordinates—Rear Admiral Novi!

His warning quickly spread. The Marines snapped into action, breaking off from close-quarters fire and rushing to reposition themselves. They scrambled toward fixed artillery emplacements to strike back.

But the soul monsters gave them no breathing room. They pressed in relentlessly, flooding the battlefield and leaving no space to regroup.

"Damn it!! We can't get a clear shot!"

"There aren't nearly enough turrets!"

"They're moving too fast!!"

...

The Marines fought tooth and nail, their formation collapsing under the unending assault.

Suddenly—

A tall figure leapt gracefully from the rear ranks.

Long black hair fluttered in the storm winds. Her graceful form radiated sharpness and strength, and the Justice cloak on her shoulders billowed behind her like a banner.

Clang!!

The clear, ringing sound of a golden Meito being unsheathed sliced through the chaos.

A brilliant sword flash burst forward—slamming down directly onto a soul monster shaped from a cannon.

Swish!!

A thin, vertical cut split down the monster's core—cleanly slicing it in half!

"It's Commander Gion!"

"She really is a genius of Headquarters!"

"What incredible swordsmanship!"

As cheers erupted around her, Gion landed smoothly, expression cold. Yet behind her eyes, a shadow of grimness lingered.

These soul monsters were terrifyingly durable due to the materials they were formed from, and their only real weak point was their heads. The rest of their bodies—even if arms or legs were cut off—could quickly be reassembled using nearby debris and materials.

"Well done."

A hoarse voice sounded beside her.

Gion turned to see a middle-aged Marine wearing a peaked cap.

One of his eyes was blind—the milky white orb giving him a fearsome appearance. In his hand, he held a massive two-meter-long sword.

Though clearly custom-made, the blade was worn and battered, its edge chipped in countless places.

It was Vice Admiral Davos of Marine Headquarters.

Another elite warrior who had once fought alongside Zephyr on the high seas.

"Vice Admiral Davos..."

Gion spoke in a low voice.

Davos tightened his grip on the longsword, his voice hoarse.

"Commander Gion, a battle like this might be too much for students from your training camp."

"But we have no way out," Gion replied, her tone somber.

Davos paused, then let out a laugh.

"As expected of Admiral Zephyr's student..."

Clutching his chipped and scarred military blade, his lone eye locked onto the shrieking soul monsters. He raised his voice.

"Haki can hurt these things! All Marines who've mastered Haki—step forward!"

With a sharp swoosh, hundreds of Marines burst from the crowd. Their eyes were resolute, their movements precise and unwavering as they rushed to the front line.

Dark purple streams of Haki surged from their hands, instantly coating their blades.



Steeled expressions, calm gazes—the fierce aura of warriors seasoned by countless battles filled the air.

These were the most elite forces of Marine Headquarters!

Davos turned to Gion and the officers behind her. A wild grin suddenly stretched across his rugged, weathered face.

"Now... it's time to prove what your training camp is worth!!"

With those words, Davos—a 45-year-old Vice Admiral, half-retired—let out a thunderous roar.

Gripping his chipped sword, he charged forward without hesitation!

"For justice!!"

He didn't waste time telling Gion and the others to retreat just because they were from the training camp.

They were no ordinary recruits—they had been handpicked from across the seas and the military's finest ranks!

After enduring the training camp's harsh regimen, their strength had soared. Nearly every one of them had already mastered Haki!

Most importantly, just as Gion said...

There was no retreat.

This was Marineford—the heart of the Marine Headquarters!

Even if it meant fighting to the last, they had to hold the line!

In the next instant, as Davos led the charge, the elite Marines surged forward, meeting the soul monsters head-on with their Haki!

With nothing but flesh and blood, they clashed violently against the monstrous tide of steel!

At the same time, the pressure on Marines who hadn't yet mastered Haki eased.

Following their commanders' orders, they quickly took control of the turrets and hauled mobile cannons from the armory, unleashing a barrage toward the monsters' heads!

Marines were thrown into the air, bodies crushed underfoot.

The monsters roared, cannons thundered across the battlefield of Marineford.

Shouts, charges, clashes, and explosive blasts filled the air.

Blood rained, debris scattered.

Everything blurred into chaos and crimson.

The brutal war... had begun!!

Chapter 348 - 348: Volume 2 – Chapter 250: Ordinary People and Monsters

"Die for me!!"

A sleazy figure flipped rapidly through the air and landed squarely on the head of a 20-meter-tall fortress monster.

The monster—once a military stronghold—froze for a moment, clearly baffled by the tiny figure perched atop it.

"Don't underestimate me!!"

Tokikake gritted his teeth, locking his hairy legs tightly around the monster's head. His fists, wrapped in black Armament Haki, came crashing down like a storm.

"I'm a genius from Marine Headquarters!!"

Boom...

Under the stunned gaze of the nearby Marines, the fortress monster's head was smashed to pieces by Tokikake's flurry of blows. It collapsed like a crumbling building, reduced to scattered rubble.

"Ahhhhhhh!!"

Tokikake stood tall in the wreckage, arms spread wide as red-eyed rage burned in his expression. Shards of stone slid off his body in all directions.

"Commander Tokikake... he's so strong..."

"His close-quarters combat is..."

"He really is a genius from headquarters..."

"..."

The Marines stared in shock at Tokikake, who now seemed like a war god. For a brief moment, even his sleazy face seemed to shine with a heroic glow.

Then Tokikake roared up at the sky in anguish:

"A beautiful mature woman like Big Mom... and she chose Daren over me?! Unforgivable!!"

Bang!

Marines around him faceplanted with black lines across their heads.

The aura shattered instantly.

Before they could recover, Tokikake was already off again, shouting profanities as he charged toward another soul monster.

Fueled by rage, he turned into a rampaging humanoid beast, tearing "fortresses" apart with his bare hands. Every monster of rock and steel in his path was reduced to a mangled heap.

...

"Fiery Slash!"

A figure flickered across the battlefield.

A grotesque monster, cornering several young Marines and about to crush them underfoot, suddenly froze mid-step.

Hiss!!

A sword strike exploded across its head, releasing a jet of scorching flame.

The monster wobbled, then collapsed.

The Marines trembled, faces pale, as they watched the bearded young man land steadily on the monster's remains. He held a cigar between his lips and smiled gently.

"You guys all right?"

The Marines snapped out of it and nodded in unison.

They noticed blood dripping from the web between the thumb and forefinger of the hand gripping his sword.

"Then do me a favor—go help evacuate the civilians over there, would you?"

The bearded young man asked with a smile.

"Y-Yes, sir!!"

The Marines scrambled to their feet, gritted their teeth, and rushed in the direction he pointed.

Watching their retreating backs, the man exhaled a puff of smoke and tightened his grip on the blade.

"Hey, Yamakaji, how's it going on your side?"

A cold voice rang out from the left.

Yamakaji, with his long beard, turned to look.

He saw Onigumo walking off the corpse of a soul monster, his expression grim.

Blood trickled from the corner of his mouth, and his long, gray hair whipped around wildly like spider legs as eight military swords whirled in a sharp, whistling dance.

"These things are tough to handle."

Yamakaji let out a sigh.

He glanced around.

Strawberry, Doberman, Dalmatian, and the other officers from the same training camp were all locked in intense battles.

The soul monsters created by Big Mom were massive, with terrifying strength. A single punch from one of them could blast apart an entire building, and every step they took made the ground groan as if crying out in pain.

Just moments ago, Yamakaji had blocked a soul monster's punch head-on while rescuing fleeing civilians. The impact had split the skin at the base of his thumb, and a sharp, burning pain spread through his arm.

If he hadn't reinforced it with Armament Haki, relying solely on his flesh and bone would've left his arm shattered.

Not everyone was a freak like Daren, able to take on giants barehanded.

"Scared?"

Onigumo wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth and asked coldly.

Yamakaji laughed.

He lifted his gaze, eyes fixed on a point in the distance.

Over there, four figures—each emanating a distinct aura—were moving at blinding speeds, surrounding the defiant Shiki in a relentless assault.

From afar, it looked like four calm and ruthless wolves challenging the king of the jungle for dominance.

Each of their strikes unleashed a shockwave strong enough to ripple across hundreds of meters, ripping and crumbling the ground beneath them.

Lava, beams of light, frost, electromagnetic pulses, sword energy... The entire area, spanning several kilometers around those five, had been turned into a hellish wasteland no one could step into.

"The pressure Daren and Kuzan are under... it's on a whole different level."

Yamakaji murmured.

Onigumo frowned and narrowed his eyes.

"They're monsters. We're not."

Yamakaji grinned.

"Monsters have their own way of fighting. But us ordinary folks—we have our own responsibilities."

Hiss!

A blazing red flame erupted along the edge of Yamakaji's military sword.

The flickering fire lit up his broad, composed face, now resolute and firm.

He looked toward the distant battlefield, eyes filled with yearning.

"I'd really love to fight by their side someday..."

Yamakaji murmured, his grip on the sword tightening.

Then, without hesitation, he charged toward another massive monster stomping his way.

...

"Shishi Odoshi: Chimaki!!"

The earth within a hundred meters surged upward, quickly forming a towering lion over a hundred meters tall. It roared fiercely, opening its gaping jaws and swallowing a figure whole.

But in the very next moment—

A raging pillar of magma burst out from the belly of the rocky lion.

Cracks spiderwebbed across its massive form, glowing red light spilling from the fissures.

BOOM!!

An eruption of molten fire soared skyward, completely incinerating the solidified lion.



Liquid magma streamed across the battlefield, melting away patches of frost.

Sakazuki stepped from the magma one pace at a time, one hand holding his military cap. Blood trickled from the corner of his mouth as he looked up at Shiki in the sky, voice cold.

"So this is all the legendary Great Pirate has to offer?"

"Jihahahaha... Injured and still mouthing off—you're a stubborn little brat, aren't you?"

Shiki, dual swords in hand, laughed heartily. Just as he opened his mouth to speak again, a sudden flash of red glinted in his fierce eyes.

His gaze snapped to the side.

A burst of golden light coalesced behind him, rapidly taking the shape of a man.

A white leather shoe rotated downward, lashing out midair!

"Ever been kicked at the speed of light?"

Borsalino's form fully materialized, one hand rubbing the stubble on his chin.

With a casual posture and a kick charged with the piercing power of a light beam, he struck Shiki at the back of the head.

Chapter 349 - 349: Volume 2 – Chapter 251: The Real Pirate

A scorching beam approached from behind at light speed, its overwhelming force tearing the air into spiraling white shockwaves.

"What a sneaky little brat..."

A vicious grin curled at the corner of Shiki's mouth as he suddenly tilted his head to the left.

Borsalino's white leather shoe brushed past his hair, the searing beam of light narrowly missing and plunging into the ground.

Boom!!

A nearby military fortress erupted in a fiery explosion, black smoke billowing skyward as a wave of blistering heat rippled outward.

"Your timing was spot on... just a bit too slow!!"

Shiki let out a wild laugh and spun around, slashing out with his swords!

A dazzling golden sword beam tore through Borsalino's figure, arcing like a massive crescent moon toward the distant sea.

As the image of Borsalino dispersed into photons, the far-off waters split silently, leaving a crack several kilometers long before the surging tide rushed back in to fill the void.

"He activated his Logia form early, huh?"

Shiki sneered, but a sudden gust of wind surged from above.

Without warning, Daren had appeared overhead like a phantom, his right foot raised high above his head.

The high-altitude wind whipped through his black hair and flared his billowing white cloak.

His boot, shrouded in intimidating Haki, came crashing down like a battle axe!

Shiki's expression didn't waver. He raised both swords to block.

Clang!

The clash of boot and blades sent sparks flying in every direction.

"Jihahaha! Daren, your strength and Haki have grown again!"

Shiki's dual blades firmly caught Daren's attack, a murderous gleam flashing in his eyes as he burst into manic laughter.

Daren's eyes widened. Gritting his teeth, he twisted his waist and unleashed all his strength into the strike.

"Get down!!"

Boom!!

A second burst of Armament Haki and raw power exploded midair, creating a shockwave that tore through the sky.

Shiki's body plummeted toward the ground like a meteor.

And waiting at the impact zone...

Kuzan and Sakazuki, cloaked in frost and magma respectively, stood ready, fists drawn back.

"Jihahaha!! So this is your teamwork?"

Adjusting swiftly midair, Shiki laughed wildly and swung his blades once more.

Clang! Clang!

With his left hand, "Oto" blocked the molten fist. With his right, "Kogarashi" cleaved through the icy punch.

The shockwaves of their clash spiraled outward as both Sakazuki and Kuzan, eyes bloodshot, pushed their Devil Fruit powers to their limits!

Boom! Boom!

Scarlet magma and pale blue ice surged skyward from opposite sides, creating two massive pillars that divided the battlefield—with the legendary pirate Shiki standing dead center.

These polar forces, laced with invisible Armament Haki, spun into twin hemispherical cyclones, barreling toward Shiki with immense force.

"Jihahahaha! You're nowhere near enough! If you want me dead, bring Sengoku and Garp!"

Shiki roared with laughter, hair standing on end.

Waves of invisible Conqueror's Haki blasted out from his body, forming a translucent vortex that blocked the red and blue waves entirely, not allowing a single inch to breach.

"We're not the only ones here!!"

Kuzan shouted, his face flushed red.

At that moment, a golden streak flashed low across the battlefield.

The light rapidly coalesced into human form—Borsalino streaking forward, nearly skimming the ground.

In a blink, he appeared in front of Shiki, hands together as a radiant golden blade took form.

"Ama no Murakumo!"

Borsalino gripped the sword in one hand and brought it down in a swift, decisive arc toward Shiki's head!

For a split second, time seemed frozen.

Everything slowed to a crawl.

The blazing golden sword reflected in Shiki's pupils, growing larger with each heartbeat.

Then—

BOOM!!!

A terrifying, indescribable aura exploded from the clash's center, bursting skyward and piercing the heavens!

Sakazuki, Kuzan, and Borsalino all felt the very air around them fracture—like shattered glass—paralyzing their movements.

In an instant, black and red light swallowed the entire island.

The overwhelming pressure of Conqueror's Haki distorted space itself.

Crackling sounds burst through the air as arcs of black and red lightning flashed into existence, flickering in and out across the battlefield.

Sakazuki's pupils shrank.

Kuzan's face went pale.

Something had snapped in the fabric of reality.

A massive shockwave spiraled outward, laced with fine lightning.

It wrapped around Shiki's twin swords before erupting in all directions.

Conqueror's Haki surged violently, unleashing a torrent of black and red energy that slammed directly into Sakazuki and Kuzan's chests!

A direct hit—through the air!!

Both coughed up blood as they were sent flying backward.

"Jihahahaha!!"

Shiki cackled wildly.

Clang!!

A piercing, explosive clash rang out as the twin Meito—"Oto" and "Kogarashi"—crossed in front of him, narrowly blocking Borsalino's descending blade of light.

Behind his sunglasses, Borsalino's pupils contracted slightly. Staring at the Shiki before him—his body wreathed in black and red lightning, his aura at its peak, looking more like a demon god than a man—a bead of cold sweat slid down his forehead.

But his movements didn't slow for a second. The instant his sword was blocked, his left foot whipped forward, dragging a trail of golden light as it kicked toward Shiki's abdomen!

"Yellow brat, your kicks are still way off the mark!!"

Shiki didn't back down in the face of the so-called light-speed strike. He met it with a kick of his own.

But unlike Borsalino's golden-light-wrapped technique, Shiki's kick crackled with black and red lightning—

Conqueror's Haki!

He had wrapped even his kicks with Conqueror's Haki!

Bang!!

Their legs collided with a thunderous thud, the sound of shattering bone echoing sharply.

More sweat broke across Borsalino's brow. Shiki's counter sent him flying, his body streaking across the sky like a bolt of golden light before crashing into the central fortress, blasting a massive hole through its thick stone wall.

Flames roared. Black smoke billowed.

Gale winds howled, and black-red lightning tore through the sky.

Almost at the same instant Borsalino was blasted away, a violent, cutting gust slammed down on Shiki from above. The air pressure shifted as a three-fingered dragon claw ripped through the smoke, striking from above.

Daren!

A torrent of Conqueror's Haki surged from his body, clashing head-on with Shiki's oppressive aura.

His movements were blindingly fast—Ryusoken claw sweeping down like a thunderclap.

The one and only opening!

"Ryusoken!!"

One claw fell!

It carried Daren's monstrous strength, crashing down like a falling star!

"You think it's that easy?"

Shiki grinned fiercely, hooking one finger.

The ground beneath him suddenly surged up—an enormous wave of earth rising into a towering tsunami, instantly shielding him and crashing toward Daren.

Even after Daren found the only gap in close combat, Shiki still used his Devil Fruit ability to counter in time!

Rumble!!



Massive torrents of dirt collided midair, shaking the heavens with their roar.

In the very next instant—

A sword beam wreathed in black and red lightning burst through everything and shot skyward.

The Marine commodore's body was flung from the raging mudslide, a deep slash across his chest exposing bone.

As everyone watched in stunned disbelief...

The tidal wave of earth reversed like a flood, coalescing into a towering lion that reached the sky.

At the peak of that colossal beast, Shiki stood tall, twin swords in hand. His golden mane whipped through the air like a lion's wild crown.

Looking down on the four gasping "monsters" below, he let out a ferocious laugh:

"You Marine brats raised in your safe little greenhouse... you've got no idea what real pirates are capable of!!"

"Jihahahaha!!"

Beneath the pitch-black night sky, black and red lightning crackled relentlessly.

The massive shadow of the legendary pirate stretched across the battlefield, almost engulfing all of Marineford.

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The storm howled wildly as black and red lightning tore across the sky.

Above Marineford, Shiki the Golden Lion stood in midair, laughing madly like a demon god.

The battlefield below was shrouded in smoke and fire. Corpses piled like mountains, with severed limbs and shattered bodies buried throughout the ruins.

Marines and civilians in the distant residential zone stared up at the figure in horror, frozen in place, trembling as a deep, indescribable despair began to take root in their eyes.

On this day, the world once again witnessed the terror of the so-called legendary Great Pirates.

...

Far across the battlefield—

"Mamamama! So worried about your little students, are you, Zephyr?!"

Big Mom seized the split second when Zephyr lost focus, grinning viciously as she raised her massive, flame-wreathed sword and swung it down with overwhelming force.

"Napoleon—Cognac!!"

A wave of intense, scorching heat rushed forward, so hot it distorted the very air.

Napoleon, her bicorne hat fused with Prometheus, had become a blade of pure destruction, erupting with flames at every slash.

"Damn it!"

Zephyr's pupils contracted as he cursed under his breath, crossing his arms over his chest, now coated in Armament Haki.

Boom!!

A cyclone of flames exploded outward, transforming the surrounding tens of meters into a blazing sea of fire.

Zephyr shot backward from the flames, his military boots carving twin gouges into the scorched earth.

But before he could even catch his breath, the air above cracked open with a thunderous burst. A whirlwind and crackling lightning surged downward like a hammer!

"Worororo!! An opening!!"

Kaidou, in his dragon-human hybrid form, descended with a savage grin, his eyes burning blood-red with fury.

Both hands gripped his black spiked kanabō, streaks of black and red lightning crackling wildly as he swung. His long, dark hair lashed around him like a furious serpent.

"Die!! You're just a washed-up old man! Stay down where you belong!!"

One swing—falling like a meteor!

"Kosanze Ragnaraku!!"

A flicker of anger flashed in Zephyr's eyes.

Kaidou's attacks were brutal, wrapped in Conqueror's Haki, and struck like thunder.

Although his Haki didn't match the intensity of Shiki's, a direct clash would still cost Zephyr dearly.

His eyes glowed crimson—Observation Haki pushed to its peak, reading the future in the split second before impact.

In a flash—

Zephyr's boots slammed into the ground, his body shifting position at the last possible moment.

The kanabō, wreathed in lightning, smashed down just beside his flapping cape.

The Hassaikai drove deep into the earth.

Boom!!

A seismic strike shook the battlefield!

Black and red lightning surged with a devastating shockwave, blasting outward for over a thousand meters.

Within several hundred meters of the impact point, the ground caved in by a full meter, rupturing into dozens of jagged cracks as boulders exploded into the sky.

Kaidou's sure-kill attack missed—and a flicker of disbelief flashed across his eyes.

"Kaidou, you punk... Strength alone won't carry you. You're still too green!!"

A furious roar burst from within the thick cloud of dust.

The next instant, a coarse, jet-black arm shot out from the smoke, racing toward Kaidou's face—reflected clearly in his narrowing pupils.

Zephyr, fierce as a raging tiger, exploded through the rubble.

His calloused hand spread wide, fingers rough and gnarled, and clamped down on Kaidou's head with crushing force.

"This guy!!"

A jolt ran through Kaidou's chest.

In the heart of true close combat, he finally felt it—

The crushing, inescapable pressure of the former Marine Admiral standing before him.

Every technique refined to perfection.

Armament Haki—calm, unshakable.

The battle instincts of a man who had walked through countless blood-soaked battlefields.

Unshakable will, hardened through life-or-death clashes.

He was like a towering, immovable mountain.

And no matter how much raw power or Haki Kaidou possessed—he couldn't overcome it.

Zephyr gritted his teeth hard. Behind his sunglasses, his eyes flooded with bloodshot veins as he roared with all his might:

"You're the one who should be on the ground!!"

He slammed his hand down with force.

Boom!!

Kaidou's head was driven into the earth in a crushing impact. The already fractured ground collapsed completely, shattering with a deafening rumble as waves of destruction rippled outward.

Shards of stone exploded into the air.

Blood streamed from Kaidou's nose and mouth. His dragon eyes began to lose focus, pupils dilated as stars danced in his vision.

"Mamamamama!!"

A shrill laugh echoed from above.

"Hahaba!!"

Big Mom's towering, voluptuous form flipped nimbly through the air and appeared before Zephyr in an instant, both hands gripping her flaming blade as she slashed down hard!

Clang!!

Zephyr raised his arms to block, sparks exploding in his face as the impact sent him flying backward, gritting his teeth.

A numbing ache surged through his arms, and he couldn't help but curse under his breath.

Whether it was Big Mom or Kaidou, both of their bodies defied human limits—stronger even than full-grown warriors of the Giant Tribe. They were absurdly hard to deal with.

The only fortunate thing was that, while Kaidou had reached an Admiral's level in raw power, his combat technique and Haki weren't all that refined—certainly not on Big Mom's level.

Still, their monstrous endurance and regenerative ability were astonishing. Zephyr felt more and more constrained with each exchange.

A thin line of blood trickled from the corner of his mouth as he glared coldly at Big Mom, who stood with her massive sword slung over her shoulder, and at Kaidou, swaying as he struggled to rise from the crater. His fists clenched tight.

"Damn Marines... That really hurt."

Kaidou grunted, wiping the blood from his face, his eyes brimming with violence and malice as he stared at Zephyr.

"Mamamama, you're still alive? Then get up already, Kaidou."

Charlotte Linlin let out another twisted laugh, then turned her amused gaze toward Zephyr, pointing into the distance.

"Zephyr, are you sure you want to waste your strength on us here?"

"Your precious little students... won't last much longer."

"Let's make a deal—hand over Daren, and I'll leave with him and Kaidou."

Before Zephyr could even reply, Kaidou whipped his head around in disbelief and roared:

"What the hell are you talking about, you crazy hag?! I don't take orders from you!!"

"Kaidou, don't forget—you owe me a huge favor."

Big Mom sneered, unbothered.

Kaidou froze at her words. He gritted his teeth, and though his face twisted with hesitation... he didn't say another word.

Big Mom smiled sweetly again, turning back to Zephyr.

"See? Just hand over Daren, and Kaidou and I will be gone."

"That way, you'll be free to stop that lunatic Shiki. Otherwise... your students won't make it out alive."

She licked her crimson lips and giggled softly.

"Don't worry—I won't kill Daren. I couldn't bear to. A man that perfect... I'd never waste him."